



BEYOND REVIVAL

**ON TO
PERFECTION**

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Beyond Revival On To Perfection

Introduction

As I write the draft for this little booklet it has been over ten weeks now that I have been watching what the LORD is doing at Lakeland Florida.

With few exceptions I have been privileged to witness and participate in the revival/outpouring of the LORD during this time, due to the fact that God TV has been airing the revival each night for four hours live.

This is truly a first in the earth, when an actual outpouring of the LORD can be witnessed and experienced by anyone in the entire world who either has satellite television or who is connected to the internet.

This revival indeed has the ability through modern technology to touch people by the millions who would otherwise be unable to attend or participate! Praise the LORD for taking His technology and showing the benefit it can have when used for His purpose.

I have been blessed to have seen a genuine revival of the LORD which sprang from what is known as the Toronto Blessing. Not that I attended in person but was in a church which was seeking the presence of the LORD during those days. The pastor had been touched by Toronto and that old mainline professional minister began to seek God as he never had before. He prayed for the sick, he prophesied and he led people to the LORD, something which he had never done in his 20+ years as a 'pro'.

What is the point of this last statement? During that time we saw what church could be when the Holy Spirit was in charge and not merely man with his programs and agendas. I also saw what men, even those who have been touched by the LORD will do in an attempt to remain in control and not give their all to the LORD.

I include myself as one of those men.

We may want to try and remain in control and 'use' God's power to give our ministry credibility but one thing I have learned of the LORD..... He will NEVER share His glory with any man!

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As a result of people trying to lay hold of the Glory for their purpose, I have seen three distinct visitations of the LORD simply dry up and revert back to the former. I have seen those wells dry up and then abandoned by those who had freely drunk of them.

I have also observed another truth about a genuine visitation of the LORD and that is: once you have drunk of the Real you can never go back to the counterfeit! Once you have experienced the Glory and tasted of the LORD you can never go back to the same old lifeless religious thing you called church.

So, what have I learned from personal experience and from looking at revivals of the past? I have learned that while they are wonderful and indeed touch those blessed enough to have seen and touched and tasted; they **ARE NOT ENOUGH!**

Hence the purpose of this little booklet which will show what I believe the LORD wants from us after we have tasted of Revival. After all, revival is to bring back to life something which is either dead or very nearly dead and then that Life should be the Light unto the world it was always intended to be.

If you are content with the status quo, then put this little booklet down and go back to church.

Prepared to be challenged by what is beyond revival? Read on.

Chapter 1

What is Revival?

The dictionary definition of revival is:

Main Entry: re·viv·al

Function: noun

Date: 1651

1: an act or instance of reviving: the state of being revived: as a: renewed attention to or interest in something b: a new presentation or publication of something old c (1): a period of renewed religious interest (2): an often highly emotional evangelistic meeting or series of meetings 2: restoration of force, validity, or effect (as to a contract)

The word revival is an act of reviving, the word revive meant:

Main Entry: re·vive

Function: verb

Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French revivre, from Latin revivere to live again, from re- + vivere to live

Date: 15th century

intransitive verb: to return to consciousness or life: become active or flourishing again transitive verb 1: to restore to consciousness or life 2: to restore from a depressed, inactive, or unused state: bring back 3: to renew in the mind or memory

The word revival best describes an event during which time those who experience it are revived. The word revive has many meanings, all of which can be applied to the church in North America and elsewhere in this hour.

Revive is said to return to life, become active, to restore from a depressed, inactive and unused state and renew in the mind or memory!

So if we recognize that the LORD wishes us to be revived during a time of revival we must accept the fact that we are in NEED of reviving. We must accept the fact that we need to be brought to life, as we are very nearly dead! We must accept the fact we have been in an inactive and unused state and need renewing in our mind!

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We must accept the fact that while our minds should have been renewed we have allowed ourselves to be conformed to the world rather than having been transformed.

We must accept that fact we have taken the holy assembling of ourselves around the LORD and turned it into a form of entertainment or worse yet a lifeless form of godliness while we are denying the Power of it.

We must accept the fact we have taken the Precious Blood of our LORD and have pretended it was poured out so that we could 'have church' after the fashion we have come to adopt in North America.

We must accept the fact we have thought ourselves wise, with much intellectual understanding while we have denied the True power of the Gospel.

We must accept the fact we have taken the manifestation of speaking in tongues and have convinced ourselves that is all there is to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We must accept the fact we have put a man or woman between us and the LORD, in the form of pastors and teachers and have asked them to tell us about the LORD rather than going directly to Him and learning of Him.

We must accept the fact we have allowed pastors to assume a role they were never intended to assume, they were NEVER meant to replace the Head, and they were always supposed to direct us TO the Head.

So, should we rejoice when the LORD blesses us with revival? Absolutely!

Should we repent of the fact we NEED to be revived? Absolutely even more!

We have been here for nearly 2,000 years and are yet to catch up to the place the early Church had during the days of the Apostles.

It is time to recognize we have been wandering the wilderness for years now, and have not been able to recognize the fact we have been going around the same mountain for generations!

The Purpose of Revival

The purpose of revival in the shortest form is to take those who believe on the LORD Jesus Christ from being the church to being THE CHURCH!

The CHURCH is the LORD'S Body, the Fullness of Him which fills all in all.

The church is a group of people who believe the LORD for their eternal salvation but don't really believe Him for much else.

The purpose of a genuine revival is to cause us to believe that all of the promises of God are truly Yes and Amen IN Christ Jesus our LORD.

A little child has no difficulty believing everything the Bible says about Jesus and about His Church, it is only us intellectual adults who have taken the truth of the Gospel and the Bible and turned it into something to be studied to death, rather than believed and then LIVED!

Jesus came that we might have Life and have it more abundantly. He did not come that we could have church and have it more abundantly!

The church has become the source of dead, lifeless sermons delivered in many cases by professional clergy who are not even saved and only interested in their pay check. The church is also the resting place of those who felt called to the ministry, but were never anointed of God as pastors or teachers. They are occupying on office by presumption, with predictable results.

I think there are also a great number of genuine pastors whom the LORD did call, but who have been destroyed by the church system and have allowed the tail (the congregation) to wag the dog (the pastor), once again with predictable results. These poor souls are suffering burn out and many I am sure have finally quit the ministry.

So the question remains do we the church want to embrace God and His revival so that we may become THE CHURCH, or are we going to be content to once again be touched by the LORD and allow Him to turn us

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into a flame for a season, only to go back to our old ways and habits until we once again become a smoldering wick?

What is the purpose of Church?

If you are to ask Todd Bentley, Benny Hinn or any other on fire evangelist this question they will immediately reply 'to fulfill the Great Commission'.

As much as I love and respect both of these men and admire their loyalty to their calling, I would have to say that I disagree with both of them! That is only one part of the true purpose of THE CHURCH. Of course until the evangelist has done their job the church would be empty. However it is the job of the equipped saints to take the believers who come to church and see them transformed into THE CHURCH.

According to scripture the Church is the body of Christ and it is the fullness of Him.

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Eph 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Eph 1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Eph 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

Eph 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Eph 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

According to scripture the purpose of the fivefold ministry is not to fulfill the Great Commission it is to equip the saints, who in turn build up the body until we all are transformed into the very stature of the fullness of Christ.

If you think this is a message the devil absolutely dreads you are right! He

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could care less if this world is filled with carnal, cerebral, baby christians as they will NEVER damage and destroy his kingdom. Want proof? Just take a look at the Christian church and ask yourself 'is it taking the Kingdom of heaven and seeing it brought into the earth?'

Is the witness of the Christian church demonstrated in the power of the Holy Spirit or merely with the enticing words of mans wisdom?

Has the church become a club of bookworms and tapeworms who are ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the Truth? There are lots of us who can tell you the meaning of the original Greek or Hebrew text for a certain word in the Bible. But there are precious few of us who can tell you what the Bible means!

Where is the Church which preaches the full gospel? Where is the Church which preaches the Kingdom, heals the sick, cleanses the leper, raises the dead and casts out demons?

Where is the Church that is going on to perfection and even remotely believes they are to some to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ?

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

This is the blessed state that the Church is meant to come into, and when a generation finally believes what the Bible says they will see it manifest in

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their lifetime. This is not a promise to be fulfilled after the LORD returns it is meant to be fulfilled in any generation which dares to believe it!

Do you?

Where to from here?

Once again the Bible has the answer to every question we can possibly ask, and it has the answer to this one as well.

Heb 5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Heb 6:2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Heb 6:3 And this will we do, if God permit.

Can you not see the modern day church in North America falling into the category the Holy Spirit is addressing in these verses of scripture?

The Amplified Bible translates the same verses this way:

Heb 5:11 Concerning this we have much to say which is hard to explain, since you have become dull in your [spiritual] hearing and sluggish [even slothful in achieving spiritual insight].

Heb 5:12 For even though by this time you ought to be teaching others, you actually need someone to teach you over again the very first principles of God's Word. You have come to need milk, not solid food.

Heb 5:13 For everyone who continues to feed on milk is obviously inexperienced and unskilled in the doctrine of righteousness (of conformity to the divine will in purpose, thought, and action), for he is a mere infant [not able to talk yet]!

Heb 5:14 But solid food is for full-grown men, for those whose senses and mental faculties are trained by practice to discriminate and distinguish

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between what is morally good and noble and what is evil and contrary either to divine or human law.

Heb 6:1 THEREFORE LET us go on and get past the elementary stage in the teachings and doctrine of Christ (the Messiah), advancing steadily toward the completeness and perfection that belong to spiritual maturity. Let us not again be laying the foundation of repentance and abandonment of dead works (dead formalism) and of the faith [by which you turned] to God,

Heb 6:2 With teachings about purifying, the laying on of hands, the resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment and punishment. [These are all matters of which you should have been fully aware long, long ago.]

Heb 6:3 If indeed God permits, we will [now] proceed [to advanced teaching].

The King James Version calls them the ‘principles of the doctrine’ and the Amplified calls them the ‘elementary stage’. Both translations clearly define what is then said to be the fundamentals of the faith and as such we should be growing to the point where we are not just preaching the same fundamentals over and over and over again!

So what are those fundamentals? They are listed as repentance from dead works, faith toward God, doctrine of baptisms (s), laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

Ask yourself, when was the last time you heard a teaching which does not fall into the above categories? As a matter of fact when was the last time you heard a teaching which did anything more than tickle your ears?

You may consider yourself mature because you have been in the church for 20 years or more, but if your faith does not extend beyond what is described as the fundamentals you are fooling yourself if you claim maturity. In the Church, maturity has nothing to do with seniority; it can only be measured by our knowledge of the LORD Jesus Christ. Remember unless you become as a little child you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven. When was the last time a little child cared about all that information being preached today which has the form of godliness but denies the power!

The title of this chapter is ‘Where to from here’ which can only be answered when we take a reality check and see where we are starting from. It may come as a surprise to discover we may not actually be any farther along than when we first were saved. In fact, if we are brutally honest, we

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might have to admit we are not as close to the goal now as when we first were saved!

Don't be confused by the expression 'knowledge of the Son of God' in Eph. 4, it does not mean ever increasing head knowledge, rather it means as the Amplified Bible says;

Eph 4:13 [That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him.

Ask yourself this question 'what do I know of the LORD Jesus Christ which Satan does not know'.

Does Satan know Jesus is God's Son? Does Satan know Jesus died to forgive sins? Does Satan know that Jesus rose from the dead? Does Satan know he is subject to the authority of Christ Jesus? Does Satan know he is going to hell one day?

Now then, is Satan saved? What do you know that Satan does not know?

Again back to the question of 'where to from here'. Once again the Bible has the answer, and we have already read it. Remember?

Eph 4:13 [That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him.

So considering we are to arrive at 'really mature manhood, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ and the completeness found in Him' how do you think we are doing after about 2,000 years?

Are we there yet? Or are we forever just going over and over and over the fundamentals of the faith and even when it comes to the fundamentals, do we even have them learned properly yet?

What about the doctrine of baptisms, plural. If you have been in church for any length of time you probably realize the subject of baptism is cause for considerable division in the church. Given that the whole topic of baptisms (plural) is classed as one of the basics of our faith, you might think that the body of believers would be on the same page by now. But alas, that is not the case.

Consider just a few of the divisions which surround this fairly simple topic. First it says baptisms, which means there are more than one, yet many will believe that the baptism in water is all that is needed and end it there. Of course even those who agree on the need for water baptism can't agree on the method, full immersion or just a sprinkle?

This is not meant to be a debate on baptisms it is merely meant to highlight the fact there is not even agreement across the church on this very basic issue. So why would we think we have attained some level of maturity when we can't even agree on this?

If there is a conclusion we can draw from this it would be the fact that as much as we don't care to admit it, we are still very much in need of milk and are not as yet ready for the strong meat we would like to think we are capable of digesting.

If we can ever admit that we really don't know anywhere as much as we like to think we do, we will be finally in a position so that the LORD may take us from where we are, to where He would have us go.

How to Get Where We Should be Going

The last chapter lays the foundation so that we may see that where we are is nowhere near as close to where we should be as we might think.

What is the first step? Simply admitting to the LORD that we have been behaving like a bunch of thumb sucking two years olds trying to act like adults, would be a good starting point.

Pastors need realize that those diplomas on the wall from college and seminary are worth about as much as Paul said his early training was worth. Remember? He called it something like, no it was not something like, he did call it dung! If you are unfamiliar with the word it refers to what a cow leaves behind which is then used for fertilizer!

We all need to stick with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and quit with this intellectual, social gospel nonsense, which is made up only of mans enticing words. We also need to quit relying on our intellects and realize that when it comes to the things of the Kingdom of God we would actually do well if we did check our brain at the door. Doubt what I say? Where has all our intellect gotten us so far? We still have not mastered the fundamentals yet think we are of full age!

There are Christian book stores filled wall to wall with information which is probably 95% trash and won't be remembered nor quoted in a year let alone in decades to come.

Ministries have become mini publishing companies with their 'product' becoming the message rather than the Gospel of our LORD. Their new book on the five steps to freedom, the ten ways to success etc. etc. has replaced the simple message of the Gospel which obviously we have neither heard nor believed for quite some time now.

This is a good place to add the Full Gospel Message as I now understand it as a foundational point on which to place our feet.

What is the Full Gospel?

The word gospel means a good message or good news.

The Good News of our LORD Jesus Christ and what He has done includes but is not limited to the following elements:

Our names are written in heaven

Luk 10:20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Eternal salvation of our souls

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Forgiveness of our sins

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

We are reconciled to God

2Co 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; Rom 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Have become temples of the Holy Spirit

1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Christ dwells within us by His Spirit; He is our hope of glory

Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

The Holy Spirit will lead and guide us into all truth

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1Jn 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Jesus bore our sickness and disease and by His stripes, we are healed

Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 1Pe 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Spiritual power and spiritual gifts are available to us for our growth and transformation

1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 1Co 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 1Co 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 1Co 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Jesus has become our Righteousness

1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Jesus has become our Wisdom

1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Jesus has become our Sanctification

1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Jesus has become our Redemption

1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Jesus is our Justification

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Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

We can be transformed and our minds renewed

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Christ is being formed in us

Gal 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

We are set free in Christ Jesus

Joh 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
Joh 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

We have power over all the power of the devil

Luk 10:19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

We have power over sin and need no longer be its slave

1Jn3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 1Jn 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. Rom 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

We can mature until we come to the full measure of the stature of the LORD Jesus Christ

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Gospel of sonship, we are adopted as children of God

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Rom 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

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Joint heirs with Christ Jesus

Rom 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Seated with Christ in the heavenlies

Eph 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

We can come boldly before the Throne of Grace

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We can come to a place of perfect fellowship with God

This is the most blessed state I can even imagine, to be able to walk in perfect fellowship with God through unbroken communion with our LORD Jesus Christ is perfect harmony with the Holy Spirit. To me, this is the greatest promise held out in the Gospel. Do you believe it?

What is being preached as The Gospel?

The Gospel which is preached most commonly in North America is the Gospel of the forgiveness of sin by the shed Blood of our LORD Jesus Christ. Of course this is absolutely true and without this truth and benefit of the Gospel we would all be destined for hell despite how good ‘our’ deeds may have been. For indeed we ALL have sinned and fallen short of the righteousness of God.

However, where is the Gospel of healing? The Gospel of deliverance? The Gospel of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? The Gospel of the equipping of the saints with the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Have you ever wondered why the healing and deliverance and power gift ministries seem to be relegated to itinerate ministers, rather than being present in all assemblies everywhere?

Consider if this sounds plausible if you will. Is it possible that the Gospel of forgiveness of sin and the typical church altar call are considered safe? By that I mean it does not require any ‘stepping out’ on the part of the preacher to deliver this Gospel message.

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It gets much more demanding when you start preaching the gospel of healing, deliverance, Holy Ghost baptism and operating in the gifts of the Spirit than asking someone to respond by coming forward to receive the LORD.

Don't get me wrong, I know that ALL the angels of heaven rejoice when one sinner turns to God, and any genuine salvation which comes from preaching the Gospel of Salvation is truly precious to the LORD.

However, if salvation were accompanied by healing and deliverance and the baptism of the Holy Spirit all in one package well that is the kind of Gospel that produces life changing results, and shakes the kingdom of hell at the same time!

Remember what the Apostle Paul had to say:

1Co 2:1 And I, brothers, when I came to you, did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God.

1Co 2:2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

1Co 2:3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling.

1Co 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

1Co 2:5 so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

We can not possibly think that our LORD paid the price He paid so that we could come together once a week, listen to 4 songs, hear a few announcements, pass the plate, listen to another sermon and leave in time for lunch with such regularity that the restaurant knows when to expect us.

If we preach and believe the full Gospel; the LORD would once again confirm the word with signs following those who believe.

Revival is a wake up call from the LORD who is gracious and longsuffering which hopefully will cause us to realize the spiritual squalor we have been living in for decades and now having tasted of the True will never be content to return to the former.

Lest we become as the dog who has returned to his vomit or the swine to its wallow.

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2Pe 2:20 For if they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the full knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and are again entangled, they have been overcome by these, their last things are worse than the first.

2Pe 2:21 For it would have been better for them not to have fully known the way of righteousness, than fully knowing it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

2Pe 2:22 But the word of the true proverb has happened to them: The dog turning to his own vomit; and, The washed sow to wallowing in the mire.

What will it be? church or CHURCH?

It might be helpful to define what church and CHURCH is for the purpose of this discussion.

church is basically what we have been doing for decades and centuries with the occasional change coming about as the result of a revival or awakening, or whatever other name you wish to give, when God actually shows up and touches our miserable souls.

One of the tools I suspect the devil uses to keep us all tied up in our infancy is our innate desire to prove to others and ourselves that we are somehow superior to others. Whether that comes from comparing our spiritual level of 'knowledge' with others, from comparing our performance to others or just our general place in the pecking order of things.

In any case we do err when we compare ourselves among ourselves. For you see none of us have anything to boast in when we compare our maturity to that of our LORD Jesus Christ. To compare our growth to any lesser standard is to do injury to the true Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ.

This basic flaw in our character manifests itself when the leadership tries to take the place of the LORD and when that happens we will always have church. The easiest way to recognize church, is that it contains no life, oh yes it may have the form of godliness but it denies the power and has no ability to transform your life.

Another way to know if you are having church, is by its predictability and the fact you can set your watch by how long the service will last. It will follow an agenda using a program as rigid as a dead lifeless corpse, which is an accurate comparison.

You will also not be able to remember from one week to the next what the pastor had to say, although you will probably compliment him on another fine sermon on your way out the door. Only to return next week and go through the same defunct exercise once again.

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The truly sad part is that we don't seem able to see the uselessness of our religious exercise. Why else would we continue week after week after week?

Does this happen with those who are born again, or is it only the folly of the 'old' mainline religious types?

I am sure some of the born again, tongue talkers reading this could be a little puffy right now, confident that it is only the 'old' religious Christians who have been taken captive in this snare.

What's that you hear? Could that be the sound of rushing air as you are being relieved of the source of your puffiness?

I have attended one of the oldest mainline churches in Canada, complete with choir, choir loft, organist and old pipe organ all of which is necessary to conduct their religious ceremonies orchestrated by the board of directors. In these organizations, there is no place for the pastor to truly lead if he intends to keep his job. They have been doing this for ages now, and everyone in the club seems content enough. It seems that once you are dead, you have the appearance of being content.

These services are as predictable as the rising of the sun and nowhere near as interesting. But for some I am sure it fills a genuine need to worship the LORD and for those with the right heart they will be touched by Him in spite of the service, not because of it.

I contrast that with some of the hip, new, born again, tongue talkin', prophesyin', hands layin' on assemblies who all are up on the latest book or fad making the rounds in the Charismatic zoo! What's that you smell? Could it be roasting cow? Hope you brought a knife and fork because we are going to have a little bar-b-cue!

From my personal observations the 'spirit-filled' crowd is just as capable of having church as the old stodgy mainline Christians are they just have a little different appearance about them. However, the results are pretty much the same. They still manage to keep the Holy Spirit at bay while they perform their updated version of the same old religious ceremony man has been enjoying for a good long time now.

The choir has been exchanged for guitar and drum set, the choir gowns exchanged for blue jeans and a good shirt, if you are really lay back. The

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old rugged cross has been replaced with a newer offering. There may be a few more songs than the old church sings, but not necessarily.

There is still however, a program orchestrated to see that we have done our religious duty again this week and it contains pretty much the same elements as the old mainline church employs.

There will be singing, announcements, collection, sermon and if you are really on the cutting edge, at the end you may actually set aside sometime to pray for members of the congregation who are in need.

So there you have it, old or new congregations are still just having church the difference being the tongue talkers think they have the real thing compared to the old dead crowd.

Can you spell d e c e i v e d ??

What is Missing then?

The common denominator in both of the above scenarios is that they are both simply going through a form of manmade religion which (as Bono is quoted as saying) is what you are left with, when the Spirit has left the building.

Spurgeon put it another way, a little harsher but still meaning the same thing. I am not quoting directly, but in essence he said that if the Holy Spirit is not present in church, we might as well nail up the doors and put an upside down cross on the front door!

Another quote attributed to Spurgeon was “The greatest crime of sinners is to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and the greatest fault of saints is to neglect the Holy Ghost.”

So you see the difference between church and CHURCH is The Holy Spirit! He is the only One capable of taking a group of sinners, saved by grace and conforming them into the very image of Christ Himself!

New form or old form, man will only produce church when he chooses to do things his way. Oh, how we like to do things our way, and so does Satan like it so, when we do things our way!

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How do you like the bar-b-cue so far?

Who is the Holy Spirit?

He is a most wonderful, misunderstood and little known Person upon whom the Church is totally dependant yet it seems blind to this simple fact.

He is referred to as the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God, both titles are equally accurate and it is He Who was the promise of the Father Whom Christ said it better for us that He sends. He is the One who dwells within and comes along side. He is the One who will lead and guide us into all truth. He is the One who will reveal Jesus to us. He is the One who does not testify of Himself, which is why we know so little of Him.

He is the One who imparts gifts to believers for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ in the earth. He is the Comforter Who will never leave nor forsake us. He is a most wonderful Person we seem so totally ignorant of, to our great dismay.

To help in our understanding of Who this Person of the Trinity is consider the following scriptures and what they tell you of His Person and role in bringing about the purposes of God.

If I may suggest you not just breeze over the following, but read each scripture line by line and let the Holy Spirit show you the truth about Him which is contained in each verse. You will be surprised what He will show you when you take the time to get to know Him.

Considering we are to be led by Him, it is absolutely imperative that we learn to truly hear His voice if we are ever to stop having church and begin to become THE CHURCH.

The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Scriptures supporting the 'Person' of the Holy Spirit, Who as such does have a will and a personality.

Eph 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

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Mat 12:31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

Act 5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1Co 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

1Co 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

1Co 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

1Jn 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Scriptures teaching the ministry of the Holy Spirit during OT times, during the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the NT Church.

Heb 10:15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

2Pe 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Act 28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

Luk 3:22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Luk 4:1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Act 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

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Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Joh 14:25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Joh 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

Joh 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Joh 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Eph 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Eph 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

Mar 13:11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

Luk 12:12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

Act 1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

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Act 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Act 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

Act 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Act 7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

Act 7:56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

Act 9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Act 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Act 13:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Act 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

Act 16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

Act 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Act 20:23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

Act 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Act 21:11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

Rom 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

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1Co 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1Co 12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

2Co 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

2Ti 1:14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

Tit 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Heb 2:4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1Co 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

1Co 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

1Co 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Jud 1:20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

1Jn 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

This is to take nothing away from our LORD Jesus, but our LORD is seated on the right hand of the majesty on high, and it is the Holy Spirit Who is present with us in this physical realm. It is He Who will bring the Kingdom into the earth and no amount of human enterprise can accomplish what is assigned to Him and Him alone.

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We desperately need to get to know Him and His leading, and quit pretending we are always hearing from Him when it is clear so very few of us truly know His leading.

Oh how, we must quench Him.

Oh how, we must grieve Him.

Oh how, we will rue the day if we ever vex Him.

Oh how, indebted we are to His longsuffering and faithfulness.

It is only He Who can take believers from being the church to being THE CHURCH!

We need to make Him the most welcome Person in our midst whenever we get together to taste of our LORD. We greet one another, and so we should. But to our shame and detriment we ignore the Person of God in our midst who is the only One Who can transform us.

Let us resolve to never do this again in our assemblies.

How CHURCH is supposed to look.

This modern, theatre style of church we seem to so embrace is so far from what CHURCH is supposed to look like as to be unrecognizable. It is little wonder what is to be the Light in the darkness is barely acknowledged anymore by those who are lost in this present world.

It is little wonder those who are sick will run to the doctor before they would ever dream of calling on the man or woman of God. And why would we expect the world to seek healing within our walls, since most of us will still run to the medicine cabinet or doctor before we would seek the prayer of faith offered up by the elders in our assembly.

It might interest you to know that when Jesus referred to the religious crowd in His day as being hypocrites; the word hypocrite comes from a word meaning ‘an actor under an assumed character (stage player)’.

Be honest now, in our modern church whether we are the new or the old flavor of christianity, haven’t we all come to know our parts and our places in our little bit of theatre we put on weekly? Being honest again, don’t we get just a little puffy when the chief actor (the pastor) promotes us to a role of more prominence and greater visibility?

So, who is the center of this little play we put on weekly? Why, the pastor of course! Occasionally he may be replaced with a guest speaker of some sort or perhaps a traveling musician or preacher.

Then of course there is the other star attraction which will be the worship team, whether they look like the lone guitar soloist or the fifty piece choir resplendent in matching flowing gowns!

The other players may include the ushers and official greeters and of course the collection takers. Depending on your tradition you may even have a member or two of the flock honored with the reading of a verse or two from the Bible or perhaps reading the church announcements.

Of course, the largest number in any theatrical performance is the audience which of course is made up of you and me, who come dutifully every

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week to play our parts in this little drama all the time thinking we are doing God service with our participation.

Oh, how pathetic we have become, but oh, how well we have learned to play our parts in the church!

I realize that this may sound like a rather bleak and cynical description of what the modern church has become, but I think if you are honest with yourself you will see the truth in what I am saying.

Why do we seem to like our little theatre?

I think the answer is pretty clear as well as pretty simple. I also realize that it will be as popular as a skunk at a garden party but here goes anyway....

We like our little form of theatre because we are sinners saved by grace that don't recognize the fact we are still sucking our thumbs and in need of more milk and would likely benefit from a diaper change!

Are you still here? If you want someone to stroke your ego and tell you how wonderful you are, you are in the wrong place! If however, you are ready to admit that the CHURCH has been the church for far too long and that each one of us has our share of blame, then keep on reading.

Do you remember what the people said to Moses when God appeared on Mount Sinai? Well for those who need reminding they said; "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Exo 20:19

There is another scripture which speaks of mans desired relationship with God, it comes from 1Samuel and says:

"1Sa 8:5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

1Sa 8:6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

1Sa 8:7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."

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We may like to think we are somehow different from all those people who kept seeing the goodness of God and continued to rebel against Him, but are we all that different.

Oh I realize that they did not have the indwelling Holy Spirit however we still have the same untransformed will and emotions as they did, so why would we expect to really be any different?

Perhaps we enjoy our little church theatre group because deep down we still want Moses to go and hear what the LORD has to say and we still would prefer an earthly king to rule over us rather than coming into that place with God where we speak with Him directly and we make Him our King!

What else could explain these pastor-centered churches we seem to embrace and hang onto like a dog with a bone? Perhaps we are simply far too spiritually lazy to pay the price it takes to hear from God for ourselves and it is ever so much easier to say: ‘oh Pastor what do you think I could do in this situation?’

Of course the pastors are quite happy to play their role and offer you their advice rather than teaching you how to go before the LORD yourself and hear from Him directly. Of course for this to be true, the pastor actually has to be capable of teaching you how to hear from the LORD for yourself.

It is also easier to ask each other what we think our best course would be when we are faced with one of our little dramas. As I heard Joyce Meyer say the other day; “don’t reach for the phone go straight to the throne!” Sound advice we all need to take seriously.

So to answer the question posed by the title of this chapter ‘How Church is supposed to look’; it should look like a whole group of people who individually are hearing from the Holy Spirit and who individually are being led by the Holy Spirit, who are then the animated Body of the LORD Jesus Christ with Him as the Head as He is supposed to be!

Then we will all assume our proper roles as members of His Body and not merely members of a theatrical troupe who put on the same performance week after week after week.

Do we all participate in the properly functioning Body?

When we come together, rather than waiting to hear what God told Moses this week, perhaps, just maybe, the Holy Spirit would like all of us to assume our parts in the Body of the LORD Jesus Christ with each of us supplying what only we can supply. Perhaps then the Body will actually start to be built up into the Holy Temple of the Holy Spirit it is intended to.

The Properly Functioning Church Community

Why is the church of today so ineffective, so lacking of life changing power?

It is NOT functioning according to the model as laid out in scripture. It has become 'pastor' centered rather than Christ Centered.

It also does not know, or give place to the ONLY true Teacher in the earth today. He is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the One our LORD sent within and along side, to lead and guide us into all truth. He is the ONLY one qualified to lead and grow the Church, and to our detriment, He has been pushed off to one side and ignored in favor of certificates from Bible Colleges and seminaries.

The current state of our church communities testifies to our gross error and need of true repentance and a crying out to God to 'Heal our Land' starting with the Church community we belong to. We are barely (if at all) worthy to take the Name of Christ.

So where did we go so far wrong? The bible of course contains the answer as it always has let's see what it has to say.

A healthy Church Community as outlined in the Bible.

Ephesians 1:19-23

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

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Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Note that Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is called His body which is also called the FULNESS of Him. Let that settle down, and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what this really means.

I pray you will not misunderstand what I am about to say, but this means, that in the earth the Church is not complete without the Head, neither is the Head complete without the Body. The Body, the Church is said to be the FULNESS of the LORD.

Ephesians 2:19-22

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

We are meant to be a member which is a part of the holy temple which is to be a habitation of God through the Spirit. The properly built Church is intended to be a habitation of the very Presence of God Almighty. Hardly an apt description of what takes His Name right now.

Ephesians 3: 14-21 KJV

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

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And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

“That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God”! What a promise! Do we believe it? How could it even be possible?

The very next verse tells us that it is above all that we ask or think, but is not impossible for Him, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.

Ephesians 4: 11-16

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

I am repeating myself, but it bears repeating as this single passage of scripture tells the purpose of all the ministry offices the LORD has given to the Church. Those operating in the offices of Evangelist, Apostle,

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Prophet, Pastor and teacher are to be equipping the saints for the work of ministry which is to build up the body of Christ.

That work is not complete until we have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! An awesome promise, but we do have an Awesome God who is well able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think!

So now we have a very clear picture of what the properly functioning Church is to look like and what our goals should be. Of course when we realize how great the final goal is we have no choice to realize we will NEVER attain it through any amount of human effort. As scripture says it is not by might nor by power but by My Spirit says the LORD.

The properly functioning Church will have every part, that is you and I brother, that is you and I sister, doing whatever part the Holy Spirit would have us do and it means we take our eyes off the Pastor and place them firmly upon the LORD Jesus and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit Who shall lead us into all truth.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit His tools to build the Church.

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

For the body is not one member, but many.

If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And if they were all one member, where were the body?

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But now are they many members, yet but one body.

And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

If you have spent much time in the church or in the Word yourself I am sure you are familiar with most of this chapter. But how much do we really understand what it means and how often do we see these gifts operating in our assemblies?

It is my firm belief that the Holy Spirit would very much like to operate through every member of the Body in an assembly and elsewhere from time to time with each and every one of His gifts herein described for the express purpose of edifying the entire Body.

I believe the following scripture also points to Gods desire that we all are to participate as members of His Body and this participation is to be done under the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit. For He is the One who will bring order in our assemblies when allowed the control He is to have.

1 Corinthians 14:26

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How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

1Corinthians 14:30-31

If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

One of the things I ‘suspect’ happens within the Church which would explain the reason for the itinerate ministers being the ones operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit rather than the gifts operating through the whole body; could be the fact that those who have pressed in and those who know how to properly function in the gifts of the Spirit are loathe to teach others how to function in the same gifting. Why you may ask?

Again I ‘suspect’ it is due to our innate desire to set ourselves apart from the crowd and in some cases, I ‘suspect’ some ministers see their gifting as their meal ticket and want to limit the competition. I sincerely hope I am wrong, but people being people gives me little room to doubt my suspicions.

Think about it, when was the last time someone like Benny Hinn was able to teach anyone how to function as he does? Why do you suppose that would be?

I am not picking on Benny Hinn, the same could apply to Rodney Howard Browne, Todd Bentley, Reinhart Bonnke and others. They will talk about the gifts of the Spirit but as a friend of mine points out, they will teach you out of the word about the gifts, but will not give you the ‘key’ to unlock them!

The next chapter will take a look at how the gifts of the Holy Spirit work in harmony and if allowed will do that for which they are given.

Don’t resist the Holy Spirit by refusing His gifts for remember we are told to ‘earnestly covet’ spiritual gifts. I have heard far too many Christians say they are not interested in all that Holy gifts business, because after the entire Bible says that love is better than all of the gifts.

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Consider the gifts are what we need to build up the body of believers and if we truly loved the Body we would never refuse the gifts designed to bring us to a level of maturity we will never attain in our own efforts.

Remember to earnestly covet spiritual gifts.

How the Gifts of the Spirit Harmonize and Compliment each other.

As the scripture says it is the manifestation of the Spirit which causes the gifts to operate. It is not the will of man.

The role of the gifts is to build up and mature the Body of Christ, which is His Church, which is made up of us individual members.

You will notice that for the gifts to function effectively they work in harmony and few operate simply on their own.

What do I mean?

The word of knowledge may indeed offer the knowledge of God in a certain situation, however, the word of wisdom will help direct you as to what to do with the knowledge. Get it?? I think I confused myself, but I know they do work together.

The gift of faith can work in harmony with the gifts of healing. It is very difficult, if not near impossible for someone who does not have faith God will heal them, to actually receive and keep a healing which comes with the gifts of healing.

Speaking in an unknown tongue, benefits no one (except he who speaks) unless the interpretation of that tongue is also in operation.

The discernment of spirits needs to operate in harmony with the gift of prophecy to guard against false prophecy.

The gift of faith could also operate in harmony with the working of miracles, as the one working the miracles, could use the gift of faith, to see miracles manifest.

We are all members of the same body, and all should be under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and we should be aware of His leading all the time. He delights in manifesting His gifts through ALL the different members of the body, but not all at the same time. That would simply result in chaos,

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if all began speaking in tongues, which is what the church at Corinth was guilty of doing.

When the gifts are allowed to flow freely through the Body as intended, which means we all may prophesy (but not at the same time) then the Body will be built up as the Lord intended. We are told the body is built up as each member does their part.

The greatest part is co-operating with the Holy Spirit and recognizing He will gladly manifest through all of us, with all of the gifts as He chooses. He of course will not manifest the same gift through all of us in the same meeting or we would simply have chaos.

Do not limit Him, only He can bring us into the level of maturity spoken of in Ephesians.

If Pastors and teachers etc. were equipping the saints, by making them understand how the Holy Spirit would truly function if allowed, then we would all be equipped for the building up of the Body.

Then we could expect to reach the incredible promise of coming to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

That is the end goal of the Holy Spirit, and the operation of His gifts, is how He will take us there if we ever quit limiting Him.

More on the Gifts of the Spirit And Offices within the Church

The Role of the Gifts

The gifts to be properly understood must be considered as to their purpose and function which of course is not always the same.

For example the 'fivefold' ministries function is to equip the saints. Period. The saints are the ones who actually 'grow' the Church, and the saints are all of us, regardless of what some will try and teach you.

The gift of tongues which are used in prayer to God, are for the edifying of the individual believer and their personal spiritual growth.

The manifestations of the Spirit, commonly referred to as the gifts of the Spirit, are for the building up of the Body as a whole which is accomplished by the participation of individual members as the Holy Spirit wills.

There are gifts of helps, government etc. which are given for the practical day to day running of 'church' business if you will, for example the feeding of the widows, the collection for the saints etc.

The purpose of Apostles, Prophets etc:

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in

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the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The Amplified version puts it this way:

Eph 4:11 And His gifts were [varied; He Himself appointed and gave men to us] some to be apostles (special messengers), some prophets (inspired preachers and expounders), some evangelists (preachers of the Gospel, traveling missionaries), some pastors (shepherds of His flock) and teachers.

Eph 4:12 His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), [that they should do] the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body (the church),

Eph 4:13 [That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him.

Eph 4:14 So then, we may no longer be children, tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, [the prey of] the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men, [gamblers engaged] in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead.

Eph 4:15 Rather, let our lives lovingly express truth [in all things, speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly]. Enfolded in love, let us grow up in every way and in all things into Him Who is the Head, [even] Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).

Eph 4:16 For because of Him the whole body (the church, in all its various parts), closely joined and firmly knit together by the joints and ligaments with which it is supplied, when each part [with power adapted to its need] is working properly [in all its functions], grows to full maturity, building itself up in love.

Who would claim that the current system (about 1500 years old) is anywhere near to bringing us to the full and accurate knowledge of the Son of God? Who would claim we are approaching the completeness of Christ's own perfection?

The reason we are still no farther advanced than in Paul's time is because we are not allowing or are seriously limiting the Holy Spirit from working through us as only He can. Men have taken us as far as they can and the

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Holy Spirit is the only One who can bring this level of maturity which is the same as the completeness of Christ's own perfection.

That is why we are told:

1Jn 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

The Holy Spirit is the only Teacher who can lead us into the standard of perfection spoken of in Ephesians.

Currently all men can teach us are what the Bible calls the 'basics' of the faith. Which of course is the foundation we all need to stand upon, but is only the foundation for going onto the standard of Christ's own perfection. The basics which are all that is being taught are outlined in Heb. 6:1, they include repenting from dead works, faith toward God, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

You would think that after nearly 2,000 years we might have progressed past the basics. But we have not; in fact we are not all that clear on the basics if you consider the doctrine of baptisms.

We seem to have been convinced that we do not need the very gifts which God has put in place for our growth, which all work by the Holy Spirit. We accept bad teaching which attempts to show we don't all really need the gifts, as if only some of us need building up. This is the reason we are stuck in the nursery and will continue there until we die.

Just like at the River Jordan, those who do not believe God, will be allowed to die in the wilderness and never see the fullness of what He would freely give to all who simply believe Him.

The purpose of Prayer 'tongues' or language:

1Co 14:2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

1Co 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

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1Co 14:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

Amplified version:

1Co 14:2 For one who speaks in an [unknown] tongue speaks not to men but to God, for no one understands or catches his meaning, because in the [Holy] Spirit he utters secret truths and hidden things [not obvious to the understanding].

1Co 14:3 But [on the other hand], the one who prophesies [who interprets the divine will and purpose in inspired preaching and teaching] speaks to men for their upbuilding and constructive spiritual progress and encouragement and consolation.

1Co 14:4 He who speaks in a [strange] tongue edifies and improves himself, but he who prophesies [interpreting the divine will and purpose and teaching with inspiration] edifies and improves the church and promotes growth [in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, and happiness].

This is the first way the Holy Spirit will provide for our building up, by equipping us to pray directly to God without trying to figure out what we need to know. Consider the verse which tells us to pray without ceasing. With your prayer language you can actually do exactly that. You can talk to God non-stop for hours on end when using this prayer language.

Ignoring this gift will greatly hinder your personal spiritual growth, yet it is available to all who will simply ask in faith for it. Don't listen to those who wish to keep you in the dark.

The Purpose of the Manifestations of the Spirit:

1Co 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

1Co 12:5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

1Co 12:6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1Co 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

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1Co 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

1Co 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Amplified version:

1Co 12:4 Now there are distinctive varieties and distributions of endowments (gifts, extraordinary powers distinguishing certain Christians, due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit) and they vary, but the [Holy] Spirit remains the same.

1Co 12:5 And there are distinctive varieties of service and ministration, but it is the same Lord [Who is served].

1Co 12:6 And there are distinctive varieties of operation [of working to accomplish things], but it is the same God Who inspires and energizes them all in all.

1Co 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the [Holy] Spirit [the evidence, the spiritual illumination of the Spirit] for good and profit.

1Co 12:8 To one is given in and through the [Holy] Spirit [the power to speak] a message of wisdom, and to another [the power to express] a word of knowledge and understanding according to the same [Holy] Spirit;

1Co 12:9 To another [wonder-working] faith by the same [Holy] Spirit, to another the extraordinary powers of healing by the one Spirit;

1Co 12:10 To another the working of miracles, to another prophetic insight (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose); to another the ability to discern and distinguish between [the utterances of true] spirits [and false ones], to another various kinds of [unknown] tongues, to another the ability to interpret [such] tongues.

1Co 12:11 All these [gifts, achievements, abilities] are inspired and brought to pass by one and the same [Holy] Spirit, Who apportions to each person individually [exactly] as He chooses.

These are the manifestations of the Spirit which He uses in harmony, to build up the entire Body as a whole. When we come into an assembly we should invite the Holy Spirit to come, and do as He pleases, give Him permission to use the gifts of His manifestation anyway He pleases then you will start to see what Church is really supposed to be all about.

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All who realize the Church is meant to be so much more than it is today, need to repent for quenching the Holy Spirit and ask Him to come back into our meetings and do what only He can do.

Those satisfied with the status quo and pleased with where men have led us, can continue their wandering in the desert.

We are Dependent Upon God Working Through EACH of us!

Our maturing will never come about if we rely on the wisdom of men and the traditions and doctrines we have adopted. After all, after nearly 2,000 years we still have not caught up to the first century Church!

Jesus is the Head of the Church and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ in the earth and it is He Who will bring us into maturity if we ever get out of His way and give Him His place in our meetings. Perhaps right there is one problem; I just referred to them as 'our' meetings when in fact they should be His meetings.

Quit Resisting the Holy Spirit

You may say you do not resist the Holy Spirit. But is that true? For example have you earnestly coveted the gifts of the Spirit and asked to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? Have you sought after the gift of tongues or do you offer some excuse or other for not asking for this very useful gift?

Why you should ask for the Gift of Tongues

I am not referring to the gift of tongues which requires interpretation nor the tongue which is understood by another person. I am referring to the gift of tongues often referred to as a heavenly prayer language.

The Bible says this about this particular gift:

1Co 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

1Co 14:2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

1Co 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

1Co 14:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

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I have heard many Christians try to use this scripture as a reason for not receiving the gift of tongues, say rightly so that prophesy is considered a better gift. However, what is missed with that argument is the fact that when you pray in an unknown tongue you are speaking directly to God and you are building yourself up. Who among us would suggest that we should not earnestly desire, and then use a gift which allows us to speak directly to God and build ourselves up?

The other reason to earnestly seek after a prayer language is because it is a gift which definitely is 'of the Spirit'. By that I mean it helps to bring you to a place where you no longer trust your own understanding, a place where you must be willing to yield your tongue to the control of the Holy Spirit. After all, it is really He who is speaking, yes He is using your vocal chords, but it is He who is speaking. If you never become comfortable with praying in an unknown tongue, the Holy Spirit will likely have a very difficult time manifesting any of His other gifts through you.

To use a modern term, I might say that the gift of tongues (used to pray to God) is a gateway gift which helps you to be positioned to accept and receive the other gifts of the Spirit as it is a gift which exercises your 'inner man'.

The other gifts are used to build the body up as a whole and for that reason should be earnestly sought after, not so that we can be all puffed up because we operate a 'better' gift but rather because it equips us to contribute to the building up of the entire body. I believe the level of maturity that equals the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ will only be attained as the whole body comes into the place of unity and knowledge in the Son of God.

I believe that this level of maturity will only come about when each of us allows the Holy Spirit to function through us as He wills, which means we ALL are to participate and not just a few who have the gifts operating.

Look at Ephesians again:

Amplified Translation

Eph 4:13 [That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of

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Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him.

Eph 4:14 So then, we may no longer be children, tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, [the prey of] the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men, [gamblers engaged] in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead.

Eph 4:15 Rather, let our lives lovingly express truth [in all things, speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly]. Enfolded in love, let us grow up in every way and in all things into Him Who is the Head, [even] Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).

Eph 4:16 For because of Him the whole body (the church, in all its various parts), closely joined and firmly knit together by the joints and ligaments with which it is supplied, when each part [with power adapted to its need] is working properly [in all its functions], grows to full maturity, building itself up in love.

You will note the body is said to build itself up in love. There are two points here; one that it is the body which builds itself, not the Pastor or Apostle or any other person occupying an office; two it builds itself up in love.

Now before we go saying how much we love each other, think about what this implies and whether we can honestly say we love each other, if we continue to reject the very tools the Holy Spirit would have us use to build up the whole body. I submit if we truly did love each other as we should we should be more than willing to say 'come Holy Spirit, manifest whichever gift you wish through me, so that I may help build up my brothers and sisters so that we may come to the level of maturity seen in Christ Jesus Himself'.

If we are to mature, this western theatrical drama style of church needs to be put to death and buried! The Body is an organism, not an organization and it requires the functioning of EVERY part to reach maturity and there is NO Pastor or Apostle or Prophet or Evangelist or Teacher who can bring us to that level of maturity. It can only be accomplished when the Holy Spirit is manifesting through every part, every member as only He can.

So, if you wish to contribute to the maturing of your brothers and sisters the place to start is by recognizing we are totally dependent upon the Holy

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Spirit and that He does desire to manifest Himself through you for the benefit of all.

Returning the Church to the Holy Spirit

Starting with every member of Church leadership and continuing throughout every member of a congregation we need to earnestly seek the Presence of the LORD if we are ever going to have CHURCH.

The days of laying out precisely 30 minutes of praise and worship, followed by a few announcements, followed by taking up an offering, followed by the delivery of a well crafted 45 minute sermon followed by a praying of 'Our Father' and then prompt dismissal in time for lunch have to be OVER!

A good place to start would be to take the WHOLE DAY Sunday and seek the LORD without restriction imposed by the clock! Some churches have a morning service and an evening service on Sunday. Usually the evening service is very poorly attended in numbers, however if you consider sincerity of heart it probably greatly exceeds the morning service attendees.

So what would be wrong with coming together in the morning and seeking the LORD by first inviting the Holy Spirit to come and have full dominion over the assembly for the entire day? Invite Him to come and do whatever He wants to do, and be prepared to wait until He does. If fasting for the day is not popular you could plan a mid day meal together which could prove a blessed time of fellowship and truly getting to know each other under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Don't be afraid to turn your entire day over to Him and allow Him to manifest Himself as only He knows how to.

If you can let loose the reins and give them to Him be prepared to be blessed beyond measure and also be prepared to be challenged beyond measure. One thing you will discover about the Holy Spirit is that He is not predictable nor does He do things the way WE think He should.

The Supernatural is not to be feared but is to be expected when the Holy Spirit is in Control.

The Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ is the One who hovered over the deep and brought order out of chaos in the beginning. It is the same

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Holy Spirit who raised Christ Jesus from the grave! Now, if you think that He is not supernatural, then you need to rethink that thought!

When you think that the Power of God manifests in our midst and that we fleshly beings are going to not react, you are deluding yourself and setting yourself up for a lie of the devil.

The devil will tell you when someone starts to get hot, or starts to laugh, or starts to shake, or start to fall down, or who rolls on the floor, or who goes totally silent and looks like a statue; is not how God would behave, is a common lie he uses to bring fear which causes you to reject the Holy Spirit in your midst. The devil is quite good at it he has been doing it for quite awhile now. Don't let him deceive you, simply because the Holy Spirit seems a little messier than you might have expected.

That is not to say He is always messy, sometimes He may come to Church and everyone simply winds up almost passed out, quite orderly in their seats! Other times He is quite capable of having half the congregation laughing and the other half weeping, don't limit Him based on your natural intellect.

We need to quit fearing and begin trusting if we ever expect to go beyond the form of carnal Christianity that is so prevalent in North America. We need to realize that when we completely trust the Holy Spirit, and give Him total dominion in our meetings He is well able to keep us from deception. When we are only seeking the Presence of the LORD and not the presents of the LORD we can rest assured He will not allow the devil to trick us somehow with manifestations that are not of the Holy Spirit.

I throw this out as a challenge to all those in leadership and also those of us who consider ourselves sheep:

Decide you will no longer restrict the movement of God in your midst based upon your preconceived ideas, agendas and programs.

Repent for having quenched and controlled the Holy Spirit in your meetings and invite Him to come and freely move in your midst.

Determine when you come together that you will only leave when the Holy Spirit tells you it is time to go, and MEAN it! Be prepared to stay all day, or longer if that is what He has in mind.

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Give the Holy Spirit the freedom to manifest His gifts through whoever He wishes and don't think that only those in 'leadership' can be used by the Holy Spirit. You will be surprised what He can do through the youngest child when He is allowed to move freely among us.

Repent and tell Him you are sorry for not taking the time to learn to recognize His voice and His leading and determine you will proceed no further with 'church' until you can clearly hear His voice and follow His leading.

If you think there are any shortcuts to maturity which remove the Holy Spirit and what only He can do, you are destined to remain exactly where you are until you die and make room for another generation who will give Him His place.

What we need to know about ourselves!

First, if we do not recognize the fact we are not anywhere near as mature as we would like to think we are, we are destined to continue in our infancy unable to partake of the meat of the Word.

Remember what the Holy Spirit said in Hebrews? He said:

Heb 5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Heb 6:2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Heb 6:3 And this will we do, if God permit.

This is covered in an earlier chapter but bears repeating as it describes where the North American church is today, even though we have ourselves convinced we are far more mature than we really are.

When was the last time your pastor did not teach something which can be contained by the above topics listed as the ‘principles’ of Christ? When was the last time we were challenged because we are not fulfilling the basic instruction the LORD gave His Church. Remember what He said? Preach the Gospel of the KINGDOM, heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead, and cast out devils! If that is not what the church is doing, then we really have to ask ourselves ‘what are we doing in His Name?’

We were never instructed to meet for a couple of hours a week, so we could listen to a few songs, pay the pastors wages and listen to another

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Bible story, we will forget by Monday, and then do the same thing all over again next week. We are called to be His Body and as such we should be doing what He did when He was here in the flesh which is preach the gospel of the kingdom, heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead and cast out devils.

Of course you can fairly argue that there is no way we can heal the sick, or cleanse the leper, or raise the dead or cast out devils. After all we may have made a few attempts but our record of even seeing the sick in our midst healed is abysmal if we are honest with ourselves. So, why would Jesus tell us to do something we can't do?

I think there is something we completely overlook when we read the Bible and study what Jesus did during His earthly ministry.

Jesus said He never did anything which He did not see His Father doing and you will also notice that Jesus did not start His ministry until He had received the Holy Spirit. So, what would make us think we can ignore the Holy Spirit and run around expecting to heal the sick in our own power?

Of course we can't which is why we fail miserably, which is why we have turned Church into church.

Instead of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom we preach a watered down version of the Gospel of salvation and instead of actually healing the sick we will study ad nauseam the original Greek or Hebrew and even write another book on the subject while ignoring the fact we are not healing the sick.

How have we let ourselves slip so far from the truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom, or have we never really ever heard the Gospel of the KINGDOM?

What is the Gospel of the Kingdom? What are we preaching instead?

The best explanation I have heard for the word kingdom is that it is a place where the King exercises His Dominion.

So what are we preaching in Church if it is not the Gospel of the Kingdom? In fact do we even know what the Gospel of the Kingdom is?

There has always been one verse in scripture that has intrigued me every time I read it, yet I have never heard it preached on. Consider that the disciples had spent over three years walking with the LORD. They spent their days listening to Him, eating with Him, fellowshiping with him, witnessing Him do all manner of miracles. They were also present when He was taken in the Garden, they were present when His body was scourged and broken, they were present when He hung upon the Cross, and they witnessed Him after His resurrection.

Much is recorded of what they witnessed while walking with our LORD and in fact it says that if all they witnessed were to be written the earth could not contain the books that would be written.

So what verse do I find so intriguing in light of what I have just said? It follows:

Act 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

After spending over three years walking with and listening to and witnessing our LORD He still spoke with them for forty days, after His resurrection of the 'things pertaining to the kingdom of God'. Yet, nothing is recorded of what He said to them during this time, yet He took a full forty days to talk to them of it. Have you ever asked yourself 'What did He say, which clearly we do not know from our reading of this verse?'

Let me say, I do not believe any of us can have an understanding of this unless it is revealed by the Holy Spirit Himself.

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What I am offering here is nothing more than my own thoughts, I do not claim any Divine inspiration nor do I claim 'the LORD told me'.

The devil does have his kingdom in the earth, which he maintains by power he exercises through men who have not Jesus their LORD. It is a kingdom which he gained and maintains by deception and also through the will of men who refuse to bow their knee to God. It may surprise you to know that many of those attend church and call themselves Christian.

The devils kingdom has successfully come into the 'church', again by his greatest tool which is deception and via his greatest ally, man. We think we are having Church which should be a demonstration of Power in the Holy Spirit, however we are having church which is a demonstration of mans intellect and ability to use enticing words.

As long as we are willing to accept the enticing words of mans wisdom and accept our traditions and doctrines which deny the power of the Gospel, then the kingdom of God will continue to suffer violence in this earth.

The kingdom of God is not merely about the message of our salvation it is about the KING having Dominion in the earth. How does He do that? First, He must have Dominion in the hearts and minds of those who call themselves by His Name! Remember where He said the kingdom was?

Luk 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

That is where the kingdom of God resides within the heart of the believer, and if the King does not have Dominion there, how can he have it elsewhere?

Look honestly at your life and the life of your church. Does it look like Jesus has dominion in either case?

What the Bible has to say about the Kingdom.

(Mat 6:33) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

(Mat 12:28) But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

(Mat 19:24) And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

(Mat 21:31) Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

(Mat 21:43) Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

(Mar 1:14) Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

(Mar 1:15) And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

(Mar 4:11) And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

(Mar 4:26) And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

(Mar 4:30) And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

Mar 4:31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

Mar 4:32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

(Mar 9:1) And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

(Mar 9:47) And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

(Mar 10:14) But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

(Mar 10:15) Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

(Mar 10:23) And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

(Mar 10:24) And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

(Mar 10:25) It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

(Mar 12:34) And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

(Mar 14:25) Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

(Mar 15:43) Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

(Luk 4:43) And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

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(Luk 6:20) And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

(Luk 7:28) For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

(Luk 8:1) And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

(Luk 8:10) And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

(Luk 9:2) And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

(Luk 9:11) And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

(Luk 9:27) But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

(Luk 9:60) Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

(Luk 9:62) And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

(Luk 10:9) And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

(Luk 10:11) Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

(Luk 11:20) But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

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(Luk 12:31) But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

(Luk 13:18) Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

(Luk 13:20) And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

(Luk 13:28) There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

(Luk 13:29) And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

(Luk 14:15) And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

(Luk 16:16) The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

(Luk 17:20) And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

(Luk 17:21) Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

(Luk 18:16) But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

(Luk 18:17) Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

(Luk 18:24) And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

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(Luk 18:25) For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

(Luk 18:29) And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

(Luk 19:11) And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

(Luk 21:31) So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

(Luk 22:16) For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

(Luk 22:18) For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

(Luk 23:51) (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

(Joh 3:3) Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

(Joh 3:5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

(Act 1:3) To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

(Act 8:12) But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

(Act 14:22) Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

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(Act 19:8) And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

(Act 20:25) And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

(Act 28:23) And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

(Act 28:31) Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

(Rom 14:17) For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

(1Co 4:20) For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

(1Co 6:9) Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

(1Co 6:10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

(1Co 15:50) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

(Gal 5:21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Col 4:11) And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

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(2Th 1:5) Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

Kingdom of Heaven scriptures:

(Mat 3:2) And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

(Mat 4:17) From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

(Mat 5:3) Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 5:10) Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 5:19) Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 5:20) For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 7:21) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

(Mat 8:11) And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 10:7) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

(Mat 11:11) Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

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(Mat 11:12) And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

(Mat 13:11) He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

(Mat 13:24) Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

(Mat 13:31) Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

(Mat 13:33) Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

(Mat 13:44) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

(Mat 13:45) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

(Mat 13:47) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

(Mat 13:52) Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

(Mat 16:19) And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

(Mat 18:1) At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

(Mat 18:3) And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

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(Mat 18:4) Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 18:23) Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

(Mat 19:12) For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

(Mat 19:14) But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 19:23) Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

(Mat 20:1) For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

(Mat 22:2) The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

(Mat 23:13) But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

(Mat 25:1) Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

(Mat 25:14) For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

(Rev 12:10) And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

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Can we say we have been preaching the Kingdom of heaven or have we been only preaching the Gospel of Salvation?

Have we been building the Kingdom of heaven or are we just building evermore kingdoms of man? You know, the mega – church with all the latest in seating, décor, sound systems and architectural detail. Complete with television broadcasts which give an ever increasing collection plate.

Have we been building publishing empires based upon books and tapes which have almost zero substance and the only true substance they do contain was a revelation meant to be given away?

Have we just been building the kingdoms of men which are almost indistinguishable from the corporate world in the secular world?

Have ministries become McChurches complete with cookie cutter buildings and formulas and programs and agendas, supported by good sounding teaching which is completely void of life changing power?

When did we stop preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, healing the sick, cleansing the leper, raising the dead and casting out devils? When did we exchange that for 1.5 hours of carefully orchestrated christian theatre which entertains and strokes egos, but does little else? What do you think would happen if the LORD Himself were to come into one of our ‘successful’ mega-churches or Christian bookstores?

Can you hear the sound of the whip and the tables being overturned??

Beyond Revival
PART TWO

Chapter one

Will We Ever Go any Farther Unless Something Changes?

Considering we are nearly 2000 years old and we are barely able to put together even the smallest healing meeting with any degree of success; would it be fair to say we have come as far as we can unless something drastic changes?

As anointed as the Smith Wigglesworths, Amy Semple MacPhersons, Kathryn Kulmans, Benny Hinns', Reinhardt Bonnkes', Todd Bentleys and Rodney Howard Brownes' are; they are seriously limited in how far towards Christ-like perfection they can lead us.

They all demonstrate clearly that the supernatural realm is to be the natural realm for all Christians, however, beyond their specific gifting and ability to access the supernatural, they all fall miles short of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!

Lest you think I am being too harsh in what I have said consider the words of Paul the Apostle when he wrote the letter to the Phillipians:

Php 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Php 3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Php 3:12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Php 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Php 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Considering that Paul was writing this letter about 4 years before his death he was not writing as a brand new babe in the LORD but as a man the

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LORD had shown Himself powerfully through in establishing the churches throughout the entire region.

So, if this man Paul who wrote most of the New Testament, whose ministry was marked in a demonstration of power in the Holy Ghost with healing and signs and wonders being the norm; could say: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended:” then what does that say for the ministries of today, how far from attaining that for which Christ has apprehended us are we in our current condition?

If this level of perfection were unattainable, then why is it held out in the Bible at all? Why are we told that the purpose of the fivefold ministry is to equip the saints, who build up the church until we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ?

Why are we told that it is Christ within us the hope of Glory? Why are we told that Christ is being formed in us? Why are we told the same power which raised Christ from the grave is available to all of us who believe? Why are we told we will be conformed to the image of Jesus? Why are we told we can be filled with all the fullness of God?

Think of the magnitude of these promises! Now look at the Church in its present condition or even any condition you can imagine. Do they look the same?? If not, why not? Does God not mean what He says? Can God not perform that which He says?

I believe that we all are to become indistinguishable from the LORD Jesus Himself during His earthly ministry and that none have attained this great and mighty promise!

Oh, there are God’s firecrackers He is able to throw into our midst every now and then to try and rouse us from our slumber but after they have gone off, we seem quite able to roll over and go back to sleep! As wonderful as all past revivals have been, what have they produced in the area of Christ-like perfection? Have they brought the Kingdom of God into the earth?

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If these promises sound beyond belief consider a few others in the Bible; you shall live in houses you did not build, drink from wells you did not dig and eat from vines you did not plant!

Sound impossible? Remember our God is well able to do exceedingly; abundantly above all we ask or think.

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Part Two

Chapter two

Will We Ever Grow Up?

Make no mistake I do not pretend to know how we get from where we are to where we need to go, but I do know that if we stay where we are we will all simply be another generation to die in the wilderness.

Yes, we have had the benefit of yet another Revival during which the LORD is calling and anointing his children and equipping them to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom in a demonstration of power in the Holy Spirit.

But that is what is necessary to add souls to the Kingdom, this does not cause us to grow up and build the Kingdom of God in the earth. That is where the Church needs God ordained Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and teachers who are to equip the saints for the work of ministry to build up the body until we all come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Until then we will be like children being tossed back and forth on the winds of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness; whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

In North America there is no lack of cunning craftiness which has crafted doctrine which in many cases is not scriptural and in many cases is simply pure fiction. We have also developed an appetite for listening to teaching which sounds like it should make us wise but in the end does nothing to cause us to grow in our knowledge of the Son of God.

We have replaced true praise which becomes genuine worship with highly polished christian entertainers who can get us raising our hands and clapping and dancing while at the same time never bringing us into the life changing Presence of the Living God.

We have completely ignored the Holy Spirit except to pay some lip service to Him, while never admitting we don't really know what He would

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like to do, instead we ask Him to bless what we are doing, rather than doing what He is blessing.

We have made excuses or simply completely ignored the fact we are not doing what the Church is supposed to be doing. We are not preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead and casting out devils. We are not even asking why the Church of the Bible is not the Church we are living in the here and now.

We have absolutely no idea of the Power of the Blood and the Power of the Cross of our LORD. We have turned them into a Melba toast and milk gospel which only holds out a promise of going to heaven some day.

We think we can still participate with sin every now and then or even more regularly and think it has no consequence because our conscience has been seared and we seem to think we can play with sin today as long as we ask forgiveness tomorrow. The meaning of the word HOLY is never preached, nor is it understood.

We take our jobs, our families, our friends, our hobbies, our sports, our investments and holiday plans more seriously than we take our participation in the Kingdom of God as Blood-bought sons and daughters.

How many hours a day do we devote to enjoying the Word of God? Do we give our favorite television shows more time in a night, than we give the Word in a whole week?

How many hours a day do we simply spend seeking and enjoying the Presence of the Living God?

Are we really serious about the Kingdom of God coming into the earth now, and God's will being done in earth as in heaven, or are those just empty words we have repeated so many times, so as to have no real meaning?

Are we God and His Kingdom focused or are we honestly ME and MY Kingdom focused? When we go to church or in our prayer time are we genuinely seeking the Kingdom of God and it coming into the earth or are we more interested in OUR little kingdoms? You know the ones made up of our little castles, be they mansions on acreage or one bedroom apartments. Are we interested in the finances of Gods Kingdom or are we only

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interested in our own finances and how we can be blessed. Are we more interested in our own spouse than we are in the state of the Bride of Christ? Are we only interested in our own health and not the health of the Church?

In short are we only focused on US and what God can do to make our little kingdoms prosper? Be honest now you can't fool God.

‘Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven’

LET'S START MEANING IT WHEN WE PRAY IT!

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Part Two

Chapter Three

Do We Diligently Seek God or Just Pop-in every now and then?

The dictionary defines 'diligent' as:

1. constant in effort to accomplish something; attentive and persistent in doing anything: a diligent student.
2. done or pursued with persevering attention; painstaking: a diligent search of the files.

I can honestly say that I do not diligently seek after God, oh yes, I pray and read my Bible and even maintain two websites which are Christian. However I would be deceiving myself to say that I am painstakingly seeking after Him and what His will is in every situation in my daily life!

An example of what might be a diligent search on our parts would be the effort we might put forth if we knew a diamond of exceeding great value because it was in fact of great price, but it also was from your wedding ring. Now suppose you saw it fall from the ring while you were on the beach and it immediately got mixed into the sand. I can guarantee you would begin a most diligent search until you found the diamond!

God wants us to seek Him in the same and even greater fashion! Remember the LORD did not say seek once and you will find, nor did He say to knock once and it will be open. We have to keep on seeking, keep on knocking; we must be diligent in our seeking after God.

Luk 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Luk 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

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Who among us can say we hate our own life? The meaning of this word is to detest! If we do not detest our very own lives, then we can not say we are His disciple?

All of us who have been saved gladly receive Him as our Saviour as we know He has saved us from hell. But how many could honestly call Him LORD?

What does the word Lord mean? Here are two definitions:

Thayers G2962

Thayer Definition:

1) he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord

1a) the possessor and disposer of a thing

1a1) the owner; one who has control of the person, the master

1a2) in the state: the sovereign, prince, chief, the Roman emperor

1b) is a title of honour expressive of respect and reverence, with which servants greet their master

1c) this title is given to: God, the Messiah

Strongs G2962

From kuros (supremacy); supreme in authority, that is, (as noun) controller; by implication Mr. (as a respectful title): - God, Lord, master, Sir.

Who among can say of the LORD that we belong to Him, that we give Him power of deciding, that He possesses us and has control of us and that we have made Him master?

Is it not more likely we have remained as master ourselves and have attempted to make Him our servant? Have we not tried to manipulate Him to accomplish what WE want, rather than spending the time with Him listening to Him and only doing what we know He wants?

Do we try to manipulate scripture in an attempt to better and make more comfortable our own little kingdoms without ever making Jesus the LORD and Master?

Jas 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Be honest ----- we can't fool God!

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If we ever are to go beyond the blessing which comes with revival to a state of maturity exceeding anything we have seen, then we need give the LORD Jesus His rightful place in our hearts, minds and lives!

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Part Two

Chapter Four

From One Extreme to the Other

Many if not most of the old mainline churches used the Holiness, Majesty and Power of the Living God as a club and whip to keep the sheep in their places!

They insisted the sheep had no need of the written Word of God for themselves and kept it cloistered away and only brought out and read to the masses as they deemed fit. The hierarchy of these churches placed themselves firmly between the sheep and the Shepherd and used the Word of God to build and maintain their own kingdoms which by worldly standards were quite large and powerful

Some churches were/are worse than others but even to this very day in our liberal un-legalistic churches we have a form of the same hierarchy which elevates the leadership above the laity. The leadership in most cases can still see the following fulfilled in their ministries:

Mat 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

Be honest, where is the church leadership who goes into the kingdom of heaven and then is able to lead and point the way for the rest of us sheep. For that matter, even if they did, would we sheep go?

The first extreme in the church is the beating of the sheep into submission by preaching we must live in constant fear of the Living God and that maybe if we try really hard and follow all of the rules and traditions of the church we might, just might make it into heaven one day. But in the here and now we could never know the Living God and must take someone else's word for what the will of God is for our lives. In the meantime we must live in constant fear that we will be sent to hell if we mess up in our humanity.

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The second extreme is what is in the church today where we have so embraced ‘not being under the law’ that we are making the Grace of God of no effect. We have taken the rightful relationship that God would have with His children and have become so familiar that the meaning of His Holiness is completely lost on the most of us!

For example, consider the program you follow in your church whether it is Sunday morning or Wednesday night. We set aside a time during the week to do our ‘God Service’ and I guarantee you, that within fifteen minutes we know when we are going to DISMISS GOD and go home! Did you get that? It is us, (as one priest puts it ‘sacks of rotten meat’) that come together and tell God when He may come and when He may go!

We come together at a certain time, snap our fingers, sing a few songs and expect God to show up and bless us. We also insist that He do what we want and in the manner we are comfortable with. We then DISMISS HIM when we have had enough of our God service for today and go home!

Both of these extremes serve the devil’s purpose which is to keep the church under the care and control of people who are not truly submitted to the LORD and who are not really making Him LORD and Master! When that happens, the devil is really the one running things in the background and he has been doing a very successful job so far.

The devil takes us from one extreme to the other, with the same result. We still never see God’s Kingdom come, nor do we see His will being done in earth as it is in heaven. You know there is no sin, no sickness, no sorrow and no death in heaven. That is meant to be seen in the earth also!

The devil is fond of using extremes to ensnare us in our own conceits. What do I mean? He knows that as long as we continue to think for ourselves and trust our intellects he has us just where he wants us.

Consider a short example of some of his cleverly crafted extremes about himself. There are some people who see the devil so powerful he holds them in fear of himself and keeps them bound. There are some the devil convinces that he does not even exist and so they never even consider the power he exercises over them. Then there is a new trick he will use if allowed, he will convince us that the LORD defeated him (which of course is true) and that we have no need to be concerned with him. I am not exalt-

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ing the devil whatsoever, but he is not stupid you know there was a time he led all of creation in worship of God.

From one extreme to the other we bounce, blown about on every wind of doctrine which has been crafted by men (with the devils help) that is used to deceive us.

On the one hand the law is used as a club and whip to keep us ignorant sheep in line following all the rules crafted by the traditions of men. Then the law and what it says is thrown completely out the window and we turn our freedom into another snare which replaces the Majesty and Holiness of God with almost a contemptuous familiarity.

We are in danger of turning our freedom into familiarity and turning our LORD into our personal servant who we will ask to give us whatever we think we would like and then DISMISS Him until the next time we decide we should call upon Him.

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Part Two

Chapter Five

Are we Really Spirit FILLED because we pray in tongues?

One of the common means of determining what tribe we belong to if we say we are Christians is whether or not we are ‘Spirit Filled’. That is generally meant to ask the question ‘do you speak in tongues when you pray?’

You see if we do, we see ourselves as elevated in our spirituality compared to the believer who has to rely upon their native language when they speak with God.

Did you know that Jesus did not say, you shall speak in tongues after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you? He actually said you will receive POWER after the Holy Ghost comes upon you and that miraculous working power will be what you use to be His witness in the earth!

Can you say ‘is that another cow going on the bar-b-cue?’

In my opinion speaking in tongues is evidence of just that, it is evidence of speaking in tongues. To then turn around and say that means we are FILLED with the Holy Ghost is not only a false doctrine but a dangerous one also.

What do I mean? Well, if you assume you are ‘filled’ with the Holy Ghost, that implies there is neither room nor need for any more of Him, which of course is an idea straight from the pit!

When you see some anointed leader operating in power on the platform or elsewhere you might think to yourself, ‘that person is full of the Holy Spirit’, when in fact that person is under the anointing of the Holy Spirit in that moment in time. When the leader comes out from under that anointing they are once again just like you and I in the ‘Spirit Filled’ department.

Why Tongues?

The gift of tongues we use to pray to our Father is a gift given by the Holy Spirit which is for our own edification or building up. It is meant to help

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us mature and allows us to pray with God for more than the five minutes or so our regular language will allow.

So rather than thinking that the gift of tongues is a sign of elevated maturity we need to realize it is a gift given to us because we are NOT mature and in need of growing up! We need to get over ourselves and the wrong notions we have attached to our maturity simply because we can pray in tongues.

Spirit FILLED??

I remember reading the story of Reese Howells the Intercessor and one thing he said changed the way I looked at being Spirit FILLED as I used to also think that praying in tongues meant I was filled.

I am paraphrasing but Reese put it this way, when the Holy Spirit came to him he knew that he, that is Reese Howells was going to have to completely die and be empty of himself as the Holy Spirit does not share the vessel.

Remember we are a three part being with a spirit and soul and a body. When we are born again, yes our dead spirit is replaced with the Spirit of God. However the soul and body are no where near being filled and until they are we have no claim to being FILLED with the Holy Spirit. We can all be led by the Holy Spirit and we can all have Him come upon us and we can all function under the anointing of the Holy Spirit but none of this means we are FILLED with the Holy Spirit.

Still not convinced about being 'filled'? Consider does the Holy Spirit ever get mad when someone cuts Him off in traffic? Does the Holy Spirit ever lose His temper when something frustrates or bothers Him?

Finally Does the Holy Spirit EVER sin??

Still think you are filled because you can pray in tongues??

What did Jesus Actually Say?

In the first book of Acts the eighth verse Jesus said:

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But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The word which is translated power is as follows:

Strong's G1411 dunamis

From G1410; force (literally or figuratively); specifically miraculous power (usually by implication a miracle itself): - ability, abundance, meaning, might (-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle (-s), power, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work.

This does not sound like the gift of tongues we use for praying to our LORD in a language we do not understand, but never is exhausted and is meant to build us up.

Being a witness to the LORD was never meant to be simply talking about the LORD but it was also meant to be demonstrating the POWER of the LORD and His Gospel. The Gospel as Paul said was meant to be preached not with merely enticing words of mans wisdom but in a demonstration of power in the Holy Spirit.

When we witness the LORD it is not meant to be in word only, it is meant to be in a demonstration of miracle working power. When He sent out the disciples He told them to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead and cast out devils.

HE NEVER CHANGED HIS MIND and that is what He means by being His witness!

So then what do I think is missing from the Christian life even though we claim to be Spirit FILLED? What is missing my brother and sister is the POWER which Jesus promises after the Holy Ghost comes upon you.

Does Unbelief Trump God Blessings?

Firstly, I know that God is absolutely sovereign and He can and will do whatever He decides to do and that we can never say never when it comes to the things of God.

However, I do feel that our lack of belief, of faith in the truth of what God has said greatly hinders what we are able to receive of Him.

Remember Jesus Himself is said to have been hindered in His own hometown when it came to performing miracles and that was because of unbelief! I do realize however, that our LORD can and will heal someone who is totally in unbelief, and in fact may not even know the LORD. I am sure He delights in healing the unbeliever in our midst just to rattle our cages from time to time.

If we go all the way back to the Garden, was not unbelief in what God had said, the very thing that got us into this mess in the first place? All God said was ‘don’t eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’, pretty simple command, and all we had to do was to simply BELIEVE!

Rather than simply believing we begin to ‘think’ about what we ‘thought’ God really meant rather than just believing that He is God and can not lie and therefore what He says, is exactly what it means.

At the end of the Gospel of Mark the LORD makes some very clear promises:

Mar 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Mar 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

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Mar 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

The only caveat the LORD placed on these promises was whether or not we believe, again He did not make it complicated. But because our experience does not line up with what the Word of God says, rather than questioning our experience we begin to question the Word of God.

We ask ourselves ‘did God say?’ Sound familiar? Does that sound like the voice of that subtle serpent when he approached Eve? All he has to do is get us to doubt what God said which is really the same as not believing what God said, and SNAP the trap closes shut and the devil has us trapped by our own unbelief.

If we can’t believe that God really means for us to lay hands on the sick and they SHALL recover, how in the world will we ever believe we are to come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ? Yet that is exactly what God has said will happen and I believe the devil knows as long as he can keep us in unbelief this is another great promise of God which we will miss out on because we trust what we think, rather than what God has clearly said!

Like many things in the Kingdom of God, things are the exact opposite of what we would think in the natural world. For example to live, we must die and if we are ever to grow up we must become as little children!

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Part Two

Chapter Seven

Do We Actually OBEY the Word of God?

Not being under the law, as I pointed out earlier is a truth which the devil will pervert and we will agree with the perversion, and once again he's got us!

The earlier church leaders used the law to beat and whip the sheep to keep them in line so they would follow the well crafted doctrines of man. These people had no hope of seeing the Kingdom of Heaven come into the earth as their leaders had so badly perverted the Gospel it was barely seen.

The generation I am of clearly has the revelation that we are not justified by the law nor by the works and traditions of man. After all that is the basic revelation that Martin Luther got a long time ago. However, in our effort to preach the love of God and His acceptance of all through faith in Christ Jesus we have tended to completely gloss over anything which can even remotely be seen as putting people under the law.

I can not vouch for the accuracy of the statistics but from personal observation I don't doubt them; it is said that within the Church there is just as much sexual immorality as outside the church, the rate of abortion is basically the same, the rate of divorce, and perhaps the most telling of all, the health issues inside the Church are much the same as outside the Church.

How can that possibly be if we were actually OBEYING God instead of turning Him into our own personal Genie to grant our every wish, whose only purpose is to bless us in all areas of our lives, while we ignore Him and what He had said!

Do we actually detest sin or is there sin in our lives we have learned to tolerate all the while soothing our conscience with the knowledge that He is just and will forgive our sin? Are we making a mockery of the freedom of the Gospel with our acceptance of sin in our lives?

The Roman Catholic church used to sell what was known as indulgences a long time ago. Basically they were a 'get out of hell free' card which you

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purchased in advance of participating in a sin. Assured your sin was forgiven in advance and that you would suffer no eternal consequence.

Does that sound ludicrous today? Is there any difference in what we are actually participating in ourselves? Are we making a mockery of Grace and trampling the Blood of our Saviour beneath our feet?

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Part Two

Chapter Eight

WE NEED TO QUIT EXCUSING OURSELVES!

*Sin and Self with Satan's help Will Halt
Further Advance Toward Maturity*

I have discussed with many people the following scripture which is used to say that we all are sinners (which we are) and that we are also destined to continue sinning as long as we live. The scripture used to support this argument is:

1Jn 1:8-10 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

In the very same epistle are the following scriptures which say that although we all have sinned and fallen short that is a declaration of the condition we come from, but is not a declaration of the condition in which we are to remain.

1Jn 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

Here we are told that we are not to continue with sin, however, we are also not to come under condemnation if we do, for our confessed sin is forgiven. However, the first statement is that we sin NOT.

1Jn 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

We are told that if we say we abide in the LORD we should also walk, even as he walked. I ask you, how much sin did our LORD walk in.

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1Jn 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

1Jn 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Sin is unrighteousness and we are told to do righteousness as a proof we are born of Him.

1Jn 2:28,29 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

We are told to abide in our LORD, that when He appears we will have confidence and not be ashamed to face Him. We will have the confidence that comes from doing righteousness which means we are no longer slaves to sin.

Rom 6:12-18 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

This is not intended to provide the springboard for making a list of sins to determine which might be more acceptable than others, as ALL unrighteousness is sin and clearly sin is to no longer reign in our mortal body, period!

Of course there is not one of us who could ever overcome sin in and of ourselves, the very notion we could is sin in itself, as it denies the need for our Saviour. The only way to have the victory over sin is to ABIDE in the

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LORD. You will notice we are told to ABIDE, which does not mean pop-in every now and then for a visit when things are not going right.

WE MUST ABIDE IN CHRIST

Joh 15:4,5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

It is very clear that in spite of how mature we may feel we are and perhaps what past victories we may have experienced that unless we are abiding in the LORD all the time, we will not bear fruit as we can not do anything of ourselves.

Joh 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

This state of abiding is also the position from which we can expect our prayers to be answered. I believe that this is a result of ‘knowing’ what the LORD wants done before we pray, thereby praying His will when we ask! Rather than praying what we ‘think’.

1Jn 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

What’s that you say? We can’t even do the abiding ourselves? No, that is accomplished by the Holy Spirit Who Himself abides in us and teaches us to abide.

1Jn 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

As long as we are abiding in Him we can not sin ... what a wonderful promise! However, if we think we can overcome sin without abiding in Him, we are fooling ourselves. When we are truly abiding in Him, it is He who lives and no longer I.

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Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth 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.

We just fool ourselves and deny the Gospel when we think that the LORD will 'tell' us how to live victorious over sin by something we can do ourselves! The only true victory over sin is 'death'! Which is what we are to have experienced when we were baptized into Christ Jesus our LORD?

Rom 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Rom 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Rom 6:7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

One of the problems we all share is not identifying ourselves as being DEAD in Christ Jesus when we were baptized into Him. That is why we are told to put off the old man and put on the new. It is something which takes a constant decision as the old man is much more comfortable than the new! However, there is nothing but death in the old man and the only source of life will be found when we put on the new!

As was said about Lazarus, he has been dead long enough that he 'stinketh', well the same can be said of our old man, which is why we usually go around stinking up the place, when we should in fact be bringing LIFE wherever we go!

.Joh 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Joh 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

Both of these verses say the same thing and that was that Jesus Himself could do nothing of Himself. How much more do you think that applies to

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us? So why do we think we will ever do anything as long as we are abiding in ourselves rather than in Him?

1Jn 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

1Jn 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

1Jn 3:23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

1Jn 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

You will notice a key to receiving ‘whatsoever you ask’; they key is because we are keeping his commandments and are doing those things pleasing in his sight.

Who among us can make the claim we are truly keeping His commandments of believing on the name of his Son and loving one another?

Remember believing on the name of the Lord Jesus would mean that we have come to know that WE can do NOTHING and we are totally dependent upon Him.

We may say we love one another, but just let someone cross you, and then you will see the depth of that love you profess to have for one another!

As the Apostle Paul said:

Rom 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

So as long as it is truly ‘us’ who lives and not Christ living through us we will produce no good thing as there is no good thing dwelling in our flesh.

Jesus did not just come to save us from Satan’s grip; He came to save us from sin and most importantly from SELF!

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Part Two

Chapter Nine

What I think Happens When We are Born Again

When we receive the Gospel of Jesus and are born again by the Spirit and baptized into Christ, we are placed IN Christ by God Himself. This is not something which we can do ourselves it can only be accomplished by God.

In the spirit realm, which is true Reality our old man is actually put to death as we share in Christ's death via baptism. We are indeed a new creation and have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light.

We have been put to death and are no longer under the law of sin and death but are now under the Law of Life in Christ Jesus. The example in Romans of the woman whose husband dies makes the point, that because of the death she was no longer guilty of adultery if she married another. She would have been guilty however, if her husband was still alive.

The old man, who was living under the law of sin and death, has now been put to death IN Christ which is why we are no longer under the law.

In the natural realm that is to say the physical realm, obviously our bodies did not at that moment die, nor did our minds suddenly become new with all understanding. In the natural realm our minds and bodies are now undergoing a transformation to reflect the Reality of what happened in the Spirit when we were baptized INTO Christ.

When we are born again we are indeed helpless infants in need of milk, but as we grow and mature we can begin to eat meat and understand the deeper things of God. Hebrews 6:1 lists what Paul calls the fundamentals of our faith and urges us to go on to perfection. You will notice however, that he does not give any advice which the natural mind can understand as to how this is accomplished. That is because the perfection he talks of is only achieved in the Spirit.

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It is no sign of being disrespectful to say that a believer is still a babe or that they are a carnal Christian. They have not had their spiritual eyes opened and are still relying on their natural senses, which is why the deep things of God are still a mystery to them.

This is the fertile ground out of which all manner of false doctrine springs. You have Christians who have never gone beyond the fundamentals trying to understand and then teach the hidden things of God. The devil of course delights in this opportunity to mislead Gods people and keep them in their infancy all their lives. As long as he can do that the Church is no threat to his kingdom in this earth. The devil is not concerned how many baby Christians there are as long as he can keep them from growing up INTO Christ.

An example of some of these doctrines of devils include the fact we can not have victory over sin in our lives, that we were not really healed by the stripes of Jesus, that devils either do not exist or that we don't have authority over them to cast them out, that we have no power to heal people when we lay hands on them and that we will never really grow into the full measure and stature of Jesus.

These are some of the devices the devil has used to keep the Church from upsetting his kingdom for centuries now. Quite successfully I might add. We do not achieve what the early Church achieved because we do not believe as the early Church believed.

We have nearly 2000 years of carefully crafted doctrines which are pure deceit and as we speak, modern day 'ministers of the gospel' are coming up with yet more such doctrines.

Most of these doctrines are self and self's kingdom centered rather than God and His kingdom centered. Most of what is taught and sought after in the modern church is designed to appeal to the carnal man, who was baptized into Christ's death. However, because the carnal man is so familiar we keep putting him on rather than putting on the new man.

Even though the old man stinks to high heaven!

Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

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Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Col 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

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Part Two

Chapter Ten

Do We Want to Be Saved ?

I think any sane person would say they want to be saved from an eternity spent in hell and on that basis would answer 'yes' to the question of wanting to be saved.

If you asked the same people do they want to be saved from sin; you might get a different answer depending on how you frame the question.

If you are told that sin will lead to an eternity in hell, again you will likely get the 'yes' response. However, if you are told that you can enjoy the pleasures of sin without consequence, what answer do you think you might get?

I suspect that quite a few of us would continue enjoying a sins' pleasure if we felt there would be no consequence as a result.

Now consider; is that not the mixed message the modern day gospel being taught in North America will lead us to? Yes, I know we are saved by grace and that we are not under the law and that we are not saved by our own works.

HOWEVER, have we taken that freedom and turned it into a license to sin, not unlike the indulgences the RCC sold at one time? Have we sort of adopted an attitude of 'sin now – repent later'? What are we doing with the Blood of our Saviour? Are we not in danger of trampling it beneath our feet?

You may say to yourself 'I don't indulge in any serious sin so I need not worry'. That is a lie straight from the pit! None of us can sow to sin without receiving its fruit which is death.

Yes, I agree our eternal salvation is assured by the shed Blood of our Saviour however we will be missing out on the life we could have if we continue in sin and that is the death to which I refer.

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If the LORD has been dealing with you in even what seems like a most insignificant area of your life and you refuse to listen and obey ----- you are sinning BIG TIME!

So be honest with yourself, you certainly can't fool God; Do you RE-ALLY want to be free of ALL forms of sin in your life!

DO YOU WANT TO BE SAVED FROM YOURSELF?

This is a far trickier question since most of us are quite comfortable with ourselves. Remember this one thing, in the garden of Eden, Satan tempted Eve however it still took ‘self’ to agree with Satan and we all know where that got us!

We earlier looked at what it meant to be baptized INTO Christ and His death, unless we have forgotten that means that ‘SELF’ is to have been crucified with Christ when we were baptized into Him. That being the case why do we keep picking up this old stinking self, dusting him off and putting him back on?

I am of the opinion, that Jesus did not come to ‘fix us up’, nor did He come to empower US as much as these are popular thoughts. No I believe He came for the express reason of actually KILLING US! That is the way we are free from the law and made free from sin, when we are dead!

Much is said from time to time about dying to self, but the instrument being used is the very self we are trying to die to. Do you think we will be successful?

DO WE WANT JESUS TO BE OUR LORD?

Let's begin by taking a look at what the word LORD actually means:

G2962 êõñ` ò kurios

Thayer Definition:

1) he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord

1a) the possessor and disposer of a thing

1a1) the owner; one who has control of the person, the master

1a2) in the state: the sovereign, prince, chief, the Roman emperor

1b) is a title of honour expressive of respect and reverence, with which servants greet their master

1c) this title is given to: God, the Messiah

The first definition is **'he to whom a person belongs'** another definition is **'the possessor and disposer of a thing'**.

How kindly do you think our 'self' takes to the notion of making anyone, even Jesus Himself the one to whom we belong and the one who possesses us?

I have heard said that God gave us a free will and will never violate that and that he does not want a whole host of puppets on a string. True enough, I totally agree.

However, the only Son in Whom He was pleased was Jesus who was totally obedient even unto death on a cross. So how do we figure we will ever be pleasing in His sight as long as we are running around in our old stinking selves? We can only be pleasing in God's sight if we are found IN Christ Jesus and unless He is truly our LORD we will never be found there!

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It would not surprise me if very few of us are ever truly in the place of being able to call Jesus our LORD and mean it in the fullness of what the word means.

Do We Want a LORD or a Servant?

Jesus said He came to be a servant and not that He be served. Many of us seem to take that statement and apply it to our relationship with the LORD even when we are born again.

Do we only come seeking His hand (what He can do for us) or do we honestly come seeking His face (just seeking to be with Him)? Is He truly our LORD or is He more likely the genie in the bottle we summon to do our bidding as we choose?

Do we obey our LORD?

The following can be taken with a bit of humor, but I think if you are honest you will see the truth of it:

If the LORD tells Satan himself to ‘jump’, the devil would have no option but to say ‘how high?’, and immediately obey.

Consider the typical response of many Christians.

When the LORD tells us to ‘jump’ we will offer the following responses:

“Is that you LORD?”

“What do you mean by ‘jump’?”

“When do you mean I should jump?”

“Do you mean to literally jump, or is this symbolic of something else you really mean for me to do?”

“I will have to wait for at least three confirmations to be sure this is not the devil”

“I better scour my bible to see if the LORD has ever asked anyone else to ‘jump’.”

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“I had better check with my pastor and church to see if they think this is really of the LORD”.

“Perhaps I should check my tape and book collection to see if there are any good teachings on the subject of jumping”.

“Is this a revelation for me alone, or am I to share it with my congregation this coming Sunday”?

You see why we are oh so fortunate that our LORD is longsuffering?

Do you remember the story of the centurion who came seeking healing for his sick servant? He is the only example I can think of where someone seemed to fully understand the authority which rested upon Jesus. He knew that Jesus had such power and authority that his servants illness would HAVE to obey the sound of the LORDS voice!

Why are those of us who take His Name guilty of less obedience than a rebellious, filthy demonic? Should we be proud of ourselves?

In Conclusion:

Revivals have come and revivals have gone, As much as the Welsh Revival is much talked about, I have also read that three years after the revival, things were pretty much back to normal. The miners once more were cussin' and drinkin' and carrying on.

Will this current revival have the same testimony in history or will we see it as an opportunity to really press in to the LORD, making Him LORD and begging Him to keep us ABIDING in Him, as there is NOTHING we can do of ourselves.

Or will we all buy our Lakeland Revival tee shirts and books and tapes, enjoy the Presence and Power of the LORD for a time, and then return to where we came from?

I honestly believe that GOD makes Himself available during every generation to come into Him and enjoy the fullness of all that He will provide. But in that place there is no room for Sin or SELF!

Beyond Revival On To Perfection

There are four things I will close with that I believe came from my LORD over the past few years:

- **SIN is the ‘desire’ to live independent and apart from God.**(You can go to Church; you can even be the Pastor and still be desiring to live independent and apart from God)
- **God Can NEVER rule in the earth unless and until He RULES in the HEART of His people!**
- **The enemies of God’s people never gave Him any problem whatsoever. It has always been His people who give Him grief!**
- **The present level of Sin and Self are keeping us from going any further in the LORD.**

God Bless Us All and May this generation be the one which goes BEYOND REVIVAL and on to PERFECTION.