

Do It Yourself City Church Restoration

**I mean, how hard could it be to
restore the Body of Christ in one little town?**

**from Doug Perry
www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com
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But don't worry about me calling the law on you, this belongs to God.
Abuse it or profit from it and He'll get ya Himself. I'm not kidding.**

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Aren't Things Just Fine?

There is only one prayer that I can find in the Bible that Jesus prayed and God didn't answer. This is the perfect, sinless, Son of God made flesh. Everyone He tried to heal got healed. Every demon He cursed jumped out of people. The Father gave Him all authority and loved Him and repeatedly confirmed this was His Son and He was proud of Him. So how come there is a prayer He prayed that hasn't been answered? Do you even know what it was?

John 17:20-23 (KJV)

*20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 **That they all may be one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; **that they may be one, even as we are one**: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

The VERY last prayer Jesus Christ prayed before going to the Cross was for us. That we would be one as He and the Father are one. And we're about as far from ONE as you can get. We're the most divided, factious, competitive, selfish religion on the planet right now. Why didn't God answer that prayer?! Maybe because we're not praying it in agreement with Jesus. The Word says where two or more are gathered, He'll be there and whatever you ask in His Name, He will do. Maybe Jesus is praying all by Himself on this one!

If you say you love Jesus and He is your Lord and Christ, then maybe you ought to devote yourself entirely to seeing to it that this final wish of Jesus before the Cross is fulfilled no matter what. Maybe we should all stop praying for ANYTHING other than that God would do whatever it takes to answer this one, last, unanswered prayer of Jesus.

Now, I know, there will be those among you that say that the "Universal Church," the spiritual Bride is one and we all share the Holy Spirit so we're already One and God answered this prayer. But I'm not buying it. Sorry, you can show me your faith without works and I'll show you my faith with works. Faith without works is dead. (James 2) You can assert your pie-in-the-sky idealism that we're all One as much as you like, but the manifestation of His Body on earth is horribly fractured and divided and nobody is really acting out that Oneness. I don't want your cheap talk – if you're supposed to be known by your love, then get to loving each other!! And not just your friends or the folks who agree with you either. Love your enemies and turn the other cheek and forgive seventy times seven and stop doing the acts of the sinful nature (Gal. 5:19-21) or stop saying You love and obey Jesus! You're NOT going to inherit the Kingdom of God if you don't knock it off.

1 John 2:9-11 (KJV)

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Exactly how broken are things? Is it measurable? Can we statistically show we're off track or is this just for effect so we'll repent? How bad could things really be?

Oh, yeah. It's measurable and verifiable. I'm not making this up. Things are FAR worse than you know.

Hold on to your hat. This gets really ugly.

We're not just NOT being One Body, we're doing everything pretty much exactly the opposite of the way Jesus wanted it. This has to be the worst warfare model in history! That's probably why we're getting creamed by the forces of darkness.

(I know that I'm probably preaching to the choir, because if you're reading this at all, you're probably already REALLY dissatisfied with the status quo and are desperate for change. But maybe this will give you some ammunition to empirically explain to other people why we have to try something different.)

Scary Stats and Facts

This is a compilation of the scariest, most embarrassing, most shocking statistics and information about the Church and it's affairs. Somebody is going to have to stand before Jesus one day and explain their role in this. We don't want it to be US - or you. We don't quote anything haphazardly without having good documentation and sources. If you have stats you think we need to hear, find the source material and email us. fotm@fellowshipofthemartyrs.com

(Statistics from David Barrett & Todd Johnson, "World Christian Trends AD 30 – AD 2200 - The summary and analysis of the annual Christian mega-census." William Carey Library, 1991. Unless otherwise noted.)

Web Links

STATUS OF GLOBAL MISSION, AD 2006, IN CONTEXT OF 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

<http://www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/globalchristianity/IBMR2006.pdf>

Are there really 30,000+ denominations?!

<http://www.bringyou.to/apologetics/a120.htm>

Looking Forward: An Overview of World Evangelization, 2005-2025

http://www.lausanne.org/lcwe/assets/Looking_Forward.pdf#search=%22%22todd%20Johnson%22%20christianity%22

SUMMARY

Assets of the Church

- USA Christians control TRILLIONS in assets while at any given time 200,000,000 Brothers and Sisters starve.
- 78 countries each have Great Commission (evangelical) Christians whose personal incomes exceed US\$1 billion a year.

Financial Fraud in the Church

- Annual church embezzlements by top custodians exceed the entire cost of all foreign missions worldwide. Emboldened by lax procedures, trusted church treasurers are embezzling from the Church \$5,500,000 PER DAY. That's \$16,000,000,000 per YEAR! That's Billion - with a "B"! *{For reference: TOTAL Christian spending on foreign missions - \$15 Billion. God forgive us!}* **America's share of that crime is \$5,693,060,314 per year.**
- Criminal penalties against clergy in sexual abuse cases now exceed \$1 billion, causing a number of churches, dioceses, and even denominations to be forced into bankruptcy.
- Each year 600,000 full-time ordained workers (clergy,ministers,missionaries) reach retiring age; 150,000 then discover their employers provide no old-age pensions.

Wasteful Spending by the Church

- Most Christian bodies insist on full accountability to the last cent in finance *{But not very well. See above.}*, but ignore or even decry the collection of statistics about Christian workers/ministries and their effectiveness.
- More than 91% of all church budgets in the US are spent on people that are already church members. Less than 1% is spent on evangelism to the most unreached third of the world.
- 40% of the church's entire global foreign mission resources are being deployed to just 10 oversaturated countries already possessing strong citizen-run home ministries.
- All costs of ministry divided by number of baptisms per year: Cost per baptism in India - \$9803 per person. Cost per baptism in the United States - \$1,550,000 per person.
- Every year the churches hold a megacensus costing \$1.1 billion, sending out 10 million questionnaires in 3,000 languages, which covers 180 major religious subjects.
- Christians spend more on the annual audits of their churches and agencies (\$810 million) than on all their workers in the non-Christian world.

- The total cost of Christian outreach averages \$330,000 for each and every newly baptized person. (USA \$1.55 Million, India \$9,800)
- Non-Christian countries have been found to have 227 million Bibles in place in their midst, more than needed to serve all Christians, but poorly distributed.
- 91% of all Christian outreach/evangelism does not target non-Christians but targets other Christians in World C* {>95 Evangelized, >60% Christian} countries, cities, peoples, populations, or situations. (* See key on page 7.)
- Each year, 180 million Bibles and New Testaments are wasted - lost, destroyed, or disintegrated - due to incompetence, hostility, bad planning, or inadequate manufacture.
- Books primarily about Jesus in today's libraries number 175,000 different titles in 500 languages, increasing by 4 newly published every day. As in all scientific research, 70% of all new Christian books and published articles will never be quoted in print by their peers, ever.

Missions and the Church

- Some 250 of the 300 largest international Christian organizations regularly mislead the Christian public by publishing demonstrably incorrect or falsified progress statistics.
- Christian triumphalism - not as pride in huge numbers, but as publicized self-congratulation - is rampant in most churches, agencies, and ministries.
- All costs of ministry divided by number of baptisms per year. Cost per baptism in India - \$9,803 per person. Cost per baptism in the United States - \$1,550,000 per person.
- It costs Christians 700 times more money to baptize converts in rich World C countries (Switzerland) than in poor World A countries (Nepal). {For descriptions of World A, B and C, see page 7}
- Percent of Christian resources in countries that are already more than 60% evangelized - 99.7%. Percent spent in countries where less than half the people have EVER heard of Jesus - 0.3%.
- It is estimated that Christians worldwide spend around \$8 BILLION dollars PER YEAR going to the more than 500 conferences to TALK about missions. That's more than HALF the total spent actually DOING missions.
- Everywhere on Earth can now easily be targeted with at least 3 of the 45 varieties of effective evangelism.
- 818 unevangelized ethnolinguistic peoples have never been targeted by any Christian agencies ever.
- Over 20 centuries Christians have announced 1,500 global plans to evangelize the world; most failed; 250 plans focused on AD 2000 fell massively short of stated goals.
- Because of the failure of the West, China's Christians have raised up tens of thousands of trained workers who began evangelizing the world de novo (all over again) soon after AD 2000. www.BackToJerusalem.com
- Regular listeners to Christian programs over secular or religious radio/TV stations rose from 22% of the world in 1980 to 30% in 2000.
- Out of 648 million Great Commission Christians, 70% have never been told about the world's 1.6 billion unevangelized individuals.
- The 3 least cost-effective countries over 1 million in population for Christian outreach are: Japan, Switzerland, Denmark.
- The 3 most cost-effective countries over 1 million in population for Christian outreach are: Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania.
- Per hour of ministry, the 5 megapeoples most responsive to Christianity, Christ, and the gospel are: Khandeshi, Awadhi, Magadhi, Bai, Berar Marathi .
- Per hour of ministry, the 5 megapeoples least responsive to Christianity, Christ, and the gospel are: Swedish, Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, Georgian .

Denominations of the Church

- Currently there are over 37,000 Christian denominations in the United States. We add a new one every other day.
- A huge new Christian nonconfessional megabloc, the Independents/Postdenominationalists, is growing rapidly and numbers 19% of all Christians. These 386 million Independents in 220 countries have no interest in and no

use for historic denominationalist Christianity.

- From only one million in AD 1900, Pentecostals/Charismatics/Neocharismatics have mushroomed to 524 million affiliated (with unaffiliated believers, 602 million).

Growth of the Church

- From only 3 million in AD 1500, evangelicals have grown to 648 million worldwide, 54% being Non-Whites.
- The country with the fastest Christian expansion ever is China, now at 10,000 new converts every day.

Persecution of the Church

- More than 70% of all Christians now live in countries where they are experiencing persecution. In some cases EXTREME persecution.
- 14 million converted Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims have opted to remain within those religions in order to witness for Christ as active believers in Jesus as Lord.

Global Population Issues

- Despite BILLIONS of dollars spent by dozens of denominations toward over a hundred major programs to fulfill the Great Commission by the year 2000, we didn't even keep up with population growth, much less reach the 2 billion unreached. Evidently no apologies are forthcoming for the giant waste of assets and broken promises.
- 124 million new souls begin life on Earth each year, but Christianity's 4,000 foreign mission agencies baptize only 4 million new persons a year.
- Since AD 1900, Christian urbanites have exploded from 100 million in 500 cities to 1,160 million in 5,000 cities.

Unreached Peoples

- Out of 648 million Great Commission Christians, 70% have never been told about the world's 1.6 billion unevangelized individuals.
- There are still thousands of language groups who do not have a SINGLE page of the Bible in their language. 98.7% of people have access to scripture in 6,700 languages leaving 78 million in 6,800 languages with no access at all.
- The majority of the unreached people groups are in restricted access countries. Western missionaries may not even be able to get to them.
- Despite Christ's command to evangelize, 67% of all humans from AD 30 to the present day have never even heard His name.
- 648 million Christians today (called Great Commission Christians) are active in Christ's world mission; 1,352 million Christians ignore this mission.
- Organized Christianity has total contact with 3,590 religions but no contact at all with 353 other religions and their over 500 million adherents.

Micro-Lending Stats

- We can help a Brother or Sister start a business in India with a loan of as little as \$25.

Martyrdom

- Over the last 20 centuries, and in all 238 countries, more than 70 million Christians have been martyred - killed, executed, murdered - for Christ.
- More Christians have been martyred in the last 100 years than all others years since AD 30 combined.

Had Enough Yet?

It gets worse.

We're stuffing the Fattest and starving the Hungriest!

KEY:

World A are the 38 countries that are primarily unevangelized. <50% (1.6 Billion souls)

World B are the 59 countries evangelized by not converted. >50% evangelized, but <60% Christian (2.9 Billion souls)

World C are the 141 countries primarily or predominantly Christian already. >95% evangelized and >60% Christian (2 Billion souls)

Broadcasting (radio/TV) per year - total spend \$5.8 Billion (100%)

World A - \$6 Million (0.01%)

World B - \$226 Million (3.9%)

World C - \$5,568 Million (96.0%)

Finance (church/agency) per year - total spend \$270 Billion (100%)

World A - \$188 Million (0.01%)

World B - \$1,370 Million (5.1%)

World C - \$256,100 Million (94.8%)

Foreign Missions Money per year - total spend \$15 Billion (100%)

World A - \$250 Million (1.7%)

World B - \$1,750 Million (11.7%)

World C - \$13,000 Million (86.6%)

Scripture distribution per year - total spend 4,600 Million pieces (100%)

World A - 20 Million (0.4%)

World B - 680 Million (14.5%)

World C - 3,900 Million (84.8%)

Christian Books (copies printed) per year - total spend 3.5 Billion pieces (100%)

World A - 4 Million (0.1%)

World B - 346 Million (9.9%)

World C - 3,150 Million (90.0%)

Foreign Mission Money per year – total spend \$15 Billion (100%)

World A – 1.7%

World B – 11.7%

World C – 86.6%

(Plus 10 other scales that all look about the same. Tracts, Scripture languages, Literature, Periodicals, Computers, Full-time workers, Computer users, Foreign Missionaries, Home Missionaries, Lay leadership. Barrett, Page 55.)

Page 80 - "Where should foreign missionaries work?"

	As Currently Deployed	If Deployed where <u>UNEVANGELIZED</u> are located
World A Countries (<50% evangelized)	18,000	177,000
World B Countries (>50% evangelized)	68,000	242,000
World C Countries (>60% Christian)	335,000	1,000
Total	420,000	420,000

Statistics by Country

<p>Canada (total population 31,147,000) Unevangelized - 2.2% Evangelized but non-Christian - 18.3% Christian (of one sort or another) - 79.5% (self-described, includes Catholics) Evangelization percent - 97.8% Offers per person per year - 331 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$1,189,000</p>	<p>India (total population 1,013,662,000) Unevangelized - 40.7% Evangelized but non-Christian - 53.1% Christian (of one sort or another) - 6.2% Evangelization percent - 59.3% Offers per person per year - 13 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$9,800</p>
<p>USA (total population 278,357,000) Unevangelized - 1.5% Evangelized but non-Christian - 13.8% Christian (of one sort or another) - 84.7% Evangelization percent - 98.5% Offers per person per year - 368 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$1,551,000</p>	<p>China (total population 1,262,557,000) Unevangelized - 35.2% Evangelized but non-Christian - 57.7% Christian (of one sort or another) - 7.1% Evangelization percent - 64.8% Offers per person per year - 16 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$15,800</p>
<p>France (total population 59,080,000) Unevangelized - 3.7% Evangelized but non-Christian - 21.8% Christian (of one sort or another) - 75.8% Evangelization percent - 95% Offers per person per year - 360 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$2,030,000</p>	<p>Indonesia (total population 212,107,000) Unevangelized - 37.2% Evangelized but non-Christian - 49.7% Christian (of one sort or another) - 13.1% Evangelization percent - 62.8% Offers per person per year - 29 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$40,800</p>
<p>Britain (total population 58,830,000) Unevangelized - 1.9% Evangelized but non-Christian - 15.5% Christian (of one sort or another) - 82.6% Evangelization percent - 97% Offers per person per year - 349 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$1,816,000</p>	<p>Mozambique (total population 19,680,000) Unevangelized - 23.0% Evangelized but non-Christian - 38.6% Christian (of one sort or another) - 38.4% Evangelization percent - 80% Offers per person per year - 100 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$1,400</p>
<p>Germany (total population 82,220,000) Unevangelized - 2.4% Evangelized but non-Christian - 21.8% Christian (of one sort or another) - 75.8% Evangelization percent - 95% Offers per person per year - 381 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$2,119,000</p>	<p>Afghanistan (total population 22,720,000) Unevangelized - 70.4% Evangelized but non-Christian - 29.6% Christian (of one sort or another) - 0.1% Evangelization percent - 29.7% Offers per person per year - < 1 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$30,400</p>
<p>Japan (total population 126,714,000) Unevangelized - 33.1% Evangelized but non-Christian - 63.3% Christian (of one sort or another) - 3.6% Evangelization percent - 60% Offers per person per year - 6 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$2,721,000</p>	<p>Cambodia (total population 11,168,000) Unevangelized - 50.9% Evangelized but non-Christian - 48.0% Christian (of one sort or another) - 1.1% Evangelization percent - 49.1% Offers per person per year - 1 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$4,300</p>
<p>Australia (total population 18,880,000) Unevangelized - 1.6% Evangelized but non-Christian - 19.1% Christian (of one sort or another) - 92.9% Evangelization percent - 98% Offers per person per year - 336 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$1,104,000</p>	<p>Bangladesh (total population 129,155,000) Unevangelized - 42.8% Evangelized but non-Christian - 56.5% Christian (of one sort or another) - 0.7% Evangelization percent - 57.2% Offers per person per year - 1 Cost effectiveness (Cost per baptism) - \$7,200</p>

An AD 2001 reality check: 50 new facts and figures about trends and issues concerning empirical global Christianity today. (from Table 1-1 and elsewhere in World Christian Trends, William Carey Library, David Barrett & Todd Johnson.) Country stats from p. 520 and following and p. 407 and following.

Thus Saith the Lord

Isaiah 1:2-31 (ESV)

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.
3 The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."
4 Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.
5 Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.
6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil.
7 Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners.
8 And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.
9 If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!
11 "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.
12 "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts?
13 Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.
15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.
16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,
17 learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.
18 "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;
20 but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

21 How the faithful city has become a whore, she who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers.
22 Your silver has become dross, your best wine mixed with water.
23 Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them.
24 Therefore the Lord declares, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: "Ah, I will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes.
25 I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy.
26 And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."
27 Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness.
28 But rebels and sinners shall be broken together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.
29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks that you desired; and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen.
30 For you shall be like an oak whose leaf withers, and like a garden without water.
31 And the strong shall become tinder, and his work a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with none to quench them.

The Locusts Have Eaten Everything

Because of the deception that has fallen on the “church,” most folks are just as sure as they can be that they are rich and have acquired wealth and don't need a thing. They believe they already have all the treasure in heaven they need because they said the “Sinner's Prayer” once. But they don't realize they are lukewarm, wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. (Revelation 3:17)

And do you know how they got so blind? Because God did it to them. He turned them over to their own reprobate minds because they insisted on going their own way. It's all in Deuteronomy 28. THIS is the true sign and wonder at the end of the age! Not peace and safety and prosperity. Those are the lying signs and wonders. The true sign to you and your descendants forever is that God did this to you because you did not joyfully and gladly obey the Lord your God in the time of prosperity, therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty you will serve the enemies the Lord sends against you! (Deuteronomy 28:45-48) Not teaching THAT in Sunday School, are we?

How about this? “You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the Lord your God. Just as it pleased the Lord to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you.” (Deuteronomy 28:62-63) Did you get that?! He will prune you right off the vine and you won't even know He did it! You'll be eating moldy dirt and be convinced it's fillet mignon. Because our standards have been lowered so much, we'll pretty much buy anything nowadays. It's been so long since anybody came bringing pure, undiluted Truth that it freaks us out when somebody says something that radical! We perk up to see if they'll do it again, but we also start dissecting everything to find ANY error so that we can justify marginalizing and ignoring them.

In the end, we are searching, but we're not finding anything good to eat. There's milk out there – and a tidbit of meat mixed in with a bunch of other moldy, poisonous stuff – but mostly we're all starving to death, or eating things that aren't food at all. Surely you must see that locusts have come and sucked all the good stuff out of the “church”? If you could see inside the people, if you could see through the eyes of Jesus, you would see they're pretty much all shackled and oppressed and their cups are full of all kinds of nasty stuff – and there is no sign on the horizon that the “system” even cares or knows what to do to set them free. And I'm talking really, completely, all the way, holiness-walking, sanctified, big cup of Jesus, keep it full all the time, glow in the dark, peace, joy and victory – FREE. Do you even know anybody like that? Isn't that what we need? Aren't we all desperate for it, but don't want to admit we're not finding it? If we admit how truly, deeply unhappy we are – yet we've tried every available option with no success – then what will we do with ourselves except doubt that our faith is even real at all?

Surely the Lord knew this was coming. This passage in Joel is as good a description of the “church” in America as I can find:

Joel 1:16-18 (NIV)

16 Has not the food been cut off before our very eyes – joy and gladness from the house of our God? 17 The seeds are shriveled beneath the clods. The storehouses are in ruins, the granaries have been broken down, for the grain has dried up. 18 How the cattle moan! The herds mill about because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep are suffering.

The sheep and cattle mill around looking for green pasture, but can't find any. We have no real growth in “church” attendance in this country. It's all transfer growth. They're just milling around. Mostly going from dying small congregations to mega-churches with fancier shows and better childcare. But they're still just as hungry and oppressed.

Please hear me! I know it sounds crazy, but I see people's “cup”. I can tell what's in there. I can see the spirits messing with them. (That's the gift of discernment of spirits. - I Corinthians 12:10) I can tell what's chewing on them and whispering to them. And I've been to 100+ “institutional churches” in the last two years and they are ALL full of shackled, oppressed, dying people who are trying desperately to find Truth – or convince themselves they're not really starving to death! And pastors just as oppressed! Please hear me! This isn't working! You only think it is because you don't know the difference. You don't know what it COULD be like. But I do. The Lord has shown me true community. Fellowship with believers who are fully cleaned out and walking in holiness and free of all systems and structures of Man. People who will take a bullet for you, that will love you even when you poke them in the eye – on purpose! People who will lay anything down for you, that will offer up their own marriage if only God would fix yours. People who can pray sincerely that God would send them to Hell if only He would bring revival to this town. (Exodus 32:32) People who have REAL, TRUE, FULL-ON joy and peace and victory. People that who been broken free of every yoke and God directs their EVERY step. Is that who you're hanging out with? Is that what your “church” is doing for you? Cause it should be.

Please! Please! Stop eating moldy stuff. Demand better. It's out there. It's within reach. It's your birthright! Don't settle for the status quo. Let's do it the way Jesus intended and get out of His way and see how different it could be. Please?

The IF/THEN Axioms of God's Wrath

IF you are a child of God, **THEN** the requirements are higher on you than on the “world”. (John 1:12, Luke 12:48)

IF you are a child of God, **THEN** you are supposed to obey God and God alone and lean not on your own understanding. (Acts 5:29, Proverbs 3:5)

IF you are a child of God and you are following a Man instead (including yourself), **THEN** you are in disobedience to God. (Matthew 9:9; I Peter 2:21; John 12:25-26)

IF you are a child of God in disobedience, **THEN** the Lord would like to draw you back to Himself – by whatever means necessary. (Luke 15)

IF you repeatedly refuse correction, **THEN** God will turn you over to increasingly bad stuff until you break. (Daniel 4:28-37; Romans 1:18-32)

IF you are really, really stubborn and rebellious, **THEN** God will harden your heart and send strong delusion on you until you are utterly destroyed – or you repent, whichever comes first. (Romans 1:18-32; Romans 9:18; John 12:40; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

IF you are a group of people, **THEN** God may collectively turn you over to satan to teach you not to blaspheme or send oppressions upon you. (I Timothy 1:20; I Timothy 6:1, Exodus, Judges, I and II Kings, etc.)

IF you persist in your rebellion, **THEN** expect MASSIVE negative consequences both spiritually and physically. (Isaiah 31:1, Deuteronomy 28, Lamentations; the bulk of the Bible is warnings of negative consequences for disobedience!)

IF there is a war between Good and Evil and we seem to be losing, **THEN** we are going our own way and God has blinded us and sent a strong delusion against us because we are being disobedient and rebellious. (Deuteronomy 28, Revelation 3:14-22)

The IF/THEN Axioms of God's Curses

IF you are a child of God in disobedience, **THEN** God WILL send down curses on you until you turn. (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12; Acts 9:1-9; John 9:35-41, 12:40)

IF God sends down curses on you, **THEN** one of them is probably “strong delusion” or “blindness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12; Acts 9:1-9; John 9:35-41, 12:40)

IF God sends blindness or strong delusion on you, **THEN** you probably won't even know you're blind and deceived. (Revelation 3:15-17)

IF you are a prophet of God and you're in disobedience, **THEN** you will probably be VERY sure that you're hearing God really well, even though it's a lying spirit that is twisting everything up. (1 Kings 22:1-40; Matthew 15:14, 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Revelation 3:15-17)

IF repentance is the only thing that can break the curse, **THEN** you really, really need to repent right now. (James 4:7-10; Mark 1:4; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; Romans 2:4-5; Matthew 3:1-2; Luke 13:1-5; Acts 2:36-41; Acts 17:29-31; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 2:5, 2:16, 2:22, 3:3; 3:19)

But, **IF** you're under a delusion and are blind or asleep, **THEN** you can't repent or don't know what to repent for. (Matthew 15:14; Revelation 3:17; John 9:40; Matthew 13:13-14)

IF you don't repent, **THEN** you are toast. (And repentance is a gift that can ONLY come from God – and He is cursing you for being disobedient and may not pour out on you the Gift of Repentance.) (Romans 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:25-26; Acts 17:30; James 4:7-10, Acts 5:31)

IF you can't or won't repent and repentance is the only hope, **THEN** you're caught in a hopeless paradox loop.

IF there is going to be any hope for you, **THEN** either God Himself or someone who already HAS a gift of repentance has to come and pour it out on you so that you can get released. And then you have to turn and **stay** turned. If you go back like a dog to its vomit, it's going to go VERY badly for you. (2 Peter 2:20-22; 2 Timothy 2:25-26; 2 Corinthians 7:10)

The IF/THEN Axioms of Current Church Conditions

IF God is for us, **THEN** nothing can stand against us. (Romans 8:31; Joshua 1:9; 1 John 4:13-18; 2 Chronicles 32:7-8; 2 Kings 6:15-17)

IF God says that if you obey, nothing can stand against you, and currently things are standing against us, **THEN** we must not be obeying God.

IF there is a war between good and evil and we seem to be losing, **THEN** we must be under the curses of Deuteronomy 28, not the blessings. (Deuteronomy 28)

IF there is hatred among brethren and adultery and envy and lust and dissension and factions and selfish ambition inside the Church and its leadership, **THEN** it CANNOT inherit the Kingdom of Heaven in its current state. (Galatians 5)

IF there is a love of money present and persistent in the Church, **THEN** the root of all evil is well entrenched in our structures and we're in big trouble. (I Timothy 6:10)

IF we are to be known as Christians by our love and we hate each other, **THEN** we might not actually be Christians. (I John 2:9,11; 3:14-24; 4:19-21; John 15:23)

IF we are not being good stewards of that which the Lord entrusted to us and we've buried our coin in the dirt, **THEN** we will be cast into outer darkness where there will be much crying and gnashing of teeth. (Luke 12:35-48; Matt. 25:25-46)

IF we can definitely show that the Church is basically doing everything exactly BACKWARDS of the way the Bible suggests we do it – and nobody seems to mind, **THEN** we have to come to the conclusion that there is a supernatural stupidity imposed on the system because nobody could intentionally design something this broken.

See http://www.fellowshipofthemartyrs.com/scary_stats.htm
See <http://www.fellowshipofthemartyrs.com/pharisees.htm>
See <http://www.fellowshipofthemartyrs.com/humansacrifice.htm>
See <http://www.fellowshipofthemartyrs.com/business.htm>

**I don't have room or time to go into it in full detail here,
but if you want to bring restoration to your town,
you need to be fully Red Dragon-free.**

This is critically important!!

You may already be, but you need to be sure. Repentance is the key.

**Please take the time and read the Red Dragon book here -
http://www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/red_dragon.htm**

The Body of Christ?

As I've been looking intently at the state of the Church, I've grown more and more frustrated that hardly anybody seems to be really aware of the problems and the need for repentance. I struggle with what to make of that. Perhaps people think the 37,000+ denominations we have now are a good thing. Perhaps the fraud and waste and division and selfish ambition are just part of the human condition and can't be helped (although he says he's coming for a Bride without wrinkle or blemish and I think those are blemishes.) Perhaps no one ever told them how much this is hurting Jesus. I hope this helps with that. In fact, I hope it sears an indelible burn mark on your conscience that makes you cry in pain every day. That's probably what it's going to take to get this turned around.

The Romans and the Pharisees conspired together to crucify Jesus. They didn't just crucify him, they spit on him and beat him and whipped him until his bones showed. And then the Lamb of God bled all the way through Jerusalem and they nailed him to a cross naked and hung him up in front of everyone. The Bible says he was unrecognizable as a man – much less recognizable as Jesus. They put a sign over his bloodied, broken, humiliated body sarcastically declaring him King of the Jews. They fought over who would get his clothes. They stabbed him in the side to be sure he was dead, then buried him in a cave.

We have all heard of the pain and suffering he endured, not just physically, but the sin he carried must have been an unbelievable burden. The spiritual warfare and temptation to get him to back down and call up ten thousand angels to avenge him must have been horrific. None of us can even imagine what he went through in those last twenty-four hours.

How could the Pharisees and the Romans be so cruel? How could anybody inflict that kind of blood-thirsty, heartless damage on another human being – much less the Son of God?! What kind of monsters must they have been to so torture and degrade a person? What kind of evil spirits must have possessed them in that hour that they could do such a vile thing to an innocent man?

Everything that happens in our “natural” world has a spiritual counterpart. The human body of Christ was raised from the dead and abides with the Father. But I Corinthians 12:27 and Ephesians 4:12 and other places say that the Church is the Body of Christ. Do you know what that means? It means WE are the spiritual Body of Christ and that's just as real to Jesus as was his physical body. And it means we are meaner and more heartless and more possessed by evil than the Romans or the Pharisees could ever be.

You see, we have been hitting the Body of Christ with a cat-of-nine-tails daily for about eighteen hundred years (give or take). We have been hacking and slicing and shredding his flesh for generations. We have been fighting over his clothes and spitting on him since the first Christians started dying off. We have left a trail of his blood all over the world. And not in a good way.

To slice the Body of Christ up into 37,000+ denominations, we've basically had to run his flesh through a food processor. We've hacked off toes and then cloned them so we'd have a whole barn full of toes who refuse to reconnect with the rest of his body. We've ripped and shredded his flesh and stolen it from each other like a pack of hungry hyenas eating a fresh kill. Because he is Christ and he is SO much better than we could ever be, he has mostly taken it quietly like a sheep led to the slaughter. He has resisted the constant urge to call up 10,000 angels and avenge what we've done to his body. And it's a good thing too, because we should be FLATTENED by now for how much pain we've caused him. We've ignored those in need and focused on our own agendas. We've introduced malignant cancers and poisons and all kinds of disgusting stuff into his body.

When he came in the flesh, Jesus endured a few people beating him and a few people spitting on him. But it was pretty much all over in 24 hours. But in the spirit, we have been beating him mercilessly for hundreds of years. Under our own power, there is no sign on the horizon that the “church” system we've built is going to stop doing it either.

We refuse to connect up to the central nervous system and get commands from the brain. We refuse to coordinate our efforts with all the other body parts, so the whole Body just lays there and twitches in pain. Some parts look like they're getting somewhere, but it's more like the illusion of rigor mortise, than actual progress. Without ALL the pieces taking commands from the Head, we're just spinning our wheels and he bleeds more and more every day and the people we were supposed to reach out to are dying.

If you think this is just figurative and it isn't causing Jesus pain, then you surely don't really understand the nature of his love for us and his desire for his body to be whole. He prayed in John 17 that we would be one body because, if not, THIS is the result. In essence, he prayed that the cup of suffering on his physical body would be taken away if possible

AND he prayed that the cup of suffering on his spiritual body would be taken away if possible. Neither was. He is crying every day and has been for centuries. And the Father is fuming.

He has been enduring daily torture of a scale none of us can imagine. We have inflicted far more pain than the Pharisees and Romans could have ever even imagined. The physical body has limits of what it can endure, but Christ's spiritual body evidently has no limits on how much it can be tortured. Worse yet, the Pharisees and Romans hated him and didn't believe in him – but we claim to know he is the Son of God and we say we love him, and yet, we're the ones doing the real damage. And we continue getting together in our little boxes every week and singing song of praise and taking communion with a straight face while we're collectively desecrating and defiling his body.

I can tell you this, if I were the Father and I loved my only son Jesus with all that I am, at some point I'm going to FORCE the torture of his body to stop. If they won't start being one body, I'm going to get their attention by whatever means necessary. If I have to, I'll send earthquakes, tsunamis, wars, plagues, famines ... whatever. If they keep on singing and dancing and being completely oblivious and asleep, I'll even kill two-thirds of the planet if that's what it takes for them to knock it off and start being one body. That's pretty much what the book of Revelation predicts is coming – and we deserve it.

And if I were you I wouldn't count on a “rapture” getting you out before the suffering starts. Since the Church was supposed to take the light to the world and it's REALLY dark out there, I'm pretty sure the sad state of things is our fault. We're the ones who knew better, we're the ones who have been butchering the body of Christ for centuries. I don't see any reason why we should get out of the consequences of what we've done. He's going to spank us really hard and we have it coming. Don't think you're going to avoid suffering, you're not.

Our only hope is to weep and repent and mourn before the altar. We need to apologize and mean it – and then we need to turn from our wicked ways and get under HIS headship. No more structures and systems and traditions of Man. If we don't start acting like One Body on our own, then the Father is going to kill off all the body parts who won't play nice together. Then He'll graft in bits who will appreciate it. Like prostitutes and drug dealers and homeless and the lost and kids with purple hair and hurting people who will defend his body to the death and refuse to listen to anyone but HIM.

Burn it into your brain. We ran the Body of Christ through a meat grinder. We sent people to seminary to learn how to slice the Body of Christ up into smaller and smaller pieces. We paid them to do it. We self-righteously took pleasure in splitting off from other people who had the Holy Spirit in them. We fought over his clothes. We placed a sign over his head that proclaimed proudly to the world that THIS beaten, bloody mess was an accurate representation of the King of Kings. We are thieves and liars and murders of the first order.

There's just one simple standard. If the Holy Spirit is in me and the Holy Spirit is in you, then we're just One Body and we're going to have to figure out how to get along without killing each other. We've got to knock it off before it's too late.

Please? If you love Jesus, could you please stop torturing his body? Could you tell him you're willing to share in his sufferings and help bear this burden until this is over? Could you acknowledge your part in it, however small, and stop? Could you insist on harmony from now on? Could you ask the Father to let you feel the pain Jesus feels? Could you ask the Father to let you see through His eyes? I know He wants to.

Please make it stop.

John 15 - If/Then Statements

God does **not** change. What irritated Him then, still irritates Him now. What pleased and honored Him then, still pleases and honors Him now. These If/Then statements are guarantees! IF you do these things, then He WILL do what He said He would do – sooner or later, one way or the other. He reserves the right to manifest it in whatever way He wants, but He WILL do it.

It's equational. Like math. Just insert the quantity.

IF you do Behavior X **THEN** Consequence Y will result. Quantity N is the only variable.

$$BX(N) = CY(N)$$

Positive Behavior = Positive Consequence **OR** Negative Behavior = Negative Consequence

Get it? Doesn't even require faith. It's just a guarantee from God. Now, it may not manifest like you expect or when you expect, but it WILL happen because God's promises are good. He is faithful and just.

So here we go. Let's look at the guarantees. (*Scripture quoted from Amplified Version.*)

John 15

1 I AM the True Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser.

Just so we're clear who is whom. God is the one doing the pruning, with whatever tools He wants to use.

2 Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit [that stops bearing] He cuts away (trims off, takes away); and He cleanses and repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more and richer and more excellent fruit.

If you are stagnant my Father will spew you out. He repeatedly prunes EVERY branch. Don't think you're exempt and don't think the pruning you just went through is the last of it! And know that the ONLY reason He is doing it is so that you and the Vine will bear more fruit.

3 You are cleansed and pruned already, because of the word which I have given you [the teachings I have discussed with you].

The disciples to whom I was speaking were currently in pretty good shape. That wasn't always the case. Peter, in particular, required additional pruning later on. And then there was Judas.

4 Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me.

Here you should begin to see the recipe book of conditional statements that follow. It's very important to note that "abiding" is not at all the same as "believing in". It's not a one time acceptance of a truth, it's a constant relationship. Abiding infers constant and deep symbiotic relationship with Me, not just an acknowledgment.

IF you remain in ME, THEN I will remain in you.

5 I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing.

Just so we're clear on who is whom. I'm the Source. You're the twig. You're the fruit bearers, but you CANNOT do it without a constant relationship with Me. If ANYTHING interrupts the flow or nourishment from me, you will NOT be able to bear good fruit. Just so we're clear.

IF a man remains in Me AND I in him, THEN he will bear much fruit.

IF you are cut off from Me, THEN you can do nothing.

6 If a person does not dwell in Me, he is thrown out like a [broken-off] branch, and withers; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, and they are burned.

{Editors note: It's possible to be a fruit-bearing branch, stop bearing fruit and be thrown into the fire. This ought to scare the pants off of all of us!! Why else do you need to work out our salvation with fear and trembling?! If our acceptance of Jesus resulted in permanent, unchangeable salvation, how is this possible? These aren't branches that stay attached to the Vine and are refined by fire and then made useful again. The clear implication is that these are trimmed off, hauled off and burned. There is nothing here that indicates that it is for medicinal value and they eventually return to the Vine. I know this disrupts a lot of people's theology. I'd sure like somebody to tell me how else to interpret this! Note these are not some other kind of branch that is pruned off. These are not non-Christians. These are people that WERE connected to the Vine and stopped bearing fruit.}

IF you stop dwelling in Me, THEN you will be cut off, hauled off and burned in the fire.

7 If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

As long as we're in relationship and you are producing good fruit, I'll listen to you and answer you.

IF you abide in Me AND My words in you AND they continue to live in your heart (active and operating, not passive), THEN ask whatever you like and I'll do it for you.

8 When you bear (produce) much fruit, My Father is honored and glorified, and you show and prove yourselves to be true followers of Mine.

The Vinedresser is pleased with you when you effectively accomplish that for which you were designed. You are like the Vine when you take what the Vine feeds you and produce that which defines the Vine. If you produce nothing OR make olives on a grape vine, you're not pleasing to the Vinedresser. You must do as you were designed and as the Vine and the Vinedresser desire. You must obey THEIR design for you, not your own plans and goals.

9 I have loved you, [just] as the Father has loved Me; abide in My love [continue in His love with Me].

The Vinedresser lovingly cares for Me and I will lovingly care for You. Please don't do anything to screw it up. Please make good fruit so nothing bad will happen.

10 If you keep My commandments [if you continue to obey My instructions], you will abide in My love and live on in it, just as I have obeyed My Father's commandments and live on in His love.

The Vinedresser is pleased with Me, so He will be pleased with you if you are like Me and do as I instruct. Make the fruit in the time and in the way and in the proportions that I tell you to, or else.

IF you keep My commandments, THEN you will abide in My love and live on.

11 I have told you these things, that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing.

I want everybody clear on the expectations and requirements. I don't want you to have to guess about what I'm expecting of you. This should be pretty clear. If you mangle it all up later, don't say I didn't warn you. You will not have joy and gladness in full measure, complete and overflowing, unless you operate within My guidelines. You and I both have to do it the way the Vinedresser designed it.

12 This is My commandment: that you love one another [just] as I have loved you.

Just so we're clear. If you don't keep My commandments, I'm not going to abide in you and you're in danger of being pruned, cast out and burned. So please obey Me on this. Love one another, just as I love you. What the Vine feeds you should flow THROUGH you and on to all the other members without interruption. Don't clog up the flow and don't add your own spin or flavor or virus to it. Just let what I do for you flow on through you to

others. If not, then you're a wart and a cancer and you're keeping others from bearing fruit and the Vinedresser is NOT going to be happy. Nothing personal. I love you. I'm just saying so you're clear and there won't be any surprises. If you try to prune parts off yourself, you're going to be in big trouble. That's not your job. You need to love and feed all your members and let the Vinedresser take care of the rest.

13 No one has greater love [no one has shown stronger affection] than to lay down (give up) his own life for his friends.

This is what I'm doing for you. I'm serving and upholding and feeding and sacrificing so YOU can bear fruit. For a little while I was the Vine AND the Branches, but it was only a one-man show for a tiny sliver of time as it was growing. Now I'm the support mechanism so you can grow and prosper. And I love doing it! It would sure be great if you would be willing to do it, too. Lay down your own desires and just feed and love your members as they grow. And if they produce more fruit than you, that's OK, that was the plan. What you don't get is that even though I'm the Vine, when a branch gets pruned, that's part of Me too – and I'm willing to let that part of Me die for the sake of the whole. Be willing to lay down whatever is necessary for the sake of Me or for those around you. If you do, the Vinedresser will be REALLY happy with you.

14 You are My friends if you keep on doing the things which I command you to do.

A reminder of verse 10. Not just producers, not just branches, but FRIENDS if you KEEP ON doing what you are commanded. This is active and ongoing. Constant acknowledgment, listening and obedience results in friendship. I want you to be My friends. Please be My friends.

IF you want to be My friends, THEN keep constantly doing what I command you to do.

15 I do not call you servants (slaves) any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing (working out). But I have called you My friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. [I have revealed to you everything that I have learned from Him.]

You're not flying blind here – I've given you plenty of information about what the plan is. You are partners and team members, so long as you don't deny Me by going your own way.

16 You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed you [I have planted you], that you might go and bear fruit and keep on bearing, and that your fruit may be lasting [that it may remain, abide], so that whatever you ask the Father in My Name [as presenting all that I AM], He may give it to you.

I picked you, I grafted you, I grew you, I feed you, I instruct you, all with one goal – that you will constantly bear good fruit that is lasting AND so that whatever you ask the Vinedresser, He will give you. We have an open heaven over us when we don't make it about us – we abide, we obey and we bear much lasting fruit.

17 This is what I command you: that you love one another.

Remember verse 12? I wasn't kidding. Do this or else. You CANNOT abide in me without this. You will surely be pruned sooner or later if you don't do this. And I'm not defining who "one another" is, but it's a lot wider sphere than you think. For sure it includes EVERYONE connected to the Vine. I'm talking to the whole lot of you. If ANY of you are not loving ALL the others, you're going to be in big trouble and you need to wonder if I'm really abiding in you. The Vinedresser might prune you off at any moment.

18 If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you.

You're not alone. The more you get to be like Me, the more you need to expect this stuff.

IF the world hates you, THEN be comforted in knowing that it hated me first.

19 If you belonged to the world, the world would treat you with affection and would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world [no longer one with it], but I have chosen (selected) you out of the world, the world hates (detests) you.

This is pretty clear, isn't it? If the world is in love with you, you need to wonder how much you are like me. If

you fit right in with them, you are a lot more like them than you are like Me. The world cannot produce the fruit My vine bears, so you might be in danger of pruning at any moment. Better turn.

IF you belonged to the world, THEN the world would love you as is own.

IF you are no longer of the world because I have chosen you, THEN the world hates you.

20 Remember that I told you, A servant is not greater than his master [is not superior to him]. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word and obeyed My teachings, they will also keep and obey yours.

You will endure what I endured if you seek to be like me. You will not surpass me, but you should expect the same treatment. That may just be one of the most depressing sentences in the Bible. Since they DIDN'T keep My word and obey Me, you really shouldn't expect anybody will listen to you either! Be surprised and thankful if they listen at all.

IF they persecuted Me, THEN they will also persecute you (assuming you're like me).

IF they obeyed Me, THEN they will also obey you.

21 But they will do all this to you [inflict all this suffering on you] because of [your bearing] My name and on My account, for they do not know or understand the One Who sent Me.

Don't be ashamed, they're doing it because you are like Me! That's great! They would love you if you looked like them. They don't understand the Vinedresser and how He works – or they do and they hate the whole idea – it's not your fault they're mad at you.

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin [would be blameless]; but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Without my voice and my commands, they could not really be expected to produce fruit at all or they would not produce the correct kind. But now they have no excuse. If they expect to abide, then they need to obey.

IF I hadn't explained sin to them, THEN they would not be guilty.

23 Whoever hates Me also hates My Father.

IF you hate me, THEN you hate My Father as well.

24 If I had not done (accomplished) among them the works which no one else ever did, they would not be guilty of sin. But [the fact is] now they have both seen [these works] and have hated both Me and My Father.

They saw miracles. They saw undeniable proof that I am who I say I am. They have no more excuse to deny they need to obey Me. I am greater than you and that's just all there is to it. But instead they saw and hated both the Vine and the Vinedresser.

IF I had not done miracles, THEN they would have an excuse to disobey – but they do anyway – and by it show their hatred of Me and the Father.

25 But [this is so] that the word written in their Law might be fulfilled, They hated Me without a cause. I saw it coming. They saw it coming. There's no avoiding it. Had to happen.

26 But when the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who comes (proceeds) from the Father, He [Himself] will testify regarding Me.

The Holy Spirit will explain it all later and help you hear My voice so you can produce good, abundant, lasting fruit forever. Hang loose, it's on the way. He will be your teacher, not Man.

27 But you also will testify and be My witnesses, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

You will tell the world. You will be witnesses (martureo from martus – meaning martyrs) because you can hear Me, are abiding in Me and are obeying Me. Big fruit comes when you are witnesses, no matter how much persecution comes, no matter how much the world hates you, even unto death.

SUMMARY

Below is a list of the If/Then's in this amazing chapter. These are straight from the mouth of Jesus. These are conditional statements and promises. It is a recipe for success and fruit bearing and a road map to know what to expect. It is also a condemnation of those who are not doing these things and should not expect ANY blessing! The thing you need to see is the equational nature of these. They aren't just On/Off switches, they are Dials. It should be obvious that some people bear more fruit than others. Why? Because they did these to a greater degree, they poured out more of themselves, they dialed it up higher. They've learned how to let Jesus flow through them without getting in the way. They have a bigger cup of Jesus. However you want to think about it. It's all math, just plug in the quantities.

IF you remain in ME, THEN I will remain in you.

IF you remain in 20%, THEN I will remain in you 20%.

If you remain in me ALL, THEN I will remain in you ALL.

IF a man remains in Me AND I in him, THEN he will bear much fruit.

IF you are cut off from Me, THEN you can do nothing.

IF you stop receiving from Me, THEN you WILL stop growing.

IF you turn the valve down to 50% of capacity, THEN you will grow 50% of capacity.

IF you try to grow on your own power, THEN nothing that looks like MY fruit will result.

IF you stop dwelling in Me, THEN you will be cut off, hauled off and burned in the fire.

IF you shut the valve all the way off and walk away, THEN you are in big trouble.

IF you abide in Me AND My words in you AND they continue to live in your heart (active and operating, not passive), THEN ask whatever you like and I'll do it for you.

IF you do this stuff a little bit, THEN you can ask for help with your headache.

IF you do this stuff all the way, THEN you can ask to raise the dead.

IF you keep My commandments, THEN you will abide in My love and live on.

IF you keep some of my commandments, THEN you are abiding SOME.

IF you want to be My friends, THEN keep constantly doing what I command you to do.

IF you don't want to be my friends, THEN just do some of them sometimes.

IF the world hates you, THEN be comforted in knowing that it hated me first.

IF the world hates you once in a while, THEN you're probably like me a little bit.

IF the world boils you in oil and kills you, THEN you're probably like me all the time.

IF you belonged to the world, THEN the world would love you as is own.

IF the world loves you 40%, THEN there's probably 40% of you that's not obeying Me.

IF the world can't tell you apart from it's own people, THEN you're probably not much like Me.

IF you are no longer of the world because I have chosen you, THEN the world hates you.

IF I chose you AND you choose to let me, THEN I will make you someone the world despises.

IF they persecuted Me, THEN they will also persecute you (assuming you're like me).

IF they obeyed Me, THEN they will also obey you.

IF the vast majority ignored me, THEN don't expect any different.

IF I hadn't explained sin to them, THEN they would not be guilty.

IF you understand the equational nature of this chapter, THEN you need to give ALL.

IF you abide and obey 50%, THEN the other 50% is sin and you are guilty.

IF you hate me, THEN you hate My Father as well.

IF the world hates me and won't receive from me, THEN they won't receive from the Father either.

IF you abide in me 70%, THEN you hate me 30% - and the Father too.

**IF I had not done miracles, THEN they would have an excuse to disobey – but they do anyway
– and by it show their hatred of Me and the Father**

IF you have EVER seen Me work, ever heal or transform or redeem,
THEN you have no excuse – and any disobedience is hatred toward Me and the Father.

Sing it like you mean it this time.

I Surrender All

by Judson W. Van DeVenter, 1896:

ALL to Jesus, I surrender; **ALL** to Him I freely give; I will **EVER** love and trust Him, In His presence **DAILY** live.

I surrender **ALL**, I surrender **ALL**, **ALL** to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender **ALL**.

ALL to Jesus I surrender; Humbly at His feet I bow, Worldly pleasures **ALL** forsaken; Take me, Jesus, take me now.

I surrender **ALL**, I surrender **ALL**, **ALL** to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender **ALL**.

ALL to Jesus, I surrender; Make me, Savior, **WHOLLY** Thine; Let me feel the Holy Spirit, Truly know that Thou art mine.

I surrender **ALL**, I surrender **ALL**, **ALL** to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender **ALL**.

ALL to Jesus, I surrender; Lord, I give myself to Thee; **FILL** me with Thy love and power; Let Thy blessing fall on me.

I surrender **ALL**, I surrender **ALL**, **ALL** to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender **ALL**.

ALL to Jesus I surrender; **NOW** I feel the sacred flame. O the joy of **FULL** salvation! Glory, glory, to His Name!

I surrender **ALL**, I surrender **ALL**, **ALL** to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender **ALL**.

**So what's it gonna be? How far are you willing to go? What still needs to be laid down?
Could you do it now?**

Maybe pray this prayer, if you have the guts for it -

Lord, I really WANT to surrender ALL. I really do, but I don't know how. I know I'm not there and I'm sorry I ever held anything back. Please help me. Please? If there is anything that stands between me and You, anything I love more than You, whether I realize it or not, whether I like it or not, no matter where it came from or how long it's been there, would You just rip it, shred it, burn it, crush it, kill it, tear it out of my grip even if I like it. Whatever You do, DO NOT stop breaking me until You are finished, no matter how much I whine. Do not dial down Your refining fire. YOU have your way with me. Give me Your Spirit right now in as big as measure as I can handle. I trust You. Please don't leave me like this, I stink. I'm sorry I didn't pray this sooner. I love You, Jesus. Do it now! Amen.

Thus Saith The Lord

Ezekiel 34:1-31 (ESV)

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, **Thus says the Lord God:** Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?

3 You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep.

4 The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.

5 So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts.

6 My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

7 **"Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD:**

8 As I live, declares the Lord God, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep,

9 **therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD:**

10 Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.

11 **"For thus says the Lord God:** Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out.

12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

14 I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel.

15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God.

16 I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

17 "As for you, my flock, **thus says the Lord God:** Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats.

18 Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet?

19 And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

20 "Therefore, **thus says the Lord God to them:** Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.

21 Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad,

22 I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep.

23 And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.

24 And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. **I am the LORD; I have spoken.**

25 "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

26 And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing.

27 And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. **And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them.**

28 They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid.

29 And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations.

30 **And they shall know that I am the LORD their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord God.**

31 **And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God."**

Declaration of War Against the Forces of Darkness

www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/declaration_of_war.htm

Now, before you start thinking we're talking about YOU, this is about EVIL - not people. Sure, some people are stinkers, but we're to love people and we're to hate evil. The darkness from our sinful nature is in all of us. We're not any better, it's just Christ in us that helps us be redeemed. Anyway, this is about the BIG picture, not any specific person, organization, leader, etc.

No more. It ends now.

For too long we've ignored what was going on in the church. For too long we've sat out or even denied there was a war. We've been infiltrated. We've been co-opted. We've been dumbed down. We've had our greatest weapons ridiculed and demeaned until nobody wants them anymore. This is no kind of way to fight a war.

We've allowed ourselves to be fattened up and we've planted roots. We've been herded together in big groups like cattle and we bump around against each other making useless noises. Wolves have come in and we've welcomed them. We've accepted aid from the enemies of God. We've taken the enemy's advice about how to make war. We've hired consultants to show us how to be more like the world.

We've ignored our own King's plan. We've sent a pitiful few skirmishing parties out to do the work of missions for us and patronized them when they come home wounded and hungry. We've given all the ammunition to the supply clerks back home and deprived the infantry of what they needed to push back the darkness. Everything about what we're doing is upside down.

No more will we take on the names and philosophies of men to define and identify us. No more will we allow factions over secondary issues to divide us. We are to be OF Jesus and Him alone. Only He gets to put His brand on us. Only He gets to direct us. Only He is truth. This is war! Nothing else can be trusted. His is the unbreakable cypher. Pure, full, uncut Truth cannot be spoken by the enemy. Truth and Love are our uniform, our code, our defining characteristic. Only Truth and Love will suffice for battle against principalities and forces of darkness.

No more will we waste time on our own vain pleasures and indulgences. No more will we allow the egos and prides and traditions and philosophies of Man to divide us. We will love Truth and settle for nothing less. We will learn to sniff out and purge compromise and half-truths. We will force out of us every bad dark thing by being completely filled with the Bread of Life. We will be nourished by Truth. We will be armored by Truth. We will swing the Sword of Truth in big wide circles and pierce the hearts of anyone near. We will fight and not grow weary. We will charge forward and never retreat. Should one slip, others will lift him up. Should one fall, others will take his place.

No more. It ends now. There are those who are already equipped to fight and we will enlist them, organize them and send them back out to recruit more. We'll fight with love to awaken our brethren who are asleep and get them in fighting form. We will push back the darkness by speaking nothing but TRUTH. It is rare and precious - and only Jesus is the source. Every man-made thing will burn off in the fire. Only Jesus can be trusted.

As Gideon, we will lovingly restore our own altars first while the people are sleeping. Then we can rally a restored, awakened people to fight the forces of darkness. Those on the front lines who have proven themselves good and faithful servants and stewards of their talents will be provisioned with a hundred times their own needs so they can feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty as they see any need. We will pray and encourage and support them and recruit more. We will always strive to continue growing up into Jesus, who is the Head.

In view of the great mercy shown us by Jesus Christ, we will offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. We will stop conforming to the pattern of this world. We will be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we will be able to test and approve what is God's good, pleasing and perfect will. Then we'll go and do it.

I Corinthians 14:8 "Again, if the trumpet make an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?"

No more. It ends now. As clear as we can say it, this is war.

What Is The Solution?

We need New Wineskins. We need to be corporately transformed by the renewing of our minds. (Romans 12:1-2) We don't need to invent some new system. A true New Wineskin isn't a mega-church with really excellent childcare and fancy shows. That's not resulting in radical transformation of economies and ecologies and taking back the culture. Transfer growth and massive budgets spent on discretionary things aren't going to get this done.

We have to be rebooted. We have to be re-NEW-ed. Set back to the defaults. Back to our first love. Things have to be put back into divine order, the way they were intended from the beginning. And that means the City Churches. That is the New Wineskin. That is the greatest challenge for us to face, will require the most Holy Spirit, is the most dangerous thing to the enemy and will prove our love for each other to the world in ways we can't even comprehend right now. THAT kind of community and sharing with each as they have a need is a true witness of what Christianity can and should be. Our endless divisions and factions are not.

Again, a City Church is NOT a matter of creating some new organization. If there are Christians in your town, then there is a "Church of YourTown" and there always has been. Odds are that the Body in your town is filled with all kinds of things that grieve God and will keep you corporately from inheriting the kingdom right now. (Galatians 5:19-21, Deut. 28) It's just a matter of following the Biblical prescriptions and getting it washed clean and then getting it filled with Jesus instead. It's a matter of confessing your sins and the sins of your fathers and forefathers and asking Him to do whatever it takes to show up and direct the affairs of this stiff-necked people. You have to ask Him to restore the Lampstand because you've almost surely lost it generations ago. America has been dark for a LONG time.

Revelation 2:1-7 (KJV)

1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The "love" mentioned there is "agape". Their former agape was cold. Surely that was affecting their own bonds of harmony. Surely some of them were going their own way. They were commended because they were patient and had not fainted and hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. But still they had lost their first love. Perhaps their focus had gotten diverted to all the things coming against them and not on the love for their Lord and for each other. But at least they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans (NOT the people themselves, their deeds). (See Psalm 141:5-6)

But who were the Nicolaitans? Some say they were a cult formed around a leader Nicolaus – whether that is the deacon Nicholas or not, no one really knows. It may be that it's not a name but a description of the main theology of the group – that it was transliterated instead of translated. The word itself is from the Greek *nikao*, which means "to conquer or overcome," and *laos*, which means "people" and from which the word "laity" comes. Together they mean destruction of the people and refers to the earliest form of a priest class or clergy that "lorded it" over the people. This divided the people and set up some who had the "deep mysteries" as more holy or more powerful or responsible to direct the affairs of others. That is decidedly against the truth that we are all priests and kings and none is greater than any other. We are to lean not on our own understanding – or that of any other man. (Proverbs 3:5-6) Only Jesus gets to direct all of our paths!

A good translation of Nicolaitan would be "those who prevail over the people." This clergy system would later turn into the papal hierarchy of the Catholic church. The Council of Trent stated, "If anyone shall say that there is not in the Catholic Church a hierarchy established by the divine ordination, consisting of bishops, presbyters and ministers, let him be anathema." (That means cursed and excommunicated.) The "Reformers" may have changed some things about the Catholic church, but they were very careful not to disrupt the hierarchy that empowered them, as well as the Catholics! It was a "reformation" that addressed all the inconsequential issues and left alone the things that would have really done some damage to the forces of darkness. It brought more division, didn't restore the City Churches and didn't eliminate the priest class. (But there were always those out in the woods who remained true – and were actively hunted by the Catholic church and her daughters. Do you know how many people Luther and Calvin had burned at the stake? Look it

up.)

Those who are appointed by God to serve (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers) are NOT to “lord it over” the people!! They are GIFTS to the church to serve. To lead by the examples of their holy and broken and submitted lives – not to boss people around and legislate behavior. That is just stepping into the role set for God and God alone. No man should be directing our paths. Only God, through His Spirit, gets to direct us! Until the Church learns this and the pyramidal, hierarchical system comes crashing down and gets inverted to its proper form, we cannot march shoulder to shoulder without jostling each other. (See page 72.)

Here is what the Matthew Henry Concise commentary says about this passage:

These churches were in such different states as to purity of doctrine and the power of godliness, that the words of Christ to them will always suit the cases of other churches, and professors. Christ knows and observes their state; though in heaven, yet he walks in the midst of his churches on earth, observing what is wrong in them, and what they want. The church of Ephesus is commended for diligence in duty. Christ keeps an account of every hour's work his servants do for him, and their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. But it is not enough that we are diligent; there must be bearing patience, and there must be waiting patience. And though we must show all meekness to all men, yet we must show just zeal against their sins. The sin Christ charged this church with, is, not the having left and forsaken the object of love, but having lost the fervent degree of it that at first appeared. Christ is displeased with his people, when he sees them grow remiss and cold toward him. Surely this mention in Scripture, of Christians forsaking their first love, reproves those who speak of it with carelessness, and thus try to excuse indifference and sloth in themselves and others; our Saviour considers this indifference as sinful. They must repent: they must be grieved and ashamed for their sinful declining, and humbly confess it in the sight of God. They must endeavour to recover their first zeal, tenderness, and seriousness, and must pray as earnestly, and watch as diligently, as when they first set out in the ways of God. If the presence of Christ's grace and Spirit is slighted, we may expect the presence of his displeasure. Encouraging mention is made of what was good among them. Indifference as to truth and error, good and evil, may be called charity and meekness, but it is not so; and it is displeasing to Christ. The Christian life is a warfare against sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh. We must never yield to our spiritual enemies, and then we shall have a glorious triumph and reward. All who persevere, shall derive from Christ, as the Tree of life, perfection and confirmation in holiness and happiness, not in the earthly paradise, but in the heavenly. This is a figurative expression, taken from the account of the garden of Eden, denoting the pure, satisfactory, and eternal joys of heaven; and the looking forward to them in this world, by faith, communion with Christ, and the consolations of the Holy Spirit. Believers, take your wrestling life here, and expect and look for a quiet life hereafter; but not till then: the word of God never promises quietness and complete freedom from conflict here. —Matthew Henry Concise

The enemy of our souls convinces us that when there is conflict we need to subdivide up into chunks that will have peace. Churches and denominations split because of conflict. And yet, there is no way to build spiritual muscles – to practice patience, kindness, long-suffering, brotherly love, godliness, etc. – without conflict! If the first time God takes sandpaper to our rough edges (at the hand of another Christian) we run for somewhere without sandpaper, the end result is thousands of denominations full of fat, soft, milk-fed, couch-potato, shackled, self-deluded, immature people who are sure they're going to heaven, even though they have no real Fruit. And that's pretty much what we have now. And the enemy is winning. (And God Himself turned us over to this and blinded us to our own state because we've gone our own way.)

God wants us to be One Body and to be known by our extravagant, unstoppable, unchanging, sacrificial love for Him and for each other. By our ability to forgive any wrong, to love despite any insult, to endure through any trial, to love unconditionally despite anything that comes. But that's not what the Church of America is known for at all right now. We're known for our political involvement, for our massive buildings, for our endless divisions, for our dress codes, for our fancy shows, for our legalistic attitudes. But surely not for our fierce, absolute love for ALL the Brethren and willingness to sell all that we have and share with each as they have a need. We're not known for our desperate, unfailing love for community and harmony and respect for the final, last wishes prayer of Jesus in John 17.

I believe it can change, but not until your town gets a Lampstand back. Not until a fire is lit. That's what happened in Ephesus in the first place. That's how they first got a Lampstand. Paul was sent by Antioch (which got lit by Jerusalem - which got lit by God Himself in the upper room at Pentecost), and he went into Ephesus and found some Christians there. They had been baptized by John and repented, but hadn't received the Holy Spirit. So Paul explained it to them, laid hands on them and lit them up with the fire of God. That was the first “spiral”. First, individuals have to be lit up.

Acts 19:1-7 (KJV) – 1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the

upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Then Paul went into the synagogues for three months, speaking boldly and proving through the Scriptures (that's the Old Testament, by the way) that Jesus was the Christ.

Acts 19:1-20 (KJV) – *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. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*

So He left the “institutional churches” and went out into public space and disputed and taught daily in the school of Tyrannus. He labored for two years, so that ALL who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord. And God confirmed it with miracles by the hands of Paul. Even handkerchiefs that touched his body were healing people and delivering them of demons! But still the town won't light up. Until ...

Acts 19:13-20 (KJV) - *13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 **And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.** 18 **And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.** 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 **So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.***

Do you see what was required? The difference between the counterfeits and the real thing had to be illustrated. The people had to understand that posers and fakers will get their rear ends kicked by the forces of satan! It's not just using The Name, it's having the authority behind it to handle whatever comes – and that requires holiness. The people didn't really turn until the false got stripped naked and sent screaming into the night – and then the people realized how truly desperate their state was. THEN fear fell on them – and Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, you can't get anywhere without that. They held the name of Jesus in high regard. And many who were believers came and confessed and showed their deeds. There were LOTS more Christians than probably even Paul realized – FAR more! But they were hiding. They were lukewarm. They were unrepentant of their witchcraft and idolatry. But now they get a little fear and they come together and light a big bonfire in the middle of town.

Paul brought a fire from Antioch (which was a Lampstand city) to light Ephesus. He started immediately down by the river, but it doesn't manifest in a big way until two years later. Something is percolating and the stage is being set and the spiritual weapons of war are being turned against the town – and God is confirming it with miracles – but it doesn't really, really light up until this moment. Then, in the “natural” the Body of Christ comes together, repents and lights a fire – burning all the objects of their idolatry! And the witchcraft and spells and other things thrown into that fire amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver! That is approximately 150 years worth of personal income at the average wage at the time! That is FAR more than those twelve guys down by the river! This is a BIG DEAL! In American terms, that would be like a \$4,000,000 bonfire! (\$27K x 150)

What do you think might happen if the Body of Christ in a town in America came together and burned all their Harry Potter and New Age books and porn and all the other things that had become idols in their lives and grieved God – maybe even their TV's and Playstations and their fishing poles and their Precious Moments collection? Do you think a \$4,000,000 bonfire would make the news? Do you think it would get God's attention? Do you think He might pour out His Spirit on a town that came together like that and repented for all the things they had put ahead of Him and His will? I wonder what God might do to bless a place like that?!

Well, in Ephesus, the economy starts to change pretty much instantly. It is a pagan capital and has temples to many gods, foremost among them Diana (Artemis). The temple of Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the largest building on the planet at the time and a MAJOR tourist attraction. The silversmiths (and their demonic rulers) in Ephesus realized how much this confession and repentance was going to hurt their livelihood and so they start a riot. They charge Paul with how many people he has converted – which is a compliment and a confirmation in a round-about way. The resulting riot and the people chanting for two hours would surely have made the news today!! And why are they rioting? Because they don't like change and because their WEALTH is at risk.

Acts 19:21-41 (KJV) – *23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have **our wealth**. 26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this **Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands**: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. 30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of **two hours** cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. 37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. 38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. 39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. 40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.*

Finally the city clerk has to calm it down and dismiss them for fear that the Romans will call it an unlawful assembly and punish the town for revolting. Most of them don't even know why they are there, but remember, this is a SPIRITUAL battle and the forces of darkness whisper to the minds of the weak and defenseless and get them to obey. Without Jesus helping us take captive every thought and bring it into obedience with Christ, the rulers of darkness whisper to us and we often obey. The enemy really, REALLY didn't like what God was doing in Ephesus. I bet for a long time he thought he was winning and Paul wasn't getting anywhere, but then all in one burst God uses the sons of Sceva to glorify His own Name and turn the tide. The result is that Ephesus becomes a Christianized city and eventually the Temple of Diana is sacked repeatedly and mostly sinks into a swamp!

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephesus>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Artemis

But by the time John receives the Letter to the Church of Ephesus from Jesus around A.D. 100, the Body of Christ in Ephesus had lost most of its fire. It remained a watchful group, being in the midst of a town full of idolatry – and it hated the “priest class” that tried to elevate itself above the people. Surely those in this city would see the dangers of that. Surely many ran TO Christianity because of the abuses of the priest class in their former religion. But they had lost their agape love – for Jesus and for each other. You can't lose just one or the other, as our first love leads the way and empowers our agape love for all other people.

What is a City Church?

I know this might get a little detailed and you might be tempted to skim over some of these without paying too much attention, but if you're really seeking TRUTH, please stay with me here. I want to lead with the Word of God, so you can see it for yourself, as He explained it to me.

Biblically, the “church” or “ekklesia” is only one of three choices.

1) Either it is the Body of Christ universal – that consists of all of those who have “been called out”:

[1 Corinthians 15:9](#) For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted **the church {ekklesia} of God.**

[Ephesians 5:27](#) That he might present it to himself a glorious **church**, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

LOTS more example of this one. I'm not going to spend time on that. That one should be obvious.

These below are the only two instances of the word “ekklesia” in the Gospels:

[Matthew 16:18](#) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build **my church {ekklesia}**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

[Matthew 18:17](#) And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell [it] unto **the church {ekklesia}**: but if he neglect to hear **the church {ekklesia}**, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Those in Matthew are both from the mouth of Jesus – one referring to the universal church – His Body – and the other to the local assembly (you surely can't tell anything to the whole universal assembly). All the other “ekklesia” uses are in Acts and the epistles (and again from the mouth of Jesus in Revelation).

2) Or it consists of those who are called out that live in a particular municipality:

[Acts 8:1](#) And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against **the church which was at Jerusalem**; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

[Acts 11:22](#) Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of **the church which was in Jerusalem**: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

[Acts 13:1](#) Now there were in **the church that was at Antioch** certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

[Acts 15:4](#) And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of **the church**, and [of] the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. **{This is Jerusalem.}**

[Acts 15:22](#) Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with **the whole church**, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; [namely], Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: **{This is Jerusalem.}**

[Acts 20:17](#) And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of **the church. {of Ephesus.}**

[Romans 16:1](#) I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of **the church which is at Cenchrea: {a suburb city of Corinth}**

[1 Corinthians 11:18](#) For first of all, when ye come together in **the church**, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. **{Corinth}**

[1 Corinthians 1:2](#) Unto **the church of God which is at Corinth**, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called [to be] saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

[2 Corinthians 1:1](#) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy [our] brother, unto **the church of God which is at Corinth**, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: **{Achaia is a region, not a city.}**

[Colossians 4:16](#) And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in **the church of the**

Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the [epistle] from Laodicea.

[2 Thessalonians 1:1](#) Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto **the church of the Thessalonians** in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

[Revelation 2:1](#) Unto the angel of **the church of Ephesus** write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; **{Note: these in Revelation are all Jesus talking.}**

[Revelation 2:8](#) And unto the angel of **the church in Smyrna** write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

[Revelation 2:12](#) And to the angel of **the church in Pergamos** write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

[Revelation 3:1](#) And unto the angel of **the church in Sardis** write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

[Revelation 3:7](#) And to the angel of **the church in Philadelphia** write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

[Revelation 3:14](#) And unto the angel of **the church of the Laodiceans** write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

3) The third option is the segment of the local church that might be meeting in a particular place:

[Romans 16:5](#) Likewise [greet] the **church** {assembly} that is in {Greek: kata} their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaeetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. **{Remember, Achaia is a region.}**

[1 Corinthians 16:19](#) The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the **church** {assembly} that is in {kata} their house.

[Colossians 4:15](#) Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the **church** {assembly} which is in {kata} his house.

[Philemon 1:2](#) And to [our] beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the **church in** {kata} thy house:

(The literal translations translate “church” in these contexts as “assembly” – as even the King James does in Acts 19:12 when it refers to a riotous mob – which wants nothing to do with Jesus, but at least they’re in one accord!)

The word “kata” is Strong's Concordance Greek number 2596 and you can read more about how it is translated [here](#) (or go to www.BlueLetterBible.com) The short of it is that that word – kata – is not as simple as just “which is in.” It's translated dozens of different ways throughout the Bible and has a sense of increasing or starting, not just sitting there. So these passages may mean that the City Church sprang from the assembly that started in their house. I'm not a Greek scholar, but I know that this particular word is not as clear-cut as to make the translation absolutely sure. Work it out yourself.

Even if it is translated correctly and means that the ekklesia was meeting in their house, that doesn't infer that it was ALL of the ekklesia in that town or that it's OK to divide up into unconnected home groups – and the clear words of Jesus are to either the Universal Church or the City Church.

These four listed above are all the references that I can find to anything smaller than a city and in these there is no implication that this assembly is a self-contained unit, but only that SOME of the ekklesia of that town are meeting in these particular houses. It's clear that there are far more references to the church universal and to the city church.

These handful of verses are often used to justify the “house church” movement that wants to return to the apostolic roots of the church – but they miss that these aren't the ONLY places that the ekklesia was meeting – they also met in Solomon's Porch and in rented spaces and in the School of Tyrannus. (Acts 5:12, Acts 28:30, Acts 19:9) God is a lot more creative than just to use homes. If you make meeting in homes an idol, then all you've got is the programmatized system we already have, but with much smaller buildings. Jesus often met in the open air and by the wells and in the streets and even in the synagogues – AND in homes. And He preached repentance to whole cities.

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

[Matthew 10:23](#) But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not

have gone over the **cities** of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

He wants whole CITIES to repent!

[Matthew 11:20](#) Then began he to upbraid the **cities** wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

[Luke 10:13](#) *Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.*

What I'm trying to show is that we need to disconnect the word "church" from all of the baggage that we have attached to it by our systems and structures. You're going to have to set aside for a moment what you think "church" looks like or always has been and focus on what it SHOULD be in God's economy.

Here is further evidence that the City Church is the thing. There is no regional church in the Bible. There is no structure or leader that has oversight or control beyond one city. There are no denominations or national headquarters. Here are verses where the Word refers to multiples of churches {ekklesias}:

[2 Corinthians 1:1](#) *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy [our] brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with **all the saints which are in all Achaia**: {Achaia is a region, not a city. Thus ALL the saints there are greeted, not the singular "church" of Achaia.}*

[1 Corinthians 16:19](#) *The **churches of Asia** salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. {Asia is a region with multiple city churches.}*

[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. {Judaea, Galilee and Samaria are regions with multiple city churches}*

[Acts 15:41](#) *And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the **churches**. {Both are regions with multiple city churches}*

[Acts 16:4](#) *And as they went through **the cities**, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. [Act 16:5](#) And so were the **churches** established in the faith, and increased in number daily. {They went through the CITIES delivering the message and thus the CHURCHES grew.}*

[Romans 16:4](#) *Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all **the churches of the Gentiles**. {This is a reference to the cities outside of Israel that are primarily populated by Gentiles. There were no ekklesias that were JUST for Gentiles and excluded Jewish Christians – that would have been against everything they were teaching! (1 Corin 12:12-14, etc.) This is a reference to the cities of the Gentiles in which there were assemblies.}*

[1 Corinthians 14:33](#) *For God is not [the author] of confusion, but of peace, as in all **churches** of the saints.*

[1 Corinthians 16:1](#) *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to **the churches of Galatia**, even so do ye. {Galatia is a region with multiple city churches.}*

[1 Corinthians 16:19](#) *The **churches of Asia** salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. {Asia is a region with multiple city churches.}*

[2 Corinthians 8:1](#) *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the **churches of Macedonia**; {Macedonia is a region with multiple city churches.}*

[2 Corinthians 8:18](#) *And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise [is] in the gospel throughout all the **churches**;*

[2 Corinthians 8:19](#) *And not [that] only, but who was also chosen of the **churches** to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and [declaration of] your ready mind:*

[2 Corinthians 8:23](#) *Whether [any do enquire] of Titus, [he is] my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren [be enquired of, they are] the messengers of the **churches**, [and] the glory of Christ.*

[2 Corinthians 8:24](#) *Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the **churches**, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.*

[2 Corin 11:28](#) *Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the **churches**.*

[2 Corinthians 12:13](#) For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other **churches**, except [it be] that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong. {Message to the church of Corinth.}

[Galatians 1:2](#) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the **churches of Galatia**: {Galatia is a region.}

[Galatians 1:22](#) And was unknown by face unto the **churches of Judaea** which were in Christ: {Judaea is a region.}

[1 Thessalonians 2:14](#) For ye, brethren, became followers of **the churches of God which in Judaea** are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they [have] of the Jews: {Judaea is a region.}

[2 Thessalonians 1:4](#) So that we ourselves glory in you in **the churches of God** for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

[Revelation 1:4](#) John to **the seven churches which are in Asia**: Grace [be] unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; {Asia is a region.}

There are those that say the Church is one and is purely spiritual and is already one body and doesn't need to be restored. Fine, in the spiritual realms, the Body is one. True enough. But in the "natural" - in this world - they are plural - churches. You can't just say the "Church" is one body and then explain away all of those verses where the Word of God refers to them as being more than one. It is both. In the spirit we are one, but in the natural, we are one body per city. That is the smallest division the Lord allows. That is the only thing I can find in the Word. The problems we have are not with the ethereal, spiritual, universal Body. All the problems that we have are a result of disobedience and rebellion in the Body of Christ that manifests in the "natural." If we can touch it, we can mess it up!

Considered differently, in ALL of these verses that refer to "churches" - not ONCE, not a single time in the Word of God is there a reference to the "churches in Jerusalem" or the "churches in Rome" or the "churches in Corinth". It's just not in there. Not ever. One town, one ekklesia. Period.

The Lord had already explained all of this to me before we ever found Watchman Nee, but I'm quoting him here because many recognize that he was a great pillar of the Church and already did so much work on this nearly 90 years ago. Here is a quote from Chapter 4 of Watchman Nee's book "The Normal Christian Church Life." (I would encourage you to read his entire book. It's available free on the FOTM website or at www.MinistryBooks.org .)

Watchman Nee, Chapter 4 {**Bold** emphases are mine.}

The seven churches in Asia, referred to in the book of Revelation, comprised the church in Ephesus, the church in Smyrna, the church in Pergamos, the church in Thyatira, the church in Sardis, the church in Philadelphia, and the church in Laodicea. They were seven churches, not one. Each was distinct from the others on the ground of the difference of locality. It was only because the believers did not reside in one place that they did not belong to one church. There were seven different churches simply because the believers lived in seven different places. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea are clearly all the names of places. Not only were the seven churches in Asia founded on the basis of locality, but all the churches mentioned in Scripture were founded on the same basis. Throughout the Word of God we can find no name attached to a church save the name of a place, for example, the church in Jerusalem, the church in Lystra, the church in Derbe, the church in Colosse, the church in Troas, the church in Thessalonica, the church in Antioch. **This fact cannot be overemphasized, that in Scripture no other name but the name of a locality is ever connected with a church, and division of the church into churches is solely on the ground of difference of locality.**

Can't you see that if there were ever supposed to be multiple churches in one town, somebody at some point in the Word would have mentioned it? Paul would have greeted the churches in Rome or some other city. But he didn't - not once.

That's because the assembly of those that live in one town are supposed to be One Body. That doesn't mean they all meet in one place, but that they are all under Christ's headship and working together. So, Biblically speaking, in God's eyes, for as long as there have been Christians in your town, there has been a "Church of Your Town."

What the City Church is NOT.

It's ultimately about Pride, isn't it? Surely that's how we got to 37,000+ denominations. That just CAN'T have been God's desire for us, can it? Is THIS mess what Jesus prayed for in the Garden of Gethsemane? (John 17) No. His plan is for one body in one town. His plan does not include giant autocratic networks managed by some regional or national leadership – whether by a board or by a “pope” or even by a democratic vote.

Watchman Nee, Chapter 4

“We have just seen that the boundary of a church cannot be narrower than the locality to which it belongs. **On the other hand, its boundary cannot be wider than the locality.** In the Word of God we never read of the church in Macedonia, or the church in Galatia, or the church in Judea, or the church in Galilee. Why? Because Macedonia and Galilee are provinces, and Judea and Galatia are districts. A province is not a scriptural unit of locality; neither is a district. Both include a number of units; therefore, they include a number of separate churches and do not constitute one church. **A provincial church or a district church is not according to Scripture, since it does not divide on the ground of locality, but combines a number of localities.** It is because all scriptural churches are local churches that there is no mention of state churches, provincial churches, or district churches in the Word of God.

It was not God's plan to unite the churches of different places into one church, but to have a separate church in each place. There were as many churches as there were places.

“He passed through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches” (Acts 15:41). Again the reference is not to one single church, because Syria and Cilicia were vast districts, each comprising a number of different places. It is permissible in political circles to unite many different places into a district and call it Syria or Cilicia, but God does not unite the believers in a number of different places and call them the church in Syria, or the church in Cilicia. There may be unions or mergers in the commercial or political world, **but God sanctions no combinations among the churches.** Each separate place must have a separate church.

God sanctions no division of the church within any one locality, and He sanctions no denominational combination of the churches in a number of localities. In Scripture there is always one church in one place, never several churches in one place, nor one church in several places. God does not recognize any fellowship of His children on a basis narrower, or wider, than that of a locality.

Nanking and Soochow are as truly separate units as Nanking and Glasgow are. In the division of churches the question of country or province does not arise; it is all a question of cities. Two cities of the same country, or the same province, have no closer relationship than two cities of different countries or different provinces. God's intention is that a church in any one locality should be a unit, and in their relationship one to the other the different churches must preserve their local character.

When God's people throughout the earth really see the local character of the churches, then they will appreciate their oneness in Christ as never before. The churches of God are local, intensely local. If any factor enters in to destroy their local character, then they cease to be scriptural churches.

Do you understand the damage that is done when men come together to build larger and larger systems? Do you see that the power plays and the money and the politics increase exponentially as a system of Man incorporates ten or a hundred or ten thousand congregations? Whether you acknowledge it or not, whether you name it that or not, you eventually end up with a pope and a board of cardinals. You end up with aristocracy that controls and manages and passes it down to those they deem worthy. You end up at the Tower of Babel again – building something that isn't of God – and the Lord has to split you up again. Isn't that what He's done with all of our denominations? Are there any that haven't split? Can dissension, division, faction, selfish ambition, envy, lust, pride, greed be anything other than the acts of the sinful nature that keep us from inheriting the Kingdom of God? (Galatians 5:19-21) How do you split a denomination or a congregation without at least SOME of those being in play?

The point is that the system we have built is built on the wrong foundation all the way down the line. There was never supposed to be a separate priest class that dominated all the sheep. We are all priests and kings and each is the temple of God. The Holy Spirit is to be our teacher – not any dogma or doctrine of Man. Those men who insist the most that it is THEIR responsibility to guide us into all truth are probably the ones that hear God's voice the least. (John 16:13-15, Ezekiel 34)

Hear me, there is NO hierarchical, autocratic, administrative, or other structure in the Word of God that extends beyond a single city. Except the universal Body of Christ as a totality that is under His headship, there is no conglomeration of churches. If there had been a “Bishop of Asia Minor” then the letters given to the Apostle John in the book of Revelation could have been addressed to him. But there wasn't and there's not supposed to be. Yes, those things did come into place later, but there is no scriptural justification for any such thing and it should be obvious by the fruit of them over the last 1900 or so years that they are NOT from God!

Can't you see the wisdom of God in all this? If the City Church is the biggest AND smallest allowable unit of the church, then heresy is limited, global or regional control by one person is eliminated, love of money is minimized, the massive inertia of a giant organization is eliminated, they can respond to local needs and crises much better, wholesale persecution and elimination of Christians is much harder – and many more. We'll cover that more later.

The City Church is also not about a “ministerial association” where all the denominational pastors get together. By it's very nature, that is just an effort at politeness, but not a representative governing body for the Body in that town. There are too many Christians that are no longer in the institutional churches. There are too many pastors that will not even socialize with other pastors. If we had to call up all the troops for war and we put an announcement in all the “institutional church” bulletins, who many of the true warriors would we reach? Half?

Restoring the City Church doesn't mean having a city-wide Christmas concert or a pastors prayer breakfast every couple of months. It means repenting for going your own way, repenting for not having been one body all along. It means getting under Christ's headship and no other. And it will require something different and it will manifest differently in every city. More on that under the “How” section.

One of the errors that has done great damage to the reputation and desirability of the City Church is a certain current group that is intent on “restoring” the role of the Apostles and Prophets, but they describe it in terms of a tiny handful of men sitting in authority OVER all the local city churches and directing their actions. That's just TOO close to a One World Government and Church for comfort! It's likely that any strategy about autocratic control under any headship other than Jesus' is dangerously likely to be coopted. Since a one world government and church is predicted in Revelation - and the leaders aren't on our team - this should be strongly resisted.

Clearly, the city churches MUST remain independent and should fight at ALL costs the imposition of outside autocratic authority models. This is another great defense against a (coming) One-World Church, since the towns are autonomous bodies with no outside dependencies for programs or processes or funds or leadership. They can't be co-opted and they can't have their resources siphoned off to some central command and control structure with leaders that aren't truly accountable to anyone. The error of C. Peter Wagner and others is not that they want to unite the body of Christ, it's that they misunderstand the nature of authority and hierarchy and servanthood within the Church of God. (And that they think they can have that much authority without it wrecking their heads.)

The true prophets and apostles called by God don't need restoring. They are out there doing as they're told without drawing too much attention to themselves. They are known by their deeds, not by their titles or their bank accounts or their big ministry budgets. And they know enough to not want autocratic control over anything. The real ones are servants at heart and know that absolute power corrupts absolutely. They don't even trust themselves, only Jesus.

Just so we're very clear, in case you missed it or I was being too subtle. I'm convinced that according to the Word of God, taking the names of Men and dividing up into factions is a heresy. Promoting factions and dissensions and teaching people that it's OK to marginalize or ignore other parts of the Body is one of the acts of the sinful nature that will keep you (and your sheep) from inheriting the kingdom of heaven. Sugarcoat it and all it a “denomination” if you like, but you're a sect and, ultimately, a cult. You cannot walk in His power while you're doing stuff like that. The Word of God says that if you have something against your brother, you should leave your sacrifice at the altar and go settle it first. (Matt. 5:23-24) It says that if you take Communion unworthily and have unforgiveness in your heart and aren't rightly discerning the Lord's body you will get sick and die. (I Corin. 11:27-30) We have people in the congregations all over America that are sick and dying and no sign of the Lord healing them on any large scale. Maybe it's because we're taking Communion unworthily. How do you split a congregation or a denomination and not be still holding something against a brother? Can that be rightly discerning the Lord's body? Could that be it? Is that why people are getting supernaturally healed in Africa and India, but not here? Because Deuteronomy 28 says that if we don't carefully obey the Lord our God in our time of prosperity all the diseases of Egypt will stick to us and nobody will heal us. Wasting diseases and boils and blindness and confusion of mind – and it even says that the Lord will INVENT new diseases to torture us for having gone our own way. (Like AIDS and Ebola and Smallpox and bird flu and mad cow and ...) Go read it! He even says that just as it pleased Him to see us prosper it will please Him to see us destroyed!! I don't think we're teaching that in Sunday School!

If you don't think God is irritated about what we've done to the Body of Christ, then you must think that God changes and what used to irritate Him doesn't irritate Him anymore. Because when His children were being rebellious in Hosea and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and other places, He had no problem at all whacking them with a big stick and turning them over to their own depraved minds. I'm pretty sure that's what He's done with us. We wanted to go our own way, so He let us. We wanted to set a king over us, so He let us. And we deserve everything we've gotten and more. But there is one chance to turn this around. He gave us a simple, one-step recipe to restore it all – REPENT. To all the city churches in Revelation 2 and 3 that were criticized, the solution is the same – repent. And you better mean it. And the more of you that do it, the better.

But even one man is enough to get Him to turn. (Ezekiel 22)

And I need to mention this, just because it affects our own backyard here. About 20 years ago there was a man here in Kansas City that had a big calling on him to bring revival and to restore the Body – by means of the city church. I don't doubt that his call was genuine, there are too many confirmations of it. I don't doubt his heart. I don't doubt that God told him to restore the true church outside of the denominational walls. (In fact, I can find evidence of God raising up men to do just that in Kansas City going back nearly 200 years!)

But I do question how well he was hearing God and interpreting what he was hearing. This particular man's vision of the city church was to get a bunch of “Spirit-filled” congregations reporting to HIM and that would be the restored “Church of Kansas City.” That defies the clear indication of scripture that the city church already IS and consists of ALL who have Jesus. There is no need to BUILD one, just to tune up the one that's been there all along!

His model was autocratic and top-down in nature with him as the head. Which defies the clear indication of scripture that the elders are to be servants of all, not popes. And, when pastors of particular congregations didn't want to knuckle under and join the big move of God, the “prophets” from this ministry would go and publicly preach disaster on them and their congregations. Which is just manipulation and control – and ultimately witchcraft.

I grew up in the Baptist church in Kansas City during that time and never even heard of the guy until the Fall of 2004. Evidently, nobody bothered to consider that maybe the Baptists in the Northland were also part of the Body of Christ and they should maybe include us in the big move of God. The short of the story is that this particular city church movement (and ministry) fizzled rather dramatically and publicly and hurt a lot of people in the process. There are still pastors in town that were SUBSTANTIALLY injured and have a knee-jerk reaction now to any discussion of a city church. If God gives you a really big job to do that will potentially affect MILLIONS of people – and you make it about YOU and your conferences and DVD's and your prophets – the Lord is going to turn you over to your own depraved mind and you won't even know He did it. Now all that remains is a very large prayer network, which is just ONE of the four things the angel supposedly told him to do. And, you can pretty much trace all of the excesses and goofy “Charismania” manifestations that have afflicted the church in the last twenty years back to that time in Kansas City when it all imploded.

I'm familiar with several people that were raised up after that to do the same job in Kansas City. Some wouldn't give up their money or their job or their “self”. The eye of the Lord ranges to and fro seeking those who will obey. And if His eye lands on you, then He'll test you – and if you fail, He'll move on to the next guy. I suspect that there have been hundreds and hundreds of people just in Kansas City that God has tried to call to do this over the years.

But even if you can keep it together under all the trials and tests and spiritual warfare, if the timing isn't right, it's never going to work anyway. So we need to show a lot of mercy, cause if it wasn't God's time, there was no way they were going to be able to do it right anyway. God Himself will make it fail if He's not ready for it yet. But I think now is the time.

Just because someone has tried before and failed, doesn't mean it can't be done. Just because someone that was a heretic on other things spoke about a city church, doesn't mean it's not the right thing to do. Just because Benny Hinn wears a suit to preach and takes up an offering, doesn't mean those things are automatically wrong. Does it?

And, in case you haven't, let me suggest again that you read the “Red Dragon” book. If God gives you a big job to do, like restore the City Church and get the bleeding in Jesus' Body to stop – and you make it about YOU – you're going to get one big, nasty, snarly Red Dragon and not even know it. The closer you got to getting it right before you screwed it up, the more of God you heard and saw before you stepped off the path, the worse it's going to go for you. That guy twenty years ago didn't get the worst Red Dragon I've seen. Joseph Smith was also sent to the Kansas City area (in fact, was in LIBERTY!) and told to restore the Body and the City Church. He made it about him and temples, started hearing from false angels – and it all grew into a really big cult (or denomination, same difference) with a NASTY Red Dragon!

Who is part of the City Church?

Everybody that has the Holy Spirit in them and lives in that town is part of the Body. Period. You don't have to "join" something or be a "member" or take some class. You're either part of the Body of Christ or you're not. Any effort to divide or eliminate people or refuse fellowship to those who are His is divisive and outside of the bounds of scripture.

Watchman Nee, Chapter 4

What then is right? **All exclusiveness is wrong. All inclusiveness (of true children of God) is right.** Denominations are not scriptural, and we ought to have no part in them, but if we adopt an attitude of criticism and think, "They are denominational; I am undenominational. They belong to sects; I belong to Christ alone"—such differentiating is definitely sectarian.

Yes, praise God I am of Christ, but my fellowship is not merely with those who **say**, "I am of Christ," but with all who **are** of Christ. What is of vital importance is not the confession, but the fact. Although these other believers say they are of Paul, of Cephas, and of Apollos, yet in fact they are of Christ. I do not so much mind what they say, but I very much mind what they are. I do not inquire whether they are denominational or undenominational, sectarian or unsectarian; I only inquire, "Are they of Christ?" **If they are of Christ, then they are my brethren.**

To say, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Cephas," is obviously sectarian; but to say, "I am of Christ," is sectarian too, though less obviously so. The confession, "I am of Christ," is good as a confession, but it is not an adequate basis for forming a separate church, since it excludes some of the children of God in a given locality by including only a certain section who say, "I am of Christ." **That every believer belongs to Christ is a fact, whether that fact be declared or not; and to differentiate between those who proclaim it and those who do not, is condemned by God as carnal.** It is the **fact** that matters, not the **declaration** of it. The sphere of a church in any place does not merely include those in that place who say, "I am of Christ," but all in that place who **are** of Christ. It extends over the entire area of the locality, and includes the **entire** number of the Christians in the locality.

To take one's stand as belonging to Christ alone is perfectly right, but to divide between Christians who take that stand and Christians who do not, is altogether wrong. To brand as sectarian those who say, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Cephas," and feel spiritually superior as we separate ourselves from them and have fellowship only with those who say, "I am of Christ," makes us guilty of the very sin we condemn in others. If we make non-sectarianism the basis of our fellowship, then we are dividing the church on a ground other than the one ordained of God, and thereby we form another sect. The scriptural ground for a church is a locality and not non-sectarianism. Any fellowship that is not as wide as the locality is sectarian. **All Christians who live in the same place as I do, are in the same church as I am, and I dare exclude none. I acknowledge as my brother, and as a fellow member of my church, every child of God who lives in my locality.**

We should all be absolutely committed to this! I'm not calling people to leave their denominations in order to be a part of the Body of Christ. That's just goofy! Either you are or you aren't already a part of the Body of Christ. What building you happen to visit on Sunday morning is irrelevant. We CANNOT continue to divide the Body of Christ, even by an insistence that only those who agree with us about THAT can be a part of what we're doing! Some of the people that tried to restore the City Churches in the past fell into this trap – "we're the true church and you're not." It just denies the reality of the situation. **I'll keep saying it – if the Holy Spirit is in you and the Holy Spirit is in me, then we're just ONE and that's all there is to it!** Now we need to figure out how to act like it.

But how do we know if the Holy Spirit is in someone? How do we know if we're supposed to be one with them?

Watchman Nee, Chapter 5

The Spirit who dwells in the heart of every believer is one Spirit; therefore, He makes all those in whom He dwells to be one, even as He Himself is one. **Christians may differ from one another in innumerable ways, but all Christians of all ages, with their countless differences, have this one fundamental likeness—the Spirit of God dwells in every one of them.** This is the secret of the oneness of believers, and this is the secret of their separation from the world. The reason for Christian unity and for Christian separation is one.

It is this inherent unity that makes all believers one, and it is this inherent unity that accounts for the impossibility of division between believers, except for geographical reasons. **Those who do not have this are outsiders; those who have it are our brethren. If you have the Spirit of Christ and I have the Spirit of Christ, then we both belong to the same Church.** Paul besought all believers to endeavor "to **keep** the oneness of the Spirit" (Eph. 4:3); he did not exhort us to **have** the oneness, but merely to **keep** it. We have it already, for obviously we

cannot keep what we do not have. God has never told us to become one with other believers; we already are one. Therefore, **we do not need to create oneness; we only need to maintain it.**

We cannot **make** this oneness, since by the Spirit we **are** one in Christ, and we cannot break it, because it is an eternal fact in Christ; but we can destroy the **effects** of it, so that its expression in the Church is lost. **Alas! that we have not only failed to preserve this precious oneness, but have actually so destroyed the fruits of it, that there is little outward trace of oneness among the children of God. ”**

Did you get that? We were supposed to KEEP the Oneness. What are you doing in your current situation or congregation that actively works to assure the KEEPING of the Oneness of the Spirit amongst the believers in your city? How much are you reaching out? How much are you forgiving and overlooking so that peace can reign?

Are we not the most hypersensitive, error-seekers on the planet? Even the slightest hint of a difference of opinion, and we call it heresy, throw up our hands and split off. We might even split a church because we didn't like the way a business meeting went. Or take sides in a personnel dispute and allow it to split the Body.

If it weren't so devastatingly painful to millions and insulting to God, it would almost be funny how we think so much of ourselves that we can just do our own thing and tell the rest of the Body to go take a flying leap.

Watchman Nee, Chapter 5

“How are we going to determine who are our brothers and our fellow members in the Church of God? Not by inquiring if they hold the same doctrinal views that we hold, or have had the same spiritual experiences; nor by seeing if their customs, manner of living, interests, and preferences tally with ours. We merely inquire, Are they indwelt by the Spirit of God or not? **We cannot insist on oneness of opinions, or oneness of experience, or any other oneness among believers, except the oneness of the Spirit.** That oneness there can be, and always must be, among the children of God. All who have this oneness are in the Church.

In your travels has it not sometimes happened that on a boat or train you have met a stranger, and after only a few moments of conversation you have found a pure love for him welling up in your heart? That spontaneous outgoing of love was because of the one Spirit dwelling in both hearts. Such inner spiritual oneness transcends all social, racial, and national differences.

How can we know whether or not a person has this oneness of the Spirit? In the verse immediately following Paul's exhortation to keep the oneness of the Spirit, he explains what those have in common who possess this oneness. **We cannot expect believers to be alike in everything, but there are seven things which all true believers share, and by the existence or absence of these we can know whether or not a person has the oneness of the Spirit.** Many other things are of great importance, but these seven are vital. They are indispensable to spiritual fellowship, and they are at once the minimum and the maximum requirements that can be made of any person who professes to be a fellow believer.

SEVEN FACTORS IN SPIRITUAL ONENESS

“**One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all**” (Eph. 4:4-6). A person is constituted a member of the Church on the ground that he possesses the oneness of the Spirit, and that will result in his being one with all believers on the above seven points. They are the seven elements in the oneness of the Spirit, which is the common heritage of all the children of God. In drawing a line of demarcation between those who belong to the Church and those who do not, we must require **nothing** beyond these seven lest we exclude any who belong to the family of God; and we dare not require anything **less**, lest we include any who do not belong to the divine family. **All in whom these seven are found belong to the Church; all who lack any of them do not belong to the Church.**

(1) ONE BODY. The question of oneness begins with the question of membership of the Body of Christ. The sphere of our fellowship is the sphere of the Body. Those who are outside that sphere have no spiritual relationship with us, but those who are inside that sphere are **all** in fellowship with us. We cannot make any choice of fellowship in the Body, accepting some members and rejecting others. We are all part of the one Body, and nothing can possibly separate us from it, or from one another. Anyone who has received Christ belongs to the Body, and he and we are one. **If we do not wish to extend fellowship to anyone, we must first make sure that he does not belong to the Body; if he does, we have no reason to reject him** (unless for such disciplinary reasons as are clearly laid down in the Word of God).

(2) ONE SPIRIT. If anyone seeks fellowship with us, however he may differ from us in experience or outlook, provided he has the same Spirit as we have, he is entitled to be received as a brother. **If he has received the Spirit of Christ, and we have received the Spirit of Christ, then we are one in the Lord, and nothing must divide us.**

(3) ONE HOPE. This hope, which is common to all the children of God, is not a general hope, but the hope of our calling, that is, the hope of our calling as Christians. What is our hope as Christians? We hope to be with the Lord forever in glory. There is not a single soul who is truly the Lord's in whose heart there is not this hope, for to have Christ in us is to have "the hope of glory" in us (Col. 1:27). If anyone claims to be the Lord's, but has no hope of heaven or glory, his is a mere empty profession. **All who share this one hope are one, and since we have the hope of being together in glory for all eternity, how can we be divided in time? If we are going to share the same future, shall we not gladly share the same present?**

(4) ONE LORD. There is only one Lord, the Lord Jesus, and all who recognize that God has made Jesus of Nazareth to be both Lord and Christ are one in Him. **If anyone confesses Jesus to be Lord, then his Lord is our Lord, and since we serve the same Lord, nothing whatever can separate us.**

(5) ONE FAITH. The faith here spoken of is the faith—not our beliefs in regard to the interpretation of Scripture, but the faith through which we have been saved, which is the common possession of all believers; that is, the faith that Jesus is the Son of God (who died for the salvation of sinners and lives again to give life to the dead). Anyone who lacks this vital faith does not belong to the Lord, but all who possess it are the Lord's. **The children of God may follow many different lines of scriptural interpretation, but in regard to this fundamental faith they are one.** Those who lack this faith have no part in the family of God, but all who possess it we recognize as our brothers in the Lord.

(6) ONE BAPTISM. Is it by immersion or by sprinkling? Is it single or triune? There are various forms of baptism accepted by the children of God, so if we make the form of baptism the dividing line between those who belong to the church and those who do not, we shall exclude many true believers from our fellowship. There are children of God who even believe that a material baptism is not necessary, but since they are the children of God, we dare not on that account exclude them from our fellowship. What then is the significance of the one baptism mentioned in this passage? Paul throws light on the subject in his first letter to the Corinthians. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?" (1:13). **The emphasis is not on the form of baptism, but on the name into which we are baptized.** The first question is not whether you are sprinkled or immersed, dipped once or three times, baptized literally or spiritually; the important point is this: Into whose name have you been baptized? If you are baptized into the name of the Lord, that is your qualification for church membership. **If anyone is baptized into the name of the Lord, I welcome him as my brother, whatever the manner of his baptism.** By this we do not imply that it is of no consequence whether we are sprinkled or immersed, or whether our baptism is spiritual or literal. The Word of God teaches that baptism is literal, and is by immersion, but the point here is that the **manner** of baptism is not the ground of our fellowship, but the **name** into which we are baptized. All who are baptized into the name of the Lord are one in Him.

(7) ONE GOD. Do we believe in the same personal, supernatural God as our Father? If so, then we belong to one family, and there is no adequate reason for our being divided.

The above seven points are the seven factors in that divine oneness which is the possession of all the members of the divine family, and **they constitute the only test of Christian profession.** They are the possession of every true Christian, no matter to what place or period he belongs. Like a sevenfold cord the oneness of the Spirit binds all the believers throughout the world; and however diverse their character or circumstances, provided they have these seven expressions of an inner oneness, then nothing can possibly separate them.

If we impose any conditions of fellowship beyond these seven—which are but the outcome of the one spiritual life, then we are guilty of sectarianism, for we are making a division between those who are manifestly children of God. If we apply any test but these seven, such as baptism by immersion, or certain interpretations of prophecy, or a special line of holiness teaching, or a so-called Pentecostal experience, or the resigning from any denominational church—then we are imposing conditions other than those stipulated in the Word of God. All who have these seven points in common with us are our brothers, whatever their spiritual experience, or doctrinal views, or so-called church relationships. Our oneness is not based on our appreciation of the truth of our oneness, nor on our coming out from all that would contradict our oneness, but upon the actual fact of our oneness, which is made real in our experience by the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

So, there you have it. Can you tell me where that's not scriptural? Can you show me where the Word of God says it's okay to disfellowship people over differences on secondary issues? In fact, didn't the Word say to not get caught up in useless quarrels and senseless disputes? (See references below.) I'm pretty sure.

So if the church consists of those who are called out – the ekklesia – in the local city or town, and all who have the Holy Spirit in them are a part of it, then how well are we manifesting that oneness in our cities? Is there ANY city in America where truly, the Lord is in charge and the Body in that town is under His headship? Surely the enemy has worked hard to make sure that even in the smallest towns in America there are usually two or three or more congregations of different denominations that refuse to talk to each other.

If there is a war between Good and Evil, who benefits most if the Christians refuse to work together? If there is a war between Good and Evil, whose strategy to divide and conquer is working the best? Ours or theirs?

1 Timothy 6:20-21 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

2 Timothy 2:14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Titus 1:10-11 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision: whose mouth must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

Titus 3:9-11 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

James 1:26-27 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.

1 Timothy 1:3-5 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in the faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some have swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Mark 7:6-8 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, this people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

Who it's NOT.

This isn't about the real estate. It's not about the actual city itself. And it's not about the members of the "world" in that city. This is about those who are a part of the Body of Christ and live in a particular city or town.

But what about the people that live outside of city limits? Well, in Jesus' day there pretty much wasn't anybody that didn't assign their allegiance to a particular city. They might have been farmers outside the city, but when an enemy approached, they all went inside the walls and defended the town. In America in our day, it's not so clean-cut.

What we learned as we began to apply these things in Liberty, Missouri is that the Lord assigns His forces across the battle lines from those of the enemy. At one point, the Lord asked us to drive around the town seven times on seven Sunday mornings. We got out a map and began to figure the best way to drive around city limits, but the Lord stopped us and had us drive the circumference of the school district instead. In our case, that included a couple other little towns like Missouri City and Mosby and Roosterville. (Yeah, really, that's a real town.)

I asked the Lord about why the school district instead of just city limits. Didn't those towns have their own city church? Weren't they autonomous? The answer was clear. If you put a spiritual hedge of protection (or sphere) around Liberty and then go out Monday morning and bus in drug dealers and witches and all kinds of other problems from the neighboring towns into your schools, your shield is going to be useless. The Lord wanted us to line up our forces across from the system of Man (satan) that could do the most damage. And, think about it, which has more impact on the lives of a city in the long run – the city government or the school district? So in Liberty, it means that we are sister cities with those other towns because we share a system of Man that impacts our children. That doesn't mean the elders of Missouri City have to obey the elders of Liberty because their kids go to Liberty schools. It means we have to work together on that particular issue because we share a common interest there. But Missouri City is autonomous and self-directing and may choose not to be a part of anything that Liberty does. That's just fine, but Liberty still has primary responsibility for the spiritual protection and warfare over the school district.

Liberty is also the county seat and may need to coordinate with all the other city churches on county-wide prayer initiatives and other things. There may also be a time when all the city churches in the metropolitan Kansas City area or all of Missouri come together to conference or pray or repent for a wider area or coordinate resources on some other issue. But that doesn't mean that the elders from any one city get to tell the elders from any other city what to do. God will raise up the leaders in each city and appoint and anoint them himself. They don't need to be called or recruited or transferred from some other city. If God sees there is a need in a particular city that's under His headship – He will meet it. He will send or raise up all the pastors and teachers and evangelists and prophets and apostles that are needed to serve the Body in that town. And it will probably sometimes be someone really unlikely – because God always uses the foolish things to confound the wise.

I've met lots of the true elders in cities all over the country. And they are rarely (if ever) the pastors of the denominational congregations in town. But they're the most humble, and the best servants and most amazing lovers of people that you've ever met. That's what God looks for in an elder, not the number of degrees on the wall in their office. Whoever has the biggest cup of Jesus with the least "self" left in it are probably the ones that are the most dangerous to satan.

Don't let titles get you all puffed up. To be an "elder," all you have to be is a four year old in a room full of three year olds. Paul went into a town and found those who were slightly more mature than the others, set them in place as servants to all and came back in a couple years to see if they were still standing. I'm just sure that it wasn't about degrees, but about spiritual maturity, faithfulness, holiness, sacrifice and a humble, servant's heart.

Why? Why restore the City Churches?

So, Biblically speaking, in God's eyes, as long as there have been Christians in your town, there has been a "Church of YourTown."

So how is it doing?

That's the question the Lord asked me and I took a long, hard look around my town – Liberty, Missouri – and had to come to the conclusion that as one body we really, really stunk. We have a town with about 28,000 people and 40+ congregations – not including house churches or any other groupings that are hard to find. We have pastors that hate each other. We have some groups that refuse to fellowship with any other group – under ANY circumstances. We have people going hungry and homeless. We have heresies running rampant. We have a ministerial association that doesn't even represent everybody and is basically useless. (I'm sorry, if you're on it and you're reading this. You just are. People are lost and hungry and naked and you're doing pretty much diddly compared to the resources at your disposal and the expectations of our Lord. I love ya, but you're just not trying hard enough.)

Have you read Galatians 5:19-21?

Gal 5:19-21 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these]; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 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. (KJV)

Some of those words are outside of our normal vocabulary, so let me give you that in the Amplified Version:

Gal 5:19-21 19 Now the doings (practices) of the flesh are clear (obvious): they are immorality, impurity, indecency, 20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies), 21 Envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Got any of those inside the body of Christ in your town? Yep. Us, too. That can't be good, can it? How can we expect to inherit all that God has for us, how can we expect to walk in the power of God, when we're full of THAT kind of stuff?! You can't. You're in direct disobedience to God and the curses of Deuteronomy 28 will cling to you – and they are. Our people aren't getting healed, our children are being given over to foreign nations (and demons) and we are sowing much and reaping very little.

Hmmm... I thought that if we were His and we were obeying nothing could stand against us? I thought He would lift us up above all nations and we'd be the head and not the tail? So, how come we look like the tail? Must be because we're not really obeying. I can't come to any other conclusion.

How about these:

Proverbs 6:16-19 These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Let's try those one at a time:

- 1) **A proud look** – to raise or increase or extol self, to presumptuously promote or set up. Yep. We're sure doing that in the congregations of America.
- 2) **A lying tongue** – speaking vain, false or deceitful things. Yep. Lots of vanity. And if we're telling people that we don't have to be one with all the rest of the body, then we're lying to them all. Probably so that we don't have to share our stuff or be uncomfortable in any way.
- 3) **Hands that shed innocent blood** – taking those who have no fault and forcing error and sin upon them. Just like the Pharisees in Matt. 23, we travel to the world to make a single convert and then make them twice the denominational son of hell that we are. Read Matt. 23 and see if we're not doing every single thing in there. Jesus spoke seven woes on them. And I think we deserve every one.
- 4) **A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations** – this speaks to the emotions of the heart and the soulish nature and how we use our feelings to generate programs and systems and processes that feel good and vainly

accomplish our own purposes. If God is to direct all of our paths, but we are directing our own, then anything we do devise are wicked imaginations and schemes of our own.

- 5) **Feet that are swift in running to mischief** – Are we not the most error-sensitive, heresy hunters on the planet? Are we not constantly searching for some reason to excommunicate or eliminate someone from our fellowship? The Hebrew meaning of that word “mischief” means calamity. That we are always jumping from the frying pan into the fire. Is not the “system” that we have built in America on fire?
- 6) **A false witness that speaketh lies** – this seems like a duplicate of the lying tongue, but God not only hates the tongue, he hates the person who allows themselves to speak lies. He puts it here twice for emphasis and to show the premium that He places on Truth. And the truth is that we are way outside of the model of harmony that He set for us.
- 7) **One who sows discord amongst the brethren** – How can we have gotten to 37,000+ denominations without being experts at that one?! Can there be any doubt about our guilt? Can there be any question about how God feels about what we've done?

Why the City Church? Because it's the only thing you can find in the Word of God. Because it's the only thing Jesus established. Because it's the only thing that will work. Because it pleases God.

Still not buying it?

You're kidding!? After all of this, you're still holding out on me? Well, I'll keep trying.

How about this? The city church is the only thing that has a chance to withstand widespread persecution. I certainly see some really deep wisdom here as it applies to the possibility of persecution in a given locality. Since local leaders, local funds, and local assets are used, it is much harder to eliminate Christianity widely in one blow. This kind of “compartmentalization” not only limits the chances of accumulation of assets and control by one individual, but it makes it very hard for any enemy to actively stamp out the work of the Church. When wide-spread persecution of Christians comes to America (which it WILL as soon as enough Christians are acting like Jesus), the local city church model will provide lots of redundant systems and leadership and people that can take the reigns at a moments notice and even shift between localities if necessary. A state-run church can be co-opted. A few mega denominational leaders can be assassinated or bribed or threatened. Giant infrastructures can be destroyed or incorporated into a One World Church. But local assets, controlled by local leaders, led by God are VERY hard to stamp out.

If there is a war, which is harder to target? One Pentagon where all leadership and command and control is centralized – or thousands of self-contained, self-directed, self-supporting cell groups spread all over the world? And even in your particular town, which will the enemies of God have an easier time eliminating? The institutional churches with their big buildings and the pastor's name on the sign out front? Or the small groups that meet in homes and businesses and underground if necessary? It would NEVER even occur to the house church Christians in China to make a pictorial directory or report to the government how much money they've giving to a church!! If persecution comes to America, we're really going to regret that we made it so easy for them to round us all up! A local church model could effectively avoid many of these.

There is also a Biblical imperative to go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and unto the ends of the earth. But if you're ignoring Jerusalem, why do you think you're qualified to go to the ends of the earth? Take care of your own home first! Are there hungry and naked and oppressed in your own town? Are there even people inside the local Body that are bleeding all over and we're ignoring them? How much budget are we spending on ourselves or sending overseas while we show the “world” in our own towns that we don't care about them? A local City Church model would bring the focus back to healing the local area first and bringing repentance and unity and harmony to the Body and to the local community, THEN we can go out and accomplish His purposes in the power of His might. Until then, we cannot inherit the Kingdom of God as He would like it to manifest on the earth right now.

This model also is ideal for general emergency management. If a natural disaster comes to a city, if the Body of Christ in that town is really talking to each other well and communicating about needs and available resources, there is probably nothing they can't do. Very high on God's priority list is the creation and application of an internet portal that connects the Body of Christ in each town to itself and to all the other local churches. (I'm aware of several redundant people that have been commissioned by God to do this and are racing to get it built.) If there is a war between good and evil, shouldn't we have some kind of central communication network that's accessible to all? Yep. God designed it and it's in the process of being built right now.

Watchman Nee, Chapter 4

“There is a beautiful balance in the teaching of God's Word regarding the relationship between the various churches.

On the one hand, they are totally independent of one another in matters relating to responsibility, government, and organization. On the other hand, they are to learn from one another and to keep pace with one another. But in everything it is essential to have both the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the pattern in God's Holy Word."

Imagine if there had been a communication network across the whole of the Body of Christ in place before the hurricane hit Mississippi. The Church in New Orleans (and every other town in the Gulf) could have sent out an alert across the internet to every other town and made requests for shelter and supplies and volunteers and there could have been national and global coordination and communication with no loss or duplication of resources. If we were not divided, then each local church could inventory their assets and pray and seek God on how they were to help. Those with much could share with each as they had a need.

The life of the first century Christians described in Acts 2:42-47 is to be the same kind of relationship as that of the local churches with each other. Ultimately it's a one-on-one relationship with Christ, but we are known by our love and self-sacrifice for each other. Each town with true community. Each connected to every other community, but each reporting directly to God. Full participation and efficient delivery of resources and skills. The world would be transformed in a matter of months if the Christians actually started working together seamlessly! That's the goal. Not about authority or control, all about love and being under His headship. And He is NOT a God of confusion – we made this mess ourselves!

The local city church model also minimized the spread of heresy inside the larger Body. If a city or town goes their own way and error is rampant (as it was in Corinth), then the other cities can stem the flow of it into their own cities. We are to test and approve, after all. As with Corinth or Sardis or Laodecia, they can be in big trouble with God and it not effect Philadelphia or Smyrna or Jerusalem. But in our current model, if (for example) the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville goes rogue, it will affect the ministry and effectiveness of tens of thousands of congregations all over the country (and the world). We are seeing it with Rome and the Episcopalians and the Lutherans and all other monoliths of man. Administrative decisions are handed down from a handful of "Cardinals" that have massive repercussions across a huge public. The media eats that up and it embarrasses the Body of Christ. But who cares if this or that little town decides something dopey that only affects a few people? That's not likely to make the news.

Additionally, if a pillar of fire descends on a denominational "church" it will likely take about 12 seconds for that denomination to send out press releases gloating about how this proves that they were the right ones all along. If a pillar of fire descends on a whole town, no one will be able to claim it and bottle it and try to sell it. God is just NOT going to allow anyone to individually promote and package what's coming. The Body of Christ in a whole town working together will make it very difficult for any single congregation, leader or denomination to take the credit for any miracles, signs, wonders or other blessings.

I can't find any other model that will work. I can't find any other model that fits with the Word of God. I can't find any other model that shows as much divine wisdom and would have minimized all the problems that we're now seeing. In fact, it should be clear that pretty much as soon as the Roman empire could, they outlawed house churches, established temples, set up a priest class and began demanding sacrifices. As quickly as they could, they took the Word of God away from the people so no one could even double check what they were doing against the Bible. Even now, many in the priest class will tell the laity that question them that they shouldn't be reading their Bibles because it's "over their head" or they couldn't understand it anyway without a seminary degree.

The Reformation worked in reforming some of the errors that the Roman church had established as doctrine and tradition, but it didn't actually change the fundamental structure. There remained a firmly entrenched priest class with temple worship and a willingness to kill anyone that disagreed with the leadership. We don't really talk much about how many people Martin Luther burned at the stake because they were against infant baptism (or some other thing). (Did you know that about him?) The system didn't really get rebooted back to the defaults, they just put a patch on it.

Why do it? Because it's the only thing that has EVER worked. All the Great Awakenings were about whole cities. Whether Finney or Etter or Wesley or the Salvation Army, the great moves of God involved whole towns. Not just the congregation at the intersection of Main and Broadway. The places in the world where major revivals are breaking out and cities are being changed (and economies and even ecologies!) are all about a move across the whole of the Body in that place, not just this or that denomination. Cali, Columbia changed when the Body repented. Fiji is changing because the Body repented.

Want to see how pretty it might be if the Body came together and repented and God swooped into action? Read about what happened in Manchester, Kentucky when the Body came together on the drug issue (and I wonder what might happen if they came together on ALL the issues, not just this!) - www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/manchester.htm

Yet another major benefit is that it forces us to not just BE One Body, but also to STAY One Body. There is no escape. If you don't like what is happening in the Body in your town, then either fix it or move out to another town. You don't get to split off and start your own thing just because you didn't get your way on the color of the new carpet. God hates divorce and that's what we do when we divide one body.

How else will we be able to practice those things in 2 Peter 1:5-8 (faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love) and have them in increasing measure if we don't have difficult situations and people to deal with? How are we going to practice peace and forbearance and longsuffering (Romans 2:4, Ephesians 4:2, 2 Timothy 3:10-12) if we are never in situations that require longsuffering? If we keep looking for calm, peaceful congregations with no conflict and no "rubbing" on each other, then we're going to continue to be spiritual weaklings that never have any resistance training to build our Jesus muscles.

How else are we going to show the fruits of the Spirit if we don't have difficult situations to endure?

Galatians 5:22-26 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Did you get that? How many verses do you need to read to see that if we are provoking each other and desirous of vain glory then maybe we are NOT walking in the Spirit. That can't be good!

Colossians 3:12-15 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Exactly how many is seventy times seven? Is that how many times we forgave each other before we decided to split the church? Why do we need to be one body? Because we should have been one body all along, but we went our own way. Because we're grieving God and torturing the Body of Christ. His physical body was tortured for twenty-four hours. But His spiritual body has been undergoing endless torture for nearly 1800 years. We've been hacking His body up into smaller and smaller bits and watching it bleed – and putting a sign over this blood mess that proudly proclaims, "Behold the King of the Jews." The "world" knows this is whacked. We might as well just admit it. This can't possibly be about Jesus and what HE wants. It must be about us and what WE want.

Why do we need to do this? Because it's the right thing and it's long overdue. Because it's what the Lord wants. And, frankly, because it's coming whether you like it or not and if you fight against it, you'll just find yourself fighting against God.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

Sing along if you know it. Ask a kid to sing it for you if you don't.

This is my commandment that you love one another that your joy may be full.

That your joy may be full. That your joy may be full.

This is my commandment that you love one another that your joy may be full.

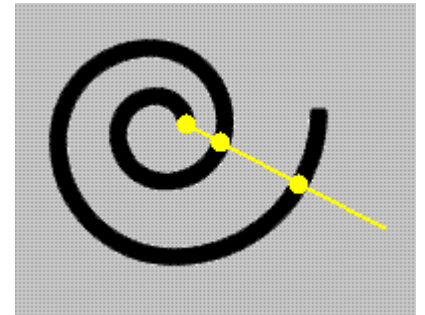
Lampstand Spirals

The Word of God doesn't just come right out and say to do this, but there are lots of spirals. That is, repeating, increasing echoes of this and the needfulness of it. I look for the patterns of scripture, not just the direct instructions.

For example, we normally think Passover was first visible when the Children of Israel put the blood over their doorposts and the death angel killed the first born of the Egyptians. When Noah and his family closed the door behind them and were saved from the flood, that's a Passover. (Genesis 7) When Abraham offered to sacrifice Isaac and he was saved and the ram given instead, that was a type of Passover. (Genesis 22) When the Assyrians are about to destroy Jerusalem and Hezekiah repents and they leave, that's a kind of Passover (I Kings 19). When the Jews were faced with imminent destruction under Haman, but Esther turned the tide, that was a Passover. (Esther 8) When Jesus as a child avoided being killed by Herod, that was a kind of Passover. The Jewish tradition instituted by God to celebrate the Pessach (Passover) was a reminder of all the times that God had covered them and they had escaped sure death. But the big fulfillment of that was Jesus, the Lamb of the World that was slain and His Blood spread on the doorposts of our hearts so that we might not die. All those other mini-spirals were pointing to Him. And we still don't fully understand what He did for us because it's not complete. There is yet a restoration of all things and a new heaven and new earth to come.

In the same way, there are lots of examples of water baptism spirals and ritual cleansing and the need to be washed clean so that the Lord can use you. The Children of Israel had to put the blood over the doorposts in order to be saved, but then they also had to obey and leave all behind and go, and they had to go through the waters of the Red Sea and come out the other side. This is a type of baptism that cleansed them – and their Egyptian pursuers were trapped below the water. They arose from the water as free men (and women). The anointing on King Saul that made him a new man was a kind of baptism. (I Samuel 10:1) The ritual cleansing of the priests before they could be useful to God is another example (Exod. 29:4).

You getting this? Spirals. Like ripples in a pond when you throw in a rock. These repeating patterns help explain and understand what God is doing and will do. Consistency with the spirals is VERY important to Him. If something used to annoy Him, it still annoys Him. If something used to please Him, it still pleases Him. It's just a matter of the quantity involved. If America does something that is just like what Israel did and it brought massive judgement down on their heads, then we shouldn't expect it to be any different with us. You just have to insert the quantity to get an idea of the expected severity. Because we are three part beings – Body, Soul and Spirit – these spirals can have application across multiple levels all at once. Some can be physical manifestations, some spiritual – sometimes both at the same time.



Read this for more - www.fellowshipofthemartyrs.com/big_picture_one.htm

Anyway, I want to illustrate just a few of the spirals about lighting a fire that I think have application to the Lampstand understanding. Hopefully they will show you there is a consistent pattern of this in the Word of God. I'm not expecting you to take my word for this – and there are surely spirals I haven't seen.

The fire of sacrifice that Abraham was willing to light, even if it cost his own son is an early example. That fire transformed the world. Without his willingness to light that fire, who knows what would have happened. (Gen. 22)

The Lord also lit the fire on the burning bush that didn't consume the bush. That is what got Moses' attention so that he would come to God and get drafted into service. It wasn't as big and flashy as the pillar of fire, but it was just for a personal application, not nationwide. Still, it's a spiral.

The Lord also lit the fire that led the Children of Israel out of Egypt and protected them from the Egyptians. The Lord Himself provided a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. This directional beacon guarded them, was a witness to their enemies of the power of God, lit their way and generally reminded them of the constant presence of God. (Exod. 13)

At the bottom of Sinai, the people watch as Moses goes up to meet God. The Lord doesn't need to light the fire, He IS the fire!

Ex 19:18 (KJV) – *And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*

The seven pronged golden lampstand in the Tabernacle and the Temple are foreshadows and spirals of the seven independent golden lampstands in Revelation. (Exod. 25; Rev. 2-3) They were one lampstand when it was one people worshipping God in one place, but now WE are the “church” and we are independent one from another because of locality. And yet, Christ walks among us and amongst all the Lampstands. In Leviticus, the priests were to tend the lamps all the time and make sure they never stopped burning.

The Ark of the Covenant itself is a type of spiral because it is a symbol of the power and presence of God in a place. When the Ark went before them, no enemy could stand against them. And it was untouchable, lest someone die. (2 Sam. 6:6-7) God's fire is real, but the power of it is too much for any man to try to harness – much less make DVD's and books and try to profit from it. It WILL reach out and kill you – and you might not even know you're dead. Be warned.

When the Children of Israel first go into the Promised Land, the VERY first thing the Lord has them do is light a fire all together. He sent them against a pagan capital, Jericho, told them how to crush it, then had them light it up like a giant sacrifice. (Judges 6) This is very much like the bonfire the Ephesians have in Acts 19 where they burn all their pagan idols. There was lots of good stuff in there they could have used, but it was a kind of First Fruits offering to God, so all of it was off-limits and to be sacrificed. This is a communal, nationwide, Lamplighting ceremony to go ahead of the Children of Israel into their Promised Land. And it worked, it scared the pants off of all the people who lived in the land!

Another good example is Gideon in Judges 6. The Lord had sent the Midianites to oppress Israel because they all had altars of Baal in their backyard. But He hears their cry and decides to free them (after sending an unnamed prophet to tell them to repent), and raises up Gideon to do it. But before Gideon can go, he has to get the altar of Baal out of his own backyard. God will not send him out to conquer 150,000 men while he still has an altar to a foreign God on his own land! So God doesn't require Gideon to go and preach to all of Israel and get rid of ALL the altars, just that he light ONE fire. Get one altar to God doing what it's supposed to do and then the MASSIVE weapons of war you get access to when God is your defender will kick into gear. So Gideon and ten servants go under cover of darkness and knock the altar down, use their own resources against them and burn the Asherah poles (big pointy, male fertility symbols that God hates – much like the steeples on churches) and then use his dad's second best bull as the sacrifice.

Judges 6:25-31 (KJV)

25 And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: 26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. 27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night. 28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. 29 And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. 30 Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. 31 And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.

Immediately after this, Gideon blows the trumpet for war and the whole tribe shows up to help. Now, get this, they wanted to kill him, but why didn't they? Why didn't they convert the altar back? All Joash said was “Aw, c'mon guys, let Baal fight his own battles.” And they left. And THEN they answer Gideon's trumpet for war a verse later! The answer is, they HATE change. Their instant reaction was to kill whoever disrupted the altar they were so used to. But something inside of them knows that the kid has a point. Yahweh is their God and this altar is better anyway. So they leave him alone. They don't go home and knock their own altars down, but they wait and watch. When God gives Gideon victory with 300 guys and the craziest warfare plan in history, then ALL the altars to Baal in all of Israel get knocked down and the people live at peace with God – until Gideon dies.

The Lord began speaking to me two years ago, “Give me ONE altar. Light ONE fire and I'll give you victory over the world. Fix the altar in your own backyard and then see what happens.” My backyard is Liberty. That one fire needed to be lit. And it was lit – Praise God – on October 31, 2005.

Other examples include times when the Lord lit the fires of repentance and restoration Himself. Like the showdown between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. (1 Kings 18) The whole nation got to watch God light the fire and they repented substantially and killed all the prophets of Baal.

When Solomon builds and dedicates the Temple, the Lord lights it up Himself.

2 Chron 7:1-3 (KJV)

1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. 2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. 3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

There's also practically no end to the number of times in the Bible when God is REALLY mad about all the times we light fires to foreign gods. Even when we have high places to the Lord that aren't where He intended them to be or aren't doing it right! If you complain and grumble too much, He might even send His consuming fire after YOU! (Numbers 11,16)

But God is faithful and He says He will never let it go too far. And yet, even embedded in this verse is a symbolism that references the spirals we're talking about – baptism with water and with fire.

Isaiah 43:2 (KJV)

2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Here it is specifically laid out. Can't deny it – it's right there in the Word. (Did you already get the “fire” part? Still waiting?)

Luke 3:16 (KJV)

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

The Lord Himself lit the first City Church Lampstand when He sent down tongues of fire on the people.

Acts 2:1-4 (KJV)

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

That was a change in the spiral from lighting fires on sacrifices and inanimate objects to putting the fire directly into all people. Now that WE are the temple, the fire itself doesn't change, but the vehicle changed. He didn't change. The Holy Spirit didn't change. But because we were ready, the fire could manifest inside of us. There's no reason to believe that this fire in us stopped being necessary when the Bible was completed. These are increasing spirals with increasing applications across broader and broader groups and in more powerful ways. See?

Matt 5:13-16 (KJV)

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

In Acts 19, God uses an encounter with a demon to motivate the Body of Christ in Ephesus to come together, get cleaned out and light a fire that changes the town forever.

Acts 19:16-20 (KJV)

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

The final application of this spiral is when we are all in One City with One Lampstand – and it's the Lord Himself.

Rev 21:23 (KJV)

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Won't that be great! All together in one New Jerusalem with one Lampstand – and it's HIM!! All we need to do in order to see what He wants from us is to go out to the final spiral – the biggest possible application of the City Church and the Lampstands - and then backtrack through the spirals and see how it applies to us now. What we need to do is get everything that we have now to act as much like it will in heaven as possible. Sounds reasonable, right?

If you pray the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." - then shouldn't you want us to be One Body under His headship with His fire burning right now, just like we will be later? Are we going to have denominations in heaven? Are we going to have strife and dissension and division and sects? Are we going to try to hide HIS light under a bushel?! So why is it OK to do that stuff now?

If you can't pray it and really mean it, it's probably better if you just stop praying the Lord's Prayer at all.

Helpful Visual Aid

Music Anyone?

When conditions are right a certain note is played - whether it's string tension or key positioning or wind volume. Certain conditions always result in certain notes, the only difference is octave (frequency).

People don't get the complexity of God!! His ability to say ONE thing and have DOZENS of applications!

We fight and fight over who is hitting the right "C" and it's entirely possible He meant ALL of the "C's"! ALL could be right, just different octaves! We're fighting over which "C" is more like a "C"!

Different Octave, Same Note
Unison, but not identical.

**Before we go any further, now might
be a good time for the **WARNING** label.**

WARNING!

DANGER! DANGER!

Proceed at your own risk!

We will NOT be responsible for ANYTHING that happens from here forward. You have been warned. The enemy DOES NOT want the Body restored. And God can only use broken and contrite vessels.

We want you to be ABSOLUTELY clear that this is FOR SURE, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT going to hurt A LOT.

You can drive 20 miles an hour and you probably won't get hurt too bad in an accident. If you drive 200 miles an hour and you make a mistake, it's going to get really ugly.

This IS NOT for sissies!

If you have ANY desire in you to maintain the status quo, STOP NOW!
DO NOT GO THIS WAY!! DO NOT take our advice on this stuff!!

It will totally transform your life and things you love will be ripped from you.

Nothing – NOTHING – you have will be your own any more.

So He can rebuild you His way, God will IMMEDIATELY start yanking chunks out of you. Probably stuff you really liked. Like maybe your job and your family and your health and pieces of YOU that seemed fine. The fire will get VERY hot!

If you even so much as TRY to do this in your own power, you're gonna be toast!

ONLY Jesus in you can get you through this.

Last chance. Get out now! ALL the darkness WILL come for you!

We've seen it over and over. We ARE NOT kidding around!

If you miss a step or make this about YOU, you could end up on crack or beating your wife or drinking like a fish or in jail – or worse, the pastor of a thriving mega-church with pews full of dead bodies and you'll think you're the hottest ticket ever! We've seen it happen to good, Jesus-loving people who weren't all the way sold out. God will get you through, but it will hurt even more if you bail out. You BETTER mean it! We're serious.

We love you very much. We want to see you refined and purified and REALLY dangerous to the enemy, but we want you to be FULLY READY before you pull into the Fast Lane!

How Many People Are Required?

This may be a shocker to you, but the Lord doesn't require some big repentance meeting in a football stadium. If it happens, great, but that's not the minimum necessary. If you're waiting until you can get 1,000 people to pray with you because you don't think it will count with just a handful – or just ONE man – then get over it and start praying.

Ezek 22:23-31 (KJV)

*23 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 24 Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. 25 There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. 26 Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. 27 Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. 28 And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. 29 The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. 30 **And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.** 31 Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.*

Do you see? He was searching for **A** man, even a single solitary man, who would stand in the gap and make a hedge (a wall, a defense, a shield, a sphere). He's actively looking for one. And this wasn't just about Jerusalem. It's the same now in every city. He's actively seeking someone who will stand in the place of the original bonfire the Lord started, someone who will beg for a Lampstand and then hold it up over their head defiantly and refuse to be moved. Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – someone who will take on whatever comes, knowing God will protect them. And even if He doesn't they're still not going to bow down to idols.

Dan 3:17-18 (God's Word)

17 If our God, whom we honor, can save us from a blazing furnace and from your power, he will, Your Majesty. 18 But if he doesn't, you should know, Your Majesty, we'll never honor your gods or worship the gold statue that you set up."

We need some Davids who are fearlessly willing to go out against the Goliaths in the Land – alone if necessary. He has always had a soft spot for crazy, radical adventurers who have faith like a child and just KNOW that He will back them up even against 10,000 Philistines or 1,000,000 screaming demons. He wants men like Elisha who will see the defenders He has set around us – not wimps like Elisha's servant who only focus on the natural.

2 Kings 6:13-17 (KJV)

13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. 14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

Elisha went out and took care of this whole army alone. He walked out to meet them and by his prayers captured the whole Syrian force without any bloodshed when God made them blind. Elisha marched them inside the walls of Samaria where they were surrounded and THEN their eyes were opened – and they stopped attacking Israel when they saw the power of God and the hopelessness of trying to attack Elisha.

Now how much faith in God does it take to KNOW your prayer was already answered and go outside the walls to meet this force intent on killing you personally? Don't you think God would back up somebody who trusts Him that much? One man is sufficient. It will be REALLY hard and it will be a long uphill battle and you better be fully cleaned out and willing to lose anything – but one man can turn a town. In fact, for good or ill, every big thing in history is because ONE man sets his face like flint and won't be moved no matter the cost. Pick one; Martin Luther, Tyndale, Gutenberg, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, John Wesley, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Adolf Hitler, Carl Marx, King Solomon, Elvis. One person CAN have a huge impact. (OK, Elvis is a stretch. Just seeing if you were listening.)

But Can You Pray The BIG Prayer?

The point is, when we act like Jesus, God honors it. And Jesus had MASSIVE backup. His army included enough angels to FLATTEN the planet in an instant! But He never called them. He stood alone, knowing God would back Him up. He stood in the gap for all people for all time against ALL of Hell and the weight of ALL sin. He just knew that He knew that He knew that God would back Him up. He just knew HIS Dad was bigger than THEIR Dad. That's why God loved David – and the others throughout history who have gone up against impossible odds alone (but with God at their back) and willing to lay down anything for others. That's why He loved Moses and Paul. Can you pray the BIG Prayer?

Exodus 32:30-32 (KJV)

30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

Romans 9:1-5 (KJV)

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, 2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Clearly, as the ultimate Apostle, this is the model Jesus set forth for us when He offered Himself as the scapegoat for all the sins of everyone for all time. He had to have known He could never go before the Father again with all that sin on Him! Can you get your head around the kind of sacrifice that was? Not just about His physical body being beaten, but what it was like for the Son of God to be fully separated from the Father by the weight of ALL sin?

Are you willing to pray that God would blot YOU out of the Book of Life if only He would send the people into the Promised Land? What is the Promised Land for us now, but a true community under God's headship, in oneness and harmony and sharing with each as they have a need? What is the Promised Land but “church” outside the walls, all day, every day, being One Body? Doesn't that sound great?! What's it worth to you for Christ's Body to be restored and for Jesus' final prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 17:21) to be answered? How much have you been begging and weeping and groaning for it to come? Can you pray the prayer of Moses? What HAVE you prayed?

John 15:12-13 (KJV)

12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

I'm not going to mince any words. (Why try to be subtle now all of a sudden?) Which is more valuable? Your physical life or your eternal life? You are a blade of grass that withers. (Job 14:1-2) But your eternal life is where your treasure is.

John 10:27-28 (KJV)

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

If you are one of His, no one can take it from you – but you CAN lay it down. I just gave you three examples of people who did (Moses, Paul and Jesus). It's your birthright, but you can offer it in exchange for another. If you have too much of YOU in your cup, there's no way you can pray that prayer. But if there is hardly any of YOU left and you're so crammed packed full of Jesus that nothing else can fit, it's no problem – because He prays that prayer really well.

I'm not going to make any excuses about this. My goal is to raise up or gather together (or whatever) the people who understand this and get them to pray together the biggest prayers they can pray and see what breaks. I know lots of them. I've helped grow some of them. NOTHING is more loving than to be willing to lay EVERYTHING down. It's nice that people give 10% to the “church”. It's better that some people will offer up their car or sell their boat or invite strangers into their home. It's amazing when someone sacrifices their life for the Gospel. But ALL the forces of Hell quake in fear before those who are broken enough and sincere enough and fearless enough and so full of Jesus that they can offer up their eternal salvation if only their kinsman could enter into the Promised Land – whatever that “land” might be.

These are people who love God so much and trust Him so much that if it brings Him glory and furthers His kingdom – or

heals one little old lady or restores one marriage – they will be willing to go to Hell for eternity. And this isn't a reckless self-deception or bravado or empty offer. These are not people who don't know what they are doing. These are people who may have even seen Hell. These are people who have their eyes fully open and are STILL willing to go.

Hear me, DO NOT pray that prayer unless you mean it!! You may THINK you mean it, but God will correct you REAL FAST if you're holding something back! I've seen it happen and it hurts!

My goal is to raise up the kind of people who love the brethren enough to lay down anything – including praying the Big Prayer – if only the Gospel will be preached in power and things will change. Those kind of people don't really want to argue about dogma or doctrine or any man-made thing. They do not hold tightly to their cash or their stuff or have other idols. They will lay down their family, their marriage, their hobbies, their job – anything if God tells them to. They hear His voice and they won't settle for anything less than Him directing ALL of their paths ALL of the time. They will NOT listen to man anymore. They know Jesus' voice – even when it's coming out of another person – and they won't settle for less.

Never mind teleporting through walls or being bullet proof or fire coming out of your mouth or whatever other stuff some folks have been preaching. Those people I just described are the “Manifest Sons of God” that the earth is crying out for! (Romans 8) Those who are dead to self, have a giant cup of Jesus, are walking in holiness and are unshackled from this world. Those whose love for each other is so big, so sacrificial, so totally not like the world that no one can figure them out. They are led by the Spirit and hear Him – and go and do as He says. The “glorious liberty of sonship” is absolute submission! The “Manifest Sons of God” are those who understand the meaning of the word “ALL”.

Prov 3:5-6 (KJV)

*5 Trust in the LORD with **ALL** thine heart; and lean **not** unto thine own understanding. 6 In **ALL** thy ways acknowledge him, and **he** shall direct thy paths.*

ALL thy ways and ALL thy paths. Period. All means everything – what to eat, what to wear, what to say, where to go, how to spend every dollar, what to pray – everything at every moment. Unless you think “ALL” means something else? How much freewill does a Bondservant really get? I think you had freewill just long enough to decide to be a Bondservant. Now you're not your own anymore. Bondservants don't need forty days to decide what their “personal purpose” is. They don't get to decide what they think they would like to do for the Master and King. They trust and obey – ALL the time. (Here's a tip: There's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.)

These are the people who can walk shoulder to shoulder without jostling each other because they're not looking at each other for cues, they're watching the Commander in Chief – and He is their Head. (Joel 2) They keep their eyes straight ahead and keep marching. And if one falls, they don't stop and pick him up, they just keep marching and another takes his place. And yet, they are true community and have true love for each other. It is a great mystery how both can happen – and God's wisdom will be revealed in them. When they come together, the world has never seen anything like them before. But they are just the first-fruits of what's to come.

Said another way, it's entirely possible that you have made your going to heaven an idol. Ever consider that?! Are we worshiping salvation more than we're worshiping the Saver? Are we giving people a “short-cut” method to get saved and escape Hell, but allowing them to make THAT the end-all-be-all of their spiritual walk? That would make heaven an idol. And it's just as deadly to do that as to make an idol of wood or stone and bow down to it every day in your living room. We are not to worship ANY created thing – and heaven and our own eternal soul are created things – we're to worship the Creator and Him only. If you hold onto something too tightly, it's an idol. We have to hold everything in an open hand. It's all His anyway, and if He wants it, He can have it.

Extended to the extreme, that applies even to our own salvation. If He wants to send me to Hell, I totally deserve it. A thousand thousand times over I deserve it. It's only by His grace and mercy that I'm not already there. And He is really big and I'm really not, so if He wants to change His mind or cash my soul in to save someone else, who am I to argue with Him? Whatever brings Him the most glory is fine with me.

If you hear God, ask Him if I'm bluffing - or if this is bravado or blind stupidity. I'm deadly serious about this. As the Lord is my witness. *“I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.”*

This is the big league. If you're going to try to restore the Body of Christ, you better be ALL THE WAY willing to lay down anything He asks for. He will allow the enemy to test you – like Job. Or like Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, the son of promise. Those are the kind of people who change things. (And if you make it about YOU, He'll crush you.)

Zechariah 2:5 (KJV)

5 For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her {the city} a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

An Autocratic Network Led By Super Apostles?

The City Church is NOT a massive network of apostles and prophets organized from some national headquarters to do spiritual warfare over a region larger than ONE CITY. It is NOT a hierarchical pyramid controlled by a handful of self-appointed Super Apostles who tell everyone else what to do. That is the model of C. Peter Wagner and is HUGELY dangerous and misses the whole point of the role of an apostle. I cannot stress enough the distance between what I'm talking about and what he is talking about. Just because two people are both talking about the City Church and restoration and even "transformation" does NOT mean that they are in agreement! This IS the right thing to do, but MANY have come in the past and done it the wrong way. Just because someone has tried and failed, doesn't mean it can't be done (or shouldn't). C. Peter Wagner is one of the ones who has substantially done it the wrong way. Mike Bickle did it wrong too, and admitted as much. Even Joseph Smith tried and did it wrong! I pray that C. Peter Wagner will repent and that the structures and contacts he has built will be redeemed and used for God's glory and not his own. I've never met the man, never read anything of his and I'm sure he won't like me saying this. But I expect God will back me up if I'm right. What he is building is the road to ecumenical footsies and a one world religion, not the City Church.

This is about the LOCAL city church and it's need to repent and be restored. It will have all the local leaders and elders it needs. It will have all the training and education it needs. The Holy Spirit will be their teacher and if they have a need they can't meet internally, the Holy Spirit will send the resources they need. God will make sure that the Star of the city has all the resources necessary to accomplish God's purposes. There can be NO autocratic, controlling system that is wider – or smaller – than the city itself. We must resist at all costs the imposition of legislative controls from some outside religious structure. Laodecia does not get to tell Philadelphia what to do. Jerusalem can give advice because they are the eldest, but ultimately it is only advice, not dictatorial control over any other city. Paul never went into a new city to set himself up as their new pope and tell them what to do – or force them to knuckle under the national headquarters. He went in with a team to train and teach and to raise up the elders of the city. Then he left and let them stand on their own, if they could. Sometimes he would check back and make course corrections – and he would implore or reason or cajole or beg, but he didn't have any autocratic control over any of the City Churches he planted. He was their spiritual father, but it didn't mean he got to boss them around. Ultimately Corinth or Sardis or Smyrna or Laodecia or Antioch stands or falls on their own. The Lord judges them independently of each other. (See Rev. 2-3)

The City Church model shows God's divine wisdom and is the only thing He will pour His Spirit into. It is the New Wineskin – that is, it is what we need to be renewed into. It was the first wineskin, and it was working and transforming the world, until we got into bed with the state, they outlawed house churches and we went back to the same old pagan/synagogue temple worship with a priest class. That's what satan wanted all along; to get the spread of the Gospel out of the hands of the many and put it into the hands of an elite few – who can be indoctrinated, propagandized, bribed, controlled and/or institutionalized. I don't trust any Man. Least of all some super apostles with autocratic control over hundreds of thousands or millions of people (and their dollars). The greatest among you should be the best servants.

The City Church model is the most persecution proof. It will be much harder to stamp out Christianity when it has 30,000 independent groups of elders in each locality in America who are fully self-sufficient and meeting local needs. The spread of heresy is limited if they are compartmentalized like that. If Pittsburgh goes rogue, then all the other cities can just choose not to receive messengers from Pittsburgh and exhort and encourage them to straighten up. If the denominational walls come down, then all the members of the Body in that locality can work together and eliminate the duplication of resources and effectively meet local needs. The City Church model empowers the little guy to go be creative, to hear God and to have a huge impact. We don't even know what all the missed opportunity costs have been by stifling the little guys through our massive networks that just hand them materials and programs and siphon off funds for global missions agencies with massive overheads and minimum impact. Dollar for dollar, there are MANY one or two person ministries having a much larger impact – and don't have a love of money ruling them. Local City Churches would have the freedom to identify and support those ministries God leads them to where they would get maximum return in heavenly treasure per dollar. If there is a widespread economic or natural disaster, the local City Church fully functioning together and meeting the needs of each without divisions or walls is the most capable of surviving. There are all kinds of other reasons why the wisdom of God will be clear in this. The point is, nothing will work better and there's nothing else (no other model) that I can find in the Bible.

Declare a Holy Fast

Isaiah 58

God does not change. What irritated Him then, still irritates Him now. What pleased and honored Him then, still pleases and honors Him now. These If/Then statements are guarantees! IF you do these things, then He WILL do what He said He would do – sooner or later, one way or the other. He reserves the right to manifest it in whatever way He wants, but He WILL do it.

It's equational. Like math. Just insert the quantity.

IF you do Behavior X **THEN** Consequence Y will result. Quantity N is the only variable.

$$BX(N) = CY(N)$$

Positive Behavior = Positive Consequence OR Negative Behavior = Negative Consequence

Get it? Doesn't even require faith. It's just a guarantee from God. Now, it may not manifest like you expect or when you expect, but it WILL happen because God's promises are good. He is faithful and just.

So here we go. Let's look at the guarantees.

Isaiah 58 (NIV)

1 “Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the house of Jacob their sins.

I think He's serious about this. I guess we're supposed to point out the problem as loudly as possible. This is my personal attempt to fulfill this command.

2 For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.

So, it's not for lack of praying or evidently a desire to know what God wants. They are a whole nation who is praying and seems eager. Is it possible our churches in America seem eager, but they're off track? Could it be? That they are just pretending they are actually obeying and doing what is right?

3 ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’

They don't seem to be getting through. God doesn't seem to be answering them very much or at all. They are praying every day, they are even fasting – and yet it doesn't seem like they are satisfied with God's response to them.

“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.

4 Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.

Here we get God's response to them. They are fasting, but they're also exploiting people – like volunteers in the churches? Or illegal alien workers? Or sweatshop workers and child and prison labor in other countries so we can buy stuff cheap at Walmart? Could be. Oh, yeah, and we're fasting, but it always ends in quarreling and strife and striking each other. Could that be like church splits and power struggles and denominational divisions? Could that be like dividing the Body of Christ up into tiny little pieces because we don't want to play nice with others? Yeah, that could be it. Maybe we're ignoring the starving Brethren in other countries so we can have our fancy new building? That would do it. Evidently fasting and praying like we've been doing and still being selfish stinkers just isn't getting our prayers through to God. Evidently He's not paying too much attention to our petitions when we aren't acting like Jesus.

5 Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

I think it would be quite a shocker if you actually saw someone in a “church” in sackcloth nowadays! We can't even humble ourselves and pray in public without looking like freaks! But, thankfully, here we get to hear Him tell us what He wanted all along. Now all we have to do is implement it and we'll be fine. He didn't want a show. He didn't want sackcloth and ashes when our hearts were really unrepentant and it was just for effect. If we're quarreling and striking each other,

how much fear of the Lord do we really have? How much are we being like Jesus? How much do we really love each other? He says if we love Him, we'll obey Him – and He commanded us to put HIM first and each other second. (Matt. 22:37-40) How seriously should He take our fast when we're doing neither?

6 “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”

OK, we need to loose the chains of injustice, untie the yokes, set the oppressed free and break every yoke. What's that mean? Well, there are three dimensions – Body, Soul and Spirit. We need to settle issues of physical injustice and fight for those who are oppressed (like the child and prison laborers and sweat shops) and we need to set them free and then we need to break the yokes so they can't be applied to anyone else. For the Soul we need to break the chains binding people to legalism and dogma and the doctrinal laws of Man. We need to untie them from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil so they can go eat from the Tree of Life. Then we need to break the yoke permanently, so they won't get trapped again. This is primarily in the area of the mind – of teaching and training and discipleship. For the Spirit, we need to identify spiritual oppressions that have trespassed into the lives of Christians, and we need to release them from those yokes, set them free, teach them to walk it out and keep the yoke broken. This means deliverance from demonic strongholds, generational curses, addictions, lusts, fears, abuses and others. The more we do this, **on all three levels**, the more we fulfill this instruction of the Lord. NOTE: If we leave out one of the three, we are not in full compliance.

7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Again, three levels. We need to feed and shelter and clothe and care for our own. For the Soul, we need to share the true meat of the Gospel of Life, give it to them to eat and to drink. We need to cover them and clothe them in protective armor and the white robes that are their birthright. We need to especially minister to the brethren in need. (Romans 12) In the Spirit, we need to feed them from what we have. We need to pour ourselves out and sacrificially offer anything we have in the Spirit from the abounding riches of our inheritance to meet the needs of those who are poor in spirit. We especially need to make sure we have bandaged, healed and empowered the saints in need. He promises that if you sacrifice for His Kingdom, He will replace it abundantly in this life and in the next. If you give sacrificially, that's so much like Jesus, He will always give you more. So long as you pour yourself out, He'll keep filling you and giving you a bigger cup of Jesus.

8 THEN your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; THEN your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

9 THEN you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

So here we see the first of the consequences. IF you do those behaviors in verses 6 and 7, THEN your light will break forth like the dawn and YOUR OWN healing will quickly appear, your righteousness will go before you (because you're obeying God) and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard AND when you call He will answer and say, “Here am I.” Now that's cool! At the beginning of the chapter, they are complaining because they don't seem to be getting through to the throne. Now He says if you'll just do this stuff, He will ALWAYS answer you and be present. How about that?! And all we had to do was stop making it about ourselves and care for other people. Who knew?

“IF you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

Yeah, boy, that'd be nice, wouldn't it? So, we have to lift the yokes of oppression (Body, Soul, and Spirit). Presumably we have to do it to ourselves as well, because there's no way to stop the pointing finger and malicious talk as long as we still have things oppressing us. (And we wouldn't be pointing fingers and talking maliciously UNLESS we had things oppressing us, so don't think you don't. Things like jealousy, control, envy, pride, fear, bitterness – they're all strongholds of the enemy.) You can be sure our light WILL NOT arise so long as we're pointing fingers and talking maliciously about each other! Why don't more miracles happen in America? Maybe because we're the most finger-pointing, malicious-talking branch of the church on the planet. Could be. Why should God show up and be our rear guard and answer our call and bring healing quickly given what stinkers we're being? If your six year old bashed his brother over the head with a toy truck, you'd put him in a time out to think about what he's done until he's ready to say he's sorry. “But I'm hungry.” Forget it. “But I want to watch TV.” Forget it! You're not getting out of the time out until you say you're SORRY for bashing your brother over the head – and mean it – and then I expect you to stop doing it from now on! What kind of parent lets them keep bashing their brother over the head without consequences?

10 and IF you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, THEN your light will rise in the darkness, and THEN your night will become like the noonday.

What do you think “spend yourselves” means? That seems like it means “all the way spent.” The King James says if you “draw out thy soul to the hungry.” Seems practically sacrificial! Probably substantially more than the 2% Americans average in giving to church and charity. Not to mention that less than 5% of the income of the churches themselves is actually spent on the hungry and needy. (That's 5% of the 2% feeding the hungry. Hmmm. That's 0.1%!) The vast

majority of the money is spent on ourselves, our own programs and buildings and staffs. Anyway, so IF we spend ourselves – really spend ourselves – on the hungry (Body, Soul and Spirit) and meet the needs of the oppressed (Body, Soul and Spirit), THEN our light will rise in the darkness and our night will be like noonday. That's how bright we will be! Even in the middle of the night it will be like noonday. Even in the midst of gross darkness (like America), the shadows will flee from the glory of God shining through us and reflecting off of us. And all we had to do was stop making it about ourselves. Wow. It's all so simple – how did we squirrel it up this badly?

Actually this is a compound formula – “IF and IF/THEN and THEN” but the formula works the same.

11 The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

This is a continuation of the THEN/THEN. He promises to guide your steps (Prov. 3:5-6). He promises to satisfy your needs and to make you strong. He promises to bring fruit to your garden. That means water and light will come to grow our harvests. He says rivers of living water will flow up from inside us and will never be quenched – even though we're in a dry, sun-scorched land.

12 Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

More positive consequences from careful devotion and obedience. We get to rebuild on the ancient foundations – which is Jesus. We get to stand in the gap and rebuild the ancient walls – the defenses and protections to the people inside (which are currently clearly not working). And we get to restore streets with dwellings. People will come home and be safe. People will flourish inside the walls and be protected again. Note that this is about a city. He wants us rebuilding and restoring the walls of protection around our cities. That means Body, Soul and Spirit. That we become a true community again and meet local needs for physical and spiritual protection. What is a true community? Do we even remember what it was like? Was Andy Griffith's Mayberry the last one in America? Is it possible to have that again in this post-modern world? God says it is. At least within the Body of Christ on the local level.

13 “IF you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, IF you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and IF you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,

That means resting when He tells us to rest. It also means that we honor the Sabbath (and Jesus, who is our Sabbath Rest) by NOT going our own way and by obeying Him implicitly. (Heb. 4:9-10) We bring all these blessings on us by NOT doing as we please and speaking idle words. What are idle words? For sure that malicious talk stuff from v.9, but also ANYTHING that comes out of our mouth that JESUS didn't put there. All the useless quarrels and arguments about doctrines of demons and endless genealogies and all the stuff that doesn't upbuild the kingdom or break yokes, lift chains, free captives – but makes us look smart to people that are impressed by that kind of stuff. Not just on Sunday (or Saturday), it means EVERY day you stop the idle, useless words and stop going your own. EVERY day is His. All means all.

14 THEN you will find your joy in the Lord, and I WILL cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.”

The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Amen!

Do you see how the inverses of all of this work the same? Why would He bless us when we are actually PLACING heavier and heavier yokes on the people? Why would He cause us to ride on the heights of the land when America is the main producers and exporters of idle talk and pointing fingers on this whole planet? Why would He have us rebuild on the ancient foundations if we're just going to make it all about US?!

These blessings come when you do these things. Your fire, your Lampstand, WILL NOT light until you repent and start doing it the right way. How many of you? The more the better, but even ONE MAN will do. (Ezek. 22) But if it's just one guy, it's probably going to really, really be a long, hard, uphill fight! The more the better.

Romans 12

Romans 12 (KJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

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.

There's the simple three step plan: **1)** Get all cleaned off (holy) and offer your bodies as a living sacrifice. What body? Your own body? Yes. Your family? Yes. The Body of Christ in your city? Yes. All have to be holy so they will be an acceptable sacrifice to God. This is your reasonable – and bare minimum – service in thanks for His mercy and patience with you. **2)** climb up on the altar and lay there naked – which is definitely not conforming to the “world”. **3)** When He is good and ready, He'll take a big sword and hack your head off and graft His head on. THEN you will know what is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God.

Until you get cleaned off and offer up everything you have as a sacrifice, stop conforming to the world, and grow up into Him who is the head (Eph. 4:15), then you won't really know what He wants. You'll just have to guess – or lean on your own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6), which is a bad thing, right? Maybe you could hire consultants and do demographic studies. Maybe you could see what seems to be working in the business world and apply it to the “church”. Whatever you do, you're on your own power until you know what is His pleasing, perfect will. And you CANNOT know that until your mind is renewed and it won't get renewed until you STOP CONFORMING TO THE WORLD! Do I need to say this again? Please hear me. It's all very simple. If you love the world and look just like them and the way they do things, then you're a whore and you're an enemy of God. Period.

Does that seem too harsh? Cause I didn't make it up. It's right there in the Word of God.

James 4:4 (KJV) - *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

We're supposed to be strangers in a strange land. (I Peter 2:11) This is NOT our home. The natural man can never understand the things of the spirit. We're not supposed to fit in. We're not supposed to be like them. (John 15)

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Humility is an accurate assessment of who you are in Christ and what your role is in the big picture. It is understanding that the greatest among you will be the one who is the best servant. The one who seeks to gain – and enjoys glory and power and public notice – is living in his reward already and shouldn't expect any more in heaven. The one who washes feet, the one who sits at the end of the table, the one who lifts everyone else up to God instead of drawing men unto himself – that is the one Jesus loves. If we see ourselves through the eyes of Jesus, we will be intensely encouraged by the inheritance of our position as adopted sons, but we will also be hugely humbled to see how we really fit into HIS economy. Do not make this about YOU! It's all about Jesus.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

We need to accurately understand who each is in Christ and what they bring. Not to serve the pastor or the institution, but to serve the Body. Every town will have all that it needs. All the giftings will be present when the Body in that town is under Christ's headship and going where He directs. He will make sure every need is met and all the right people are in place to accomplish His purposes. When we start actually loving and respecting all the different and unique Body Parts, there is no telling what will happen!

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

These are all Gifts of the Spirit that are still active and necessary today. You can't pick and choose which ones ended when the Bible was completed! We still need mercy and exhortation and teaching – and we still need prophecy as well. Not to add to the Bible, but to help the people be built up and complete in Christ. All of them need to be operating decently and in order and so that we will grow up.

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

That word, “dissimulation” is sort of obscure. What it means is “unfeigned” or truthfully without any fakeness. We need to love all the way and not just be polite with a veneer of putting up with each other. Like the Pharisees and Sadducees put up with each other – until Paul said something about the resurrection of the dead, then the fight was on! (Acts 23:6-10) I wonder what would happen at a Ministerial Association breakfast if someone stood up and said, “The Gifts of the Spirit are real and alive and God speaks to people and anybody who says otherwise is a heretic and a liar!” I bet that would peel away the veneer of politeness! What the Lord wants is for us to REALLY love each other, not just tolerate. We’re to have brotherly love for each other, setting the other person’s needs first. Is that what we have out there in the Body of Christ in America? Is that how we got 37,000+ denominations?

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

You have to understand that all of this is about a holy fast. This is about giving up stuff we like. We put ourselves on the altar as a sacrifice. We love others when we want to wring their neck. We give up our time to prayer. We share our stuff with the saints. We open our home to strangers. We weep with those who are weeping, even if we don’t feel like it. This is all about the same kind of holy fast Isaiah 58 talks about. It’s about what the Lord wants us to give up – not just food – but everything we have and are, so others can be built up and God can be glorified by the harmony and cooperation of His Body.

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

We’re not going to all agree on everything. But maybe we could agree on this one thing – we all see through a glass darkly. NONE of us have all the answers. If you think you do, then you are “wise in your own conceits.” On some things, maybe I see less darkly than you do. On others, I see more clearly. Regardless, we’re all sinners and heretics and have something we’re probably holding on to that is grieving God. Why argue about whose theology is more messed up? Why throw rocks at who we think is the bigger heretic? If you are a part of a sect of Christianity, then you’ve made up your own religion and cut and pasted out of the Bible all the parts about not doing that. Can’t we just all agree we’re ALL whacked? Maybe we could just all hit our knees in agreement and repent for SOMETHING. Let’s stop fighting about who is the most whacked. What’s the point? If you think you have all the answers than you’re wise in your own conceits.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

We’re supposed to turn the other cheek and forgive seventy times seven. That’s a hard fast. Giving up what we want to say or fighting back is a hard one. Far easier to not eat for a day or two than to have a friend stab you in the back and smile about it. But the Lord has very high expectations of His children who say they want to be like Jesus.

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Are we doing that? Or are we just living at peace with the people that are like us? We’re supposed to live at peace with even the most difficult, disagreeable, hair-pulling, back-stabbing folks. We’re not supposed to divide the Body up into pieces so we can avoid them. We’re supposed to feed them and clothe them and pray for them and let Christ in us be shown by our love for each other – especially the MOST difficult people to love.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Couldn’t we just wait and trust that He will sort it out? Unbelief is as the sin of witchcraft and He REALLY hates witchcraft. Why is unbelief like witchcraft? Because we don’t think He will get things the way we want them, so we try to help Him by forcing movement ourselves. We don’t believe that if we needed something to be different, He would have changed it already. We don’t wait on Him to do His work, we try to do it ourselves according to our own understanding. And that’s witchcraft and manipulation – and He hates that. He’ll take care of it. Just rest.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Here’s God’s backwards strategy for warfare. If they want to get the burning coals off their head, then they need to be a friend and stop being an enemy. This has natural and spiritual applications. We feed them physically and spiritually, as He directs. We share with each as they have a need, from the abundance of what He’s given us. And see what happens.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

How are we doing on that one? Who is winning? Maybe we’re not doing it right.

Thus Saith the Lord

Ephesians 4:1-32 (ASV)

1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

7 But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: 13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; 15 but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ; 16 from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; 19 who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye did not so learn Christ; 21 if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: 22 that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; 23 and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

25 Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.

29 Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear.

30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.

Call A Solemn Assembly and Sanctify The People

When the locusts have eaten everything and you've declared a holy fast, the next step is to gather the people and have a solemn assembly with those who are consecrated/sanctified.

Joel 1:14 (KJV)

14 Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,

Joel 2:12-17 (ASV)

12 Yet even now, saith Jehovah, turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, and repenteth him of the evil. 14 Who knoweth whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meal-offering and a drink-offering unto Jehovah your God? 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; 16 gather the people, sanctify the assembly, assemble the old men, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth from his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. 17 Let the priests, the ministers of Jehovah, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Jehovah, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the peoples, Where is their God?

But what does it mean? Who qualifies as “elders” or “priests”? How do you “sanctify the assembly”? If you just get the whole town together in a football stadium, does that do it?

Surely, the best thing is to get everybody on board. This verse indicates that even those on their honeymoon need to stop everything. Even breastfeeding babies need to be there! The community needs to show a level of dedication to this that shows their understanding of the priority that needs to be placed on repentance. But it doesn't mean they are all in a place to pray with authority. While they all gather, it's the “priests, the ministers of Jehovah” who are to weep publicly and cry out to God. They're the ones with authority and legal ground.

Whoever gathers, they need to be sanctified. How do you do that? Well, first you make sure they are personally cleaned out, that they are circumcised of heart and have fully repented for themselves. You need people who have the inside of their cup clean – and not just the outside. (Matt. 23:25-26) You make it clear that the first order of business is to sweep clean any personal sins for which they are unrepentant. That means they need to be covered and washed in the Blood of Jesus. Which you can't do if you're not one of His. So the first thing is that this isn't about the “world” coming to pray with us, this is about the Jesus lovers.

And who are the “elders” and “ministers of Jehovah”? Well, don't get a big head. All you have to do to be “elder” is be a four year old in a room full of three year olds! The point is, these CANNOT be the denominational leaders who refuse to lay down their man-made divisions and dogmas. They are not sanctified and cannot pray for unity and harmony with any credibility until they lay down their own baggage. More likely these are the people in town with the biggest cup of Jesus who are outside of the boxes. These are the people God Himself has set in place to minister to Him and to the people. They're probably already feeding the hungry and clothing the naked and being like Jesus. They have a gift of repentance and can repent in spirit and in truth when they ask Him to make the people One Body. They could be little old ladies in wheelchairs, they could be kids, they could be the apostles and prophets and pastors the Lord Himself has raised up and nobody even knows are there. There is absolutely NO indication that this means the members of the Ministerial Association. They may or may not even be part of the Body of Christ. I'm not saying that some of them may not be the “elders” and “priests” over the town – I've met some who are – but it is rare that seminarians can lay down everything and really be one body.

They must be people that who legal ground to repent for the city. They have to be residents of the city or have been sent by God to the city for this purpose. Paul had legal ground to repent for Ephesus because God sent him there as an apostle. But people from the next town over aren't going to be helpful in getting these prayers through. They need to go pray for the Body of Christ in their own town. Identificational confession is important here. Moses could confess on Sinai for the people, because they were his people. I can confess for sins of the Body of Christ in my town, including the African-Americans and other groups who live here. But I can't just confess and repent for the sins of the African-American community as a whole, because I'm not a member and don't have legal ground there. God has raised up someone else

for that. I can't repent for all the women who have let the spirit of Jezebel rule and taken spiritual headship away from their husbands. But I can repent for the Body of Christ in Liberty not having taught them right sooner. God is VERY technical about authority lines and legal authority. If we are going to march shoulder to shoulder without jostling each other, then we need to be very clear about the importance of not trying to do someone else's job for them – or overstepping our boundaries of authority. We need to understand very clearly from the Lord what is our sphere of authority. It may just be your own home – or your business.

The hypocrites need to stay home. Those who are unwilling to repent, those who think everything is just fine, those who think we need to have denominations and they are a good thing. They need to all just stay home. All they're going to do is quench the Spirit and clog up the pipeline. Their hearts are hard and the Lord is evidently not ready to release them from their Red Dragons. So a gift of repentance cannot be poured out on them and they're no good for this kind of praying. Those who can will need to pray for them – and pray around them – but it's better if they stay home.

If you get the whole Body of Christ in the town to come together in a football stadium or a big tent to pray, you're surely going to also gather up witches and warlocks and others trying desperately to stop this. You're going to pick up denominational leadership who thinks this is nuts and unnecessary and would like to stop it. So in addition to the massive spiritual resistance from the enemy who doesn't want to see a town light up, you're going to have people (who are listening to the enemy) resisting at every step. Maybe even legally or illegally trying to stop it. I have no idea how ugly this could get. The Salvation Army officers in the height of their revival days were regularly assaulted, beaten, threatened and even killed. Most of the great revivalists had constant warfare spiritually and physically. Many died young.

I'm not telling you not to do it that way. I'm not telling you to do it any particular way. You need to get everything out of the way, hear God really well and do whatever He tells you. What I am telling you is that those who are actually weeping and mourning between the temple porch and the altar need to really mean it and have authority. Nobody should be there for show or because everybody else is doing it or for any reason other than the true brokenness of their heart and desire for God to restore the land. If there is any selfish motive in it, the Holy Spirit will know that it's not pure. Ananias and Sapphira tried to lie to the Holy Spirit and He killed them on the spot. (Acts 5:1-11) Don't mess with God!

When the Lord asked us to do this in Liberty in August of 2005, we invited everybody we could think of who might be an elder (over 60 people, including the pastors of all 40+ congregations in town) and left it to the Lord to get the right people there. Three business men showed up. But they were outside of the “boxes” and had legal ground and were repented up personally and in divine order. The Lord made sure He had the right people there to repent on behalf of the town.

Whoever and however many gather, the first order of business should be a complete personal repentance, then for our families and our homes, THEN for our city. You have to work your way up through the progression. Like spirals or ripples in a puddle. Taking each bit of ground and making sure it's clean. Before the high priest would go into the temple to offer sacrifices for the people each year, he had to offer sacrifices for himself and his own house, then wash his hands, put on the consecrated garments and THEN he could go into the holy of holies and offer sacrifices for the people of Israel. They would tie a rope around his waist just in case he wasn't all the way clean when he went in – and God killed him. That way they could drag his dead body out and decide who was going to go in next!

God is really motivated to get this done, so He'll help a lot. Just seek Him and do whatever He tells you. He'll make sure all the right folks are there. Just make sure you keep your focus on confession and repentance, not on worship and praise while you're all still knee-deep in your unrepented sins and man-made idolatry. He hates that.

Psalms 106:1-48 (KJV)

34 They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: 35 But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. 36 And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. 37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, 38 And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. 39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. 40 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. 41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. 42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. 43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. 44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: 45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies. 46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives. 47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise. 48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

Repent and Weep and Mourn Before the Altar

The translations of the Word of God sort of use the word “repent” and “confess” interchangeably at times, but it's very important that we be specific here about what we're talking about. I have had pastors (never laity) complain that we can't repent on behalf of someone else. That public repentance for a city is wrong and unbiblical. OK, here's the thing, the word “repent” means to turn away from your sin. It's an action and I can't take that action on behalf of someone else. I can't stop sinning for my wife or my kids or my ekklesia. But I certainly can confess my sins and the sins of my house. There are lots of Biblical examples – and even commands – about that. You need to understand that forgiveness of sins doesn't come in the repenting, it comes in the confessing. First you wash it clean by confessing it and offering a sacrifice (in our case the Blood of the Lamb of God), then you stop doing it (turn away). You don't get forgiven when you don't do it again. You get forgiven when you confess it and say you're sorry. Need Biblical proof?

1 John 1:8-10 (KJV)

*8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we **confess** our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Num 5:6-7 (KJV)

*6 Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty; 7 Then they shall **confess** their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed.*

Psalms 32:5-6 (KJV)

*5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will **confess** my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. 6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*

Psalms 38:18 (KJV)

18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

See? We need to admit we have a problem and then we need to say we're sorry. And He'll forgive us. But THEN He expects us to show fruit in keeping with repentance. (Matt. 3:8) We need to stop going back to our sin like a dog to its vomit. (2 Peter 2:22) We need to make recompense or be willing to accept our just punishment.

Are you with me? I'm NOT saying you can repent on behalf of someone else. But you CAN confess on behalf of someone else IF you have authority. If you're an elder, you're the spiritual leader, or you are set in place and anointed by God for that purpose. You CAN also transfer the sins of the people – or take them on yourself if you're willing.

Lev 16:21-22 (KJV)

*21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and **confess** over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: 22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.*

Ex 32:30-32 (KJV)

30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

Here we see two examples of Old Testament transferral of the sins. The high priest Aaron, would go into the temple every year, after making atonement for his own sins, and would confess all the sins of Israel and place them on the head of the “scape goat” that would then be led off into the wilderness to never be seen again. This is a “spiral,” a foreshadowing of the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the whole world. Jesus Christ was the scape goat for all of us. The Father transferred onto Him all the sins of all men for all time.

John 1:29 (KJV)

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

1 John 2:1-2 (KJV)

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: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We no longer have to offer sacrifices of animals, because the Blood of Jesus is good for all time. But we DO still need to avail ourselves of the Blood. Sometimes we need to specifically confess our sins and ask the Father to cover them in the Blood and wash them away – to send them out into the wilderness of His forgetfulness. And sometimes He calls us to confess for our people or for our land. I'm not making this up. It's entirely Biblical.

Lev 26:40-42 (KJV)

*40 If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; 41 And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: 42 **Then** will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I **will** remember the land.*

(It's another IF/THEN guarantee. See it? IF you confess for you and your fathers, THEN I will remember you.)

2 Chron 7:12-14 (KJV)

*12 And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. 13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; 14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; **then** will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and **will** heal their land.*

James 5:15-16 (KJV)

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Besides Moses (listed above praying the BIG Prayer), here are some specific examples of people doing this very thing.

Nehemiah 1:5-9 (KJV) - (This is Nehemiah praying for his people.)

5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: 6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. 7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. 8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: 9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

Daniel 9:1-19 (KJV) - (This is Daniel praying for his people.)

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: 4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; 5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: 6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. 8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; 10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice;

therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. 12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. 14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. 16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

Lamentations 2:10-19 (KJV) - (These are the elders of Jerusalem praying for their people.)

10 The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground. 11 Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. 12 They say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mothers' bosom. 13 What thing shall I take to witness for thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee? 14 Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment. 15 All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth? 16 All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it. 17 The LORD hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries. 18 Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease. 19 Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street.

Will He really forgive us and our people if we pray and mean it?

Micah 7:18-19 (KJV)

18 Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

He'll even forgive the worst of the worst if they humble themselves!

1 Kings 21:25-29 (KJV) - (This is Ahab, the worst king Israel ever had!)

25 But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. 26 And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. 27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. 28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

Jonah 3:5-10 (KJV) - (This is Ninevah, the most evil city of the day!)

5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor

flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Other examples also of God having mercy on Nebuchadnezzar, on Saul, on David, on Samson and many others.

But what happens if we are supposed to repent and weep and mourn for the sad state of things but we refuse?

Oh, you just had to go and ask that, didn't you. Well, it gets really ugly.

Isaiah 22:12-14 (KJV)

12 And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: 13 And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. 14 And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Here the Lord calls for repenting, but they're going on with their party. In fact, they're partying even more because they're going to die anyway. But He would have turned if they had heard His voice and obeyed. Instead, He's going to flatten them. Go read Lamentations to see what results from this kind of stuff. Women are cooking and eating their own babies. Just like Deuteronomy 28 said would happen if you didn't obey.

Isaiah 1:18-20 (God's Word)

18 "Come on now, let's discuss this!" says the LORD. "Though your sins are bright red, they will become as white as snow. Though they are dark red, they will become as white as wool. 19 If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land. 20 But if you refuse and rebel, you will be destroyed by swords." The LORD has spoken.

OUCH! You think that's bad? Try this one!

Ezek 9:1-11 (KJV)

*1 He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. 2 And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. 3 And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; 4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and **set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.***

5 And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6 Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. 7 And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city. 8 And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? 9 Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not. 10 And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head. 11 And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.

Here we see the remnant that is weeping and mourning for the sins of Jerusalem getting a mark. The glory of the Lord leaves the Temple and everybody who doesn't have the mark gets mercilessly slaughtered! And all their dead bodies get piled in the Temple. I think we're WAY overdue for weeping and mourning. I think God has been sending prophets to preach the urgency of this to the people for a long time. But nobody will listen.

One day the Lord led me back to this passage again. After I read it, out of the blue, the Lord quietly said, "You know, I already did that. Your temples are all full of dead bodies." OUCH!! He's totally right! I've been to dozens of them and I have to admit that mostly the people there are spiritually dead, but think they're just fine! I think we're WAY overdue. If we don't start weeping and mourning in a big way soon, there may not be anybody left.

Thus Saith The Lord

Jeremiah 3:12-25 (KJV)

12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; *and* I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I *am* merciful, saith the LORD, *and* I will not keep *anger* for ever. 13 **Only acknowledge thine iniquity**, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye **have not obeyed my voice**, saith the LORD. 14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: 15 And I will give you pastors according to **mine** heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. 16 And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit *it*; neither shall *that* be done any more. 17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. 18 In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers. 19 But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, **Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.**

20 Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD. 21 A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping *and* supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, *and* they have forgotten the LORD their God. 22 **Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.**

Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God. 23 Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel. 24 For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. 25 We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

Hosea 4:1-10 (KJV)

1 Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *there is* no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. 2 By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. 3 **Therefore** shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. 4 Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people *are* as they that strive with the priest. 5 Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

6 **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.** 7 As they were increased *{the priests}*, so they sinned against me: *therefore* will I change their glory into shame. 8 They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity. 9 And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings. 10 For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.

Isaiah 58:1-5 (God's Word)

1 Cry aloud! Don't hold back! Raise your voice like a ram's horn. Tell my people about their rebellion and the descendants of Jacob about their sins. 2 They look for me every day and want to know my ways. **They act as if they were a nation that has done what is right and as if they haven't disregarded God's judgment {on them}**. They ask me for just decrees. They want God to be near them.

3 Why have we fasted if you are not aware of it? Why have we inflicted pain on ourselves if you don't pay attention? Don't you see that on the days you fast, you do what you want to do? You mistreat all your workers. 4 Don't you see that when you fast, you quarrel and fight and beat your workers? The way you fast today keeps you from being heard in heaven. 5 Is this the kind of fasting I have chosen? Should people humble themselves for {only} a day? Is fasting just bowing your head like a cattail and making your bed from sackcloth and ashes? Is this what you call fasting? Is this an acceptable day to the LORD?

Ezekiel 7:3-27 (KJV)

3 Now *is* the end *come* upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. 4 And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. 5 Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. 6 An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come. 7 The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble *is* near, and not the sounding again of the mountains. 8 Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. 9 And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations *that* are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD that smiteth. 10 Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded. 11 Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness: none of them *shall remain*, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs: neither *shall there be* wailing for them. 12 The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath *is* upon all the multitude thereof. 13 For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive: for the vision *is* touching the whole multitude thereof, *which* shall not return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life. 14 They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath *is* upon all the multitude thereof. 15 The sword *is* without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that *is* in the field shall die with the sword; and he that *is* in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him.

16 But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity. 17 All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water. 18 They shall also gird *themselves* with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame *shall be* upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads. 19 They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity. 20 As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations *and* of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them. 21 And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it. 22 My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret *place*: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.

23 Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence. 24 Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled. 25 Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and *there shall be* none. 26 Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients. 27 The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

Ezekiel 16:3-63 (God's Word)

3 Tell them, 'This is what the Almighty LORD says to the people of Jerusalem: Your birthplace and your ancestors were in the land of the Canaanites. Your father was an Amorite, and your mother was a Hittite. 4 When you were born, your umbilical cord wasn't cut. You weren't washed with water to make you clean. You weren't rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloth. 5 No one who saw you felt sorry enough for you to do any of these things. But you were thrown into an open field. You were rejected when you were born. 6 "Then I went by you and saw you kicking around in your own blood. I said to you, "Live." 7 I made you grow like a plant in the field. You grew up, matured, and became a young woman. Your breasts developed, and your hair grew. Yet, you were naked and bare. 8 "I went by you again and looked at you. You were old enough to make love to. So I spread my robe over you, and covered your naked body. I promised to love you, and I exchanged marriage vows with you. You became mine, declares the Almighty LORD. 9 "Then I bathed you with water, and I washed off your blood. I poured olive oil over you. 10 I put an embroidered dress on you and fine leather sandals on your feet. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 I gave you jewelry. I put bracelets on your wrists and a necklace around your neck. 12 I put a ring in your nose, earrings on your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13 So you wore gold and silver jewelry. You were dressed in fine linen, silk, and embroidered clothes. Your food was flour, honey, and olive oil. You were very beautiful, and eventually you became a queen. 14 **You became famous in every nation because of your beauty.** Your beauty was perfect because I gave you **my** glory, declares the Almighty LORD.

15 "But you trusted your beauty, and you used your fame to become a prostitute. You had sex with everyone who walked by. 16 You took some of your clothes and made your worship sites colorful. This is where you acted like a prostitute. Such things shouldn't happen. They shouldn't occur. 17 You took your beautiful gold and silver jewelry that I had given you and made **male idols** for yourself. **Then you committed adultery with them.** 18 You took off your embroidered clothes and covered the idols with them. You offered my olive oil and incense in their presence. 19 You also offered them sweet and fragrant sacrifices. You gave flour, olive oil, and honey—all the food that I gave you to eat. This is

what happened, declares the Almighty LORD. 20 “You took your sons and daughters, who belonged to me, and you sacrificed them as food to idols. **Wasn't your prostitution enough? 21 You slaughtered my children and presented them as burnt offerings to idols.** 22 With all the disgusting things that you did and all your acts of prostitution, you didn't remember the time when you were young. You didn't remember when you were naked and bare, kicking around in your own blood.

23 “**How horrible! How horrible it will be for you!** declares the Almighty LORD. After all your wickedness, 24 you built yourself platforms and **illegal worship sites in every city square.** 25 **You also built worship sites at the head of every street.** You used your beauty to seduce people there. You offered your body to everyone who passed by. You increased your acts of prostitution. 26 You had sex with your lustful neighbors, the Egyptians. You used your prostitution to make me angry. 27 “**So I used my power against you.** I took away some of your land, and I handed you over to your greedy enemies, the Philistines, who were ashamed of what you had done. 28 “You had sex with the Assyrians because you weren't satisfied. You still weren't satisfied. 29 **So you increased your acts of prostitution to include the land of the merchants, the Babylonians.** Even after that, you weren't satisfied. 30 “**You have no will power! declares the Almighty LORD. You do everything a shameless prostitute does.** 31 You build your platforms at the head of every street and place your illegal worship sites in every square. **Yet, you aren't like other prostitutes, because you don't want to be paid.** 32 You are an adulterous wife who prefers strangers to her husband. 33 All prostitutes get paid. **But you give gifts to all your lovers and bribe them to come to you from all directions to have sex with you.** 34 You are a different kind of prostitute. No one goes after you for favors. You are the opposite. **You pay them, and you don't accept payment.**

35 “Listen to the word of the LORD, you prostitute. 36 This is what the Almighty LORD says: You exposed yourself and uncovered your naked body when you gave yourself to your lovers and to all your disgusting idols. You also killed your children and sacrificed their blood to these idols. 37 **That is why I will gather all your lovers with whom you found pleasure. I will have all those who love you and hate you gather around. I will uncover your body for them, and they will see you naked.** 38 I will punish you the same way that those who are guilty of prostitution and murder are punished. **I will give you the death penalty in my fury and burning anger.** 39 I will hand you over to your lovers. They will destroy your platforms and tear down your illegal worship sites. **They will tear off your clothes, take away your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare.** 40 **They will also bring a mob against you. They will stone you and cut you into pieces with their swords.** 41 **They will burn your houses and punish you in the presence of many women. I will put an end to your prostitution, and you will no longer pay others.**

42 **Then** I will rest from my fury against you, and I will stop being angry. I will be at peace. I will no longer be angry. 43 “You didn't remember the time when you were young, and you made me very angry with all these things. So I will pay you back for what you have done, declares the Almighty LORD. **Didn't you make wicked plans in addition to all your disgusting practices?** 44 “Everyone who uses proverbs will speak the following saying against you: Like mother, like daughter. 45 You are your mother's daughter. She rejected her husband and her children. You are exactly like your sisters. They rejected their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite, and your father was an Amorite. 46 “Your older sister was Samaria. She and her daughters lived north of you. Your younger sister is Sodom. She lives south of you with her daughters. 47 You didn't follow their ways. You didn't do the same disgusting things that they did. **It only took you a little time to be more corrupt than they ever were.** 48 As I live, declares the Almighty LORD, your sister Sodom and her daughters never did what you and your daughters have done. 49 This is what your sister Sodom has done wrong. **She and her daughters were proud that they had plenty of food and had peace and security. They didn't help the poor and the needy. 50 They were arrogant and did disgusting things in front of me. So I did away with them when I saw this.** 51 “Samaria didn't commit half the sins you did. You have done **many more** disgusting things than they ever did. Because of all the disgusting things that you have done, you make your sisters look innocent. 52 You will have to suffer disgrace because you accused your sisters. **Yet, your sins are more disgusting than theirs. They look like they are innocent compared to you.** Be ashamed of yourself and suffer disgrace, because you have made your sisters look like they are innocent. 53 “I will restore the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters, and Samaria and her daughters. I will also restore your fortune along with theirs. 54 You will have to suffer disgrace and be ashamed of everything you have done, including comforting them. 55 When Sodom and her daughters and Samaria and her daughters return to what they once were, you and your daughters will return to what you once were. 56 You didn't mention your sister Sodom when you were arrogant. 57 You didn't mention her before your wickedness was revealed. Now the daughters of Aram and their neighbors despise you. The daughters of the Philistines also despise you. Those around you hate you. 58 **You must suffer because of all the crude and disgusting things you have done, declares the LORD.** 59 “This is what the Almighty LORD says: **I will give you what you deserve. You despised your marriage vows and rejected my promise.** 60 I will remember the promise that I made with you when you were young, and I will make it a promise that will last forever. 61 Then you will remember what you have done. You will be ashamed when I return your older and younger sisters to you. I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of my promise with you. 62 Then I will make my promise with you, and you will know that I am the LORD. 63 **You will remember and be ashamed. You will never again open your mouth because of your disgrace when I forgive you for everything you did, declares the Almighty LORD.”**

And THEN He Will Turn

I get the penalty if we don't, but what's the payoff if we do this?

Well, first of all, you do it because He told you to, not because of the payoff. He might turn and He might not. But you do it anyway because it's the right thing to do. But if He does decide to turn, He reserves the right to manifest that however He wants to, but odds are good that it will be GLORIOUS!

Joel 2:18-29 (God's Word)

18 Then the LORD became concerned about his land, and he had pity on his people. 19 The LORD said to his people, "I am going to send grain, new wine, and olive oil to you. You will be satisfied with them. I will no longer make you a disgrace among the nations. 20 "I will keep the northern {army} far from you, and I will force it into a dry and barren land. The soldiers in front will be forced into the eastern sea. The soldiers in back will be forced into the western sea. A foul odor will rise from the dead bodies. They will stink." He has done great things! 21 Land, do not be afraid. Be glad and rejoice. The LORD has done great things! 22 Wild animals, do not be afraid. The pastures in the wilderness have turned green. The trees have produced their fruit. There are plenty of figs and grapes. 23 People of Zion, be glad and find joy in the LORD your God. The LORD has given you the Teacher of Righteousness. He has sent the autumn rain and the spring rain as before. 24 The threshing floors will be filled with grain. The vats will overflow with new wine and olive oil. 25 "Then I will repay you for the years that the mature locusts, the adult locusts, the grasshoppers, and the young locusts ate your crops. (They are the large army that I sent against you.) 26 You will have plenty to eat, and you will be full. You will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has performed miracles for you. My people will never be ashamed again. 27 You will know that I am in Israel. I am the LORD your God, and there is no other. My people will never be ashamed again. 28 "After this, I will pour my Spirit on everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions. 29 In those days I will pour my Spirit on servants, on both men and women.

Isaiah 1:18-20 (God's Word translation)

18 "Come on now, let's discuss this!" says the LORD. "Though your sins are bright red, they will become as white as snow. Though they are dark red, they will become as white as wool. 19 If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land.

Zechariah 10:3-9 (God's Word translation)

3 "My burning anger is directed against the shepherds. I will punish the male goats. The LORD of Armies takes care of his flock, the people of Judah. He makes them like his splendid war horse." 4 From them will come a cornerstone, from them a tent peg, from them every leader. 5 Together they will be like warriors who trample the enemy in the mud on the streets. They will fight because the LORD is with them. They will put to shame those who ride on horses. 6 "I will strengthen the people of Judah. I will rescue Joseph's people. I will bring them back, because I have compassion for them. It will be as though I had never rejected them, because I am the LORD their God, and I will answer them. 7 The people of Ephraim will be like mighty warriors. Their hearts will be glad as if they had some wine {to drink}. Their sons will see it and be glad. Their hearts will find joy in the LORD. 8 I will signal them with a whistle and gather them because I have reclaimed them. They will be as numerous as they have ever been. 9 Although I have scattered them among the nations, they will remember me even in faraway places. They will live with their children and then return.

Deuteronomy 28:1-14 (God's Word translation)

1 Carefully obey the LORD your God, and faithfully follow all his commands that I'm giving you today. If you do, the LORD your God will place you high above all the other nations in the world. 2 These are all the blessings that will come to you and stay close to you because you obey the LORD your God: 3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. 4 You will be blessed. You will have children. Your land will have crops. Your animals will have offspring. Your cattle will have calves, and your flocks will have lambs and kids. 5 The grain you harvest and the bread you bake will be blessed. 6 You will be blessed when you come and blessed when you go. 7 The LORD will defeat your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction but run away from you in seven directions. 8 The LORD will bless your barns and everything you do. The LORD your God will bless you in the land that he is giving you. 9 You will be the LORD's holy people, as he promised you with an oath. He will do this if you obey the commands of the LORD your God and follow his directions. 10 Then all the people in the world will see that you are the LORD's people, and they will be afraid of you. 11 The LORD will give you plenty of blessings: You will have many children. Your animals will have many offspring. Your soil will produce many crops in the land the LORD will give you, as he swore to your ancestors. 12 The LORD will open the heavens, his rich

storehouse, for you. He will send rain on your land at the right time and bless everything you do. You will be able to make loans to many nations but won't need to borrow from any. 13 The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. You will always be at the top, never at the bottom, if you faithfully obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today. 14 Do everything I'm commanding you today. Never worship other gods or serve them.

Isaiah 57:1-21 (God's Word)

1 Righteous people die, and no one cares. Loyal people are taken away, and no one understands. Righteous people are spared when evil comes. 2 When peace comes, everyone who has lived honestly will rest on his own bed. 3 But you—come here, you children of witches, you descendants of adulterers and prostitutes! 4 Whom are you making fun of? Whom are you making a face at? Whom are you sticking out your tongue at? Aren't you rebellious children, descendants of liars? 5 You burn with lust under oak trees and under every large tree. You slaughter children in the valleys and under the cracks in the rocks. 6 Your idols are among the smooth stones in the ravine. They are your destiny. You have given them wine offerings and sacrificed grain offerings to them. Do you think I am pleased with all this? 7 You've made your bed on a high and lofty mountain. You've gone to offer sacrifices there. 8 You've set up your idols beside doors and doorposts. You've uncovered yourself to the idols. You've distanced yourself from me. You've made your bed with them. You've made a deal with those you have pleasure with in bed. You've seen them naked. 9 You've journeyed to the king with perfumed oils and put on plenty of perfume. You've sent your ambassadors far away and sent them down to Sheol. 10 You've tired yourself out with many journeys. You didn't think that it was hopeless. You've found renewed strength, so you didn't faint. 11 Whom did you dread and fear so much that you lied to me? You haven't remembered me or cared about me. I've been silent for a long time. Is that why you don't fear me? 12 I'll tell you about your righteous ways and what you have done, but they won't help you. 13 When you cry for help, let your collection of idols save you. A wind will carry them all away. A breath will take them away. But whoever trusts me will possess the land and inherit my holy mountain. 14 It will be said: "Build a road! Build a road! Prepare the way! Remove every obstacle in the way of my people!" 15 The High and Lofty One lives forever, and his name is holy. This is what he says: I live in a high and holy place. But I am with those who are crushed and humble. I will renew the spirit of those who are humble and the courage of those who are crushed. 16 I will not accuse you forever. I will not be angry with you forever. Otherwise, the spirits, the lives of those I've made, would grow faint in my presence. 17 I was angry because of their sinful greed, so I punished them, hid {from them}, and remained angry. But they continued to be sinful. 18 I've seen their {sinful} ways, but I'll heal them. I'll guide them and give them rest. I'll comfort them and their mourners. 19 I'll create praise on their lips: "Perfect peace to those both far and near." "I'll heal them," says the LORD. 20 But the wicked are like the churning sea. It isn't quiet, and its water throws up mud and slime. 21 "There is no peace for the wicked," says my God.

Jeremiah 30:1-24 (KJV)

10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. 12 For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. 13 There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. 14 All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased. 15 Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee. 16 Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. 17 For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after. 18 Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. 19 And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. 20 Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. 21 And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD. 22 And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. 23 Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. 24 The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.

Want some New Testament references? (You're not one of those "the Old Testament doesn't count anymore" people, are you?)

James 4:7-10 (KJV)

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, **and he shall lift you up.**

Eph 5:25-27 (KJV)

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 **That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**

Rev 2:5,7 (KJV)

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and **repent**, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.**

Rev 2:11 (KJV)

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.**

Rev 2:16-17 (KJV)

16 **Repent**; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.**

Rev 2:22-23,26-28 (KJV)

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they **repent** of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 26 **And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star.**

Rev 3:3,5 (KJV)

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and **repent**. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 5 **He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.**

Rev 3:11-12 (KJV)

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 **Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.**

Rev 3:15-22 (KJV)

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and **repent**. 20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 **To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.** 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Light the Lampstand

Lighting or restoring the Lampstand is not so much an action in and of itself, as it is a byproduct of doing the things above to prepare the ground for it to be restored and lit. I do believe that someone from a city with a Lampstand needs to help you light yours, but that may just be a matter of reading this book. It's certainly not about ME personally and I don't know that it requires someone present. It may just be a matter of someone telling you to ask for it. Don't focus so much on getting the Lampstand lit as on preparing the ground. Isaiah 58 says that it WILL happen when you do those things that please Him – including not turning away from your own flesh and blood and stopping the malicious talk and the pointing finger. Keep asking for Him to light it – but to show you what it's going to take to do it. And whatever He tells you, DO IT!

What is it going to take to make this work?

Watchman Nee, “The Normal Christian Church Life” - Chapter 5

It was **never** God's purpose that a number of churches in different places should be combined under any denomination or organization, but rather that each one should be independent of the other. Their responsibilities were to be independent and their government likewise. When our Lord sent messages to His children in Asia, He did not address them as “the church in Asia,” but “the seven churches which are in Asia.” His rebuke of Ephesus could not be applied to Smyrna, because Smyrna was independent of Ephesus. The confusion in Pergamos could not be laid to the charge of Philadelphia, because Philadelphia was independent of Pergamos. And the pride of Laodicea could not be attributed to Sardis, because Sardis was independent of Laodicea. Each church stood on its own merits and bore its own responsibility. Since God's children lived in seven different cities, they consequently belonged to seven different churches. And since each was independent of the other, each had its own special commendation, or exhortation, or rebuke.

And not only were there these seven churches on earth; there were seven lampstands representing them in heaven. In the Old Testament there was only one lampstand with seven different branches, but in the New Testament there were seven distinct lampstands. Had the New Testament representation been the same as the Old, then believers in the seven Asiatic churches might have united to form one church; but there are now seven separate lampstands, each upon its own base, so that the Lord is able to walk “in the midst of the seven golden lampstands” (Rev. 2:1). Therefore, though all churches stand under the authority of the one Head and express the life of the one Body (for they are all made of gold), still they are not united by any outward organization, but each stands on its own base, bearing its own responsibility, maintaining its local independence. “

That leads right into the Lampstands and the need for one. In November of 2004, the Lord showed me a vision of complete blackness over America, with little, black tendrils of nastiness spreading out all over the world. I could FEEL the wrath of God at what we were doing to His children and it changed me forever. Later He began to talk to me about the City Church and what it was and how it should be.

He led me to Revelation 2 and 3 and the messages from Jesus to the seven City Churches in Asia Minor. In the very first one – the message to the Church in Ephesus – the Lord tells them they've lost their first love and threatens to take away their Lampstand if they don't get back to it. Their first love has to be Jesus – and He says they will know us by our love, for each other. So He's telling them to get back to Him and stop going their own way and get back to being One Body under His headship, or else.

Please note there are not JUST seven golden lampstands. There are clearly other city churches in existence at the time of the writing of the book of Revelation. For example, the church in Jerusalem, the church in Antioch, the church in Corinth and others are not listed. Certainly the Lord had His reasons for choosing these seven, but it should be clear that there were others at the time and each local city church in divine order has a Lampstand. Those could not have been the ONLY seven, they were just the ones chosen for the Lord's purposes for this book of Revelation.

But what IS a Lampstand? In Rev. 2, the Lord threatens the church in Ephesus that they are at risk of losing their Lampstand if they don't repent and change their ways. So what would happen if a city church lost its Lampstand? Does that mean the Holy Spirit leaves the town? Surely not, He is omnipresent. Does it mean there are no more Christians there? Surely not. Does it mean they stop gathering and fellowshiping? No. It means the Body of Christ in that town is not really under Christ's headship anymore. They're on their own power. They lose the “Seal of Approval” and their access to the really big lights that push back the darkness in a huge way. What's the fastest way to lose your Lampstand? Allowing division inside the Body and grieving God. Even though Laodicea is asleep and Sardis is dead, the Lord doesn't threaten to take away their Lampstand. They may be in error, they may be useless, they may be allowing heresy, but at least they're all in it together! The Lord simply urges the overcomers there to stand firm. At least they're still being One Body! He hates division MORE than He hates bad behavior or incorrect secondary doctrinal issues. How desperately we

need to learn that lesson! You can be wrong, you can be dead, you can be lukewarm – but don't lose your first love!

Consider it this way, “the prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16) But the prayer of a slightly-righteous man probably availeth practically nothing. It's hard to tell whose team a semi-obedient man is even on!

Likewise, the prayer of a righteous city or town availeth a WHOLE LOT. In fact, if you look at the big revivals in history, the Great Awakenings (which were always focused on towns) and other examples, when a town comes together, repents and seeks God, it doesn't just change lives, it can change economies and crime rates, affect the course of wars and can even alter ecologies! But the prayer of a slightly-righteous, divided Body of Christ in a town availeth practically nothing. In fact, it might even be hard to tell whose side they are on.

The Lord gave me a little word picture that might help explain it.

Imagine that the Lord started a bonfire in the middle of each town. In the beginning of that town, there was just one church. They were one body and they were seeking Him only. The fire is refining and purifying and powerful. Nothing can stand against it. It blazes brightly and pushes back all the darkness. The angel of the city (the Star in Revelation) blows on the fire and helps keep it burning.

But one day, one of the little flames in the fire decided that he wanted to see what was out there beyond the communal bonfire, so he wandered off on his own. Maybe he even talked some others into going with him. Eventually some others started to drift off too, to investigate what was beyond. Maybe some of them got in a fight with some of the other little flames and decided they didn't want to be around them anymore. They all took their own little candles and went their own way. Eventually everyone leaves the bonfire and there is nothing left but a pile of ash in the spot where God's bonfire used to be. The little flames may collect into little fires of their own – sometimes 20 or 100 or maybe even 10,000 all in one place. But the Star of the city is not going to help – he is assigned to God's bonfire and no other. None of their little flames can compare to the raw power of what used to be when all the little flames were together in harmony. They have their own little candles, and they might get enough of them together to create quite a little flame, but it's NOTHING like what it used to be or what it could be. Some of them are extinguished by the darkness, some die out alone, some die in large groups, some turn into strange fire. It's a LOT easier for the darkness to pick them off when they're not all together. In fact, it's the siren song of the darkness that lured them away from the bonfire in the first place – specifically so that this would happen!

The Star waits in the original ash pile, whispering to the little flames to come back. The Lord seeks even ONE man who will stand in the gap for the city. If even ONE of the little flames goes back to the original ash pile and repents and stands there defiantly burning as brightly as he can, insisting he will not be moved – then the Star will blow on his flame and start calling others back. The Star will send help from any source possible. The Star is HIGHLY motivated to make this work, so all kinds of resources will be available to those who commit to stand in the place of unity where God originally planted them. Nothing can stand against them when they are where God planted them. Only when they step outside the fire ring and go their own way can the enemy pick them off.

Whether all of them come back or just a few, when ANYONE comes back and repents and sets their face like flint and refuses to be moved ever again, the city will start to turn. The original bonfire will start to burn brightly and the Lampstand will be lit again. They will have access to the nuclear powerplants in the sky instead of just their own little candles. When the Body of Christ goes in repentance and unity and brokenness to accomplish a task the Lord directed, nothing can stand against them. They will inherit His promises as soon as they stop going their own way and they repent.

Why do we hear stories about some little missionary girl who went to some Pacific island where the Gospel had never been preached and astounding miracles follow her all over? But nothing like that happens when she's back in England? Why are headhunters and cannibals being healed and raised from the dead and miraculous financial provision for every need shows up, but she can never do it elsewhere? Because on that little island she is the ENTIRETY of the Body of Christ and she is there at His direction and under His headship and the Body is One. Just like Paul when he went into an unreached city, she IS the Lampstand. But as soon as another ministry shows up, or her converts split off and start their own brand of “church” and they refuse fellowship with each other and it becomes divisive, revivals stops dead in it's tracks and the power leaves the building. Every single time. (How many historical examples do you want?)

If the relit Lampstands mean access to the really BIG weapons of war, then it is VERY much is the enemy's best interest to keep us from having access to those weapons – from seeing the problem and doing something about it. That's why the Body of Christ in EVERY town in America has been methodically and systematically divided up into little pieces. And we fell for it. If we're going to keep praying “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” then maybe we ought to start being One Body – you know, like we will be in heaven.

So it seems to me that the entire focus of EVERY town should be, “What is it going to take to get our Lampstand back?” We believe God has shown us the formula for that. We believe that the Church of Liberty, Missouri, has a Lampstand and others around the country are being lit now. More on that below.

Let me try this from a different direction. The Apostles received the Holy Spirit in John 20:22 when Jesus breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” They had already been out in pairs healing people and casting out demons. Nobody can convince me that you can do that without the Holy Spirit in you! Then, just before Jesus' ascension to the Father, He charged them with the Great Commission to go take the Gospel into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and unto the ends of the world. But He also told them NOT to go do it until the Holy Spirit came to them. Huh? They already had the Holy Spirit. But this isn't the redemptive aspects of the Holy Spirit, this is the empowering of the Holy Spirit. They had some in there, but they weren't fully baptized, submerged, dunked, swamped, lit up by the Holy Spirit yet. Even though they had been with Him, even though they had been commissioned to go, they were NOT allowed to go until the tongues of fire descended upon them.

The Bible always speaks in spirals, multiple applications of the same process on increasing populations or situations. Hosea applies to the Israel at the time, Israel in the future, America, me, the Church, etc. The Sermon on the Mount applies to me, my family, my city, my country, the Bride, etc. It's a Living Word and it's mysteries are endless (and require the Holy Spirit to unlock them). And I want you to see that this instruction to stay in Jerusalem until the fire came has application to the City Church as well. The model we have is that the disciples stayed and were all together praying and seeking God until Pentecost when the tongues of fire fell on them and lit them up. Peter goes from being a guy who denied Christ three times just fifty days before, to being a determined, fearless leader and public speaker whose first (fully extemporaneous) sermon brings 3,000 people to repentance. He's interrogated and whipped and praises Jesus – and gets filled with the Holy Spirit again (Acts 4:31)! Before this, even a little servant girl made him deny Christ three times! Now he's making so much sense that none of the religious leaders can argue with him!

Here's the point. If the Body of Christ in your town doesn't have a Lampstand, then **stay in your Jerusalem** and pray together and seek His face until the tongues of fire light it up. DO NOT go into Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth when your own fire isn't lit. I would highly recommend that EVERY local body that doesn't have a lit Lampstand stop immediately doing or sending or funding anything elsewhere until you have cried out to the Lord sufficiently that His fire has fallen and you can then go in His authority according to His ways. Whatever you do without a Lampstand is going to be in your own power and not fully in His. It might have positive effects, but NOTHING like it will when you're fully inside His will and under His headship and operating as One Body!

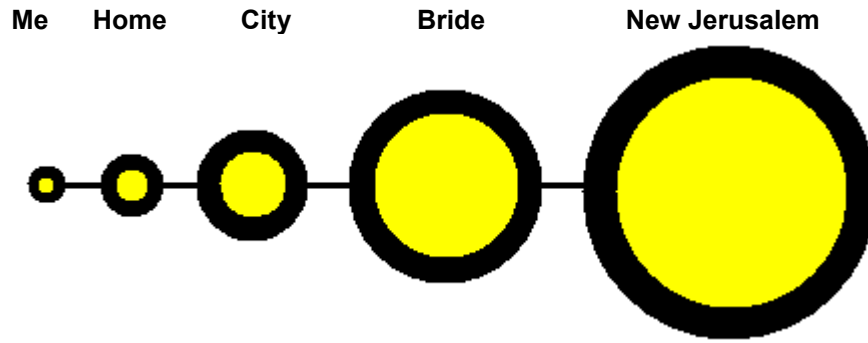
It's like a bullseye. Don't go trying to fix someplace else when your own home is out of order. Start in the center and work your way out. In my case, He didn't let me leave Liberty for over a year and half until the Lampstand was lit. I know others who have been alone on their face weeping for their city for DECADES without leaving. We pulled back all support of native missionaries in India, all outside focus and kept all of our attention on the local Body. When it had achieved a “critical mass” and it lit up, the Lord released me to go out wider and help others.

Nothing is more important – or more empowering – than having a Lampstand behind you that certifies that you are His and have His firepower behind you. Without it, you are just going to have your own little candles to light your way and push back the darkness. Please hear me. Look at the Biblical model before us. Don't go trying to fulfill the Great Commission until you've fulfilled Isaiah 58 at home. Only THEN will your light rise in the darkness and He'll be your rear guard and when you call He will answer.

Every Temple needs to have a Lampstand burning in it. Every application – every leg of the spiral – needs to have a fire burning. Not burned out, not out of oil, not under a bushel, not under the bed – but a fire set on a lampstand for all men to see and burning brightly to push back the darkness and expose all that is hidden. We are to resist the enemy so he will flee. How? By the brightness and boldness and obviousness of our Light. By keeping our Lamps full of oil of His Spirit all the time. The foolish virgins are the ones who aren't full when the Bridegroom comes.

Every Temple needs a Lamp burning brightly. We need our assemblies cleansed and purified and spotless and white – so that the Light of Jesus reflects off every wall and every person and everything that we do and say. If we're to be useful vessels then we need to be silver and gold, not clay and wood – useful for noble purposes, not ignoble. We need our homes well lit with the Gospel and the Spirit of God. The Temples ALL need cleansing. On every spiral, on every level, on every dimension – Body, Soul and Spirit.

What Temples are we talking about? ALL of them. (I don't have to go back and explain “all” to you again, do I?)



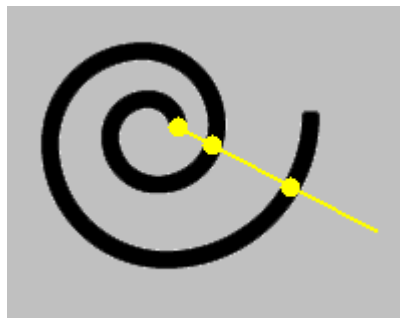
- My own heart lit by my own little candle of the Spirit
- My own home lit by the combined fire of the “one flesh” living there
- My City Church – lit by the Lampstand of the combined fire of the Body living there
 - The Bride, the entirety of the Body of Christ – lit by His Spirit in all of us
 - The New Jerusalem lit by the Light of the World

It applies to all of them. All of them should be a city on a hill. None of them should be hidden under a bushel or under the bed. All of them need to be burning brightly. (Matthew 5:13-16)

And any of them whose lamp runs out of oil will be considered foolish and cast out into outer darkness. Spirals. See?

Matthew 25:1-13 (KJV)

1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.



Thus Saith The Lord

Ezekiel 36:1-38 (God's Word)

1 {The LORD said,} “Son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel. Tell them, ‘Mountains of Israel, listen to the word of the LORD. 2 This is what the Almighty LORD says: **Your enemies said this about you, “Aha! The ancient worship sites now belong to us.”**’ 3 “So prophesy. Say, ‘This is what the Almighty LORD says: Your enemies turned you into ruins and crushed you from every side. You became the possession of the rest of the nations, and people began to talk and gossip about you. 4 “Mountains of Israel, listen to the word of the Almighty LORD. This is what the Almighty LORD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, and to the **empty ruins and abandoned cities** that have become prey and are mocked by the rest of the surrounding nations: 5 In my fiery anger I have spoken against the rest of the nations and against all of Edom. **The Edomites have taken possession of my land with wholehearted joy and with complete scorn.** They forced out the people and took their land.’ 6 “So prophesy about Israel. Tell the mountains and hills and the ravines and valleys, ‘This is what the Almighty LORD says: **I am speaking in my anger and fury because you have been insulted by the nations.**’ 7 So this is what the Almighty LORD says: I raise my hand and swear that the nations which surround you will be insulted. 8 “‘But you, mountains of Israel, will grow branches and bear fruit for my people Israel. My people will come home soon. 9 **I am for you.** I will turn to you, and you will be plowed and planted. 10 **I will increase the number of people who live on you.** All the people of Israel, all of them, will live on you. **The cities will be inhabited, and the ruins will be rebuilt.** 11 I will increase the number of people and animals that live on you. They will grow and become many. I will let people live on you as in the past, and **I will make you better off than ever before.** Then you will **know** that I am the LORD. 12 I will bring people, my people Israel, to you. They will take possession of you, and you will be their inheritance. You will no longer take their children away from them. 13 “‘This is what the Almighty LORD says: **People say that you devour your people and take the children away from your nation.**’ 14 So you will no longer devour your people or take the children away from your nation, declares the Almighty LORD. 15 I will no longer let you hear the insults from the nations. **You will no longer suffer the disgrace of the people.** You will never again take the children away from your own nation, declares the Almighty LORD.”

16 The LORD spoke his word to me. He said, 17 “Son of man, **when the people of Israel lived in their land, they dishonored it by the way they lived and by everything they did. Their ways were as unclean as a woman's menstrual period.** 18 So I poured out my fury on them because they poured out blood on the land and they dishonored the land with their idols. 19 I forced them into other nations, and they became scattered among the nations. **I judged them based on the way that they lived and based on everything that they had done.**

20 But wherever they went among the nations, they dishonored my holy name. People said about them, ‘**These are the LORD's people, yet they had to leave his land.**’ 21 I became concerned about my holy name because my people dishonored it among the nations wherever they went. 22 “So tell the people of Israel, ‘**This is what the Almighty LORD says: I am about to do something, people of Israel. I will not do this for your sake but for the sake of my holy name, which you have dishonored among the nations wherever you have gone.**’ 23 I will reveal the holiness of my great name, which has been dishonored by the nations, {the name} that you have dishonored among them. **Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, because I will reveal my holiness among you as they watch, declares the Almighty LORD.** 24 “‘I will take you from the nations and gather you from every country. I will bring you back to your own land. 25 **I will sprinkle clean water on you and make you clean instead of unclean.** Then I will cleanse you from all your idols. 26 **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove your stubborn hearts and give you obedient hearts.** 27 **I will put my Spirit in you. I will enable you to live by my laws, and you will obey my rules.** 28 Then you will live in the land that I gave your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 **I will rescue you from all your uncleanness.** I will make the grain grow so that you will never again have famines. 30 I will make fruit grow on the trees and crops grow in the fields so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famines. 31 **Then you will remember your evil ways and the bad things that you did, and you will hate yourselves for all these wicked and disgusting things.**

32 I want you to know that I'm **not** doing this for **your** sake, declares the Almighty LORD. **Be ashamed and disgraced because of your ways,** people of Israel. 33 “‘This is what the Almighty LORD says: On the day that I cleanse you from all your wickedness, **I will cause your cities to be lived in again, and your ruins will be rebuilt.** 34 The wasteland will be plowed. It will no longer remain empty for everyone passing by to see. 35 People will say, “This wasteland has become like the garden of Eden. **The cities were destroyed. They were empty and ruined, but now they are fortified and have people living in them.**” 36 The surrounding nations that are left will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted crops in the land that was empty. I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do it.’ 37 “This is what the Almighty LORD says: I will also **let** the people of Israel **ask me to make them** as numerous as sheep. 38 They will be like the sheep for sacrifices, like the sheep in Jerusalem during the appointed festivals. **Their ruined cities will be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.**”

Rebuild on the Ancient Foundations

The ancient foundation has to be Christ and Him crucified. That is the foundation the Apostles laid and no other can be laid. No improvement can be made on the truth of the Cross and the Resurrection. Without that, we have nothing. Whatever we build has to be founded on that one thing. Without His sacrifice for us and the reality of Jesus Christ's Lordship and His death and resurrection, we have nothing at all and we should all just go home and get drunk.

1 Corinthians 15:1-19 (KJV)

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

If we can't agree on that, there's nothing left to say. We can't back down and we can't compromise.

1 Corinthians 3:10-23 (KJV)

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Every man is the temple of God and the dwelling place of His Spirit

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. 20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. 21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

2 Timothy 2:19-21 (KJV)

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

In the end, it's all very simple. If the Holy Spirit is in me and the Holy Spirit is in you, then we're just One Body and that's all there is to it. Now we need to figure out how to get along without killing each other or breaking into pieces. Period.

Below are excerpts from Chapter 5 of Watchman Nee's book, "The Normal Christian Church Life." I quote him here because he was someone who sacrificed everything for God. He spent the last decades of his life in a Communist prison because he refused to back down. He understood love and he laid the foundation for and played a part in much of what has happened in the Chinese church in the last fifty years. We have never seen ANY growth in the church like we have seen in China in the last few years. Not even during the Book of Acts period has the Gospel spread so fast – and in horrifyingly bad conditions. I would encourage you to read all of his book. It's available in its entirety online for free here - <http://www.ministrybooks.org/watchman-nee-books.cfm> . I'm not following Nee, the Lord had already started me down this path before I ever found him, but he makes so much sense and says it so well, it's just easier to quote him directly.

SEVEN FACTORS IN SPIRITUAL ONENESS

"One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6). A person is constituted a member of the Church on the ground that he possesses the oneness of the Spirit, and that will result in his being one with all believers on the above seven points. They are the seven elements in the oneness of the Spirit, which is the common heritage of all the children of God. In drawing a line of demarcation between those who belong to the Church and those who do not, we must require nothing beyond these seven lest we exclude any who belong to the family of God; and we dare not require anything less, lest we include any who do not belong to the divine family. All in whom these seven are found belong to the Church; all who lack any of them do not belong to the Church.

(1) ONE BODY. The question of oneness begins with the question of membership of the Body of Christ. The sphere of our fellowship is the sphere of the Body. Those who are outside that sphere have no spiritual relationship with us, but those who are inside that sphere are all in fellowship with us. We cannot make any choice of fellowship in the Body, accepting some members and rejecting others. We are all part of the one Body, and nothing can possibly separate us from it, or from one another. Anyone who has received Christ belongs to the Body, and he and we are one. If we do not wish to extend fellowship to anyone, we must first make sure that he does not belong to the Body; if he does, we have no reason to reject him (unless for such disciplinary reasons as are clearly laid down in the Word of God).

(2) ONE SPIRIT. If anyone seeks fellowship with us, however he may differ from us in experience or outlook, provided he has the same Spirit as we have, he is entitled to be received as a brother. If he has received the Spirit of Christ, and we have received the Spirit of Christ, then we are one in the Lord, and nothing must divide us.

(3) ONE HOPE. This hope, which is common to all the children of God, is not a general hope, but the hope of our calling, that is, the hope of our calling as Christians. What is our hope as Christians? We hope to be with the Lord forever in glory. There is not a single soul who is truly the Lord's in whose heart there is not this hope, for to have Christ in us is to have "the hope of glory" in us (Col. 1:27). If anyone claims to be the Lord's, but has no hope of heaven or glory, his is a mere empty profession. All who share this one hope are one, and since we have the hope of being together in glory for all eternity, how can we be divided in time? If we are going to share the same future, shall we not gladly share the same present?

(4) ONE LORD. There is only one Lord, the Lord Jesus, and all who recognize that God has made Jesus of Nazareth to be both Lord and Christ are one in Him. If anyone confesses Jesus to be Lord, then his Lord is our Lord, and since we serve the same Lord, nothing whatever can separate us.

(5) ONE FAITH. The faith here spoken of is the faith—not our beliefs in regard to the interpretation of Scripture, but the faith through which we have been saved, which is the common possession of all believers; that is, the faith that Jesus is the Son of God (who died for the salvation of sinners and lives again to give life to the dead). Anyone who lacks this vital faith does not belong to the Lord, but all who possess it are the Lord's. The children of God may follow many different lines of scriptural interpretation, but in regard to this fundamental faith they are one. Those who lack this faith have no part in the family of God, but all who possess it we recognize as our brothers in the Lord.

(6) ONE BAPTISM. Is it by immersion or by sprinkling? Is it single or triune? There are various forms of baptism accepted by the children of God, so if we make the form of baptism the dividing line between those who belong to the church and those who do not, we shall exclude many true believers from our fellowship. There are children of God who even believe that a material baptism is not necessary, but since they are the children of God, we dare not on that account exclude them from our fellowship. What then is the significance of the one baptism mentioned in this passage? Paul throws light on the subject in his first letter to the Corinthians. “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?” (1:13). The emphasis is not on the form of baptism, but on the name into which we are baptized. The first question is not whether you are sprinkled or immersed, dipped once or three times, baptized literally or spiritually; the important point is this: Into whose name have you been baptized? If you are baptized into the name of the Lord, that is your qualification for church membership. If anyone is baptized into the name of the Lord, I welcome him as my brother, whatever the manner of his baptism. By this we do not imply that it is of no consequence whether we are sprinkled or immersed, or whether our baptism is spiritual or literal. The Word of God teaches that baptism is literal, and is by immersion, but the point here is that the manner of baptism is not the ground of our fellowship, but the name into which we are baptized. All who are baptized into the name of the Lord are one in Him.

(7) ONE GOD. Do we believe in the same personal, supernatural God as our Father? If so, then we belong to one family, and there is no adequate reason for our being divided.

The above seven points are the seven factors in that divine oneness which is the possession of all the members of the divine family, and they constitute the only test of Christian profession. They are the possession of every true Christian, no matter to what place or period he belongs. Like a sevenfold cord the oneness of the Spirit binds all the believers throughout the world; and however diverse their character or circumstances, provided they have these seven expressions of an inner oneness, then nothing can possibly separate them.

If we impose any conditions of fellowship beyond these seven—which are but the outcome of the one spiritual life, then we are guilty of sectarianism, for we are making a division between those who are manifestly children of God. If we apply any test but these seven, such as baptism by immersion, or certain interpretations of prophecy, or a special line of holiness teaching, or a so-called Pentecostal experience, or the resigning from any denominational church—then we are imposing conditions other than those stipulated in the Word of God. All who have these seven points in common with us are our brothers, whatever their spiritual experience, or doctrinal views, or so-called church relationships. Our oneness is not based on our appreciation of the truth of our oneness, nor on our coming out from all that would contradict our oneness, but upon the actual fact of our oneness, which is made real in our experience by the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

LOCAL CHURCHES

Now what is true of the universal Church is also true of a local church. The universal Church comprises all those who have the oneness of the Spirit. The local church comprises all those who, in a given locality, have the oneness of the Spirit. The Church of God and the churches of God do not differ in nature, but only in extent. The former consists of all throughout the universe who are indwelt by the Spirit of God; the latter consists of all in one locality who are indwelt by the Spirit.

Anyone wishing to belong to a church in a given locality must answer two requirements—he must be a child of God, and he must live in that particular locality. Membership in the Church of God is conditioned only by being a child of God, but membership in a church of God is conditioned, firstly, by being a child of God and, secondly, by living in a given locality.

In nature the Church is indivisible as God Himself is indivisible. Therefore, the division of the Church into churches is not a division in nature, life, or essence, but only in government, organization, and management. Because the earthly church is composed of a vast number of individuals, a measure of organization is

indispensable. It is a physical impossibility for all the people of God, scattered throughout the world, to live and meet in one place; and it is for that reason alone that the Church of God has been divided into churches.

We must realize clearly that the nature of all the local churches is the same throughout the whole earth. It is not that the constituents of one local church are of one kind, and the constituents of another local church are of another kind. In nature there is no difference whatever. The only difference is in the localities that determine their respective boundaries. The Church is indivisible; therefore, in nature the churches are indivisible too. It is only in outward sphere that there is any possibility of dividing them. Physical limitations make geographical divisions inevitable, but the spiritual oneness of believers overcomes all barriers of space.

Locality is the divinely-appointed ground for the division of the Church, because it is the only inevitable division. Every barrier between all believers in the world is avoidable, except this one. As long as believers remain in the flesh they cannot exist apart from their dwelling places; therefore, the churches which consist of such believers cannot but be restricted by their dwellings. Geographical distinctions are natural, not arbitrary, and it is simply because the physical limitations of the children of God make geographical divisions inevitable, that God has ordained that His Church be divided into churches on the ground of locality. Such division is scriptural, and all other divisions are carnal. Any division of the children of God other than geographical implies not merely a division of sphere, but a division of nature. Local division is the only division which does not touch the life of the Church.

Most believers of today are so utterly blind to the scriptural basis of a church that if one asks another, "To what church do you belong?" The first thought of the one questioned is of the specific line of teaching he approves of, or the group of people with whom he has special fellowship, or how his group of Christians is different from others, or perhaps the name that particular group bears, or the form of organization they have adopted—in short, anything but the place in which he lives. Few would answer that question with, "I belong to the church in Ephesus," or "I belong to the church in Shanghai," or "I belong to the church in Los Angeles." It is our being in Christ that separates us from the world, and it is our being in a given locality that separates us from other believers. It is only because we reside in a different place from them that we belong to a different church. The only reason I do not belong to the same church as other believers is that I do not live in the same place as they do. If I wish to be in the same church, then I must change my residence to the same place. If, on the other hand, I wish to be in a different church from others in my locality, then the only solution to my problem is to move to a different locality. Difference of locality is the only justification for division among believers.

SEVEN FORBIDDEN GROUNDS OF DIVISION

On the positive side we have just seen the ground on which God has ordained that His Church be divided. Now, on the negative side, we shall see on what ground the Church ought not to be divided.

(1) SPIRITUAL LEADERS. "Now I mean this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12). Here Paul points out the carnality of the Corinthian believers in attempting to divide the church of God in Corinth, which, by the divine ordering, was indivisible, being already the smallest scriptural unit upon which any church could be established. They sought to divide the church on the ground of a few leaders who had been specially used of God in their midst. Cephas was a zealous minister of the gospel, Paul was a man who had suffered much for his Lord's sake, and Apollos was one whom God certainly used in His service, but though all three had been indisputably owned of God in Corinth, God could never permit the church there to make them a ground of division. He ordained that His Church be divided on the basis of localities, not of persons. It was all right to have a church in Corinth and a church in Ephesus, and quite all right to have several churches in Galatia and a number in Macedonia, for difference of locality justified division into these various churches. It was also all right for the believers to esteem those leaders whom God had used among them, but it would have been quite wrong to divide the churches according to the respective leaders by whom they had been helped.

Paul, Cephas, and Apollos were true-hearted servants of God who allowed no party-spirit to separate them; it was their followers who were responsible for the separation. Hero worship is a tendency of human nature, which delights to show preference for those who appeal to its tastes. Because so many of God's children know little or nothing of the power of the cross to deal with the flesh, this tendency to worship a man has expressed itself frequently in the Church of God, and much havoc has been wrought in consequence. It is in keeping with God's will that we should learn from spiritual men and profit by their leadership, but it is altogether contrary to His will that we should divide the Church according to the men we admire. The only scriptural basis for the forming of a church is difference of locality, not difference of leaders.

(2) INSTRUMENTS OF SALVATION. Spiritual leaders are no adequate reason for dividing the Church; neither are the instruments used of God in our salvation. Some of the Corinthian believers proclaimed themselves to be "of Cephas," others "of Paul," others "of Apollos." They traced the beginning of their spiritual history to these men, and so thought they belonged to them. It is both natural and common for persons saved through the instrumentality of a worker, or a society, to consider themselves as belonging to such a worker or society. It is likewise both natural and common for an individual, or a mission, through whose means people have been saved, to consider the saved ones as belonging to them. It is natural, but not spiritual. It is common, but nevertheless, contrary to God's will. Alas! that so many of God's servants have not yet realized that they are servants of the local church, not masters of a private "church." Churches are divided on the ground of geography, not on the ground of the instruments of our salvation.

(3) NON-SECTARIANISM. Some Christians think they know better than to say, "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos." They say, "I am of Christ." Such Christians despise the others as sectarian, and on that ground start another community. Their attitude is—"You are sectarian; I am non-sectarian. You are hero worshippers; we worship the Lord alone."

But God's Word condemns not only those who say, "I am of Cephas," "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos." It just as definitely and just as clearly denounces those who say, "I am of Christ." It is not wrong to consider oneself as belonging only to Christ; it is right and even essential. Nor is it wrong to repudiate all schism among the children of God; it is highly commendable. God does not condemn this class of Christians for either of these two things; He condemns them for the very sin they condemn in others—their sectarianism. As a protest against division among the children of God, many believers seek to divide those who do not divide from those who do, and never dream that they themselves are divisive! Their ground of division may be more plausible than that of others who divide on the ground of doctrinal differences, or personal preference for certain leaders, but the fact remains that they are dividing the children of God. Even while they repudiate schism elsewhere, they are schismatic themselves.

When you say, "I am of Christ," do you mean to say others are not? It is perfectly legitimate for you to say, "I am of Christ," if your remark merely implies to whom you belong; but if it implies, "I am not sectarian; I stand quite differently from you sectarians," then it is making a difference between you and other Christians. The very thought of distinguishing between the children of God has its springs in the carnal nature of man, and is sectarian. If we look on other believers as sectarian and consider ourselves to be non-sectarian, we are immediately differentiating between God's people and thereby manifesting a divisive spirit even in the very act of condemning division. No matter by what means we distinguish between the members of God's family—even if it be on the pretext of Christ Himself—we are guilty of schism in the Body.

What then is right? All exclusiveness is wrong. All inclusiveness (of true children of God) is right. Denominations are not scriptural, and we ought to have no part in them, but if we adopt an attitude of criticism and think, "They are denominational; I am undenominational. They belong to sects; I belong to Christ alone"—such differentiating is definitely sectarian.

Yes, praise God I am of Christ, but my fellowship is not merely with those who say, "I am of Christ," but with all who are of Christ. What is of vital importance is not the confession, but the fact. Although these other believers say they are of Paul, of Cephas, and of Apollos, yet in fact they are of Christ. I do not so much mind what they say, but I very much mind what they are. I do not inquire whether they are denominational or undenominational, sectarian or unsectarian; I only inquire, "Are they of Christ?" If they are of Christ, then they are my brethren.

Our personal standing should be undenominational, but the basis of our fellowship is not undenominationalism. We ourselves should be non-sectarian, but we dare not insist on non-sectarianism as a condition of fellowship. Our only ground of fellowship is Christ. Our fellowship must be with all the believers in a locality, not merely with all the unsectarian believers in that locality. They may make denominational differences, but we must not make undenominational requirements. We dare not differentiate between ourselves and them, because they differentiate between themselves and others. They are the children of God, and because they make distinctions between themselves and other children of God, they do not on that account cease to be the children of God. Their denominationalism or sectarianism will mean that severe limitations are imposed upon the Lord as to His purpose and mind for them, and this will mean that they will never go beyond a certain measure of spiritual growth and fullness. Blessing there may be, but fullness of divine purpose never.

All believers living in the same locality belong to the same church. This is an unchanging principle. We dare not alter "all the believers in a locality" to "all the undenominational believers in a locality." If we make undenominationalism or unsectarianism the boundary of our church, instead of locality, then we lose our local standing as a church and become a sect. It is not a denominational church, nor an interdenominational church, nor even an undenominational church we are after, but a local church. The difference between a local church and an undenominational church is as vast as the difference between heaven and earth. A local church is undenominational, but an undenominational church is denominational. "The church in Corinth" is scriptural, but "the church of all those who say, 'I am of Christ' in Corinth" is unscriptural. Our work is positive and constructive, not negative and destructive. We are out to establish churches, not to destroy denominations. Human nature is prone to go to extremes; it is so easy for us either to be undenominational ourselves and demand undenominationalism of others, or else to tolerate denominationalism in others and gradually become denominational ourselves. We ourselves must be undenominational, but we must not demand undenominationalism of other Christians as the basis of our fellowship.

Therefore, if we come to a place where Christ is not named, we must preach the gospel, win men to the Lord, and found a local church. If we come to a place where there are already Christians, but on various grounds these believers separate themselves into denominational "churches," our task is just the same as in the other place—we must preach the gospel, lead men to the Lord, and form them into a church on the scriptural ground of locality. All the while we must maintain an attitude of inclusiveness, not exclusiveness, towards those believers who are in different sects, for they, as we, are children of God, and they live in the same locality; therefore, they belong to the same church as we do. For ourselves, we cannot join any sect or remain in one, for our church connection can only be on local ground, but in regard to others we must not make leaving a sect the condition of fellowship with those believers who are in a sect. That will make undenominationalism our church ground, instead of locality. Let us be clear on this point, that an undenominational church is not a local church. There is a vast difference between the two. A local church is undenominational, and it is positive and inclusive; but an undenominational church is not a local church, and it is negative and exclusive.

Let us be clear as to our position. We are not out to establish undenominational churches, but local churches. We are seeking to do a positive work. If believers can be led to see what a local church is—the expression of the Body of Christ in a locality—they will certainly not remain in any sect. On the other hand, it is possible for them to see all the evils of sectarianism, and leave them, without knowing what a local church is. We must help those, to whom God has been pleased to use us, to understand clearly the truth regarding local churches, and not to lay emphasis on the question of denominations. They must realize that whenever they use the term "we" in relation to the children of God, they must include all the children of God, not merely those who are meeting with them. If

when we say “our brethren,” we do not include all the children of God, but only those who continually meet with us, then we are schismatic.

I do not condone sectarianism, and I do not believe we should belong to any sect, but it is not our business to get people to leave them. If we make it our chief concern to lead people to a real knowledge of the Lord and the power of His cross, then they will gladly abandon themselves to Him, and will learn to walk in the Spirit, repudiating the things of the flesh. We shall find there will be no need to stress the question of denominations, for the Spirit Himself will enlighten them. If a believer has not learned the way of the cross and the walk in the Spirit, what is gained by his coming out of a sect?

(4) DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES. In the Greek the word rendered “heresies” in Galatians 5:20 [KJV] does not necessarily convey the thought of error, but rather of division on the ground of doctrine. The Interlinear New Testament translates it as “sects,” while Darby in his New Translation renders it “schools of opinion.” The whole thought here is not of the difference between truth and error, but of division based upon doctrine. My teaching may be right or it may be wrong, but if I make it a cause of division, then I am guilty of the “heresy” spoken of here.

God forbids any division on doctrinal grounds. Some believe that rapture is pre-tribulation; others, that it is post-tribulation. Some believe that all the saints will enter the kingdom; others believe that only a section will enter. Some believe that baptism is by immersion; others, that is by sprinkling. Some believe that supernatural manifestations are a necessary accompaniment to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, while others do not. None of these doctrinal views constitute a scriptural basis for separating the children of God. Though some may be right and others wrong, God does not sanction any division on account of difference as to such beliefs.¹ If a group of believers split off from a local church in their zeal for certain teaching according to the Word of God, the new “church” they establish may have more scriptural teaching, but it could never be a scriptural church. To bring error into a church is carnal, but to divide a church on account of error may also be carnal. It is carnality that so often destroys the oneness of the church in any place.

If we wish to maintain a scriptural position, then we must see to it that the churches we found in various places only represent localities, not doctrines. If our “church” is not separated from other children of God on the ground of locality alone, but stands for the propagation of some particular doctrine, then we are decidedly a sect, however true to the Word of God our teaching may be. The purpose of God is that a church should represent the children of God in a locality, not represent some specific truth there. A church of God in any place comprises all the children of God in that place, not merely those who hold the same doctrinal views.

Should we arrive at a place where a church has already been established on clear local ground, and discover that its members hold views which we consider unscriptural, or that they consider the views we hold as unscriptural, if we then refuse to recognize them as the church of God in that locality and withdraw from fellowship, we are divisive. The question is not whether they agree with our presentation of truth, but whether they are standing on clear church ground.

If our hearts are set to preserve the local character of the churches of God, we cannot fail to come up against problems in our work. Unless the cross operates mightily, what endless possibilities of friction there will be if we include in one church all the believers in the locality with all their varying views. How the flesh would like just to include those holding the same views, and to exclude all whose views differ from ours. To have constant and close association with people whose interpretation of Scripture does not tally with ours, is hard for the flesh, but good for the spirit. God does not use division to solve the problem; He uses the cross. He would have us submit to the cross, so that through the very difficulties of the situation, the meekness and patience and love of Christ may be deeply wrought into our lives. Under the circumstances, if we do not know the cross, we shall probably argue, lose our temper, and finally go our own way. We may have right views, but God is giving us an opportunity to display a right attitude; we may believe aright, but God is testing us to see if we love aright. It is easy to have a

mind well stored with scriptural teaching, and a heart devoid of true love. Those who differ from us will be a means in God's hand to test whether we have spiritual experience, or only scriptural knowledge, to test whether the truths we proclaim are a matter of life to us, or mere theory.

Romans 14 shows us how to deal with those whose views differ from ours. What would we do if in our church there were vegetarians and Sabbatarians? Why, we should consider it almost intolerable if in the same church some of the believers kept the Lord's Day and others the Sabbath, and some ate meat freely, while others were strict vegetarians. That was exactly the situation Paul was facing. Let us note his conclusions. "Now him who is weak in faith receive, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his considerations" (v. 1). "Who are you who judge another's household servant? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand" (v. 4). "Therefore let us judge one another no longer, but rather judge this: not to put a stumbling block or cause of falling before your brother" (v. 13). Oh, for Christian tolerance! Oh, for largeness of heart! Alas! that many of God's children are so zealous for their pet doctrines that they immediately label as heretics, and treat accordingly, all whose interpretation of Scripture differs from theirs. God would have us walk in love toward all who hold views contrary to those views that are dear to us (v. 15).

This does not mean that all the members of a church can hold whatever views they please, but it does mean that the solution to the problem of doctrinal differences does not lie in forming separate parties according to the different views held, but in walking in love toward those whose outlook differs from ours. By patient teaching we may yet be able to help all to "the oneness of the faith" (Eph. 4:13). As we wait patiently on the Lord, He may grant grace to the others to change their views, or He may grant us grace to see that we are not such good teachers as we thought we were. Nothing so tests the spirituality of a teacher as opposition to his teaching.

The teachers must learn humility, but so must all the other believers. When they recognize their position in the Body, they will know that it is not given to everyone to determine matters of doctrine. They must learn to submit to those who have been equipped of God for the specific ministry of teaching His people. Spiritual gifts and spiritual experience are necessary for spiritual teaching; consequently not everyone can teach.

"Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing, doing nothing by way of selfish ambition nor by way of vainglory, but in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves; not regarding each his own virtues, but each the virtues of others also" (Phil. 2:2-4). When the churches have laid to heart what Paul wrote to the church in Philippi, then it will be perfectly possible to have only one church in one locality with no friction whatever among its many members.

(5) RACIAL DIFFERENCES. "For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). Jews have always had the strongest racial prejudice of all peoples. They regarded other nations as unclean, and were forbidden even to eat with them; but Paul made it very clear, in writing to the Corinthians, that in the Church both Jew and Gentile are one. All distinctions in Adam have been done away with in Christ. A racial "church" has no recognition in the Word of God. Church membership is determined by place of residence, not by race.

Today in the large cosmopolitan cities of the world there are churches for the whites and churches for the blacks, churches for the Europeans and churches for the Asiatics. These have originated through failure to understand that the boundary of a church is a city. God does not permit any division of His children on the ground of difference of color, custom, or manner of living. No matter to what race they belong, if they belong to the same locality, they belong to the same church. God has placed believers of different races in one locality, so that, by transcending all external differences, they might in one church show forth the one life and the one Spirit of His Son. All that comes to us by nature is overcome by grace. All that was ours in Adam has been ruled out in Christ. The whole matter hinges here—are all carnal differences done away with in Christ, or is there still a place for the flesh in the Church? Are our resources in Christ sufficient to overcome all natural barriers? Let us remember that the church in any locality includes all the believers living there and excludes all who live elsewhere.

(6) NATIONAL DIFFERENCES. Jews and Gentiles represent national as well as racial distinctions, but in the Church of God there is neither Jew nor Greek. There is no racial distinction there, and there is no national distinction either. All believers living in one place, no matter what their nationality, belong to the one church. In the natural realm there is a difference between Chinese, French, British, and Americans, but in the spiritual realm there is none. If a Chinese believer lives in Nanking, he belongs to the church in Nanking. If a French believer lives in Nanking, he also belongs to the church in Nanking. The same holds good for Britishers, Americans, and all other nationalities, provided they are born again. The Word of God recognizes the church in Rome, the church in Ephesus, and the church in Thessalonica, but it does not recognize the Jewish church, or the Chinese church, or the Anglican church. The reason the names of cities appear in Scripture in connection with the churches of God is that the difference of dwelling place is the only difference recognized by God among His children. Their life is essentially one, and is therefore indivisible, but the place in which that life is lived cannot but vary as long as they remain in the flesh.

Since the churches are all local, if a believer—whatever his nationality—moves from one place to another, he immediately becomes a member of the church in the latter place, and has no church connection in the place of his former residence. You cannot live in one place and be a member of the church in another. There is no extraterritoriality in connection with the churches of God. As soon as you exceed the city limit, you exceed the church limit. If a Chinese brother moves from Nanking to Hankow, he becomes a member of the church in Hankow. In like manner, a British brother coming from London to Hankow immediately becomes a member of the church in Hankow. A change of residence necessarily involves a change of church, whereas naturalization has no effect on church membership.

Our fellow workers who have gone from China to the South Sea Islands must be careful not to form an Overseas Chinese church there. It is possible to have an Overseas Chinese Chamber of Commerce, or an Overseas Chinese College, or an Overseas Chinese Club. Anything you like can be Overseas Chinese, but not a church. A church is always local! If you go to any city in a foreign land, then it follows as a matter of course that you belong to the church in that city. There is nothing Chinese about the churches of God.

How glorious it would be if the saved in every city could overlook all natural differences and only consider their spiritual oneness. “We are the believers in Christ in such-and-such a place” is the finest confession a company of Christians can make. Whether Christ is in you or not, determines whether or not you belong to the Church; where you live determines the particular church to which you belong. The question put by God to the world is, “Do they belong to Christ?” The question put by God to believers is, “Where do they live?” Not nationality but locality is the question raised. The churches of God are built on city ground, not on national ground.

The usual conception of an indigenous church, while quite right in some respects, is fundamentally wrong at the most vital point. Since the divine method of dividing the Church is according to locality, not nationality, then all differentiation between Christian and heathen countries is contrary to God’s thought. The Church of God knows neither Jew nor Greek; therefore, it knows neither native nor foreigner, neither heathen country nor Christian country. The Scriptures differentiate between cities, not between countries, heathen and Christian. So if we would be in full accord with the mind of God, we must make no difference whatever between the Chinese and foreign church, between Chinese and foreign workers, or between Chinese and foreign funds.

The thought of the indigenous church is that the natives of a country should be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating, while the thought of God is that the believers in a city—whether native or foreign—should be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. Take, for instance, Peking. The theory of the indigenous church distinguishes between Chinese and foreigners in Peking, whereas the Word of God distinguishes between the believers in Peking—whether Chinese or foreign—and the believers in other cities. That is why in Scripture we read of the churches of the Gentiles, but never of the church of the Gentiles. The attempt to form all Chinese believers into one church shows a lack of understanding in regard to the divine basis of forming churches.

On the one hand, there is no church of the Gentiles in Scripture; on the other hand, we read of “the church of the Thessalonians.” It is suggestive that this is the only expression of its kind used in the New Testament. The Word does not speak of the church of the Greeks (a race, or nation), but of the church of the Thessalonians (a city). There is no such thing in the thought of God as the church of the Chinese, but there is such a thing as the church of the Pekinese. Scripture knows nothing of the church of the French, but it does recognize the church of the Parisians. A clear apprehension of the divine basis of church formation—according to the difference of cities and not of countries—will save us from the misconception of the indigenous church. There should be no distinction whatever between Chinese and foreign Christians, between Chinese and foreign workers, or between Chinese and foreign money in any given locality.

(7) SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS. In Paul’s day, from a social point of view, there was a great gulf fixed between a free man and a slave; yet they worshipped side by side in the same church. In our day, if a rickshaw coolie and the president of our republic both belong to Christ and live in the same place, then they belong to the same church. There may be a mission for rickshaw coolies, but there can never be a church for rickshaw coolies. Social distinctions are no adequate basis for forming a separate church. In the Church of God there “cannot be slave nor free man.”

In Scripture we have at least seven definite things referred to which are forbidden by God as reasons for dividing His Church. As a matter of fact these seven points are only typical of all other reasons the human mind may devise for dividing the Church of God. The two millenniums of Church history are a sad record of human inventions to destroy the Church’s oneness.

Well, that pretty much covers it, eh?

He's not real subtle either. That's why I like him. :-)

To Summarize:

- Preach Christ and Him crucified.
- Preach repentance and the need to not conform to the world.
 - Get out of the Holy Spirit's way.
- Be non-sectarian, but don't demand it as a requirement of others.
 - Listen real good and do whatever He tells you.
 - Feed and clothe and care for the hurting.
 - Take it outside the “boxes”.
- Stay fully independent of extra-local control structures.
 - Let the people walk in their gifting.
 - Focus on individuals.
 - Love without ceasing.
 - Test everything.
 - Stay REALLY flexible!

Restore Streets with Dwellings

Spiritually, the cities in America are in ruins. They are dark. They are havens for wild animals and demons of every sort. The enemy has purposely spent generations bringing division into every city and town in America and making sure the Body of Christ couldn't get any traction and start working together. In November of 2004, the Lord showed me America as if from looking down on the globe from outer space – and it was covered in complete, inky, black darkness.

That doesn't mean there aren't any good Christians or there aren't good ministries doing the right thing. Just like if you were looking out the window of the Space Shuttle at night, you would not see Susie's TV on, or the lights left on at the high school. All you would see is the combined fires of whole cities. I'm not saying God isn't moving in America. I'm just saying what I believe He showed me in November of 2004 – that there were NO Lampstands in America, no cities where Christ was the Head and they were burning as one.

I think some lights are burning now and I'm really excited about how far we've come and what's about to happen. I'm also working urgently because I believe our time to do this is short. I believe persecution is coming to America and we don't have long to get this into place. It's just equational, the Lord said the more we were like Him (and His design for us), the more we would be persecuted. Every time we move toward doing it the right way, the enemy is going to fight back. There are already structures in place to hunt us down and kill us. (Read this - www.FulfilledProphecy.com/2010.html . Maybe that will get you to hurry.)

What will it look like to restore streets with dwellings? Honestly, I don't really know how it will manifest. I know common components that are likely, but each city or town will be different. I can tell you from revival history, from the Great Awakenings and from study of the Word what it will likely entail, but God has different plans for the Body in each town and city – plans for good and not for evil to give them a future and a hope. (Although some may include evacuation.)

Here are just a few of the things we will see. How they will manifest in your town or in what quantities, I have no idea.

- Massive increase in “house churches” and other worship “centers” - including businesses and outdoor venues.
- Stadiums and fields and parks full of people worshiping and praying, led entirely by the Holy Spirit.
- Training and equipping centers to get people full and walking in their giftings.
- Extravagant giving to the poor – meeting physical needs of hungry and naked and lonely and hurting.
- Emphasis on personal holiness and the need to walk clean before the Lord.
- Shockingly radical people who refuse to conform to the world and will not back down under any threat.
- Large groups coming together to burn their idols – or sell them and give to those in need.
- Transferral of ministry responsibility to the people instead of a priest class.
- Massive changes in financial, capitalistic structures. Some will be changed, some will be crushed.
- Effective local networks to share resources and meet local needs. Local sending of resources for missions.
- Massive movement of people away from denominational structures as they find Truth elsewhere.
- Secession of local congregations from their national or international governing bodies in favor of the city church.
- True community on a scale we don't even comprehend – real, true love for one another.
- Identification and equipping of local servant leaders.
- Movement of the Gifts of the Spirit on a scale we haven't seen. New music and art and other things.
- Increased relevance and impact of Christian businesses.
- Voluntary regional and international connectedness between sister cities.
- The regular exposing of more and more wolves within the ranks of the “institutional churches”.
- Substantial changes in local economies, including closing of “vice” businesses and reductions in crime rates.
- Extravagant personal attention to every lost sheep.

We will likely also see:

- Massive increases in persecution against Christians from all sides.
- Desperate ploys by “institutional church” leadership to maintain the status quo at all costs.
- Increasing pressure toward a One World Church and ecumenical agreement with all religions.
- Increasing persecution of anyone who claims they have the sole source of religious truth. (Like us!)
- Increasing blame on those who are giving to the poor and are withdrawing from this consumer-driven society as being “economic terrorists”.
- Bank foreclosures on “institutional churches” that can't pay their mortgages and other bills.

I don't think those things are particularly prophetic. Many of them are already visible now and I'm just asserting that the "spirals" will continue to escalate. Some of those are predictable given Scriptural instructions, some are historically just what happens when God moves on people and they start acting like Jesus. I don't feel like I'm stepping out on a limb too much on any of that stuff. (And I want to make it clear that I am NOT a "Kingdom Now" or "Dominionist" proponent. I don't think we're going to take over the world – or that if we don't, Jesus can't come back. I just believe that we're going to see a restoration of the Body – and the City Church is the thing. I don't believe it will affect EVERY town or sweep across all the world before Tribulation starts. I think it will be just enough to give us something to look forward to and equip people and establish the necessary structures and partnerships to get us through the Great Tribulation when we are heavily persecuted and marginalized by the forces of evil. And I think we don't have any time to waste.)

How do you do it in your town? I have no idea. I'm not your boss and I don't want you to lean on MY understanding. You're not even supposed to lean on YOUR understanding! The only way for any of us to do this is to get our own heads (and our wants) out of the way and listen to Him really well and do whatever He tells us – no matter how weird it sounds. As long as it lines up with the Word of God (and not our interpretation, either, the actual Word), then you go and do it.

Just remember this, we are three part beings – Body, Soul and Spirit – and try to keep your eyes on the eternal one. Not the soulish nature, but the spirit. You need to do Isaiah 58 in as big a way as you can and across all three of those dimensions. He will help. He will provide all the help you need. He will open doors and light the way.

I'm sure that what He will want is for the Body to be the Body all the time, not just in one particular place or on a certain day of the week. We're to fellowship and minister daily and from house to house. But it may start with one event in one place. That's OK, it's all about the spirals. You have to light the fire somewhere and it may burn quietly in that one place until it breaks loose. But as it grows, expect it to jump like a wildfire into all kinds of unexpected venues and audiences. Watch for how to involve the "least of these". He likes using the foolish things to confound the wise, so ask yourself who or where or how is the most foolish thing the "institutional church" would ever think to use or do – and then pray about if you're supposed to do that. He's way more creative than you, so it might be better to just do whatever He tells you – but keep your eyes open for opportunities amongst all the people who have been marginalized and discarded previously.

The most important thing is to continue to do what got you here – that is, weep and pray in humility, listen to Him and do whatever He tells you and don't get in His way. Let the Spirit lead in ALL things. If money starts pouring in, put it into the hands of people who have already had the "love of money" beaten out of them. DO NOT entrust it to people who are used to handling lots of money – like business people and pastors, just because that's the way it was always done. (Do whatever God tells you. I'm not saying He's not going to use business people.)

The people who might be the most trustworthy may be those who were eating out of a dumpster a few days ago before God lit them up and delivered them. Doesn't it seem odd that the board of directors of a ministry helping homeless people is almost always full of business people and pastors? Shouldn't it be full of homeless people? Or at least people who have been homeless at some point?

Do not listen to people who are not walking free when they tell you how to structure things or provide ministry or meet needs. Remember that the Church of YourTown is fully autonomous in all things and has no Biblical requirement to answer to anyone other than God. Do not allow autocratic control from outside of your city under any circumstances. Receive the prophets and apostles that are sent to you, but test them all. Pray about what they bring and reject everything that isn't Truth.

Expect LOTS of warfare. Expect infiltrators and spies. This is a war! The enemy we're fighting is the KING of lies.

Whatever you do, DO NOT make it about YOU!! I'm not even sure it's possible if this is really a sovereign move of God, but just in case – don't do it!! He'll squash you like a bug!

Anti-Making-It-About-You Prescription

Say sincerely, loudly and publicly:

**THINE is the Kingdom, THINE is the Power, THINE is the Glory,
FOREVER. Not mine, not EVER. Amen.**

Repeat as needed. (You might also read Daniel 4:28-37 as needed.)

Fellowship of the Martyrs – One Page Battle Plan

See extended version with scripture references -
www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/battle_plan_long.htm

Acknowledge your complete needfulness for God and inability to reach Heaven and escape the consequences of sin on your own power. Repent of every sin. Acknowledge Jesus as the risen Son of God and beg Him to wipe you clean. Commit to Him that He will be Lord and Master and that He alone will direct you. Without any reservation or evasion, you must mean that you intend to seek Him and do as He leads - even if it means discomfort, abuse, sacrifice, change, suffering, separation or even death. Ask for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in as great a measure as He is willing to give you. Don't seek gifts for the sake of gifts, seek God - and He'll decide on the gifts for you. Be willing to chase holiness - to strive and urge forward for it everyday. Go and sin no more.

If you mean that Christ is Lord, then you must mean that His Word is the final authority. Spend most of your time in praise and worship of God because He is holy. This is the most pure expression of our love - for this we were made. Seek out anybody else that is absolutely committed to doing as God directs and is willing to speak only Truth, even if it's hard. Spend time together praising God and seeking His face. Each of you be prepared to minister. Don't rely on a paid staff person to do it.

The ultimate source of Truth is God's Word. Learn to love it, take it everywhere, read it and ask the Holy Spirit to explain and teach you what you need. Practice speaking pure Truth with no hint of Man inserted. Test everything against the Word of God.

Hold onto the good, run from evil. Learn to have no love for any created thing that exceeds your love for the Creator. Work hard. Whatever you do, do it as if you are doing it for God. Pray that God will help you have as large a positive impact as possible. More than anything else, God wants to first restore His people and convert all the altars back to the worship of God. Pray for the churches.

Take big arm loads of Truth and begin feeding the hungry. Go out as missionaries to speak into the hearts of the people where God leads you. Always speak in love and humility, pointing the way to Christ alone. Remember, you are trying to save eternal souls - never focus even for a moment on the immediate, always on the eternal.

Find those who can also commit themselves fully to Christ and involve them in your Fellowship. Praise God always for His use of you to save others. As your act of obedience, divert all available resources and assets only to those individuals and organizations most efficiently converting earthly treasure into heavenly treasure - that is, feeding the hungry, reaching the lost, caring for widows and orphans, supporting the Brethren in the hard places, equipping missionaries to push back the darkness - the same priorities that Christ has. Anyone that shows a "love of money" should be instantly suspect of being ensnared by the enemy and should be prayed for desperately - that is the root of much evil. God has already prepared many who are no longer susceptible to attack from that direction - find them and give them what they need.

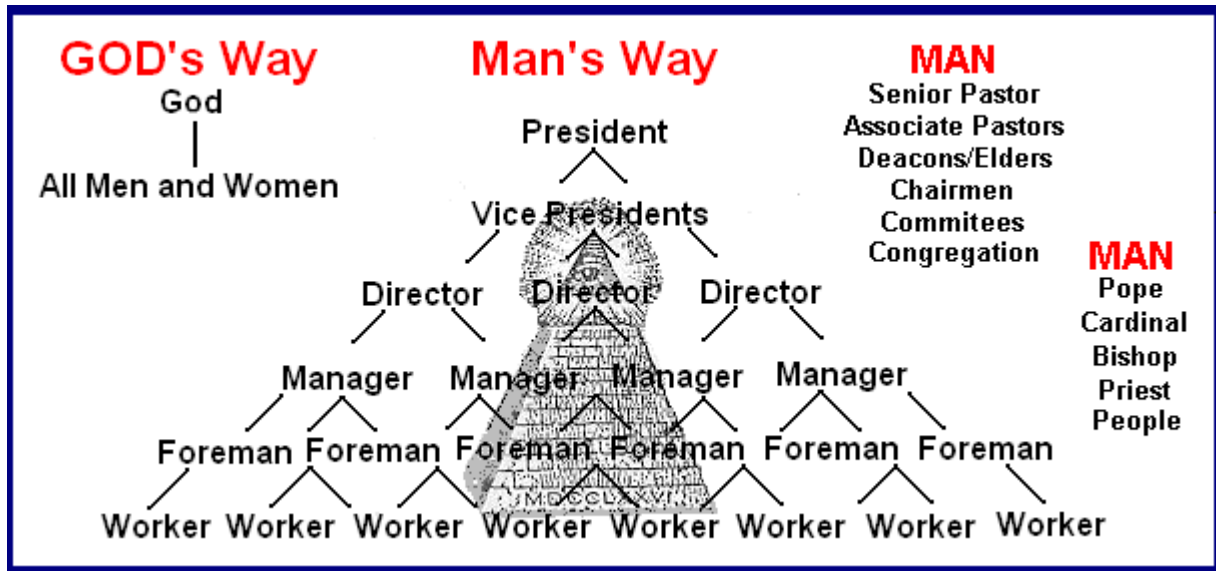
Seek out other Fellowships and submit to each other in love. Seek to support the members of your own Fellowship as they go to serve or split off to start more Fellowships. Seek unity through harmony. Don't get distracted for a single moment by secondary issues or debates. We don't want everybody singing the melody, we want everyone in harmony and singing the part written for them by God. We need all the pieces. None can be wasted. But be willing to rebuke as God directs, and forgive if they repent. Expect wolves and spies and infiltrators. Expect the enemy to be sneaky. This is war.

As you stay inside of Truth, get to know the will of God and use all your gifts and talents within His will, amazing things are likely to happen. Expect miracles. Beg to be filled with the empowering of the Holy Spirit and use what gifts He's given you. Stay filled by a constant focus on holiness and purity and praise. Then pray that God will enlarge you so you can hold more. Pray for the greater gifts - those that can do the most damage to the enemy.

Obey God only. Time is short - so don't waste any. Go in love - and never give in.

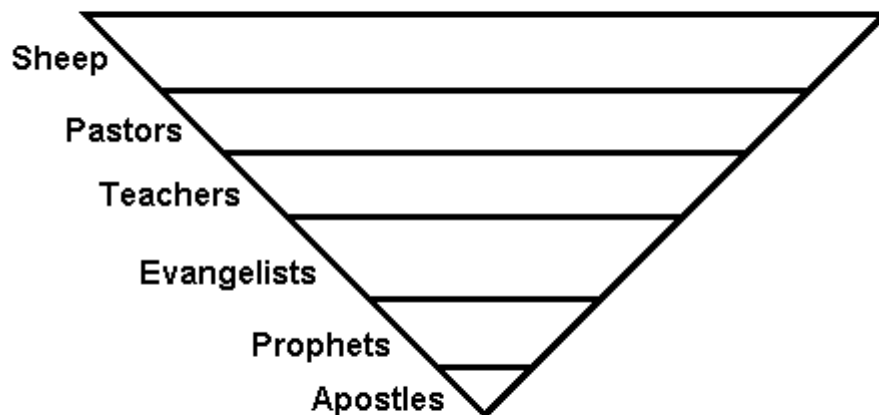
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Helpful Visual Aids



The Way the TRUE Church Works

Leaders always lift people toward God.
Not draw them unto themselves.



Shepherds care for the flock and support and feed.
All submit to one another out of love.
The Leaders lead because they're the best Servants.
The blood of a lost Sheep flows downhill on all leaders.

(If you were a sheep, which would you rather be a part of?)

How To “Do Church” in a Lampstand city

Rule #1 – DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT!

Rule #2 – See Rule #1

Thirteen Easy Ways to Grieve the Holy Spirit

You don't have to do them all, you can just pick ONE. That's sufficient.

- Tell Him when to show up and when to leave. Schedule His appearances and make sure everyone knows that you have control of His reins so He will be gone in time for everyone to get to Sunday lunch on time.
- Let somebody who isn't anointed and isn't supposed to be speaking run the show.
- Tell God how great He is and how much you love and adore Him and sing songs to Him while you completely ignore all the bleeding people around you. Tell them to call the office if they want to talk to someone, but don't disrupt the carefully planned presentation scheduled for this time period.
- Divide the Body of Christ up into smaller and smaller pieces and fill it with dissension, factions, division, selfish ambition, strife, quarreling, etc. That's a sure fire way to get the Gentle Dove to take off.
- Tell Him what He can and can't do. Be absolutely positive you know how He operates and make sure and tell everyone you have all the answers. Then program and plan and schedule everything in your own power and don't leave Him any room (or any invitation) to show up in any way other than what you've arranged.
- Give lip service to wanting Him to show up, but don't really mean it or get out of His way. If He does actually try to break through, squelch it as fast as you can. Pray fervently that the Lord would “shake things up” - but when He does, deny it was Him and go back to sleep.
- Cancel your prayer meetings because people are on their faces crying out to the Lord and it's “creepy”. We need people to be HAPPY in church! It's just not “en vogue” to have people crying all the time.
- Convince the people that worshiping the Holy Spirit and getting HIM to come is the goal. Seek manifestations and displays of emotionality above all else. (We DO want Him to show up – but as a confirming side effect of the fact that the Truth is being spoken and the Word of God is being spread and people are being transformed – not as the whole point of the meeting so that we can just all lay around and giggle.)
- Tell people that something glorious that He did wasn't actually Him – in fact, tell them satan did it. That'll do it.
- Take all of the spiritual assets the Lord has given you and hoard them and don't share with anybody – and make sure you let everyone know you are special.
- Make sure that only people with the proper degrees and certifications from approved structures and systems of Man are allowed to speak. Whatever you do, don't let the person with the biggest cup of Jesus say anything!
- Lie to the people in your congregation about spiritual gifts. Maybe even publicly deny that YOU speak in tongues or walk in one of the other Gifts – when you actually do and you know it. That'll make Him leave for sure – but it may keep you out of hot water with your denomination. (I've personally seen that one work really well. There is no telling what He will turn you over to, but it will NOT be pretty and you won't even see it coming. Be warned.)
- Make it all about YOU. Your Kingdom, Your Power, Your Glory, Forever. Amen.

What do we do first? Be a M*A*S*H

Before we start trying to equip people or even worship in spirit and in truth, we better be sure we're all cleaned out – personally and collectively. You have to purify the Temple first. The most common thing I've seen in all my visiting different denominations is that almost universally there is a tendency toward putting on programs and ignoring the individual. The bigger the congregation, the greater the tendency. It always manifests in a statement about family and concern for the individual, but then it's offset and negated by the reality of a structure seemingly engineered to disregard individual needs. However unconscious this may be, the reality is clearly that millions of Christians are NOT walking in the fullness of Christ or worse, walking around with massive oppressions that continue to go untreated. We really shouldn't even try to go "dialing up" and people who have lots of open doorways. They are lame duck leaders.

TONS of people are leaving the institutional churches. Millions of them per year. Why? Because they don't feel like their individual needs are getting addressed. They may sit through a good sermon with some life application, but they don't see or feel the radical transformation that should come as a part of the normal Christian life. Or worse, they have a crisis or a need and nobody in the "church" responds appropriately.

We are NOT honoring God. We are singing and dancing and pretending everything is fine while people are bleeding to death in the pews (not to mention in the streets). Listen to me, God does NOT want you to praise and worship Him while you're ignoring the person sitting next to you who is having a crisis! It DOES NOT bring Him honor for you to raise your hands and tell Him how great He is while you FAIL to act like Him and heal those nearest to you. Heal them – or at least TREAT them – and THEN you can go praising and worshiping and telling Him how great He is. He just DOES NOT want to hear you singing while you're ignoring people who are crying inside! Your prayers are going to bounce off of the brass over your head until you act like Jesus. Just knock it off – or else. He's not going to ignore their cries much longer.

The church should be like the TV show "M*A*S*H". If they're having a party and someone shouts "Choppers!" then the music stops and everybody rushes into action to do *triage*. That means rapidly identifying and categorizing the wounded based on needs - the bleeding, sucking chest wounds go first, then the broken legs, then the scratches. AFTER everybody is treated and in Recovery – THEN you can go back to your party. But what kind of hospital would you be if you let them bleed to death in the compound because you refuse to stop singing and dancing because you had a schedule to keep?! You planned for this party to take an hour and a half and, by golly, you're going to stay on time no matter what! The sick people can just wait until the show is over.

Even when Jesus was right in the middle of a great sermon and had them all in the palm of His hand, if a paralyzed guy dropped down out of the roof, Jesus STOPPED TALKING and healed him. (Mark 2:1-12) THEN He could go on with his sermon - AND everybody was REALLY impressed because of the miracle that had just happened in front of them! I'm not sure which would be the bigger miracle in some churches, that a paralytic rose and walked away or that the pastor actually stopped in the middle of a sermon!

The people of God need to be trained up in how to rapidly identify the physical, emotional and spiritual warfare oppressing and killing their brethren and they need to be empowered to go and treat them on the spot. The music needs to stop until EVERYBODY in your camp is bandaged up. "Church" will not be **The Church** until it stops being a show and starts being a hospital, first and foremost. The reason it's not that now is because we abdicated to paid leadership to do all the work for us and they can't possibly keep up. In fairness (to us), many of them got to liking it and now don't trust the Body to help them - so it's a vicious cycle. But it's got to stop. The Body has to learn to care for the Body, whether or not there is a paid staffer. We need the Gifts of Discernment of Spirits and Word of Knowledge and Wisdom operating in force and we need to get back to fulfilling the Great Commission - first by cleaning up the messes in our own assemblies, then by GOING. We can't wait for them to COME - cause when we do, they're mostly not staying, and it's because they're not getting healed (which is because we're too busy talking and we're not really acting like Jesus).

If any of this stuff convicted you and you realize you played a part in sustaining a system that hasn't been working or you ever ignored someone who was bleeding because you had your own agenda, now would be a good time to find a quiet place, hit your knees and say you're sorry. Crying helps God know you're serious. You might also want to admit it publicly to the people affected. How are they ever going to learn how to repent really good if somebody doesn't show them? Don't wait for somebody else to do it. It has to start with you.

If you kneel down and repent and cry in front of them, it might just start a revival. Some of them have never seen ANYBODY do that before! (If nothing else, it will give them something new to gossip about.) :-)

Personal Attention For All

If we were going to do things exactly backwards of the way things are currently being done, then we would start with radical, extravagant personal attention to each individual. That's the total opposite of the mega-church, herd-them-in, herd-them-out, take-a-number mentality. Personal attention and love is what the people are desperately hungry for. Somebody – ANYBODY – to show them some love and concern and hold them accountable and not let them drift off into the darkness. Kids will join just about any club or cult or gang or clique that will show them some personal concern and affirmation. Grown-ups aren't that different. So why are we losing over a million people a year out of the churches? Because we're speaking hard truth and people don't like it? No. It's because we're treating them like cattle.

We need to understand that the Good Shepherd will leave the 99 unattended and go find the ONE that is lost. (Matthew 15:4) That doesn't seem fair to the group, but that's His economy. We have incorporated more of a Henry Ford, assembly line, industrialized, economies of scale, kind of thinking about "church" – and it's clearly not working.

If we really commit to give every single person in a congregation (or a city) personal attention and discipleship (and deliverance) as they need it, even if that means individualized attention, how are we ever going to have enough staff time to minister to them all?! See? There is the fallacy right there. This isn't about "staff"! This is about raising up thousands of people that can minister to each other. This is about empowering the Body to minister to the Body as the Lord leads them. If we focus on training up their intellect and knowledge, then we need seminary trained, big brains to tell them stuff. But our battle is NOT against flesh and blood, it's a spiritual battle – and what have all these big brains really gotten us anyway – except 37,000+ denominations and another new one every other day? We can argue for days about who wrote the book of Hebrews or how to debunk the Davinci Code, but the people are dying in their sins and aren't free! They don't have their cups full and don't know how to get them full! But they know stuff. Unfortunately the "Sheep and Goats Final Exam" in Matthew 25 doesn't include their Bible trivia knowledge or the purity of their understanding of the Trinity or how well they line up with denominational dogma – it's about what you DID for the "least of these". (Matt. 25:31-46) You better read that and be really sure you know the right answers when you get to that final judgement. EVERYBODY goes through it, you don't get to skip it because you said a little prayer when you went down the aisle one day. (Right this minute are you a sheep or a goat? If you're the pastor, which are your people? It's on YOUR head!)

I have no idea how this is all going to work in every given situation, but I trust that the Lord will find a way. We need to equip people to break the chains, lift the yokes, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, take in the poor wanderer and teach them how to hear God's voice so HE can direct all of their paths. Then we need to trust that God has things under control and not try to micromanage what He's doing. VERY few people right now are wired to manage this. God has a remnant, and they're really beautiful, but the thing they have in common is a king-sized, faith like a child that resists all imposition of structure and just radically believes God has it all under control, no matter how wild the ride looks.

That doesn't mean they are going to accept infiltration of the enemy or acts of the flesh either. They are furiously loyal to God and won't tolerate disruptions to the flow of the Spirit from any source. We need to watch like a hawk and establish a "sphere" around our locations of ministry that is shielded with the Blood of Jesus and in which we repeatedly and constantly demand that nothing but Pure Truth be allowed to manifest. We need to try not to limit God, but still insist we want bread and not a stone, a fish and not a snake. (Matthew 7:7-11) The Lord will honor that and defend the gates. We have the authority to rebuke the works of the enemy – or of the flesh. The remnant are fierce and fiery in their absolute commitment to Truth. They will have very little tolerance for anything that smells of Man. How exactly you tell someone who is speaking to sit down and shut up, while still living at peace with all men, has yet to be seen. But we're going to have to learn how and submit to each other.

For me, nothing has worked better than the "Cup Model" at the back of this book. It transcends denominations and makes it clear we need to be walking in holiness and we don't need to repent once to come to Jesus – we need to confess and repent all the time when stuff sneaks in that shouldn't. We need to keep our cup all the way full ALL the time. Most folks don't even know how to do that and maybe never have been full their whole life! It's hard to explain, but there is a lot more detail in the "Rain Down NOW, Lord!" book online - FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/rain_down_now.htm. The short of it is that we need to be pouring out all we have and helping equip each other as quickly as possible. We're not waiting on the Lord to pour His Spirit out on all flesh – He's waiting on US to pour His Spirit out on all flesh!! The book explains how to do it, but it's critically important to understand so we can get people fully cleaned out and equipped in the quickest possible way. And I'm not sure there is a shortcut other than personal attention by someone who sees and hears really well and can help each individual.

We'll need to raise those folks up, but there are probably already lots of them in place. You have to learn how to identify the "shiny" ones real fast, see who has the biggest cup of Jesus, set them into their proper roles and let them work.

Who Has The Biggest Cup Of Jesus?

This is kind of hard to explain, but if you have Discernment of Spirits, you just sort of know when someone is extra full of Jesus. Sometimes you meet someone and you just really hit it off and you like them and later you find out they are a Christian. Sometimes people are just sort of more “shiny” than other people. Do you know what I mean? It's like the Spirit in me is in love with the Spirit in them and can tell they're on our team – and a big gun, at that. The more in tune you are with the Holy Spirit, the more you can feel that attraction.

Please reference the graphic at the end of this book. The point is that the people with the great big, cleaned out cups are the ones who should be leading things. It's not always the pastor. Seminaries don't really teach you how to walk in holiness and have faith like a child. They mostly teach you how to have more of YOU in your cup. They put the emphasis on diplomas and degrees and how big your brain is. But God's economy says that if you don't accept the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child, you can't get in. That seems kind of counter to “seminary,” doesn't it?

What we need is for the people with the great big cup of Jesus who are all cleaned out to stand up and lead the way. They are the ones who know how to walk in holiness and keep their cup full. They are probably the ones with the most spiritual gifts – or their “dials” up the highest. They are the ones who can give sacrificially and equip and fill other people. They are the ones who hear God the best and have the legal authority to do serious warfare against the enemy.

The guy that is slightly righteous is also slightly sinful. You might as well stay home until you're ready to repent and get cleaned out and filled up. Don't pretend that your prayers are going to get answered. Why is God going to listen to you when you're not listening to Him? He's convicting you about stuff and showing you things that need to change, but you're unwilling. So don't expect any help from Him with the new job or your kid in the hospital. If He comes through, it's just grace and mercy, not because you deserve it.

But the guy with a big, cleaned out cup will benefit from all the If/Then promises of God for those who carefully obey His commands. If I'm desperately sick in the hospital and everyone has given up hope for me, I want the guy with the biggest cup of Jesus – and practically none of himself left – to come pray for me! If I'm being punished for something, maybe that guy loves me enough to tell me the truth and probably hears God well enough to tell me what it is that I've done and will pray with me to do something about it. If I've got something demonic messing with me and making me sick, that guy has the spiritual authority to rip it off and shred it. Maybe he's even in a place where he can pray for my healing and God will actually answer right on the spot. Either way, I don't want the lukewarm, half-full guy anywhere near me.

The problem is, are we really sure who is who? Haven't we been taught that the guy with the diploma on the wall has the biggest cup of Jesus? And wasn't it the guys with the diplomas who taught us that? But you and I both know that if everybody in a given congregation prays, it's probably that little old lady with the walker who sits in the back who is the one Jesus is REALLY going to listen to. She has the purest heart there. Maybe it's one of the kids in the youth group. Maybe it's somebody we would never suspect. That's the way God does things. He uses the foolish things to confound the wise. The guy up front who says he's the wisest one there might not actually be the one God uses best.

I happen to know a lot of prophets and apostles nobody knows are there. They may not even know that's what they are. They're “just” a janitor or a servant of some kind, but they are the pillar holding up that congregation and pastor. They are the heart and the conscience and the God-appointed intercessors for the place. My grandfather was a janitor in churches for decades. One of the pastors there once let me know he knew Bob was the guy to go to when he needed advice or prayer. He was a pastor to pastors. They knew they could trust him and get good advice and deep wisdom from him. He would just lean on a broom and speak Truth to them. He just quietly served and prayed and spoke hard truth with good humor and changed things – without anyone noticing or trying to draw any attention to himself. He just served and was the least of these – and was an apostle in every sense of what they are to be. He spent the last few days of his life, after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, in bed on the phone calling his oldest friends who had never received the Gospel and demanding they come over and give him one last chance to tell them about Jesus. Many, many people came to his funeral and were deeply affected by this quiet, unassuming farmer from a 200 person town in southern Missouri. And he was the quiet head of a family of teachers and preachers and missionaries who have devoted their lives to God. I don't remember him ever telling me what to do or be, he just showed me.

The key is learning to see who has the biggest cup and then letting them walk in their gifting and getting out of their way. If we're going to learn how to minister to each individual, then we're going to have to quickly learn how to identify those who are ready to help. You're going to have to ask the Lord to let you see through the eyes of Jesus and have Him show you who are the most equipped, most cleaned out, biggest cups in the room. We need to be able to identify their spiritual condition on the fly, identify areas needing attention, deal with them, dial them up and launch them.

Raise Up Elders

Like I said before, to be an “Elder” all you have to be is a four-year-old in a room full of three-year-olds! Lots of people in your town think they should be Elders because they were a pastor or a deacon or a bishop in their denominational “church”. But that doesn't qualify someone. You come into a new mix, you may have a whole different group of people. You might have been an Elder in a room full of three year olds, but if you go into the high school class, you're not an elder anymore. Ultimately, you'll know them by their fruit. The true elders are probably the ones who know they are elders, but are too humble to admit it or seek a position or title. They'll just show up and serve.

What Paul did was go into a town, preach the Gospel, pour himself out, teach by the example of his life – and then see who “got it” the best. He just watched to see who was standing head and shoulders above the crowd, then poured everything out into them, equipped and anointed them, set them into place as servants to the rest of the Body and then left town. In a couple years he would come back through and see who was still standing. He trusted that the Lord would sort the wheat from the chaff and the angel (the Star) assigned to the city would sort it all out one way or the other.

The Elders may not be people who agree with you on everything. We are not to be respecters of persons. And we're absolutely, positively not to show favoritism – especially because of wealth. (James 2)

James 2:1-10 (God's Word)

1 My brothers and sisters, practice your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ by not favoring one person over another. 2 For example, two men come to your worship service. One man is wearing gold rings and fine clothes; the other man, who is poor, is wearing shabby clothes. 3 Suppose you give special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say to him, “Please have a seat.” But you say to the poor man, “Stand over there,” or “Sit on the floor at my feet.” 4 Aren't you discriminating against people and using a corrupt standard to make judgments? 5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters! Didn't God choose poor people in the world to become rich in faith and to receive the kingdom that he promised to those who love him? 6 Yet, you show no respect to poor people. Don't rich people oppress you and drag you into court? 7 Don't they curse the good name {of Jesus}, the name that was used to bless you? 8 You are doing right if you obey this law from the highest authority: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” 9 If you favor one person over another, you're sinning, and this law convicts you of being disobedient. 10 If someone obeys all of God's laws except one, that person is guilty of breaking all of them.

The bottom line is, again, listen to God and do whatever He tells you. He will raise up the Elders He wants and I'm sure He will find a way to make it clear to you who they are. Don't rebel against Him. And don't stop loving them, no matter how weird they are. And trust me, I know from experience, they'll probably be very weird. :-) But in a really pretty way.

Take the War To The Enemy

We've let the enemy twist us into pretzels for too long. It's time to take the war to the enemy. We don't have to go very far, the enemy is pretty well entrenched in just about everybody around us. The way to do the most damage is by radically transforming individuals by extravagant love and sacrifice.

My focus isn't on deliverance except to get someone unclogged so the Spirit can flow through them freely – and to defend the ground. Never mind what you'll been told, it does NOT bring glory to the enemy to acknowledge they are real! Nobody in the Pentagon worries for a second that by studying the enemy and his position and his troop movements and his weaknesses they might be accidentally worshiping him!! That's just goofy. This is a war! We're not going to honor them, but we're not going to ignore them either. We're going to acknowledge they're real, they are dangerous, they are trying to kill us – and the Blood of Jesus is WAY stronger. We deal with them and move on.

Demons are real and they do mess with us and they do oppress us – even Christians. When we give them room and listen to their whispers and do whatever they tell us, they might as well “possess” us for how well they have us trained. That's why they're called “rulers” - because if we let them rule over us, they displace Jesus and what He wants us to be doing. If someone has “rulers” then we need to identify them, they need to repent, and then we'll crush them.

The way to transform the world is by loosing the chains of wickedness, untying the straps of the yoke, letting the oppressed go free and breaking every yoke. (Isaiah 58:6) It's not enough to just untie the yokes, we need to BREAK them so they can't be used again. That yoke is the demonic burden set on the neck of someone and ruling them. We need to untie all the chains, lift the yoke off, shoo them out from under and then smash the yoke. That is LIBERTY!

Send Missionaries Out To Light Other Lampstands

When your fire is burning and the Lord says it's time, He'll probably send you out – or send people to you – to light other Lampstands. He will make it clear who and when. It will probably be someone with an apostolic calling who can be sent to equip others and it will almost certainly need to be someone with a big Gift of Repentance who can weep and repent and mourn in front of people to show them how it's done and help them break the chains and yokes over their local Body.

I'm not sure I can tell you much more than that. I have no idea how He's going to do it with you or at what stage. He sent me out long before any more than a tiny handful of people could tell that Liberty had a Lampstand. There was no big evidence of it in the natural, no city-wide revival – but we knew it was burning and there were a tiny handful capable of guarding it and keeping it burning and standing in the gap so that I could go elsewhere. I thought it was premature, but God's ways are not our ways. What followed was a four and a half month long, country-wide van trip of over 17,500 miles to 32 states. I got to meet countless amazing ministries and divine appointments, trust God for every dollar and have to listen very carefully for direction for every next step. And I got to see five new Lampstands get lit and a whole bunch that are getting closer and closer. From that handful MANY more will be lit when it's time.

Remember the equation in the Great Commission; Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and unto the ends of the earth – in that order. (Acts 1:8) Like a bulls-eye or ripples in a pond or spirals. Get Jerusalem where it needs to be (according to God) before you head out to help Judaea.

I know I did this before, but it's important, so the Lord wants me to do it again. (Please note the spirals.)

The Apostles received the Holy Spirit in John 20:22 when Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." They had already been out in pairs healing people and casting out demons. Nobody can convince me that you can do that without the Holy Spirit in you! Then, just before Jesus' ascension to the Father, He charged them with the Great Commission to go take the Gospel into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and unto the ends of the world. But He also told them NOT to go do it until the Holy Spirit came to them. Huh? They already had the Holy Spirit. But this isn't the redemptive aspects of the Holy Spirit, this is the empowering of the Holy Spirit. They had some in there, but they weren't fully baptized, submerged, dunked, swamped, lit up by the Holy Spirit yet. Even though they had been with Him, even though they had been commissioned to go, they were NOT allowed to go until the tongues of fire descended upon them.

And I want you to see that this instruction to stay in Jerusalem until the fire came has application to the City Church as well. The model that we have is that the Apostles stayed and were all together praying and seeking God until Pentecost when the tongues of fire fell on them and lit them up. Peter goes from being a guy that denied Christ three times just fifty days before, to being a determined, fearless leader and public speaker whose first (fully extemporaneous) sermon brings 3,000 people to repentance. He's interrogated and whipped and praises Jesus – and gets filled with the Holy Spirit again (Acts 4:31)! Before this, even a little servant girl made him deny Christ three times! Now he's making so much sense that none of the religious leaders can argue with him!

Here's the point. If the Body of Christ in your town doesn't have a Lampstand, then **stay in your Jerusalem** and pray together and seek His face until the tongues of fire light it up. DO NOT go into Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth when your own fire isn't lit. I would highly recommend that EVERY local body that doesn't have a lit Lampstand stop immediately doing or sending or funding anything elsewhere until you have cried out to the Lord sufficiently that His fire has fallen and you can then go in His authority according to His ways. Whatever you do without a Lampstand is going to be in your own power and not fully in His. It might have positive effects, but NOTHING like what it will when you're fully inside His will and under His headship and operating as One Body!

It's like a bullseye. Don't go trying to fix someplace else when your own home is out of order. Start in the center and work your way out. In my case, He didn't let me leave Liberty for over a year and half until the Lampstand was lit. I know others who have been alone on their face weeping for their city for DECADES without leaving. We pulled back all support of native missionaries in India, all outside focus and kept all of our attention on the local Body. When it achieved a "critical mass" and lit up, the Lord released me to go out wider and help others.

Nothing is more important – or more empowering – than having a Lampstand behind you that certifies you are His and have His firepower behind you. Without it, you are just going to have your own little candles to light your way and push back the darkness. Please hear me. Look at the Biblical model before us. Don't go trying to fulfill the Great Commission until you've fulfilled Isaiah 58 at home. Only THEN will your light rise in the darkness and He'll be your rear guard and when you call He will answer. You can't go help somebody else rebuild on the ancient foundations and restore streets with dwellings if you're not doing it at home yourself.

Stay Out Of His Way!

At the Azusa Street revival in 1906, the pastor, William Seymour, spent most of his time on his knees praying. He rarely spoke and didn't really "preach" much. And they ran 24/7 for over three years! There was a long walkway down the middle of this barn to a soap box "pulpit" - rows of benches faced each other across the center. Whoever had a word or a song or a prayer just stood up and gave it. The people who could feel the presence of God would weep and cry out if someone stood up to speak and wasn't supposed to be up there. They would feel the Holy Spirit begin to leave when someone thought it would be a "good idea" to say something, but the anointing wasn't on it. They learned how to stay in the "flow" of the Spirit without grieving God and making it about them. Thus they eliminated "idle words."

One older, black sister named Mother Brown developed a reputation for her awareness of the presence of the Spirit and she would fearlessly walk up to whoever was in the "pulpit" and gently say to them, "You know you're not supposed to be up here right now, don't you?" It got to where, if Mother Brown stood up from her seat, whoever was in the pulpit ducked for cover. She was like a barometer that helped them to stay in the flow. (Now whether or not you think Azusa was a move of God, something did happen there and it was a huge turning point for missions and for the church. Was it pure? No. Was some of it God? Surely. Do we want to do it just like they did? Surely not. But there are lessons to be learned.)

In our fellowship, we had asked God for "barometers". It can be awkward and seem rude, but it's more important to keep on God's agenda than to risk potentially hurting someone's feelings who is blabbering "self". One of the people who came to our meetings early on was a really sweet girl in her twenties who had a real, physiological response to the presence of the Holy Spirit. Some folks just get butterflies in their stomach or feel a peace, but this sister's hands would get hot. Really, really hot! You could hold your hand inches above hers and feel the heat radiating off of them. They didn't sweat or hurt, but they would get hotter and hotter the more we were in the flow and the Spirit was present. I'm not one for manifestations, but I know the Holy Spirit affects people in a variety of ways, some that are regular and predictable. We rebuked it and bound it and covered it in the Blood and all I know how to do to make sure it wasn't the enemy. It's a dangerous thing to trust someone's "feelings" - but she was very reliable and there was never a time when I felt she had called it wrong or tried to manipulate the meeting. Sometimes I would be speaking and she would just look at me and shake her head, "No" and hold up her hand. I would stop instantly and seek the Lord about what we had done wrong. Then we would repent, I would shut up and we'd do whatever we were supposed to be doing before I rambled on too long! And her hands would get hot again. In regular "church" her hands would get hot during the worship music, be instantly cold during the announcements and offering and might or might not get warm during the sermon, depending on if it was God's message or just the pastor's ideas. We had other barometers as well including chaos among the kids, people leaving, and other signs we learned to pay attention to indicating that the Holy Spirit was leaving the meeting and we were off-track. If everything was in divine order, there would be peace. If we drifted, then things started to unravel - if there were animals, they would misbehave, if there was something that could make noise, it would. Cell phones that had been quiet, started ringing and disruptions would abound. But if we were on His agenda, accomplishing His purposes and His Spirit was in charge, then He would clear out any conflicts or problems and make the way smooth and straight.

He gives grace to those who don't know better, but we were on a very short leash as we learned all of these things. Because we always prayed right up front that He would control everything in every way and because we meant it and made room for Him to do so, and expected He would - He did. If we stepped to the left or the right, He would let us know. The better we got at it, the more subtle the signs and the more we would have to listen and watch, but He will ALWAYS find a way to get your attention and let you know there is a problem.

I pray that God will raise up Mother Brown's who will fearlessly, and lovingly, insist that a meeting stay on course and in the flow. People who will not act out of self or control or desire to manipulate, but just to please God and keep His presence strong during the time together. Pray for barometers to help you, then test everything. But expect Him to be creative! For awhile He used a toothache in our group!

Which is more important to you? That you planned on speaking and, by golly, you're going to get up and speak - or that the Holy Spirit be fully present and people be transformed? If you come to one of our meetings, even if you're invited to speak or to sing or to minister, be ready to be flexible. It may not go the way you expect. We're not going to let you ramble if the Holy Spirit is leaving the building. There are sanctuaries all over town where you can go and do that all day long. We want the Spirit of God to hover among us and stay there - and that means we're going to do as He directs, even if it might risk hurting someone's feelings or upsetting the schedule. So be warned. We'll try to do it in love, but if you can't accept it, that's on you.

Which is more important to you? Haven't we grieved Him long enough by all of our idle words? Maybe it's time for something new - like getting out of His way. Maybe keeping our "self" to ourselves. That would be nice.

10 Great Ways To Be Absolutely Sure You Will Die Spiritually and You Probably Won't Even Notice

(Read the Red Dragon book here - www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/red_dragon.htm)

1) Get Comfy

This kills ministries all the time. They are radical and living on faith and “praying in” every dollar, until things start to take off, then they get loose with the money, stop praying so hard, and their lifestyles upgrade. I've seen it happen to missionaries and others who move to the USA and settle right in, get nice and plump, and go to sleep. It's like the big Thanksgiving meal of turkey and all the fixings and then you take a nice long nap while the football games are on. If persecution stops, you stopped being dangerous!! Listen! Do **NOT** get comfy. I don't mean content or have joy or peace. You know the difference. Be ready to move at any moment and be ready to lay it all down if He asks.

2) Follow Man

Surefire way to kill a move of God. Stop listening to Him and start paying attention to the advisors and prophets and apostles and other people telling you what to do. There is a place where we submit to each other in love, but there is NEVER a place where a person gets to direct your paths and you should lean on THEIR understanding. God may speak through them and you should receive it, but test everything. If it's their own flesh – or worse their own pride or control or rulers or sinfulness or self – coming out, then you HAVE to take it to the Lord and have Him tell you what's what. Don't seek to be like John G. Lake or Smith Wigglesworth or Benny Hinn or Rick Warren or some other man. Don't seek someone else's anointing or “mantle.” Seek to be so full of Jesus that nothing else can fit and HE will direct all of your paths and give you your own anointing – for whatever it is He made you to be and do. This includes preaching what someone else tells you to preach, even though God is telling you otherwise. Does God really want all evangelical pastors to preach four Sundays in a row on tithing every January? There aren't other, more urgent needs? God's not more creative than that? Maybe we're obeying Man.

3) Look Like The World

The more the world likes you, the less you're like Jesus. It's equational. They may respect you because of your good deeds, but that's different. If you adopt their models for marketing or growth or hiring or whatever, instead of doing what He tells you to do, you're in big trouble. If you make yourself a friend of the world, then you are an enemy of God. Just in case I'm being too subtle, if you build your ministry on the backs of demographic studies and consultant reports and marketing surveys, then you look like the world and you're in bed with them. And God hates adultery. His ways are NOT our ways and if you insist on doing it YOUR way, then you're going to be thoroughly unable to do it HIS way – which would have worked a lot better, but been thoroughly crazy and a test of faith and obedience. It's harder, but it sure works better and God gets all the glory instead of the MBAs you hired to help you build a “church”.

4) Accept Some Sin

Decide certain things are acceptable with God and you don't have to stop doing them. Or listen to the voice in your head that says He loves you just the way you are and you don't need to sacrifice or change. If you're not walking in holiness, you're not there yet. Yeah, He'll use you, but not like He could if you were pure. And the enemy is going to use you, too. Until you shut all the doors and keep them shut, you're coopted and you can't be fully reliable in what you're hearing. You've got blind spots the enemy will use to sneak up and bite you at the worst possible moment. And you've cut and pasted the Bible and made up your own mystery religion that allows for certain things in your case - like overeating or sexual sin or pride or self. Everybody else has to crucify ALL of their flesh daily except you because you have a special “Exemption Anointing” from the Lord because He loves you so much. Guess again.

5) Hold On To Unforgiveness

If you are still angry with any person or unforgiving in any area, then you are taking Communion unworthily and you are probably sick and dying inside. He said to settle it before you bring your sacrifice. Why? Because you don't put a one-eyed lamb or a crippled ram up on the altar and think it's an acceptable sacrifice. You bring your best – holy, pleasing and acceptable – that is your reasonable act of service in thanks for His mercy. You can't say you want to be like Him and still hold on to old wrongs. He said that if you don't forgive others, He won't forgive you. If you have a cup full of nasty stuff, there's no room for Him to come and fill you. And why is He going to give you a bigger cup when you're not even keeping the one you have cleaned out? Again, you're making up your own religion if you think you can hold onto bitterness and unforgiveness and be OK with God. You're in more spiritual danger every second you refuse to lay it at the foot of the Cross and truly forgive as He forgives us. That means keeping no record of wrong. When He forgives us, He forgets that we plunged a knife into His chest. He just opens His arms again to us – and we stab Him again. Then we say we're sorry and He forgives us and opens His arms and then we do it again. Is that the way you're forgiving people? Or are your defenses up because you're never going to forget what they did to you? That's not the way Jesus forgives – thank God! He washes the slate fully clean.

6) **Compromise The Faith**

Love for all and trying to live at peace with all, as much as you may be able, does NOT mean ecumenism and bringing all faiths together in one pot and pretending to get along. Jesus and Paul and others did NOT accept the Gnostics and the Nicolaitans and the circumcision group and those who denied the resurrection and others promoting heresies that denied the reality of Christ. We cannot compromise on the raw, bottom line truths of the Gospel. There is only ONE way to heaven and it is through Christ Jesus our Lord. And the path is narrow and requires life-long obedience and self-sacrifice and love. It requires the Holy Spirit in full measure to walk the Narrow Path. The Broad Way is playing footsies with whatever “faith” wants to blend with ours. We are not to spiritually intermarry with the nations. On secondary issues, we offer grace – on the primary issue of Christ and Him crucified there can be no compromise. We are to test the spirits always, and the spirit of antichrist cannot acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. If we're in a group and some cannot acknowledge that Jesus is their Lord (Christ, Messiah, King) – then we have a salvation issue to talk about, but you can't praise and worship and expect unity and for the Holy Spirit to come and help you make decisions when some among you are not in The Book. I'm not talking about a large evangelistic meeting where people are coming to hear about Jesus, I'm talking about leadership or directional meetings where there has to be one spirit present – and it has to be HIS Spirit!

7) **Water Down The Message**

What this does is show a lack of stewardship for time and a disregard for the importance of the souls of the people. If you preach on pop psychology or self-help topics and someone dies that week without Jesus (but knowing how to budget effectively), their blood is on YOUR head. If they came to hear about Jesus and you fed them something else, even if it was for just part of the sermon, then whatever they missed is on you. If you pulled a sermon off of the internet and delivered it as your own, or recycled something because you didn't have time this week to hear what God was saying (or didn't believe He talks to people and you've been on your own power all along), then you're in big trouble if they needed something you weren't there to give them. You HAVE to see the opportunity costs of disobedience and self. Please?! I was speaking to a home group in Fort Worth once when my cell phone rang and a sister in Liberty called and said, “The Lord says you're talking about yourself too much and you need to shut up and listen to them.” OK. Thanks, Lord. Yep, He was right (and she was obedient – and God DOES speak to people). And because I actively SEEK correction and expect that God will correct me, He will find a way to do so – even if through another person out of state. I don't think I'd crossed the line in that meeting, but I was about to and He made adjustments before it was too late. We hadn't yet covered the things that the Lord wanted covered in that meeting and He was GOING to have His way – because I always invite Him to and expect Him to, one way or the other.

8) **Make Sure Other People Are Comfy Too**

Closely related to the one previous (#7), this is where you tickle their ears and help them go back to sleep. This is mostly motivated by a desire to keep them around, usually because you don't want to alienate good, paying customers. It may be the theology you have adopted just wants them to be fat and satisfied and rich, because you think that's what God desires for them. Well, you made up your own Gospel, cause that ain't in there. We're to give up all that we have, we're dead and it's Christ in us that lives, we're to walk without sin and we're NOT to conform to the world (among others things it says). There is no rich, fat, lazy, comfy, American, acceptable walk in the Bible. You made up your own mystery religion and by preaching it to the people you have given way to a Fear of Man and probably a Love of Money that have become strongholds (rulers) in your life now. And you'll probably prosper because LOTS of people want to come hear your message and you'll think God is blessing you, but it's just a decoy to lull you into a false sense of security until you are destroyed. Read Deuteronomy 28 and Revelation 3:14-22 again. It's bad enough when YOU are comfy, but if you're teaching it, then ALL the blood of them AND those they might have reached – but aren't because they're unmotivated – is ALL on your head. Be afraid. God is not amused.

9) **Try To Help God Along**

We're supposed to wait on the Lord. I know it's hard. I know you're getting twitchy, but He can raise up stones to replace you. He doesn't need your diploma or your talents or your speaking ability. I've met little kids who were the best worship leaders I've ever met. God has a plan and you need to NOT try to get ahead of Him and help Him along. Just wait and do whatever He tells you. And if He says “Rest,” then you rest. For however long it takes, including years. You do NOT try to help Him out with your own schemes and programs and plans. If it's not anointed, it's going to fail and it's going to take people down with it. Just wait, listen, and do whatever He tells you. Know His voice well enough to know the difference between His instructions and your desires (or the enemy's whisperings). If you go out from under His umbrella and do something on your own, don't expect Him to defend you and bless it. In fact, He may turn you over to it – and it will wreck you. He'll probably find a way to redeem it and use it to His glory somehow, but that's no excuse to go your own way. The collateral damage and personal cost may be great. Just wait on the Lord.

10) **Refuse To Hear God's Voice**

This is a big one. So big that He said to put it last and deal with it specifically on the following pages.

Refuse To Hear God's Voice? Bad Idea.

In essence, what the above (and others) will do is get you under a Red Dragon curse from God and He will send strong delusion on you that is meant for your destruction and you won't even know it. You have made up your own religion and you're going your own way. And He'll turn you over to it. Read www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/red_dragon.htm

Probably the worst deception of all, the most dangerous to your soul and the most beneficial to the enemy, is the lie that God doesn't talk to us anymore. It denies relationship, it neuters the Holy Spirit, and it keeps us from really being able to have Him write His law on our hearts so He can explain everything to us on the fly and show its personal application to our daily walk with Him. (And it's really impolite to talk AT Him all the time and never expect Him to say anything back – or ignore Him if He tries. That's no way to treat your Dad. What kind of relationship do you expect to have like that?)

There is no factual or observational reason I can discern that we needed to stop hearing from Him just because the Bible was completed. The fact that there are abuses and fakers and liars, doesn't mean the real thing isn't out there. God offered Man a whole bunch of chances to hear His voice, but we keep refusing to hear from Him and instead preferring to listen to Man – or satan. And every time we do listen to somebody else instead of Him, there are bad consequences. Here are some examples:

Genesis 3:13, 16 (KJV)

13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. ... 16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Eve listened to the snake instead of the voice of God. And she got cursed.

Genesis 3:17-19 (KJV)

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Adam listened to Eve instead of the voice of God. And he got cursed.

Genesis 16:2 (KJV)

And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

God told Abram to wait and Sarai would have a child. But Abram listened to Sarai instead and got Hagar pregnant and had Ishmael. And Ishmael is the father of all the Arabs and has been no end of trouble for Israel ever since.

Hebrews 3:12-19 (KJV)

*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; 15 While it is said, **To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts**, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 **So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.***

Here they hardened their hearts, refused to listen to His voice and they all died in the desert.

Deuteronomy 21:18-21 (KJV)

*18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: 19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; 20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. 21 **And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.***

God obeys His own rules. And His rule here says that if a son refuses to obey the voice of his father, then he's to be taken out and stoned. Better to have no son at all than a rebellious, drunkard, disgraceful, disobedient son. Jesus was the opposite of that. What are you? You may not get stoned in the "natural" - but if you refuse to listen to God, you'll get pelted with rocks spiritually until you repent or die. He'll do it Himself. Evidently fear is not such a bad thing. God talks about the need for us to fear Him a lot! It is supposed to make us VERY attentive and obedient! Unfortunately we have a really serious "Fear of the Lord" shortage in America. What are you doing to turn that around?

Jeremiah 7:21-28 (KJV)

*21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. 22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: 23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, **Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.** 24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. 25 **Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:** 26 Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. 27 **Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee.** 28 But thou shalt say unto them, **This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.***

That's a pretty depressing commissioning service for Jeremiah isn't it? "Go and speak this, but I can tell you ahead of time that they're going to completely ignore you." (And throw him in prison.) Fun. God's cool. Not only are they not going to listen to God, they're not going to listen to anybody He sends to try to get through to them either. They're not listening to the Commandments or the written Law - or to the prophets sent to speak Truth to them and call them back the Lord. And why exactly do we not need prophets to do that anymore? Are we not a thousand times more rebellious and selfish and murderous than Israel? Oh yeah! I forgot - "that which is perfect has come" and Bible is complete now so we don't need prophets. That's what Israel said. We have the Torah, go away and leave us alone. God would not send prophets to speak if the people were actually obeying the written Word! It's the same today. If we were obeying the Bible, we wouldn't need God to send prophets to tell us to repent. But since we're totally blaspheming the Holy Spirit and full of dissension, factions, selfish ambition, envy, lust, pride, greed and so many other things, how can it be said we're even obeying the written Word? (Gal. 5:19-21) Are we not quarreling? Are we not taking the names of men and dividing up into factions? Are we not divorcing? Are we not sold out to the world? Why would He give us meat when we are puking up the milk we already have?! We're not loving each other. We're not sacrificing. We're not being One Body. Of course, we still need prophets and apostles! We're not on the right foundation at all! We're worshiping another Jesus and have been for generations! Somebody has to speak Truth no matter the consequences because we're so stubborn and stiff-necked that we can explain away and justify even the written Words in front of our own face!

We need prophets who will hear the voice of God and speak hard truth because we refuse to hear His voice ourselves or He might actually write His law on our hearts and keep us from sinning - and we desperately don't want that to happen because we like our sin too much. (And the enemy really, REALLY doesn't want that to happen!)

Here it is, right here. The people have been getting chances to hear His voice all the way back to the Garden, but we keep insisting we'd rather listen to ANYTHING but His voice. Eve listened to the snake, Adam listened to Eve. Here the children of Israel want to listen to Moses instead of God.

Exodus 20:18-21 (KJV)

*18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, **Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.** 20 And Moses said unto the people, **Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.** 21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.*

Deuteronomy 5:22 (ASV)

*22 These words Jehovah spake unto **all your assembly** in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and **he added no more.** And he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them unto me.*

You see? He spoke to ALL of them. It wasn't just Moses alone up on the mountain like in the movies. They ALL heard His voice and heard the Ten Commandments. And it freaked them out!

Deuteronomy 5:23-25 (ASV)

*23 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; 24 and ye said, Behold, Jehovah our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness, and **we have heard his voice** out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that **God doth speak with man**, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore **why should we die?** for this great fire **will consume us: if we hear the voice of Jehovah our God any more, then we shall die.***

And they begged and pleaded not to have to hear Him anymore. This is satan logic here. They're definitely hearing other voices because this makes absolutely no sense at all. God wanted to talk to them all the time. He only gave them those Ten Commandments – and then His voice with them all individually all the time would keep them from sinning. The fear of the Lord would be in the people because His constant presence would write the laws on their heart and show them the application of all the Big Ten to the whole rest of their circumstances. But they acknowledge they just heard God and aren't dead. But they don't want to hear Him anymore or they will die. (Something in them will die, that's for sure – their rulers and the “self” that likes the sin!) They don't believe any man can hear God and live, but they admit they just did. See the logic problems here? It gets worse.

Deuteronomy 5:26 (ASV)

26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?

Well, that's a stupid question. THEY just heard Him and are still standing, but they're sure if you hear Him you'll die. Huh?

Deuteronomy 5:26 (ASV)

*27 Go thou near, and hear all that Jehovah our God shall say: and **speak thou unto us** all that Jehovah our God shall speak unto thee; and **we will hear it, and do it.***

So what do they do because they're so sure no flesh can hear God and live? They send Moses up to see what He wants! Isn't that a suicide mission? Is he not flesh? What kind of self-sacrifice and brotherly kindness and love is this?! They just shoved him up into the fire because they're too scared to get that close to God! They want Moses to go get instructions from God and they promise they'll obey Moses. They just exchanged the voice of God AGAIN for the voice of a man. And they never do really obey Moses! He can't individually and personally write it on their hearts and explain all the personal applications of those Ten Commandments to them on the fly as their day is going on. It's a whole lot easier to blow off the words of a man than when God is speaking to you directly and personally! (Believe me.) Satan knows that, and that's why he always wants us to NOT hear the voice of God for ourselves. And see what happens next?

Deuteronomy 5:26 (ASV)

*28 And Jehovah heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and Jehovah said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 **Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!** 30 Go say to them, Return ye to your tents. 31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee **all the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which thou shalt teach them**, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it. 32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as Jehovah your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 Ye shall walk in **all the way which Jehovah your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.***

The Lord gives the people ten little rules and lets them know He will write them on their hearts and keep them from sinning. All other rules fit inside those ten. He would have walked beside them personally and individually and kept them in line with those ten commandments, but they refused to personally hear His voice. They preferred – as we still do today – to send someone else up the mountain so we don't have to hear Him for ourselves. But the man who tells us what God wants for us can never really keep us from sinning. Because they refused to hear His voice, instead of just the ten, Moses had to go up the mountain and get 609 more rules and statutes and procedural instructions and dietary laws. How to handle property, what happens if your bull gets loose, what to do if someone has leprosy, how to properly wash things. It goes on and on and on! If they're not going to listen to God, then God is going to have to give it all in one dump to Moses and leave it to him to communicate it to the people and make sure they obey – which they never really do.

Are you getting this? It could have been so much more simple!! We could have just had the ten and God explaining it to

us on the fly, but we would have rather listened to a Man than the Living God because it was too scary and we might have to give up some stuff we like. So God suggests another solution to get this done.

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (KJV)

*15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, **Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.** 17 And the LORD said unto me, *They have well spoken that which they have spoken.* 18 **I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.** 19 **And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.***

God gets that maybe He's too big and scary for them to handle directly – but they're still not listening to Moses, so He agrees to raise up a prophet that maybe they will listen to. He agrees to send His Son to come in the flesh and talk to us personally. And when He did, we crucified Him. But God is still serious about you having to listen to Him, so even though Jesus isn't among us in the flesh anymore, He sent His Spirit back to talk to us and explain everything.

John 16:7-15 (KJV)

*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. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.** 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, **that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.***

Hebrews 8:8-13 (KJV)

*8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; **I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.** 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. (Also Hebrews 10:15-18)*

See? That's what He wanted to do all the way back in Exodus 20 at Sinai, but they refused. So He sent Jesus and we killed Him. Then He sent the Holy Spirit and we're still trying to deny that even He can talk to us – despite it being right there in writing in the Word of God! Meanwhile we have great huge chunks of the Church who do NOT have His law written on their hearts and so He has not washed away their sin and iniquities. We're still denying Christ (and His Spirit) before men, so He's denying us before the Father. All because we refuse to listen to His voice. No matter what form it comes in. We're such stupid, stubborn sheep. We deserve whatever we get for this mess.

I don't want to argue about whether God talks to people today or not, it should just be obvious that if you do not have His laws written on your heart and mind enough to keep you from sinning, then you are probably refusing to listen to Him and/or have decided He can't talk to people and/or don't think He can actually keep you from sinning. We have pews full of sinners who are members of "churches" and think they are just fine. Somebody is lying to them – and it ain't God.

We have leaders who ferociously and fervently assert that God doesn't talk to people anymore. Why are they saying that? Well, partly because if nobody is going to have to teach their neighbor anymore because they "will all know God from the least to the greatest," then we don't really need those guys up on stage anymore, do we? That's a real job security problem. What were all those years in seminary for if anybody can hear God and He will tell them what to do? What exactly do we need expository sermons for? Can the pastor really write God's law on your heart? Is that working across the spectrum of Christianity? If so, then why are we so full of wickedness and look so much like the world? I think, despite God showing up and talking, Jesus showing up and talking, and the Holy Spirit showing up and talking – we're still absolutely committed to only listening to MEN tell us what to do. (Or satan – either way – anything but God.)

Deuteronomy 8:19-20 (KJV)

19 *And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.* 20 *As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; **because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.***

Deuteronomy 28:62 (KJV) - *And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; **because thou wouldst not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.***

Psalms 81:8-16 (KJV)

8 *Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;* 9 *There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.* 10 *I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* 11 ***But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.*** 12 *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.* 13 *Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!* 14 *I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.* 15 *The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.* 16 *He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.*

Psalms 106:21-27 (KJV)

They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; 22 *Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.* 23 *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.* 24 ***Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word: 25 But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.*** 26 *Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:* 27 *To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.*

Want some more. How about this? Kind of hard line here, isn't it? I'm not suggesting we do this literally, but I do believe God follows His own rules and He's already done it in the spirit to us. He has executed a bunch of people. We already have ruined and abandoned cities all over America. There wasn't a single city church – a single Lampstand – in America two years ago. Total darkness. Don't take my word for it, double check with God (if you can hear His voice).

Deuteronomy 13:1-18 (God's Word)

1 *One of your people, claiming to be a prophet or to have prophetic dreams, may predict a miraculous sign or an amazing thing.* 2 *What he predicts may even take place. But don't listen to that prophet or dreamer if he says, "Let's worship and serve other gods." (Those gods may be gods you've never heard of.)* 3 ***The LORD your God is testing you to find out if you really love him with all your heart and with all your soul.*** 4 *Worship the LORD your God, **fear him, obey his commands, listen to what he says, serve him, and be loyal to him.*** 5 *That prophet or dreamer must be put to death because he **preached rebellion** against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and freed you from slavery. He was trying to lead you **away from following the directions** the LORD your God gave you. You must get rid of this evil.*

6 *Your own brother, son, or daughter, the wife you love, or your best friend may secretly tempt you, saying, "Let's go worship other gods." (Those gods may be gods that you and your ancestors never knew.)* 7 ***They may be the gods of the people around you, who live near or far, from one end of the land to the other.*** 8 *Don't be influenced by any of these people or **listen** to them. Have no pity on them. Don't feel sorry for them or protect them.* 9 *You must put them to death. You must start the execution. Then all the other people will join you in putting them to death.* 10 *Stone them to death because they were trying to **lead you away** from the LORD your God, who brought you out of slavery in Egypt.* 11 ***All Israel will hear about it and be afraid. Then no one among you will ever do such a wicked thing again.***

12 *You may hear that the residents in one of the cities which the LORD your God is giving you to live in* 13 *have been led away from the LORD your God by worthless people. You may hear that these people have been saying, "Let's worship other gods." (Those gods may be gods you've never heard of.)* 14 *Then make a thorough investigation. If it is true, and you can prove that this disgusting thing has been done among you,* 15 *you must kill the residents of that city with swords and destroy that city and everyone in it, including the animals, because they are claimed by God.* 16 *Gather their goods into the middle of the city square. **Then burn their city and all their goods as a burnt offering to the LORD your God. It must remain a mound of ruins and never be rebuilt.*** 17 *Don't ever take any of the things claimed for destruction. Then the LORD will stop being angry and will show you mercy. In his mercy he will make your population increase, as he swore to your ancestors.* 18 *The LORD your God will do this if you listen to him, obey all the commands that I'm giving you today, and do what he considers right.*

Are we doing anything even closely resembling that? Are we even holding ANYBODY accountable for whatever stupid thing they feel like saying about God? What about this command?

1 Timothy 5:19-21 (KJV)

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. 20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. 21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

When was the last time you saw an elder rebuked publicly? More likely somebody said something stupid like, "Touch not God's anointed," to keep you from even thinking about doing it! The Word of God clearly commands us to publicly rebuke elders who are sinning. And preaching another Jesus definitely qualifies! What kind of other Jesus? Well, there's Emergency-Only-Jesus, Not-Quite-As-Good-As-The-Virgin-Mary-Jesus, Once-Saved-Always-Saved-Lifeguard-Jesus, All-Nice-People-Go-To-Heaven-Jesus, Manifestation-Jesus, Can't-Talk-Or-Heal-People-Jesus, Prosperity-Jesus, Purpose-Driven-Jesus, Seeker-Friendly-Jesus and thousands of others. Some folks just skip Jesus and worship the Holy Spirit!

Jeremiah 2:28-29 (NIV)

"Where then are the gods you made for yourselves? Let them come if they can save you when you are in trouble! For you have as many gods as you have towns, O Judah. Why do you bring charges against me? You have all rebelled against me," declares the Lord.

The number of our gods has exceeded the number of our towns – and none of these gods are getting the job done because mostly we made them all up. We have about 33,000 municipal governments in America and we have 37,000+ denominations that call themselves "Christian". Most of them won't talk to the other ones. We're in big trouble. I hope you can see that. And how did it get this bad? Because we said stuff like this and totally didn't mean it at all.

Joshua 24:19-24 (God's Word)

19 But Joshua answered the people, "Since the LORD is a holy God, you can't possibly serve him. He is a God who does not tolerate rivals. He will not forgive your rebellious acts and sins. 20 If you abandon the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you. He will destroy you, although he has been so good to you." 21 The people answered Joshua, "No! We will {only} serve the LORD!" 22 Joshua said to the people, "You have testified that you have chosen to serve the LORD." They answered, "Yes, we have!" 23 "Get rid of the foreign gods that are among you. Turn yourselves entirely over to the LORD God of Israel." 24 The people replied to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him."

They lived at peace with God only until Joshua died and nobody was watching, then they all turned back to their idols. They said all the right things, but they didn't really mean it. They turned their children over to the world around them.

I'm tired. You're probably tired, too. I don't want to keep pounding this note. If you haven't gotten it by now, there's probably nothing else I can say to you. Here's the upside – there are those coming who WILL listen and obey and they will be fierce and mighty because they will not look like the world and they will be under His command ALL the time. And when they come, they'll be bringing a consuming fire to test all that has been built by Man.

Joel 2:11 (KJV) - *And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?*

You're supposed to be hearing Him. You're supposed to obey. Please ask Him what's clogging you up so that you can hear His voice better. Please? You're no good for this war if you can't hear commands from Headquarters.

Mark 9:7 (KJV) - *And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*

Luke 9:35 (KJV) - *And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*

John 10:27 (KJV) - *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

Isaiah 6:8 (KJV) - *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Dear Lord, we love You. We don't get all of this, but we know something is desperately wrong. We can't possibly get our head around how wrong and how bad and how much we've disobeyed you, but we get that it's a really big deal. Please, Abba, please show us anything in us that is standing between us and You. Purge us and cleanse us and rip it out. If there is a doctrine or a filter or an unforgiveness or anything keeping us from walking in the fullness of all You have for us, please show us and we'll say we're sorry. Please show us what to do to fix our cities. We're sorry we made such a mess. We're sorry we didn't follow the instructions and tried to put it together ourselves and now there are pieces left over and we don't know where they go and it's not working right. We're sorry, Dad. Please fix it. Please reboot it and set it back to the defaults and get it working again. We'll try to stay out of Your way and not pester You. Just do whatever it is You're going to do. If we get in Your way, just roll right over us. Whatever it takes, just please get this ride turned around. We love You, Lord. We're sorry. Please pour out Your Spirit on us in as big a measure as we can hold. If we're ready, give us a bigger cup and fill it full, shaken, pressed down and overflowing. We need more of You and less of us. Whatever it takes, if there is something we love and can't lay down, just rip it out of our grip. Please raise up all the warriors and let them come together and march shoulder to shoulder. Please show us what true community and true love really is. And even if nobody else goes, we'll stand alone. Even if you don't come and fix it, we're not going to believe in You any less. Just please hold our hand and explain it all to us. We don't want to hear it from any Man anymore. We need You to explain all of this to us. Thanks for Your grace and mercy. We should be toast by now for how badly we've messed this all up. Please forgive us and cleanse our land and restore Your people. Not for us, but for Your Name's sake. It's Your kingdom, Your power and Your glory forever – not ours, not ever. In the mighty Name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Dear Brethren,
May the Lord Jesus Christ richly bless you in whatever way He thinks best. If there is any treasure in heaven that I have, if there is any resource or gift, any faith or peace or wisdom or discernment or authority, you're welcome to it. Even if I don't get it back. If the Lord says you can have it, then just reach out and take it in faith. He'll give me more. I love you. This isn't about me (or you). Just get everything out of the way, hear His voice really good and do whatever He tells you. And test everything.

I love you all and I'm not going to stop no matter what.

Doug Perry
servant of God

1 Corinthians 2:12-15 (God's Word)

12 Now, we didn't receive the spirit that belongs to the world. Instead, we received the Spirit who comes from God so that we could know the things which God has freely given us. 13 We don't speak about these things using teachings that are based on intellectual arguments like people do. Instead, we use the Spirit's teachings. We explain spiritual things to those who have the Spirit. 14 A person who isn't spiritual doesn't accept the teachings of God's Spirit. He thinks they're nonsense. He can't understand them because a person must be spiritual to evaluate them.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (KJV)

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com - fotm@fellowshipofthemartyrs.com
www.TheChurchOfLiberty.com

WHAT'S IN YOUR CUP?



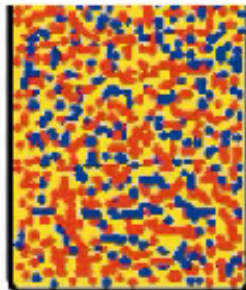
Got No Jesus?
Then you had better get Him soon!



Got Lots of Sin?
He really doesn't like being in there with it. Better turn.



Got A Little Sin?
That's still not victory, is it?



Got No Rest?
Life can shake you up. Prayer can sort it out.

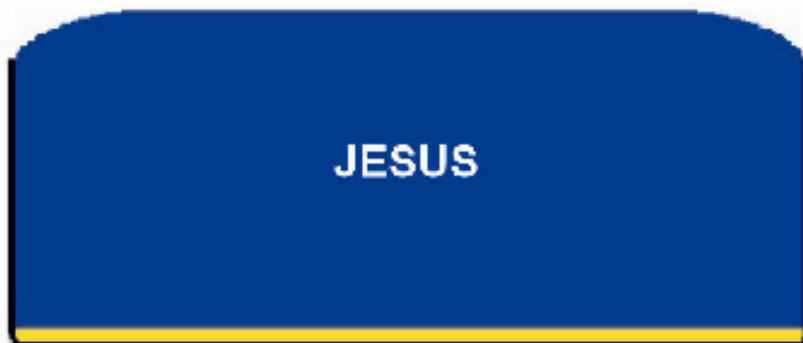


Got Lots of Jesus?
Only walking in HOLINESS means peace and joy and victory!.



Got Less of You?
He must increase and YOU must decrease.

Got a BIG Cup of Jesus?



Better keep it full EVERY DAY or the red stuff will come crush you! It's a DAILY walk! Never forget that.

If you already are one of these, then what are you doing for the Kingdom and how can I help?
The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Which One ARE You Today?
Which One Do You WANT To Be?

(Which one's prayers do think God answers the best?)

www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com

Appendix B

Open Letter of Apology to The World

from Doug Perry, www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com – February 2005

Please bear with me, this is long overdue and there's lots of ground to cover. I want to make sure that I get it all out. Not just for me, but because I think you need to hear it. Maybe there are other Christians out there as well that need to make apologies and will find courage here. I appreciate your time, I know it's valuable.

Dear Members of the World,

I'm just a guy, nobody really. Son of a preacher and missionary. Years and years of Vacation Bible Schools, summer camps, youth ski trips, puppet shows, revivals, choir trips - you name it. Even went to a Christian college and got a degree in religion. I ended up in the business world, but I spent two decades tithing, sitting on committees, teaching Sunday School, going to seminars and conferences, etc. I even met my wife in the single's class at church. I'm not a bad guy, I've been mostly behaving myself and everybody seems to like me. I do some good stuff here and there.

But lately I've been trying to understand Jesus more and stuff I never noticed before has really started to bug me. I've been taking a look around and I'm having a hard time making sense of what it is we've built here. So, it just seemed like, whether anybody else says it or not, I need to take responsibility for the part I played and say what I have to say.

Here we go ...

I know you think that Christians are a big bunch of hypocrites. We say we're more "religious" and we're going to heaven and you're not, and then we drive our big shiny cars with little fishies on the trunk and cut you off in traffic as we race by the homeless guy on the corner. We average just 2% of our money to church and charity, despite that we say the Bible is the word of God and **it** says we're supposed to give **everything**. On average, we buy just as many big screen TVs and bass boats and fur coats and makeup and baseball cards and online porn as anybody else. Maybe more. You've seen leader after leader end up in jail or court or a sex scandal of one sort or another.

Well ... you're right. We're guilty of all of it. We've done it all. And, I'm really sorry.

You see our cheesy TV shows and slick guys begging for money and you get that there's something seriously sneaky and wrong here. A high-pressure call for money so they can stay on the air? Were we supposed to use Jesus as just another form of entertainment? Who do we think we're kidding? Where's Jesus in all this? Aren't we supposed to rely on him? Isn't He going to meet our needs if we're inside His will?

What happened to sacrifice and suffering and helping the poor? I'm just sick about this. I mean, the church leaders, they're not all bad guys, there are lots and lots of really hard-working well-meaning folks who love and care and are meeting real needs in the community. Some of them understand and love Jesus - but I'm just real sure those pastors don't drive Bentley's, have multi-million dollar homes and their own lear jets! I mean, what "god" are we worshipping? Money? Ego? Power?

You see our massive shiny new buildings all over the place. Heck, maybe we even kicked you out of your house so we could expand our parking lots. You can't figure out why we need four different Christian churches on four corners of the same intersection. We've got playgrounds and bowling alleys and basketball leagues. We've got Starbucks coffee in the sanctuary. We've got orchestras and giant chandeliers and fountains out front. We've got bookstores full of "jesus junk" with every imaginable style and flavor of religious knick-knack. But where's Jesus? Is this what HE wanted?

Oh, sure, there are good folks all over and not every church is such a mess, but Christians are the ones that say we're supposed to be "One Body." So even the good ones are guilty of not putting a stop to it sooner. We were supposed to keep each other in line and not tolerate factions and dissensions and greed and idolatry and all this other bad stuff. Man, we really blew it! We've got 33,000 denominations and most of them won't talk to the other ones. We lose over \$5 million a day to fraud from "trusted" people inside the church! We spend 95% of all our money on our own comforts and programs and happy family fun time shows and we let 250 MILLION Christians in other countries live on the very edge of starvation. Not to mention the billion or so that have never even once heard of Jesus - or the homeless guy downtown we almost ran over when we cut you off.

We're as guilty as we can be. All of us. Nobody is exempt. We should have put a stop to it a lot sooner. But I can't apologize on behalf of anyone else. This is about me.

I know that you might have gone to church as a kid and stopped going as soon as you could. I know that you might even have been abused by somebody in the church! Maybe we got you all fired up and then just let you drift off like we didn't really care.

Maybe you just don't fit our "profile." You might have piercings and purple hair or tattoos or been in jail -- and somewhere inside you just know that even if you wanted to go to church one Sunday, it would not go well. I'm sorry for that. Jesus loves you. He always hung out with the most unexpected people. He had the biggest heart for the folks everybody else tried to ignore. What have we done? We've told you to put on a sweater and some loafers or you can't go to heaven. I just want to throw up.

Look, I know you're mad. And you have a right to be. We've done you wrong for a LONG time now. There's some things about Jesus that people need to hear, but we've buried a beautiful masterpiece under hundreds of layers of soft pink latex paint. If you have a Bible handy, look up Matthew 23. (If you don't, you can look it up here - www.BibleGateway.com .)

Find it? Read it carefully, the Pharisees were the "religious" people of the day, the leaders of the faith. In this chapter Jesus SEVEN times says how pitiful and wretched and cursed they are for what they're doing to the people they're supposed to be leading. He even calls them "white washed tombs of dead mens bones" and a "brood of vipers"! I don't have time here, but read it and see if we're not doing EVERY single one of those things. Jesus can't possibly be happy about what we've done to you.

Sure, we like to kid ourselves and pretend everything is OK - but it's not. We're hated. Now, please understand, Jesus was hated, too. But that was because he said hard things and sometimes people don't like hearing the Truth. And he promised we would be hated if we were like him. But that's not why we're hated at the moment. We're hated right now because we're a giant pack of lying hypocrites that say one thing and do something else altogether. If we were hated because we were like Jesus, that would be one thing, but that's not it at all. You see right through our happy music and fluffy services and you can tell there's something desperately wrong here. We're no different than anybody else - except that we say we're better than you.

It was never supposed to be like this. Jesus asked us to care for the widows and orphans, to feed the hungry, care for the sick, visit those in prison, reach the lost. He wanted us to love our enemies and pray for them. He cared about human justice and suffering, the lost and lonely. But I don't think He would have marched on a picket line - He had His mind on much bigger problems. He wanted us to focus on the eternal things, not the everyday. He never once said to go into all the world and build big buildings and divide up into factions and buy Bentleys. Just the opposite! I get that you're mad at us and I think you have a right to be, but please understand, you're mad at what we've made under our own power, you're mad at "Churchianity." That's different than Christ and what he wanted. Don't be mad at Jesus! This mess wasn't His idea!

Look, I'm really sorry. I accept responsibility for my part in having hurt you. But I'm committing to you all, dear Members of the World, that I'm not going to do it any more. Not a single penny more. I'm not going to put my faith in "Churchianity" or any leader or program or TV show -- but in Christ Jesus and His salvation. That's when I was set free and began to see that God wants and expects more of us than this. And I'm not helping anybody that's not fully committed to the same thing.

It took centuries to build this monster, so it's not like it's going to just turn around overnight. But the times are changing and we're way overdue for something new. Big bad things are happening - like the tsunami in Asia - and I think more are coming. I don't want any more time to go by without having said this. I'm sorry for all the time and money I've wasted. But Jesus saves. Really. The church itself isn't even the point. Jesus is the real deal. He lived and He died for my sins and He rose again. He is who He said He was and He cares about me - and you. He's our only hope. We need places you can go that will only teach Jesus and will not be swayed or tempted or distracted by anything else. God willing, that's coming.

Please don't think all Christians are just posers. Some of them really mean it when they say they belong to Christ. The problem is mostly in the West where we're all comfy and complacent and seem to like it that way. The Christians in China and other places are deadly serious. There's no room for anything but Jesus when you're on the run from the government. They are dying every day for their faith and doing crazy hard things because they're absolutely committed to Christ. These are martyrs. People willing to crucify little pieces of themselves every day to be more like Christ. People willing to set aside everything they want, to do what Christ wants. People willing to rot in prison or take a beating or die if that's what it's going to take. People that act in pure love and never back down. I'm not worthy to tie their shoes. And there are some like that here, too, and I hope we can get a lot more people to start living that way. It's way overdue.

If you're talking to someone and they tell you they're a Christian, ask them if they're the kind of Christian that really means it all the time or the kind that just means it on Sunday. The Bible says we'll know them by their "fruits" - by the faith and purity and love in their deeds and words. When you find one that proves Christ is in them by how much they love you, ask them to tell you all about Jesus. If you know one of those fearless martyrs that speaks nothing but pure, clean, hard Truth - ask lots of questions. Truth is a lot more rare than you would think. But don't settle for soft, fluffy and comfortable anymore - that's not in the Bible.

As for me and my house, we're really sorry. From now on, we're going to serve the Lord, not "Churchianity." We're going to try to call together as many of those martyrs as we can and start doing what Christ wanted. If I run into you someday, please give me a chance to shake your hand and apologize in person. I'm going to try harder from now on, I promise. I think there are lots of others feeling the same way, so don't be surprised if you start hearing stuff like this more often.

Thanks for your time. I hope it helps.

Use freely, but without changes or removing attribution.

WANTED – CITY RESTORATION POSITIONS AVAILABLE

WANTED: Christians that want restoration of the Body of Christ more than anything else.

PRIMARY JOB: To help bring in the last great harvest.

TITLE: KOGS (Kingdom of God Servants) - sometimes also referred to as “cogs”

NUMBER OF POSITIONS AVAILABLE: Unlimited - but currently we are pitifully understaffed for the size of the harvest we're predicting.

QUALIFICATIONS: They need to have no other gods before Me. They need to have My heart (hungry, naked, poor, in prison, etc.). They are going to need to be willing to receive with open arms and hearts the Outside Consultants and Management Experts that I send to them for training and correction purposes. They must be willing to lay down any flawed traditions or businesses practices that they have been using up to this point, so that I can retrain them. They must want to hear My voice so that I can direct their paths. They must stop putting Me in a box and asking Me to endorse THEIR ideas. They must want to be One Body with all the other KOGS and stop fighting with each other.

We are an equal opportunity employer, but priority hiring goes to those in the following categories: widows, orphans, handicapped, limping, poor, naked, down-trodden, bankrupt, criminals, prostitutes, tax-collectors, common laborers (especially carpenters and fishermen) and other broken, flawed vessels who have been humbled already. Rich people and seminary graduates may have to undergo additional breaking in order to qualify. Anyone willing to truly lay down their life (and stuff) for a friend goes to the front of the line.

REMUNERATIONS: Those accepting this position will get to see the Spirit of God descend in power on their assembly and their town like never before. They will get to see Me walk in their midst. They will learn peace and joy and victory on a scale they didn't know possible and they will have true community for the first time. They will also be ridiculed and persecuted - but they won't care. I will individually and collectively lift them up onto My lap and rub their head and wipe away every tear. I will pay all their bills and take care of their every need. I will be their Daddy.

APPLICATION PROCESS: If you have previously been revived for any period of time, before applying again you need to first say you're sorry for losing what was given to you previously. We can't give you a fresh fire until you repent for letting the last one go out. (Weeping and mourning is helpful in convincing us of your sincerity.) If you are new to this and have never made application before, just fill out the form below and submit by fervent prayer.

DEADLINE: This vacancy will remain open until we find qualified candidates or until the harvest is over. But time is getting short, so you might want to hurry before you miss it.

NOTE: Those who are comfortable with the current state of things and/or unrepentant for their part in the pain and suffering around them need not apply. Please refer to Ezekiel 9 for clarification. Church leaders please refer to Ezekiel 34.

For available positions in your area find someone that is feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting prisoners, etc. They have a direct line to Headquarters. Or call Fellowship Of The Martyrs.

BODY RESTORATION APPLICATION FORM:

www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com

Name: _____

Jesus Preference: (check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency-Only Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> Prosperity Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> Denominational Jesus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire-Insurance-Get-Out-Of-Hell-Free Jesus | | <input type="checkbox"/> Church Growth Jesus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nonjudgemental-Everybody-Goes-To-Heaven Jesus | | <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't-Come-In-The-Flesh Jesus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loves-Me-But-Can't/Won't-Talk-To-Me Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-Quite-As-Good-As-The-Virgin-Mary Jesus | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nice-Philosopher/Prophet-But-Not-Divine Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> Master, King, Commander, Lord Jesus | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

SCREENING QUESTIONS:

Money: (Check One)

- I owe God 10% of my money.
 I owe God 10% of my money and an occasional love gift or offering.
 I owe God everything I have and none of it is really mine.

Time: (Check One)

- People have been saying for years that He is coming, why hurry?
 People have been saying for years that He is coming, I should move faster.
 He is coming soon! I can't waste a second!

Sacrifice: (Check One)

- I am willing to give up Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights.
 I am willing to be substantially inconvenienced on a regular basis.
 I am willing to die for Jesus.

Love: (Check One)

- I love the people in my family (mostly).
 I love the people that are like me and agree with me.
 I love my enemies (and my family and the people that agree with me).

Humility: (Check One)

- Mine is the Kingdom ___ Mine is the Power ___ Mine is the Glory
 Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever.

Prayer: (Check One)

- I close my eyes when other people are praying and try to pay attention.
 I often pray in front of people and I pray at home by myself.
 I pray without ceasing, often alone crying out to God and with tears and supplications.

Availability Date: (Check One)

- When I'm retired and mostly out of steam anyway. ___ When I'm perfect and feel worthy.
 Whenever He says He wants me. Right NOW would be nice.

Please consider me for this position. I'm willing to go anywhere, do anything, endure anything, give anything, unlearn anything, pray without ceasing, be instant in season and out of season, know the Word of God and obey His commands and learn to hear His voice. I know I can't get there on my own and I'm sorry I ever tried. I will let Him direct ALL my paths from now on and I won't lean on my own understanding anymore. I will happily receive everything that I'm going to need to be fully equipped for His purposes. I'm ready to start anytime.

Signed: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY: Qualified? ___ Start Date? ___ End Date? ___ Rich Welcome Scheduled? ___

HELP WANTED

CITY RESTORATION LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AVAILABLE

WANTED: Christian leaders that want the restoration of the Body of Christ more than anything else and are willing to do whatever it takes regardless of the cost.

PRIMARY JOB: To help bring in the last great harvest and to serve God's people selflessly.

TITLE: L.O.T. (Least of These) - sometimes also referred to as "humble servants."

NUMBER OF POSITIONS AVAILABLE: Unlimited - but currently we are pitifully understaffed for the size of the harvest we're predicting.

QUALIFICATIONS: They need to have no other gods before Me. They need to have My heart (for the hungry, naked, poor, in prison, etc.). They are going to need to be willing to receive with open arms and hearts the Outside Consultants and Management Experts that I send to them for training and correction purposes – but test everything. They must be willing to lay down any flawed traditions or business practices that they have been using up to this point, so that I can retrain them. They must want to hear My voice so that I can direct their paths. They must stop putting Me in a box and asking Me to endorse THEIR ideas. They must want to be One Body and stop fighting with each other.

We are an equal opportunity employer, but priority hiring goes to those in the following categories: widows, orphans, handicapped, limping, poor, naked, down-trodden, bankrupt, criminals, prostitutes, tax-collectors, common laborers (especially carpenters and fishermen) and other broken, flawed vessels who have been humbled already. Rich people and seminary graduates may have to undergo additional breaking in order to qualify. Anyone willing to truly lay down their life (and stuff) for a friend goes to the front of the line. If they are not willing to cry repentantly in front of others and be transparent, they won't be able to lead the sheep to Me.

REMUNERATIONS: Those accepting this position will get to see the Spirit of God descend in power on their assembly and their town like never before. They will get to see Me walk in their midst. They will learn peace and joy and victory and intimacy with Me on a scale they didn't know possible and they will have true community for the first time. I will pay all their bills and take care of their every need. I will hold their hand.

COSTS: It's very important that they count the cost ahead of time. If they accept this position they will be ridiculed and persecuted. It will probably result in the loss of some or all of the following: prestige, health, leisure time, money and assets of all kinds, home – even spouse and children are at risk. Those who accept this position will be beat on and reshaped and refined on a scale they can't even imagine, but I promise to never let it go beyond what they can handle. Their success will be directly proportional to their willingness to let My refining fire burn off everything in them that stands in the way of My plans. It WILL absolutely, positively hurt a LOT – but I will personally wipe away their every tear. In the end, they will look like Me – and I will treat them as a Father treats his Son..

APPLICATION PROCESS: Submit this application with fear and trembling and ask Me to do whatever it takes to make you ready right NOW no matter how much it hurts. Then bite down on something.

DEADLINE: This vacancy will remain open until we find qualified candidates or until the harvest is over. But if you're supposed to be leading and you refuse, the blood of all the people that didn't get reached because you wouldn't stand up in the day of battle (or move fast enough) is on YOU. So you might want to hurry.

NOTE: If you need extra motivation, please read Ezekiel 34 several times out loud.

For available positions in your area find someone that has lost everything and has been thoroughly beaten into submission. They have a direct line to Headquarters. (Or contact www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com)

CITY RESTORATION LEADERSHIP APPLICATION FORM:

www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com

Name: _____

Jesus Preference: (check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency-Only Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> Prosperity Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> Denominational Jesus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire-Insurance-Get-Out-Of-Hell-Free Jesus | | <input type="checkbox"/> Church Growth Jesus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nonjudgemental-Everybody-Goes-To-Heaven Jesus | | <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't-Come-In-The-Flesh Jesus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loves-Me-But-Can't/Won't-Talk-To-Me Jesus | | <input type="checkbox"/> Master, King, Commander, Lord Jesus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

SCREENING QUESTIONS:

Money: (Check One)

- I am willing to go, so long as I know a regular paycheck is coming and I have some security.
- I am willing to go and live on faith, so long as I can tell people about my needs.
- I am willing to go and live on faith and depend on God alone and never mention my needs to anyone.

Service: (Check One)

- I am willing to serve those who will really appreciate what I do and won't ask me to get too dirty.
- I am willing to serve even if no one notices, so long as I can feel like we're making some progress.
- I am willing to serve those who will beat me and spit on me, and I won't stop even if it never pays off.

Prayer: (Check One)

- I often stand in front and make long flowery prayers to impress people.
- I frequently intercede for others and spend lots of hours alone in prayer.
- I pray without ceasing and offer to stand in the gap and take on me anything necessary to free another.

Sacrifice: (Check One)

- I am willing to strain my tea and religiously give 10% of all my spices and other garden produce.
- I am willing to give all that I have, but I'd like to make payments and spread it out over time.
- I am willing to die to self – all at once right now or in big chunks every day – regardless of the pain.

Humility: (Check One)

- I prefer the seats of honor at the front and try to make sure everyone knows where I belong.
- Mine is the Kingdom ___ Mine is the Power ___ Mine is the Glory
- Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever. I'll take the crumbs from under the table.

Urgency: (Check One)

- I will go when I'm sure that I'm fully prepared and know all that I need to know to be effective.
- I will go right now, but I refuse to go over 20 miles per hour so as not to get hurt too bad in an accident.
- I already left and I'm going 200 miles per hour and I don't care what happens, I'm not slowing down.

Determination: (Check One)

- I will persevere until someone raises an eyebrow or threatens to leave my church.
- I will persevere until it starts costing me things I really love.
- I will persevere until someone kills me and I get to go Home.

Please consider me for this position. I'm willing to go anywhere, do anything, endure anything, give anything, unlearn anything, pray without ceasing, be instant in season and out of season, know the Word of God and obey His commands and learn to hear His voice. I know I can't get there on my own and I'm sorry I ever tried. I will let Him direct ALL my paths from now on and I won't lean on my own understanding anymore. I will happily receive everything that I'm going to need to be fully equipped for His purposes. I promise to never make it about me. I'm ready to start anytime.

Signed: _____

OFFICE USE: Qualified? ___ Start Date? ___ End Date? ___ Rich Welcome Scheduled? ___ Robe Size? ___

***“OK, so the whole thing is a mess.
What do we DO about it?”***

www.The Church Of Liberty.com

The City Church is the only thing that will work.
It's the only thing in the Bible. And it's coming.

Other books that might help:

“Rain Down NOW, Lord!” - All about Spiritual Gifts and
how to keep your cup so full of Jesus that nothing else can fit!
www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/rain_down_now.htm

“The Red Dragon” – Why the church CANNOT seem to change.
www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/red_dragon.htm

“Who Neutered the Holy Spirit?” - What happened to God?
www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com/neutered.htm

And much more on the website.

For other similar books and materials and
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T-shirts, buttons, stickers, books and more,
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All proceeds devoted to pushing back the
darkness in the most efficient possible way.

www.FellowshipOfTheMartyrs.com
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844 S. M-291 Hwy, #251
Liberty, MO 64068

Email to: fotm@fellowshipofthemartyrs.com if we can help in any way.