

The Heartbeat of

April/May/June 2009
Volume 15 Number 2

The Remnant

Will the Real Pagan Please Stand Up?

So you're saying that in the early church there were no elders or pastors to make decisions...?

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Sitting in the Gates of Sodom

**Are you dwelling in tabernacles as you look for an eternal city?
Or are you pitching your tent toward Sodom...?**

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The Heartbeat of
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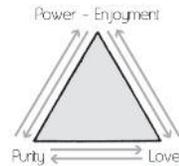
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FROM THE EDITOR...

Well, it's been another exciting quarter! In March my wife Tania and I had the opportunity to go down to Sarasota, Florida. We stayed in the Pinecraft community and I preached at the third annual Anabaptist Identity Conference. This conference was sponsored by the wife and children of the late John Overholt, publishers of the Christian Hymnary. A very diverse group of speakers were in attendance from a variety of perspectives. All the messages were very challenging. They asked me to speak on sports, marriage, and contemporary Christian music.

It's hard to explain Pinecraft...I don't think I have ever seen any place quite like it! Try to imagine a little mini-city with every representation of conservative Anabaptist milling about or driving around on little three-wheeled bikes—all in the backdrop of a tropical paradise—complete with orange and grapefruit trees, palm trees of every variety, beautiful flowers, and lots of sunshine! The meetings at the Tourist Mennonite Church were well attended by a large variety of conservative Anabaptists from all over the country. Our hearts welled in us as we shared sweet fellowship and of course, if you know the folks out there, lots of good hymn-singing! But I have to say one of the highlights was when Bro. Levi Stoltzfus and his family showed up unexpectedly and surprised us! Another great blessing was having Bro. Manny Troyer and Bro. Charles (C.C.) Matthews from North Carolina there. It was good to be challenged from so many different perspectives.

In this issue there are some really challenging articles pertaining to a variety of concerns. Sis. Rachel Weaver submitted a very encouraging article on letting God pick up the broken pieces of our lives. And Bro. Mike Atnip submitted an article on the life example of Jehu. Bro. Mike uses the life of Jehu to demonstrate a graphic example of zeal without knowledge. Bro. Roger Hertzler submitted a thought-provoking article warning us of the dangers of getting caught up in this world's politics. Bro. Paul Lamicele submitted an excellent article written by the late Francis A. Schaefer that presents one of the best messages on the balance between patience and separation in a local fellowship that I have ever heard. Also, a special treat



in this Remnant is our Blessing Corner testimony from Bro. Llewellyn van der Merwe from Namibia, Africa. I submitted "Will the Real Pagan Please Stand Up?" out of a serious burden over the growing trend of books aimed at gathering up the house church and radical Christian movement into its folds. The poor scholarship and fanciful Bible interpretations coming from these circles has troubled me for years. It is my prayer that

the Lord will guide us safely through all the pitfalls that Satan throws our way.

Who are we? The Heartbeat of the Remnant is a quarterly magazine of Charity Ministries of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Starting out as an outreach newsletter, The Heartbeat of the Remnant has now grown to reach thousands of readers all across the globe. Springing from the rich Anabaptist heritage of Lancaster County, Charity Christian Fellowship has endeavored to maintain a strong biblical orthodoxy with a genuine heart-cry for revival and radical Christian living. While maintaining an Anabaptist direction overall, the magazine does not desire to lift up any specific denomination, church or man. We desire only to glorify the name of Jesus.

The magazine features articles from a wide variety of Christian sources, ranging from ancient to modern-day testimonies. We frequently reprint articles from revival preachers and histories, missionary stories, early Christian trials and martyrs, challenging Puritan writers and Methodist circuit riders, as well as modern-day preachers. We hope you will be blessed and inspired by this edition of The Heartbeat of the Remnant!

Blessings to each one of you as you read!

~Bro. Dean Taylor



“—SO YOU’RE SAYING THAT IN THE EARLY CHURCH THERE WERE NO ELDERS OR PASTORS TO MAKE DECISIONS, OR TO SAY WHERE THE MONEY WAS GOING?” “THAT’S RIGHT”....

Will The Real Pagan Please Stand Up?

by Dean Taylor

When I walked up to the display booth, I noticed amongst the line of onlookers that a news reporter from Trinity Broadcasting was interviewing the author. Trinity broadcasting, a large international charismatic television network, was asking James Rutz, “—So you’re saying that in the early church there were no elders or pastors to make decisions, or to say where the money was going?” “That’s right,” answered James Rutz, the writer of the new book *The Open Church*. As they kept talking, I mulled around the display racks looking at their latest books. It was the 1992 Christian Book Sellers’ Convention, and I was there representing new books for Scroll Publishing Co. The first day of the convention I received a booklet by James Rutz that had rendered the first few chapters of his new book. I had appreciated Seedsowers Press, and, being a fellow house-church man, I was naturally interested in what they had to say. However, that night back in my hotel room I was shocked over what I read. The book made the common radical claim—that modern Christianity had completely messed up original Christianity—a point I agreed with. Going on with this theme the book was claiming to be an attempt to set the record straight, basing its methods on biblical literalism supposedly backed up by the witness and writings of the early church.



I happened to have been reading the early Christian writers heavily at the time. As a matter of fact, I had brought Tertullian’s Volume 3 of the Ante-Nicene Fathers along with me to the convention. But that night in the hotel I read an entirely different early church in the pages

of Rutz’s book than I had been reading. Right from the start of the book, Rutz described the communion service of the early Christians as an “often-boisterous affair” where everyone was the “star of the show.” He went on to say that “the *whoopee* part” of the meeting, which he called the love feast, “resembled a cross between a Super Bowl victory celebration and a frat party (with a few cups of wine instead of the keg of suds).”

Going further, he explained that the church lost this free-for-all style of worship in the advent of church buildings, pastoral ministry, church structure, etc., etc. Then after making several appeals to the early church, Rutz offers his one-and-only actual quote from the early church (well...kind of an actual quote). Claiming to be quoting Tertullian he says,

“In our Christian meetings we have plenty of songs, verses, sentences, and proverbs. [obviously individual] After hand-washing and bringing in the lights, each Christian is asked to stand forth and sing, as best he can, a hymn to God, either of his own composing, or one from the Holy Scriptures.”

I thought the quote sounded familiar; so there in the hotel room I reached for my Tertullian book and found the quote. However, I saw that the first line of the quote was made up, and the whole context of Tertullian’s passage showed something quite different than what Rutz described.

After waiting my time in line I finally found my way to James Rutz. I mentioned to him some of my concerns with the way that he was representing the early Chris-

tians. I showed him that his reference from Tertullian was misquoted, and that the sentences right before his quote describe a completely opposite picture of early Christian worship than what he was portraying. I took him to the very passage he had quoted and showed him how Tertullian explains the love feast with these sobering words, “great rebukes and censures are made by the brethren” and “great gravity is the work of judging carried on by them.” I showed him how Tertullian goes on recording what great concern is made to maintain a strict sense

of sobriety in both food and drink. After showing Mr. Rutz all the quotes I said, “This doesn’t sound too much like a frat party to me.”

He looked at me blankly for what seemed a peculiarly long time; and then told me that I needed to go speak with his publisher, Gene Edwards, and led me to him. I tried to share my same concerns with him as well but he quickly changed the subject. I asked him to explain why he represented the early Church in such an irreverent posture. He picked up a new book that his publishing company was reprinting called *Ante Pacem* and turned to a catacomb picture of a love feast and said, “Look—they’re *smiling!*” His reasoning took me by surprise. After a little discussion, and with genuine curiosity, I asked him to further explain his approach with the entire early church in general. I asked, “I have been reading a lot of the early church lately; and I’m confused with why I am getting something so completely different from the *actual* writings of the early Church than what I have been reading from your books *about* the early church.” He again picked up the book and held it up to my face and said, “They’re smiling...” Probing a bit, I asked him, “Well, what do you do with the actual writings of the early Christians before Constantine... You know, the ten volume set of the



OVER AND OVER AGAIN THROUGH THE YEARS, IT HAS BEEN GOD'S WRITTEN WORD THAT HAS KEPT ME. WHEN I HEAR OF THE VARIOUS "REVELATIONS" THAT MANY PEOPLE CLAIM THESE DAYS, I FIND THAT THE "SURE WORD OF PROPHECY" FOUND IN THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD A GREAT STRENGTH AND STABILITY.

eternal, he chided me for believing in water baptism, telling me that water baptism was no longer necessary. He then informed me that he was not even intending to baptize his own daughter.

An older—and wiser—brother that was there with me suggested, “Why don’t we just agree to disagree.” However, not being too long converted, I had a lot of things to sort out. I really was trying to understand the claims that he was making. My answer was simply, “I am just looking for truth.”

At that Gene Edwards quickly looked my way, came very close to my face (a bit in my personal space) and said, “You’re looking for truth?”

Startled again, I replied, “Yes, sir.”

“That’s probably the worst thing—no, wait a minute, that *is* the worst thing you could do.”

“What...look for truth?” I asked.

“Precisely! Paul wasn’t looking for truth! Paul wasn’t looking for understanding...Paul was looking for a—*a revelation.*”

Needing clarification, I asked, “So... if I get a revelation, would I still agree with the Apostle Paul?”

Moving his arm and fingers in a circular motion Gene Edwards said, “It is the same revelation...it just circles through time...you must tap into that *revelation.*”

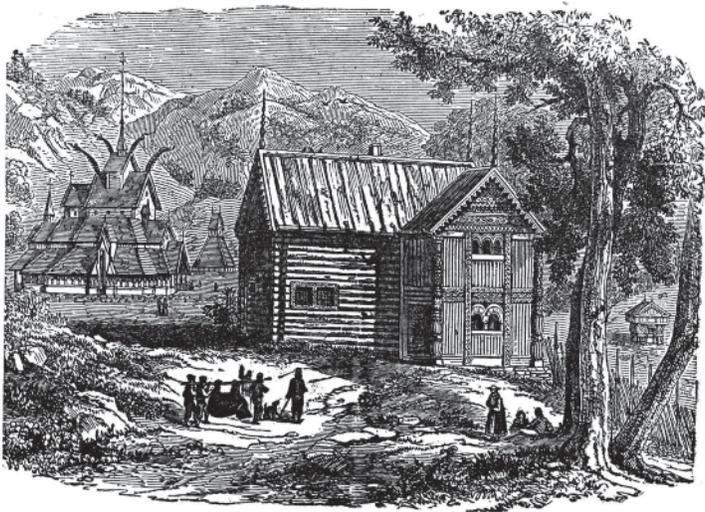
Ante-Nicene fathers?” I’ll never forget his response. He said, “Oh, I haven’t read those things since seminary!”

I was staggered. I thought, “Wait a minute... You are *the* early Church guru—you’ve written all these books on what you *claim* the early church is like, but you mean to tell me you haven’t actually read the early church since what little of it you read in seminary many years ago?!” Looking for a practical application, we somehow started talking about baptism. To my surprise, while giving me some kind of reasoning that salvation is

Now pressing the point, I asked, “Okay... so if I do get this ‘revelation’ ...will I at least agree with the Bible???”

Gene Edwards looked over to Jim Rutz—they smirked at each other—then looked back at me and Gene Edwards said, “Throw away your Bible and get a revelation.” Immediately after that he dismissed himself, saying that his voice was sore and he needed to get a glass of water. They both walked off while I struggled to scrape my jaw back up off the floor.

In his defense, allow me to say that I think Gene Edwards probably enjoys saying shocking things to young Bible thumpers just to elicit a response. That said, I still feel that the incident revealed some pretty significant problems. And the biggest problem being namely this—



a fuzzy view of truth. I’m all for seeking God’s still, small voice in my heart. He often reveals hidden sin in my heart. However, I also know too well that my heart can easily lead me astray if it isn’t scrutinized under the subjection of God’s written Word. Over and over again through the years, it has been God’s written Word that has kept me. When I hear of the various “revelations” that many people claim these days, I find that the “sure word of prophecy” found in the written Word of God a great strength and stability. There have been many people through the ages who have claimed some sort of divine “revelation.” That list is as diverse as the Mormons’ founder, Joseph Smith, down to that strange-but-nice lady at the Laundromat! They each claim their own “revelation.” This is significant, especially considering that Paul said, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal 1:8).

The House Church Movement

The house church movement has gained a lot of steam in the last fifty years—especially if you consider the tremendous success of the Chinese house churches. This movement has provided a refreshing alternative to worldly, nominal church life. All across the country, little cells of awakened pilgrims are meeting together to encourage, challenge, and worship—many seeking a return to the old paths. Likewise, right along with these house churches, scores of little radical groups are springing up meeting in rented hotels, storefronts, and borrowed buildings—all challenging the status quo. I believe this is the future of committed Christians at large. Since my

ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY, LITTLE CELLS OF AWAKENED PILGRIMS ARE MEETING TOGETHER TO ENCOURAGE, CHALLENGE, AND WORSHIP—MANY SEEKING A RETURN TO THE OLD PATHS...AS IT IS WITH SO MANY OF GOD’S BLESSINGS, SATAN IS QUICK TO DISTRACT AND COUNTERFEIT THE TRUTH WITH A LIE.

conversion in Germany almost twenty years ago, I have fellowshipped in, or closely with, one of these types of gatherings. I spent years in living room churches; and even now my current “church” meets in a rented community-type building. As “Christianity” continues to dive further into modernity and compromise, I believe the true, awakened Christians will more and more feel the need to look for more meaningful gatherings of believers. That said, as it is with so many of God’s blessings, Satan is quick to distract and counterfeit the truth with a lie. As much as I am blessed with these radical communities, I am not always happy with the voices that claim to be speaking for all of us at large.

One of the most alarming of these voices has come on the scene in the disturbing trend of the ultra-critical, iconoclastic, everybody-is-wrong books. Much like the books of the 1990s by Gene Edwards, or those of his friend James Rutz, new books have recently emerged on the scene that are a great disappointment. In particular,

a recent best seller, *Pagan Christianity*, by Frank Viola and George Barna does a grave disservice to the house church movement.

The Small Stuff

There are many things worth mentioning about these books that are claiming to speak for the “house church” and “radical” Christian movement. However, I have found that many of the issues are so unfounded that they actually take care of themselves in time. For instance, Frank Viola’s new book *Pagan Christianity* says preaching is pagan, order of worship is pagan, and even chairs—according to Viola—are pagan. Many of these things sound radical. However, I have noticed that most house church brethren see through issues like these. Most Christians embrace the freedom in Christ to use—for example—a *sermon* if they need to. These are not the kinds of things that concern me the most with these new books.

Buildings

I also used to think that the big issue was over church buildings. Maybe it’s just the circles I have been in, but oddly enough, I rarely run into a house church man who feels that a group absolutely *has* to meet in a house. Many enjoy meeting in small borrowed places equally as well as houses. And if the Lord adds to their numbers, they don’t seem to feel constrained to keep the fellowship from growing. It would seem that in the past the “building” was a bigger issue when house church ideas were new. It is true that discovering the historical and biblical facts that many of the early Christians met in homes can help prevent a small group from ever needing to feel intimidated or insignificant. However, most agree that facts *about* the early Christians meeting in homes is a lot different than a direct command of Christ that we *must* meet in homes. As a matter of fact, archaeological remains of the oldest pre-Constantine house churches, such as the Dura-Europos, show evidences that groups originally met in their homes, but then over time made significant changes to accommodate for larger crowds.

Dissent and Rebellion

Indeed, the church building is no longer the main target of these newer books. Without a doubt, the biggest

amount of space and passion is devoted to the undermining and disparaging of church leadership. The roles of pastor, elder, deacon, and bishop are where the crosshairs of these new attacks are aimed. It seems that an angry spirit permeates a lot of these writings. After reading some of these books, it makes me wonder who offended these guys. Derogatory remarks are common. In preparing this article I grabbed up an armful of these newer books from around the house. Simply paging through I found numerous negative “buzz” expressions such as: “desire to rule over you,” “mentally abusive,” “large salaries,” “sit in offices,” “honorific titles,” and of course—“conspiracy.” One writer even compared church leadership to an explicit child predator. This type of spirit really concerns me.

Their Argument

The common line of argument from these books usually starts by showing that the terms that we use for leaders: bishops, elders, deacons, and apostles actually come from very common, generic Greek terms:

Bishop = overseer

Elder = older person

Deacon = servant

Apostle = sent one

From this discovery, they usually presume that since these terms are simple generic Greek terms, then they must have no specific (particularly set apart or ordained) role. For example, Viola, writing about the word “pastor” said that it simply is “a metaphor... not an office or a title.” These writers (rightly so) are quick to quote the Scriptures concerning equality—equality between male and female, equality between Greek and Jew, and most especially, equality between brethren and leadership.

In essence I agree, we must be careful here...because it is true, and vitally important, that Jesus taught that Christian leadership should be very different than that of the Gentiles. Jesus said,

“Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mark 10:42).

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After a busy day spent in your duties to others, you finally stand alone with God.
The whole day since you last prayed to Him, seems to have been lost.
It was all one busy emptiness, because God was not in it.
Where was the evil in this? What is the remedy?

Do ALL to the Lord Jesus

by Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882)

Some of you, my brethren, have no doubt known, at times, the following state: After a busy day spent in your duties to others, you finally stand alone with God. All the events of the day now seem as one empty turmoil. The soul seems to have been dead the entire day. And now it has only a faint sickly life, having been away from God all day. The whole day since you last prayed to Him, seems to have been lost. It was all one busy emptiness, because God was not in it. Where was the evil in this? What is the remedy?

The evil is that we are slow to learn that we can do nothing good without God. This we know so well; we can confess it so truly and heartily. Yet, the more we confess it, the more often we neglect it in our deeds. We take for granted that since we know this truth, we shall act on what we know. Yet, because we take it for granted, we are not watchful, and we therefore forget it. Christians confess truly that without God they cannot think one good thought, say one good word, or do one good act. And yet they act as if nothing were less true.

Persons think it very unlikely they shall die this day, or that they shall fall into any evil accident on this particular day, for

they have lived so many days without any great accidents. Similarly, they take for granted that their food will nourish them, because it has always nourished them heretofore. Yet, how could anyone be said to really depend upon God who lies down to sleep each night with merely a formal prayer to God to protect him, yet all the while scarcely thinking but that He will protect him without any prayer at all? The same is true of one who takes his food as a matter of course, perhaps with some formal grace, yet only thinking of what is pleasant or nourishing. This is more the way of a heathen, than of

one who really believes in the special Providence of God.

The same principle is true as to deeds of grace. What a wonderful thing it would be if professing Christians, really prayed, morning by morning, to God, to carry them through the temptations and trials of the day—truly believing that they needed the special aid of God to carry them through the trials of that day. In contrast, what must we think of the very many so-called Christians? If they are honest, they will admit that if they prayed at all or thought at all, they hoped that they should somehow do right almost through the very wish and in-



tention of doing it. They have thought that it is enough merely to call upon God in some general way. They think that if they do so, then things will not be much amiss with them.

God is indeed more ready to hear us than we are to pray. But where has He told us that He will hear such prayers as these? I fear that deeds done amid such prayers as these are deeds of nature, not deeds of grace. They are the deeds that a good heathen might have done, being done with perhaps as little thought of the grace of Christ as those of the very heathen. It may seem that I am being overly harsh. Yet, take any of the words of Holy Scripture as to Christian duty or Christian life:

- “Pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks.”
- “Giving thanks always for all things.”
- “Whatsoever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord.”
- “The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”
- “If we live, we live unto the Lord.”
- “We live in the Spirit.”
- “If we be dead with Christ....”
- “Whether you eat, or whether you drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
- “Thou hast wrought all our deeds in us.”

“He that doeth good cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.” What words are these! What a light of inward life streams forth through them! What a power of the Spirit! What might of holiness! “Deeds wrought in God,” done heartily to the Lord, a life in the Spirit, Christ living in us. How many of us, if we were forced to confess, would have to say that our works were wrought without Christ, than dare to claim such words as these?

Or take Christians again in their daily trials. We know how difficult it is not to sin in words. The Apostle says that someone who does not sin with his mouth “is a perfect man.” Yet people converse together on all sorts of perilous subjects: Public evils. The ills of the Church. The measures of those in authority. Their spiritual rulers. Their neighbors. Notorious sins. Parties to whom they are opposed or who are opposed to their beliefs. Persons

uncongenial to themselves. Persons who have vexed them. Or persons who have done them an injury. Who really thinks that he can speak on those subjects without

displeasing God by pride, or unloving, or irreverent thoughts or words? Of the many conversations carried on every moment throughout the Christian world, for how many of them is any aid of God at all asked? Before speaking, how many Christians pray that God will give

good thoughts or keep the tongue from evil words?

As strange as it may sound, most Christians go about their daily deeds and conversations thinking that they cannot help but to sin. What people hate is having any strife with themselves, having to keep watch over themselves. They do not wish to pray for the grace of God, because they do not wish to be at the pains to use it. They shrink from the pain of putting restraint upon themselves. Therefore, they are ready to think that they cannot help themselves, that they must fall into these daily sins of infirmity. In this way, they can cast back their own faults upon God. What is the answer to all this?

The Apostle gives the remedy: “Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” In the Name of the Lord Jesus—as one who bears His Name. In the might of His Name. Calling upon His Name. To the Glory of His Great Name. Or in few words, referring all things to Him and receiving all things from Him. Let Him be the Beginning of all. For He is the End of all. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. The Beginning from Whom all flows. The End, in Whom we are gathered. The Aim of all we do. The Reward to Whom we look for all things that were done through Him and unto Him. He is the Fountain of all Goodness from Whom all graces flow. He is the Ocean to Whom all should flow back, receiving the streams of our thanksgivings, supplying them again to us.

Have Him before you as the Pattern Whom you are to copy. The Redeemer in Whom is your strength. The Master and Friend, Whom you are to serve and please. Your God by Whom you have been created and re-created, and Who, in His Infinite Love, is your Everlasting Reward. Fix your eyes on Him as your Help, your Aim, the Center of your being. Rivet yourself unto Himself to steady your soul and to guide you. ◻

Of the many conversations carried on every moment throughout the Christian world, for how many of them is any aid of God at all asked?

The Secret of

Power

and the

Enjoyment

of the

Lord

by Francis A. Schaeffer

There is seemingly a constant tension between a passion to uphold truth and a desire for love to flow among Christians and from Christians to unbelievers as well. Often in conservative movements such as ours, we emphasize—sometimes overemphasize—an orthodoxy of doctrine and practice while minimizing the absolute necessity of love and unity. Neglecting or underemphasizing either one is detrimental to our personal and church lives.

In this article, Francis A. Schaeffer deals with these two issues masterfully. Schaeffer himself was involved in a split in his denomination, in which he and others left the mainline part of the denomination because it was losing the true faith. But he also became deeply troubled by the wrong emphases he saw in the “conservative” group that he was a part of. He was always concerned to have correct doctrine, and he also had a heart for love and unity in the church.

I found this article a wonderful articulation of my own thoughts on these subjects; and it is my hope that we will all take to heart this message.

—Paul W. Lamicela

The Need for Both Purity and Love in the Christian Life

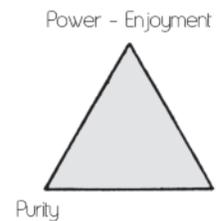
What is the secret of power? Certainly, as we consider Christianity today—true, Bible-believing Christianity—we must be impressed by the fact that there is not the consistent power that there has been in certain periods of the past. The same thing is also true of the enjoyment of the Lord. In our day, life is such that, while Christians do many things to serve the Lord, it is obvious from our faces and our conversation that few enjoy Him.

These faults tend to be equally true for us as individual Christians and for the Christian organizations in which we are. Those things that are needed to overcome these faults would also be the same for us as individual Christians and for our organizations.

Purity

As we begin let us draw a triangle. We shall write at the apex of this triangle two words, *Power* and *Enjoyment*; and we shall write at the left of the triangle the word *Purity*.

First of all, the Bible is clear in its command for personal purity. There cannot be power or enjoyment without such purity. Some Christians seem to think that when we talk of personal purity all that is meant is giving up a few



amusements and habits. What a poor view of purity this is! Dealing with these things is indeed important, but this is only the ABC. We can be without hindering habits and amusements and still be far from true personal purity.

When we consider what the Bible teaches concerning purity we find that it is not a matter basically of outward things at all, but it is a matter of inward things. The Ten Commandments do not deal just with outward things, but they deal with the inward disposition of the heart. We can break each of the commandments inwardly without any outward act. This is most clearly shown by the fact that the last commandment, “Thou shalt not covet,” deals entirely with inward dispositions and not with outward things at all. Outward things result from our inward disposition of covetousness, but covetousness in itself is an inward matter. This tenth com-

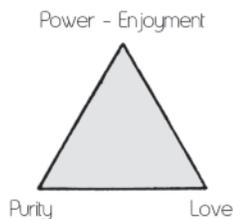
mandment is most searching; it is the negative side of the positive command of Christ that we should love all men as ourselves. We can have a covetous attitude in the wanting of what we do not have, and we can have an equally covetous attitude in determining to hold on to the possessions or leadership that we do have. Is there a simple test that I may apply to my life to find out if I am covetous? Yes, there is. Let me ask myself: If So and So, who has more possessions or leadership than I possess, should lose these, would I be inwardly pleased; or, if So and So, who has less possessions or leadership than I have, should begin to gain, would I be inwardly wretched? If I would, I have coveted. If covetousness is present I am not right inside; and to the extent that I am not right inside I do not possess personal purity. Is personal purity easy? The answer is, No. The battle is against the flesh all the way.

Let us notice, however, that true purity is more than even such a negative aspect concerning our innermost selves. True personal purity is not a bare negative. I am to love my neighbor as myself. True purity is based upon and leads to love. True purity and love stand together.

This word, then, we put at the right of the triangle.

However, the biblical presentation of purity includes more than personal purity. We find that the Word of God teaches that there is not only to be purity of the person, but purity of the external body of believers. Moses commands it, and from the Book of Judges on we find the constantly repeated illustration of what happened when the external body of the people of God forgot God's command to keep pure. When this happened, in came many things which soon destroyed the power of God's people. This is not just a lesson of the Old Testament, but it is also a lesson of the New. The lesson of the needed purity of the external body of believers is part of the warp and woof of every part of Scripture. Paul is very specific that those who are wrong in doctrine or life must be excluded from the external body of believers. This is ecclesiastical purity.

What happened when the visible church, the external body of believers, forgot to keep pure? There are many examples from church history, but let us examine two. The first is the case of the early church. As we study church history we find that in general the early church kept itself pure until the time of Constantine. Then Constantine made Christianity popular and Christianity forgot to keep itself pure. It allowed itself to be mixed in

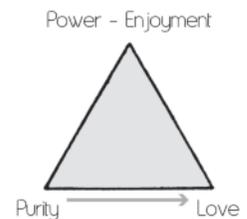


increasing measure with wrong doctrines and wrong practices. Then the church lost its true power and the Roman Catholic Church is the result.

Another clear illustration of what happens to the visible church when it does not keep its purity is the Church of the Nestorians. At one time this was a great body of believers stretching from India across the heart of China. Then they forgot to keep pure as a church, and today there is only a very small remnant in the Near East. If the Nestorian Church had kept pure, and therefore retained its power, perhaps today Asia would be Christian.

Personal purity and the purity of the external body of believers must go hand in hand. There is a tendency to minimize either one while giving the proper emphasis to the other. *Both* are needed if there is to be a real, and lasting, power and enjoyment of the Lord. Is it easy to maintain purity of the external body of believers? Is it easy to exercise discipline, to put aside men who are living a false life or teaching false doctrine, or failing in that, to step outside the camp to start anew? No, like personal purity, it is not easy, the battle is against the flesh all the way.

As in the matter of purity of life, so in the matter of purity of the church, separation must look in two directions. It is separation from the false, but it is also a separation to something positive. It must be separation to a deep love of God. If these things are not based upon and do not lead to a deep love, then it is only division and not separation in the biblical sense at all. Hence, our minds are again carried over to the other side of the triangle, "Love."



Love

Let us now consider the other side of the triangle, the side of love. Let us think especially at this moment upon what Christ said concerning our love for men. We are to love others as we love ourselves. This love for men falls into two categories. First, toward other Christians—we are to love these as our brothers in Christ. But second, let us not forget that while we are brothers *only* to those who have accepted Christ as their Savior, yet Christ's command is that we should love *all* men as our neighbors. We are to obey the lesson of the Good Samaritan. We must not minimize this love we are commanded to have to all men as our neighbors, simply because there is a clear distinction in the Bible be-

If we have true love for the Lord, the lost, and for our brothers in Christ, then we will be willing to pay a great price for personal purity and for the purity of the church. If we are not, then our love is somewhere defective.

tween our love to all men, as neighbors, and our love to our brothers in Christ.

There is a certain gentleness about really great Christians. There are many ways to observe this, but perhaps one of the best is to notice the tenderness for children in some of the great warriors of the past... Horatius Bonar of the nineteenth century was the same. How he emphasized the need of purity—purity of life and purity of doctrine! He was a warrior, but when we read his children's hymns they melt our hearts.

This love for men is not to be just a banner, not just a slogan, but it should show itself in practical ways in our lives. Our acts and our utterances in our contacts with men should show this love. We should show it by kindness in the small and large things of our daily living. The rule is that we should do to others as we desire that they should do to us. This should show itself in our dealings with those in our own organizations, in our dealings with those of other organizations with which we do not agree, and with unbelievers as well. We should deal fairly with men, including those who are our enemies for the Gospel's sake. True love results in fair dealing, in care that we deal with scrupulous honesty toward all men, both in the ordinary walks of life and in the field of Christian battle. Our walk should be such that even the blasphemer must know inwardly that we have dealt fairly with him. Rightness and love must go hand in hand or there is no real power. Showing a man to be wrong is only the first step; the final aim must be to lead him to full obedience to Christ. In dealing with the unbeliever our final desire for him must be his salvation, no matter how hopeless that seems. No man is beyond the infinite grace of God.

Those who struggle for purity of self and church easily tend to miss this side of the triangle. Purity of self and purity of the church are not ends in themselves. It will not even do to pursue these merely as a loyalty to principle. Purity of self and the purity of the church are only worthwhile when they are based upon love and lead to love.

Guarding Against Hardness of Heart

If we have come to the frame of mind where we are so occupied with the struggle against fleshly sin, or un-

belief, that we act as though any means is permissible, then the love has gone and the power has gone. Combat, to be for God's greatest glory, must be fought according to God's rules. It is possible to struggle for personal purity and the purity of the church without having the struggle based upon love and leading to a deeper love of God and man. When this is done it leads inevitably to dead orthodoxy, and dead orthodoxy is always the threshold to new heresy.

Is this easy? No, love, just like purity, is a battle against the flesh all the way.

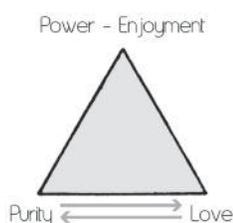
But the Bible takes this matter of love a step further. Let us notice in 1 Thessalonians 3:12 and 13, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." As biblical thinking upon purity leads us to love, so biblical thinking upon love always leads us to purity.

Not Just Good Will or Kindness

Biblical love is not just a vapid good will or a vague kindness. There is something real and realistic about biblical love. God so loves His children, those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour, that He sometimes causes pain in chastisement. And true biblical love in us also sometimes must cause pain to men, including our brothers in Christ. When a father chastises a child he does it because he loves him. When Spurgeon raised his voice in his day it was because he understood both the teaching of biblical purity and biblical love. If we have true love for the Lord, the lost, and for our brothers in Christ, then we will be willing to pay a great price for personal purity and for the purity of the church. If we are not, then our love is somewhere defective. Our love must be shown in practical ways to the end that we together may be established unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father—and how much more is this important as the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ seems so near.

True love and true purity are like two sides of a coin, or like two sides of a mirror, one concave and one

convex. *They cannot be separated and we, for ourselves personally and for the leaders of the Christian organizations in which we are, must be certain that no choice is made between purity and love.* There is something wrong with us if we produce devotional literature and sermons, without literature and sermons for both kinds of purity; and there is something wrong with us if we produce literature and sermons in defense of the faith without devotional literature and sermons. The prayer that does not lead to consecrated combat for personal purity and purity of the external body of believers falls short; and combat which does not lead to an increase in public and private prayer falls short. And how twice miserable is the man who, lacking a clear view of love, begins to toy with a loss of purity in person or church; and how twice miserable is the man who, lacking a clear view of the need of personal or church purity, loses for some reason his view of love as well. May God deliver us from the missing of either side. The lack of either is not static: If we lack purity on small points, we shall tend to let larger things pass; if we lack love in dealing with our enemies, we shall tend to lack love in dealing with those closest to us. We may do many commendable things while being deficient on one side or the other, but our true power and our joy in the Lord will be proportionately impoverished. Christ's command is for both purity and love; and if there is to be true power and enjoyment of the Lord, both commands must be faithfully and equally obeyed.



One thing more. All this is as a tinkling cymbal and sounding brass if our end motive is not right. Philippians 1:11 reads, “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” The Lord tells us here what should be the end of the fruits of righteousness. The end of the fruits of righteousness should be the glory and praise of God. The reason we should want purity of ourselves and of the church, and the reason we should want love, should only be because of our love for our Lord.

In the second chapter of Revelation, we find Christ speaking to the Church of Ephesus. This church was a church at work. It was a church of patience—patience apparently in the midst of persecution for Christ's sake. It was a church that hated false doctrine. Christ praised them for all this; but one thing they lacked. They had left their first love. They had left their love for Christ. No one looking on from the outside could observe this, but

Christ knew it. They were doing all the things they had begun to do because they loved Him, but they no longer did these things because of a deep love for Christ. And the Lord said that if they did not return to this first love, He would take away their candlestick. That is, He would remove their testimony. There is only one *final* motive acceptable to God—that is, our love for Him.

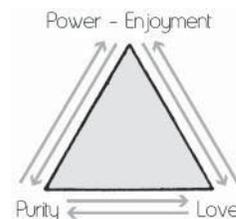
No Conflict in True Love

There will never be conflict between true love for God and true love for men. If our love for the brethren and our love for the lost are love indeed, they will never take precedence over our love for our Lord and His commands. If our love for the Lord is love indeed, we shall not forget to wage our combat according to His rules.

Doing seemingly Christian things (including the seeking of purity of life and purity of the church, and stressing love) out of an inward desire for honor or praise, for leadership, for power or money, for a desire not to be disturbed, or for a desire to be proved right in our past decisions, is a vain thing. An inward love of power, or love of any of these other things, precludes the possibility that our motive is right before God, no matter how we may talk with our lips.

Is it easy to base our lives upon this one motive—our love for our Lord? Let us take time to allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts. It is not enough to say intellectually and theologically, “The chief end of man is to glorify God.” The question is, do I *love* Him with all my heart, my soul, and mind? This matter is the most difficult of all—it is *the* battle—against the flesh all the way. This battle must be fought every day of our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the “I die daily” of Paul.

Perhaps we, like a multitude of our brothers in the past and like some in our own day, will learn this lesson in the arena of persecution; but it would be well to seek to learn it, while there is yet time, upon our knees. When we have purity leading to love and love leading to purity, and all because we love the Lord—then there will be lasting power and enjoyment of the One who is the dear Lamb of God, slain for us, our Savior and our Lord. ◻



PREACHING with

Passion

by G. Campbell Morgan

IN THE TRUE SERMON there must always be passion. Our Lord's testimony concerning John, His forerunner, was this: "He was a burning and a shining light" (John 5:35). It is one thing to shine; it is quite another to burn as well.

Half the sermons today—may I be forgiven if I am cruel—are failing because they lack the note of passion. A man was formerly said to "handle his text." If he handles his text he cannot preach at all. But when his text handles him, when it grips and masters and possesses him, and in experience he is responsive to the thing he is declaring, having conviction of the supremacy of truth and experience of the power of truth, I think that must create passion. I am not arguing for mere excitement. Painted fire never burns, and an imitated enthusiasm is the most empty thing that can possibly exist in a preacher. Given the preacher with a message from the whole Bible, seeing its bearing on life at any point, I cannot personally understand that man not being swept sometimes right out of himself by the fire and the force and the fervor of his work.

The preacher should never address a crowd without remembering his ultimate citadel is the citadel of the human will. He may travel along the line of emotions, but he is after the will. He may approach along the line of intellect, but he is after the will. When preaching becomes merely discussion in the realm of the intellect, or—forgive my use of the word—fooling in the realm of the emotions, and when preaching ends in the intellectual or emotional, it fails. It is successful only when it is able to storm the will, under the will of God.

The preacher comes with good news; but he does not come with something to be trifled with. His message has an insistent demand, because he comes on behalf of a King.



*G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945) -
A famous preacher in England used of God to
write many books which are referenced by thousands today.
Known for his mastery of expository preaching.*

The Beauty of Little Things

by Claudia Esh

Recently I've been reading a lot about approaching persecution for the church. And almost every time I see it, the article says something about preparing ourselves. But what is preparation, anyway?

I think it possible, and perhaps even likely, that persecution is coming soon. I'm no prophet, but I do have ideas of how it will happen. It will not be by denying God's existence, as in the Soviet Union. It will not even be by attacking the name "Christian." No, if the church is persecuted, I believe that it will be to force us to stop proclaiming Christ as the only way to God. Ironically, it will come from those who worship at the altar of worldwide tolerance.

We hear much about preparation, and I believe that is a good thing. But how are we to go about it? Heroic

on how you would respond if you were the one facing the stake or river or gun.

That's why preparation starts now. Here. In the tiny questions of everyday life, like whether I will read a profitable book or just a fun one, or what music I listen to, or how I respond to a veiled insult. If I can't look into my friend's eyes and say, "No," then what makes me think I could look into the barrel of a gun and say the same thing?

We all hope that we could withstand the ultimate test if we would ever face it. Only the Lord Himself can hold us steady in a moment like that and keep our faith unmoved. But in most sudden life-or-death crises, there is little time to think. Your answer will spring from the deepest part of who you are. The little decisions that you

Facing sudden danger only reveals courage; it does not create it.
...prepare by turning the mediocre tests that you face every day into victories.
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courage does not drop onto people overnight. When I read books on writing fiction, they tell me to build characters well, so that their reactions in a crisis make sense. And that is exactly the way we are in real life. Facing sudden danger only reveals courage; it does not create it.

We all have people that we admire. Like our Lord Himself, praying for His murderers. Our forefathers, singing in the midst of the fire. And wasn't the testimony of the young Moldovan martyr Ivan Moiseyev's persecutors one that we would all like to have? "He fought with death; he died hard; but he died a Christian."

But none of those people became spiritual giants in minutes. In fact, I have a feeling that the people who knew them well would have been surprised if they had acted any other way. Character is a deep, rich fountain from which springs every action of your life. The people who know you best could make pretty accurate guesses

are making will shape you into a cowardly hypocrite or a courageous Christian.

Everyday sacrifice is not glamorous. Nor is it a once-and-done thing—it stretches on and on, coloring every part of your life. And a constant, deep walk with God is not a sudden emotional flight and then silence. It is a quiet influence that never leaves you. Following Christ means to taste the very essence of peace and joy, but it also means to step into the dark unknown when the world is against you and still cling to faith.

So prepare—prepare by turning the mediocre tests that you face every day into victories. Press closer to our God, and although no one else might notice, you will build a character and a faith that will not desert you in the hardest of decisions. And if that highest sacrifice is ever asked of you, your answer will be instinctive...knowing that living or dying, we are the Lord's. □



Broken Pieces

by Rachel Weaver

“If we allow Him to, the Master Architect will take the broken pieces of our lives and put them together in a way that the sunshine of His love can shine through both the light and the dark pieces.”

A sweet friend said that to me one day in the middle of an unusually long, difficult trial that I was going through, and I perked up my ears. Then she continued, “Looking back along the years of my life, I can see where He has taken both the bright pieces and the dark ones and put them together. When the light shines on all these pieces at once, they are amazing! They remind me of His glorious Presence!” She went on to talk about the broken pieces of her life and how the Master had used them and how, even now, she was beginning to see some of the beauty of what He was doing.

What if I did not allow the Master to pick up my broken pieces? What if I did not allow Him to put them where the sunshine of His love could light them up? These broken pieces would lie there, their sharp edges exposed. Their sharp edges would wound others, especially those that I lived with, those I loved.

This is just what the great Master will do for His children. He will use all our pain, all our joy and all our sorrows, if we allow Him to, and bring them together to make something lovely for His use. If only we can remember this when we are going through the hard, dark times it will make such a difference. When the edges get a bit sharp, yield them up to Jesus. He takes away the sharpness and rounds off the corners and collects yet another lovely bit for His glory to shine through.

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

I Corinthians 13:12

It is comforting to know, in the middle of each trial, that God is using it all for His glory as long as I am totally yielding to Him. Many times I cannot see what God is doing while it is happening. This is where faith is involved. It is when I understand that God is a good God and is only interested in helping me to know and understand and love Him, that I will be truly able to trust Him. It is during the dark times, when there does not seem to be any light, that I find the greatest comfort in the light of God’s presence and really begin to understand His love and His comfort. It is when I have the greatest need that I get the greatest revelation of Jesus Christ.

When you have a need, turn to Him and He will fill that need. Do you think that our Father does not know what you are experiencing? Of course He knows it. He has designed life so that through these things that we face, we will find ourselves unable to walk alone. We will see our need and lean on Him and He will become our all. This is the way that we will learn to KNOW HIM.

Until you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you do not really know how much grace the tender Shepherd will supply in that time of great need. You do not see your need of faith until nothing, absolutely nothing else but God will work. Then, in the dark, you turn to Him. There is always more than enough grace there when we need it. I heard someone say that God has more than enough grace for any trial we face, but it is up to us to open our hearts wide enough to accept it. I believe that is true. I have marvelled, watching some Christians go through trials, and I have seen them get sweeter and sweeter. Then I have watched others go through similar circumstances and seen their souls shrivel up in bitterness and distress. Where is the difference and what is the answer to this problem?

The difference lies in completely trusting the Master. I am slowly learning this by experience. I was passing through a very difficult circumstance, which seemed to have no answer and no end in sight. At first, I despaired, sure that for this circumstance there was no way out, and I could see no good in it at all. There

seemed to be only pain and suffering. As the days went by I became desperate for the sweetness and peace that usually filled my life. I wanted an open heaven and a happy heart again. I wanted to trust and rest. I sought a friend for counsel and prayer but the answer did not come. Perhaps it was because I was expecting her to help me and the Lord wanted me to see that He could do it all, if I was only willing.

One day, on the way to church, as I was praying, He said to me very quietly, "You do not trust Me." "Yes, I do, Lord, but..." I excused myself because of the particular circumstances I was facing. "No," He said firmly, "If you would trust Me, your heart would sing. If you would trust Me, you would know that I CAN do all things. I move the mountains and hold up the stars. I calmed the storm and raised the dead and your problem is only a little one. To you it is big. It is insurmountable. To me it is as nothing. There is nothing that I cannot do." "Oh,

Lord," I prayed. "I believe, help my unbelief." I sat in the church service that morning in amazement. Tears ran unheeded down my cheeks as one song after another was filled with the power of

I began to sing again, and be joyful and find forgiveness and all the wonderful sweetness that comes with a trusting, obedient heart. That is all, but it comes from a complete trust in God.

our amazing God. He is everything. He cares. He is the Prince of Peace. He is the Mighty God! A healing stream of love washed away my frustration and my sorrow and my heart was lifted up. What an awesome God! I began to trust and rest and believe in miracles again. That was all!! But that was everything. I began to sing again, and be joyful and find forgiveness and all the wonderful sweetness that comes with a trusting, obedient heart. That is all, but it comes from a complete trust in God. It turned my eyes from my dark water and my stormy sea to the face of my Master. There is no room for bitterness, despair, unforgiveness or hurt feelings. With hurt feelings I look inward at me and my problems. With forgiveness and faith, I look up at the Master. The broken heart loses its sharp edges and starts to glow in the light of His Presence. The damaged feelings fade away and we begin to love and to hope and to trust.

God has good things in mind through all our circumstances though we often cannot see them in the middle of the trials. Joseph is such an example. The poem below says it so well.

*God meant it unto good. Oh blest assurance,
Falling like sunshine all across life's way,
Touching with Heaven's gold, earth's darkest storm clouds,
Bringing fresh peace and comfort day by day.*

*Twas' not by chance the hands of faithless brethren
Sold Joseph captive to a foreign land;
Nor was it chance, which after years of suffering,
Brought him before the monarch's throne to stand.*

*One Eye, all-seeing, saw the need of thousands,
And planned to meet it through that one lone soul;
And through the weary days of prison bondage
Was working towards that great and glorious goal.*

*Faith failed not through those long, dark days of waiting,
His trust in God was recompensed at last.
The moment came when God led forth his servant,
To succor many, all his sufferings past.*

*"It was not you, but God, who sent me hither,"
Witnessed triumphant faith in after days.
"God meant it unto good," no "second causes,"
Mingled their discord with his song of praise.*

*"God means it unto good" for thee beloved,
The God of Joseph is the same today.
His love permits affliction strange and bitter,
His hand is guiding through the unknown way.*

*Thy Lord who sees the end from the beginning,
Has purposes for thee of love untold.
Then place thy hand in His and follow fearless,
Till thou the riches of His grace behold,*

*Then when thou standest in the Home of Glory,
And all life's path lies open to thy gaze,
Thine eyes shall see the hand which, now, thou trusteth,
And magnify His love through endless days.*

- Freda Allen

continued on page 21

From Africa

by Llewellyn van der Merwe

I am delighted to write a brief update about the Lord's work here in Namibia, especially in our lives. We have quite a story to tell of God's dealings with us until now. We started out totally ignorant and for that reason many unpleasant things were used of God to show us on the way that we are in today. I am sure we must be among those with whom God is most patient. Many things could have been avoided would there have been more mature brothers around to lead us by their example. But alas, we were alone in Africa; seeking God with thousands of other confused "Christians" around; only the Lord could help us. We had little discernment and like wandering sheep were soon drawn to danger by joining a movement called Youth with a Mission.

This all happened after my wife and I were wonderfully saved out of the most unthinkable darkness, where both of us were living fully in the world as drug abusers and fornicators, thinking ourselves to be Christian. Well, pride and ambitions quickly manifested its ugly head in our lives during our time in YWAM. God really had to step in again to wake us up. We lost everything for the second time around as we left YWAM in obedience to a call from God to come back to Namibia and be "nobody."

We were confused and disillusioned, yet trusted the Lord for the impossible.

Staying in Swakopmund, a coastal town of Namibia, we found ourselves in a "Church of England" serving as youth workers. Our first child, Hannah, was born during this time and all those changes at once nearly crushed us both. We soon realized that most of these dear people had no reality with God, besides the pastor who seemed to have a real love for the Lord. He spent many hours teaching us theology. This we can see today counteracted lots of the charismatic confusion and gave us some understanding. Our search for truth led us to another church, also in Swakopmund. This was a seemingly sound church. They were what you could call a house fellowship that has grown into a church. They were closer to the truth than any we have found so far.

All this time you must keep in mind that, since we went to Youth with a Mission, I had no vocation; our only income was the contributions of those we ministered to. This was much used of God to keep us on our knees. Not forgetting the fact that it was also humbling, we made our needs known to the Lord and many a times were overwhelmed by the many ingenious ways He



would work out to provide. To my shame an undisciplined, lazy lifestyle made us stagnate, and we could see the Lord's displeasure.

There opened an opportunity for us to run a small Bible school, called Amana, for refugees from Angola and DRC on a little farm close to Usakos. So we spent most of our time alone in the wilderness. You see, it was not that I was not a hard worker; it was more a lack of direction and vision. My days were full of activities, yet empty. My quiet times were almost nonexistent. I tried to change it but to no avail. There was something missing. We would find that changes we made only lasted for a short time.

With no motivation and very little financial support, the pressure was huge. I saw all my dreams and plans die, fall away, and end. I would cry to God as I was fixing our pickup and seeing the last fuel wasted because of a hole in the tank, and hear Him say, "Trust Me". We would go down to visit the church 86 miles away in Swakopmund. Thinking back, we were often so discouraged to see the worldliness that was slowly creeping into the church, and the way their children were seeking their enjoyments in the broken cisterns of the world. It was like going into a war zone. Our time on the "plot", as we would call it, seemed like a much safer place to which we could retreat. About twenty people attended the Bible School during this time, some leaving rejoicing, some

not. It was a wilderness for all of us, especially me.

Then God answered my heart's cry. He sent us a Godly Home set from Charity Ministries. Oh my, what a joy. It was like God sent revival. The church we were with nearly dimmed out the vision we once had of a godly home, because we wondered if it is really possible, and judging from the examples we saw, it was not. I cried to God to forgive me, for seeking the praises of men and so neglecting His high calling. God deeply blessed us and our vision was renewed. Glory, victory over self was slowly coming in view. In response we started sending out copies all over. God worked it out for us to move to the capital of Namibia, Windhoek, after a few months. The Lord during our stay at Amana also added Malachi, our first boy. So with two children we moved, because the Bible school had to close, since the owner of the little farm had other plans with it.

We started a little fellowship in Windhoek together with another member of the church who was also the son-in-law of the pastor in Swakopmund. My wife was still dressing immodestly, and due to the misguidance of our leaders we still allowed the world's influences (TV, computer games) in our home. Our Lord had to again step in with a loud voice. There was a big church conflict. My coworker's wife was completely out of place and I felt it my duty to correct him and his wife. Can you think? What a mess.

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from the examples we saw,
it was not. I cried to God to
forgive me, for seeking the
praises of men and so
neglecting His high calling.



Again the Lord challenged me to evaluate all our ways, for the tree was bearing the wrong fruit, it seemed to me. My father Jaco van der Merwe, who had also by now found Christ Jesus, was crying with me to God for direction. We had been on a steady diet of Charity's sermons since we received the Godly Home set. But we, for the most part, thought their views on dress, the head covering and position towards the world were just for them, not for us, until then. But these crises made me reconsider it all, not to mention that the very thing that caused all the trouble was the position of the sisters in church and home. My father and I fasted seven days seeking God's face. I came back, and knew we were going to lose all again for the third time around. Everything must change. By this time TV and computer games were not even an issue. We threw that out long already. My wife covered her head and changed her clothes. The very next day we were asked to leave the church, or repent.

"God," I said, "send us to Ghana or Angola or Democratic Republic of Congo. Send us anywhere, God, for it seems to me our time has come to leave." But right there we heard God say, "No, you will stay in Windhoek and take the responsibility of the called out ones in Windhoek, who will stand for the truth of God's Word." A church split occurred. Most stayed with the previous church thinking that we had lost our minds and fallen from grace. Others came seeking reality with God and knowing their lives were not

bringing forth streams of living water as the Word of God promised. They, like us, were not willing to go on with all the compromise as if it was all normal. In those dark and pressuring times God through many different scriptures and faithful brothers opened the door to start a remnant church called Ekklesia.

Soon God added to us some more truth-seeking brothers and we started regular outreaches in the streets and malls in town. We also started a CD ministry, sending sermons all over as much as we could. We would download sermons from Charity's web site, and send them to as many people as we knew. O how much we still did not understand, like little children who found great treasure.

The Lord was taking us far deeper. He started opening our understanding to the death of self more than ever before. We saw victory over sin clearer, and were greatly encouraged to forsake all. In my life I started seeing my selfish motives and many other vile things that I thought were not there anymore. This grieved me and night after night I would cry to God over my wretched state. I understood that He promised full salvation, yet in my members I saw fleshly desires fighting to destroy the work of God. How great is our blindness to our own sinfulness. I know that I, for one, spent years teaching others while in my own bosom lurked jealousy, envy, pride, anger, lust and other hideous abominations. I at first argued with the Lord as I used to. How easily I could accuse others and defend self, but

My father and I fasted seven days seeking God's face. I came back, and knew we were going to lose all again for the third time around. Everything must change. My wife covered her head and changed her clothes. The very next day we were asked to leave the church, or repent.



when the Lord opened my eyes I found it all to be hypocrisy and deceit in the light of His presence. I could see me; oh how disgusting it was. I wept much. How little I knew of the glory God was working in me.

The Lord had me just where He wanted me, for in death there is life. I discovered that acknowledging my needs and believing God is able to change me is very significant. He gives grace to the humble but the proud he knows afar off.

The whole church was impacted by this dealing of God in my life, like a ripple in a pond. I could preach with authority and a number of times the whole fellowship was on their knees weeping before God. We could see God working. O how wonderful it is when He is among the poor and needy. We saw many faces come and go, sadly only a few stayed. Then the Lord even took those who stayed through even more fires, and some of those also fell back. To this day we have found that the truth is often evil spoken of and despised. There are so many other churches giving men false comfort in their sin; therefore we are ever rejoicing to see even one come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. A salvation from self and sin whereby God is of power to manifest His Son in our flesh by His indwelling Holy Spirit. Our hearts are burning for mission work though we are only five brothers in the brotherhood and completely outnumbered in the fight. The desire to see others come to the Light and give God glory is like an unquenchable passion. This has caused many forms of outreach.

During every eight weeks my father travels all over Namibia, so God started using this opportunity to reach among the poor and rich around the country. In Grootfontein we are seeing a small group of Damara-Nama people responding to the truth. We also working with a

children's home in Windhoek, and most of these children have found the fear of God.

The Lord also sent Brother Flyod back to the Democratic Republic of Congo (old Zaire). He is our first sent missionary and is finding tremendous opposition against the true Gospel of Jesus Christ among the churches. You know, the charismatic world has taken over the DRC (as they call it). To us it has always been so sad when you see how easily the poor of Africa get deceived. It seems that the fact that they are illiterate or unfamiliar with the Word of God makes them vulnerable. Then add their own sinfulness and lust for power, and deception has millions to prey on. We are trusting God to visit him some time in the near future. Reaching those in the jungles will be a huge venture, so we are seeking God for direction and wisdom. Brother Flyod with many tears is also waiting on God to send help seeing that he also has a clear vision for the unreached in the jungles of the DRC.

We lack the numbers, experience and finances to really attempt frontier missions. Yet Brother Flyod and other mission projects are all happening due to God's cry. Therefore we wait on Him for eagle's wings. There is much more to say about the work of the Lord here and the things that are happening around us today, but this is a brief overview of some of the events leading up to where God is working with us today. I am sure you can see that we stumbled along desperately seeking reality with God. We glory in Jesus Christ who is able to build His church in spite of us. I know God is busy raising up a testimony in Namibia, but there is still much work. Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." □

Visit their website: www.HisEkklesia.org

continued from page 17, Broken Pieces by Rachel Weaver

Today, no matter what you may be facing, remember that God means it unto good. Sometimes the way is so dark and the experience so painful that we cannot see how any good may come of it. But follow your Guide with a faith-filled heart. "He has given us a gentle, patient Guide, who is willing to go with us all the way, and come into the minutest steppings of our life." ~A.B. Simpson

Paul says it well in Hebrews 12:11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." You can always count on God to make the "afterward"

of difficulty, if rightly overcome, a thousand times richer than the "forward." What a yield!

As I follow Him, sometimes with faltering steps, I am learning that He can always be trusted. Ps 48:14 "For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." Isa 58:11 "And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

Let Him take your broken heart, your shattered dreams and your dark trials and turn them into something beautiful. He will make all things beautiful in His time. □



Sitting in the Gates of Sodom

by Roger Hertzler

This past election will go down in history as a significant setback for conservative Christians in America. The “liberals” won the White House, as well as healthy majorities in the Senate and the House of Representatives. The question on the mind of most evangelicals in America was, “Where did we go wrong?” And probably right behind it came the question, “How will we ever get back what we’ve lost?”

The conservatives, will, however, claim victory in one major battle in 2008. Proposition 8, the measure banning homosexual marriage in California, passed with flying colors. Or maybe we should say, it passed, with somewhere around 52% of the voters in favor of the measure and the rest of them against it.

This solitary victory did not come without a price, however. In order to get this measure passed, evangelical Christians had to join forces with the Catholics, and then with the Mormons. (“It’s all for a good cause,” they told themselves sheepishly. “We’ll discuss doctrinal issues later.”) Then together they had to shell out well over \$30 million in cash, in order to match the equivalent amount spent by the other side. And now, after the measure has been passed and the conservatives have their position seemingly set in stone, the homosexuals are rioting in the streets, and it doesn’t look like they are going to quit until they get their way.

And we’re doing all this under the banner of, “Follow the path of Jesus”?

This isn’t the first time that the conservatives have suffered a setback. Years ago, in a city called Sodom, a conservative named Lot was actively engaged in a similar battle. His godly uncle Abraham had just rescued the

entire city from a military defeat and probable annihilation. Perhaps now the city would stop their dreadful slide towards liberalism and adopt some of the conservative values of their champion, Abraham.

Determined to do all he could for the cause of conservatism, Lot ran for, and won, a coveted position sitting in the city gate. “From this position,” he thought to himself, “I can sway this society away from sin and toward God.” But despite his very best efforts and most clever campaigning strategies, he continually felt like he and his party were rapidly losing ground.

Abraham, meanwhile, kept mostly to himself in the faraway hills overlooking the Sodom valley. He had made a decision long ago that Sodom simply wasn’t his home. He was looking for a city having real foundations, whose builder and maker was God.

When election year rolled around, not only did Abraham refuse to run for office, but he even neglected to come down to cast his ballot at the voting booth! The few conservatives still in Sodom criticized him roundly for this, since “it only makes sense to do what you can for the cause of right.” Actually, though, Abraham was doing more than all of them put together. He was spending a significant amount of time on his knees, interceding for Sodom and especially for his nephew Lot.

One day Lot had a couple of visitors who told him he needed to leave Sodom. “But,” he protested vigorously, “how can I leave? I’m one of the only conservatives left in Sodom. Who will take my place in the city gate? What will happen to this city if I leave?”

“Exactly the same thing that will happen if you don’t leave,” came the urgent reply. “The only difference is that

if you hurry, you just might personally escape the judgment that's about to fall."

Finally Lot agreed to leave, escaping with nothing but the clothes on his back and only part of his family. Everything else that he had ever lived for was reduced to ashes in a matter of minutes. In the weeks and years that followed, he often wished that years ago he would have followed the example of Abraham and stayed in the mountains, rather than pitching his tent toward Sodom.

Dear evangelical friend, can I ask you a question? Is your position today that of Abraham or that of Lot? Are you dwelling in tabernacles as you look for an eternal city? Or are you pitching your tent toward Sodom and then running for office in the city gate?

If we are truly disciples of Jesus, we have been called to be citizens of a kingdom that is not of this world. Let's get out of Sodom's military, out of Sodom's elected positions, and out of Sodom's voting booths. Let us not be enticed by Sodom's financial opportunities nor by her abundant pleasures. Let the sodomites have Sodom to themselves, or fight it out with the Mormons if they wish, without us Christians sitting in the city gates making a nuisance of ourselves. Let's lay down the carnal weapons of this world and pick up the mighty weapons of our warfare that God has given us, and then go to work at pulling down strongholds. Let's get back to the power of the first Christians, who managed to turn the world upside down even though they were living in a society saturated in immorality and paganism.

Let's escape to the mountains like Abraham, following our Leader Who said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight..."

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (Colossians 1:12-13)

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: (Hebrews 12:28)

□

1st Quarter 2009 Financial Report

Thank you for your support!



The Heartbeat of
The Remnant

Charity Ministries
www.charityministries.org
A Ministry of Charity Christian Fellowship
and Ephrata Christian Fellowship

01/01/09 Beginning Balance \$48,083.70

Receipts

Tape Ministry Donations	\$51,365.40
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$5,459.44
Total Receipts	\$56,824.84

Disbursements

UPS & Postage	\$4,176.78
Tapes, Albums, CD's & Labels	\$15,885.20
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$42.45
Equipment Maint & Repairs	\$42.22
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$1,350.24
Rent	\$2,250.00
Telephone	\$774.06
Website Development & Maintenance	\$1,499.93
Building Improvements	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$791.84
Payroll Expense	\$13,700.01
Books & Catalogs	\$1,128.50
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$5,919.19
Total Disbursements	\$47,560.42

03/31/09 Ending Balance \$57,348.12

Difference \$9,264.42



The Hammer

John Dan Miller felt a surge of anger as he approached a certain point on his regular weekend travel to and from Bloomfield, Ohio—the certain point just a short distance ahead where that sign was located! What would he not do if he could get hold of the person who had put it up? The sign, figuratively, had been hitting him in the face for some weeks past!

He knew it was not far ahead—a small sign with only three words, there by the roadside. “Repent or Perish!” was all it said, but it made him furious. The first time he had seen it he stared at it in anger. What business did anyone have putting up such a sign as that? After all, was not his life his own affair?

Whose business was it whether he repented or not? Why could people not take care of themselves and let others alone?

He had wished when he first saw it and the words had smashed into his consciousness that he could take an axe and break it up. In fact he probably would have done so had he thought he could get away with it.

The words had been hammering at him week after week. It was especially bad at night when he needed to sleep. “Repent or Perish!” “Repent or Perish!”—the words brought with them also a remembrance of many things he would rather forget.

Now as he approached the sign he deliberately looked the other way. He simply would not let it have a chance to hit him again! He would *make* himself

forget it! But the trouble was he knew very well *why* he was so carefully turning his eyes in the other direction and—look where he would—the words still were definitely in his mind and upon his conscience.

Some thousands of years ago, Jeremiah the prophet quoted God as saying, “Is not my word... like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” Now John Dan was experiencing that hammer beating upon his mind, his stony heart. It was the Holy Spirit driving home upon his conscience those hammer blows, and he could not hush them—especially at night while trying to sleep.

“Repent or Perish!” “Repent or Perish!”

One night—unable to stand it any longer—John Dan arose from his bed and, kneeling down, turned himself over completely to God, receiving the Lord Jesus as his Savior. He had repented—and

now, bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, he need not perish! As he finally went back to bed he was happier than he had ever been in his life!

The true story related above is just one testimony of the fruit that resulted from the ministry of Ralph Palmer, a missionary to America who lived from 1903 to 1976. Ralph and his wife traveled extensively in tract distribution and gospel sign work and gave reports of the work in many churches.



Dry-Eyed Teaching

by Greg Gordon

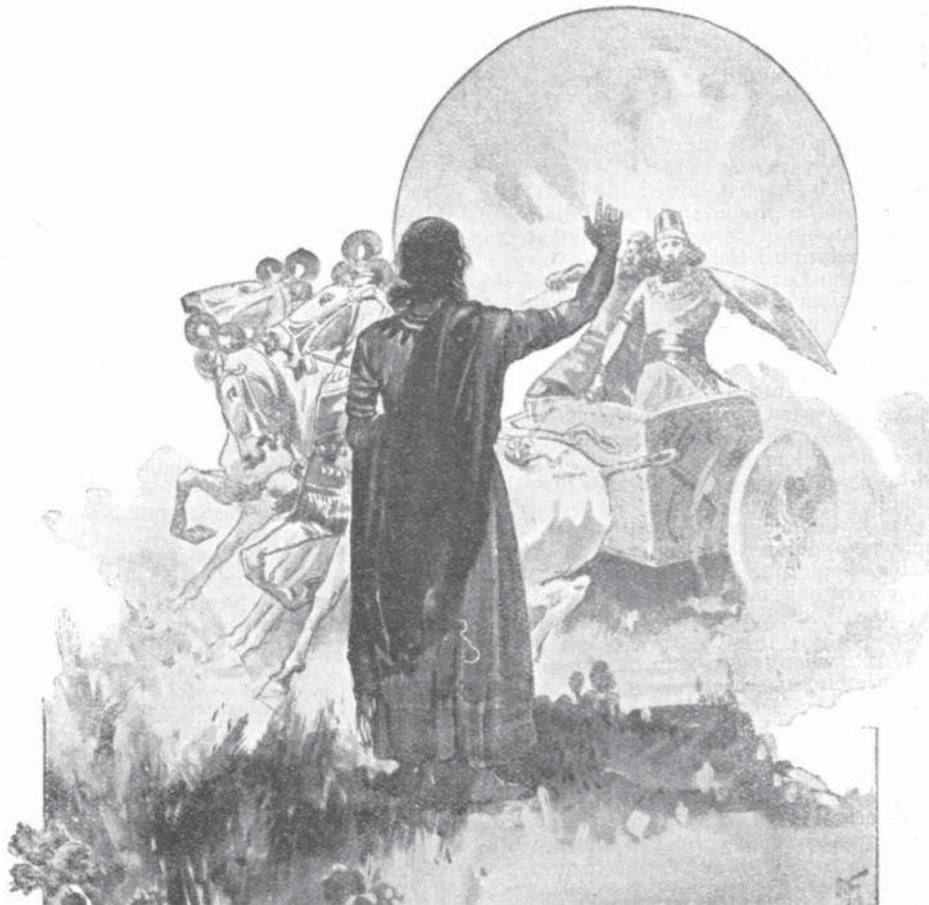


PASTOR, IF YOU ARE SHARING you are not caring for your people. If you are simply talking you are not tearing down the strongholds of the enemy. We need preaching in this late hour. Dry-eyed teaching will not produce life in men. Henry Blackaby comments that during times of revival “powerful, scriptural preaching” is exhibited: “Powerful preaching is a hallmark of true revival. Revival preachers demonstrate their commitment to the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures, with bold, urgent, and uncompromising preaching, as they set before God’s people the way of life and death. Powerful, Spirit-filled sermons concerning sin, Christ and the cross penetrate the hearts of the saved and lost alike with the realities of eternity. Concerning a sermon Whitfield preached in Scotland (1742), one present reported, ‘During the time of divine worship, solemn, profound reverence overspread every countenance. Many cry out in the bitterness of their soul. Some...from the stoutest men, to the most tender child, shake and tremble and a few fall down as dead....when the...preacher speaks of redeeming Love, and talks of the precious Savior...all seem to breathe after Him....’”

Hear the confession of Mr. Robe, a minister used in the 1742 revival in Kilsyth, Scotland. Hear what was the doctrine that was so zealously propagated, and which God’s Holy Spirit honored so much in his day: “I feared to daub or deal slightly with my people, but told great and small that they were by nature the children of the Devil, while they were in the state of unbelief; and that if they continued so to the end, I told them, in our Lord’s plain terms, they would be damned. I resolved that I would cry aloud, and not spare, and preach with the seriousness and fervor of one that knew that my hearers must either be prevailed with or be damned; and so that they might discern I was in good sadness with them, and really meant as I spoke. Aware that the greater part of every public audience is secure, unconcerned, and fearless, I preached the terrors of the law in the strongest terms I could, that is to say, in express Scripture terms. Yet I ever delighted to follow up such statement with a declaration of the gospel of the grace of God. After the law had done its office, I have seen the congregation in tears of joy when the law of grace from Mount Zion was proclaimed.” Preacher, are you dealing slightly with your people? Are you proclaiming the utmost “terrors of the law” to your people and their true condition by nature?



Greg Gordon - www.sermonindex.net



C O M E S E E

My Zeal for the LORD!

by Mike Atnip

Had Jehu been a man of 21st-century America, he would drive a 4x4, with the biggest engine available under the hood. He needs power to get him going, and that right fast. Stop signs would be a frustration, and by habit he would squeal his tires upon departure from any given point.

It is not that Jehu was a show-off. He simply had things to do, places to go, and people to see. He had no time for piddling. After all, he was Jehu: zeal incarnated.

Jehus are exciting people to be around. Things happen around Jehus. Drowsiness and puttering are evil, and half-heartedness gets a disgusting scowl every time it

meets Jehu. There is a job to do, and it needs full attention until executed. So Jehu fires up the 4x4 and peels away. He'll return with a roar when the job is done—thoroughly done.

*“Be Ye Zealous”
is a Bible Command*

God is not a lazy being, and so He appreciated Jehu's zeal; so much so that He promised Jehu four generations

of kings for executing judgment against the wickedness of Ahab. In his typical fervent style, Jehu had done a full work of annihilating the descendancy of that wicked king. Both the king of Israel and the king of Judah had fallen before him, as well as the sensuous Jezebel. When it came time to deal with the followers of Baal, he slyly had them gather into the slaughterhouse and, with his exacting passion, made sure not a single one escaped. In his enthusiasm, he turned the house of Baal into a public sewer.

“Come see my zeal for the Lord,” he had told one of his friends. I do not get the picture that Jehu was bragging. He simply was excited to be doing what he understood was the will of God, and was eager to share his own zest. After all, enthusiasm is contagious. Those infected will not stand it to let others be mere bystanders.

The Little Red Light

In watching the life of Jehu, one word suddenly jolts us to the reality that zeal in and of itself is not totally satisfying to God. We find that word in 2 Kings 10:29: “Howbeit”.

Like the flashing of a red light in the dash of a vehicle, we are warned that not all is well “under the hood”. We may be cruising blissfully along at 70 mph on a beautiful sunny day, but that little light forewarns us that we best stop and check things out before proceeding any further.

Ahhh, but we have places to go, things to do, and people to see. We have no time to stop for a silly little light in the dash!

And so Jehus speed along...until in the end they realize that it is too late to add more oil to the engine. With a clunk and a bang, they suddenly come to the stark realization that all the ambition in the world cannot keep an oil-less engine running.

In Jehu’s case, it was two golden calves that “made his engine blow”. For all his accomplishments, his life record indicates that he failed to heed the “low oil pressure” light. And that fateful mistake is forever recorded for us to learn from.

What Can We Learn From This?

First, zeal is good, but zeal is not love. Had Jehu loved God as much as he was zealous for him, his reforms would have been broader. He would have, perhaps, spent more time in getting to know the full will of God. As it was, he did indeed carry out, and zealously carry out, a part of God’s will. But because he was zealous for God instead of longing to know God in a personal loving rela-

tionship, it is written that “Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart.”

What? Zealous Jehu accused of not being wholehearted?

Yes!

You see, God appreciates zeal. But His desire is that our zeal springs from love, not ambition. Paul was “constrained by love”, not zeal.

Jehu - The Missionary

Many people are zealous for God, ready to depart unto the ends of the earth to preach to the heathen. They devour mission books and magazines. They practice self-denial to ready themselves for the arduous demands of frontier life. They study hard to learn the language of “their people”.

But there remain some golden calves in their lives. And this lack of breadth reveals itself.

I am reminded of an instance in a foreign land where a conversation was going concerning a group of unevangelized primitive people, about two ridges over from the home base. This little group of people supposedly had never heard the Gospel.

I can still hear the words of one young man: “Now that is what stirs my heart! The people who never heard before! I get excited about that!” He was ready to hoist a backpack and head out.

But this “Jehu” had some calves in his life. While he got excited about the group of ignorant souls two valleys to the east, his daily walk in the neighborhood he lived in did not manifest a passion for lost souls. Jehu! Zealous Jehu on the mission field!

Jehu - The Reformer

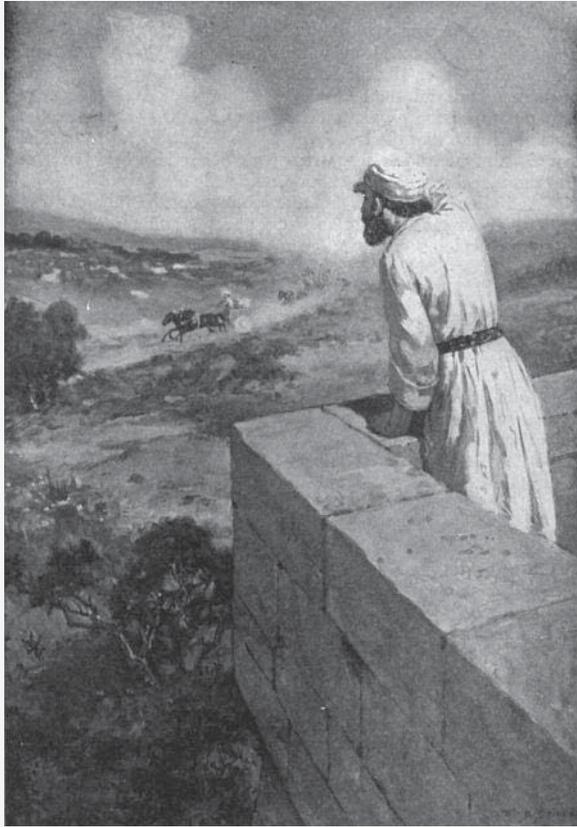
With a commendable zeal, these Jehus set themselves to destroy anything and everything associated with, say, Roman Catholicism. Fat books are written about Mariology and the falsehood of transubstantiation. Tracts are passed out at Catholic seminaries and at the front door of convents. Websites are published with links to any and all information available about the apostasy of the Roman church.

This is Jehu in the temple of Baal. Not a dash of Baal-worship survives his reform.

“Howbeit...”

Uh-oh...

Two golden calves... Maybe those calves represent, in the life of the church reformer mentioned above, the



God is not a lazy being, and so He appreciated Jehu's zeal; so much so that He promised Jehu four generations of kings for executing judgment against the wickedness of Ahab. In his typical fervent style, Jehu had done a full work of annihilating the descendency of that wicked king.

Zeal is not charity, neither is it holiness unto the Lord. As we go through this life, let us be sure that we take time to know God and His heart. May our reforms be thorough, based upon a love for God and truth.

negligence of practicing the principle of nonresistance, and being covetous. Maybe they represent some other aspects of God's heart, in other reformers.

Jehu - The Evangelist

Jehus are great people to have around in evangelistic efforts. They will boldly stand on the housetops wearing sandwich boards and preaching hellfire and damnation upon all who will not believe. With an ardor that ignites the interest of passing folk, they thunder out the message of righteousness and holiness and judgment to come. People stop to listen to Jehu's preaching; his very ferocity demands it. People also respond to his "altar calls" at tent meetings.

But Jehus rarely make good pastors. They cannot sit still enough to listen to a hurting heart for two hours. And so Jehu the evangelist is best backed up by a support team of men with the gift of shepherding. In his zest for truth, Jehu is prone to forget mercy.

Zeal is Good, But...

Zeal is not charity, neither is it holiness unto the Lord. As we go through this life, let us be sure that we take time to know God and His heart. May our reforms be thorough, based upon a love for God and truth. May love for souls be the fuel that thrusts us into foreign mission fields.

Zeal can get us a long way in many churches. It may put you behind the pulpit. It may put you on a mission field. It may get you a following. After all, it is a lot more exciting to ride "furiously" along in Jehu's chariot than to watch sheep nibble grass. At the end of the day, Jehu may well have to wash blood and guts off of his chariot. And they may well be the blood and guts, mind you, of a notoriously famous queen!

"Howbeit"

"Howbeit"—what does that word represent in your life? Zeal without knowledge? Unbridled ambition? Unbalanced reformations? Ministering truth without love? Love without truth?

Be zealous! This is a Bible command. Just make sure "howbeit" does not appear at the end of the biography that God writes about you! □

www.primitivechristianity.org



THE WINDOW AND THE MIRROR

A very rich young man went to see a rabbi in order to ask his advice about what he should do with his life. The rabbi led him over to the window and asked him:

“What can you see through the glass?”

“I can see men coming and going and a blind man begging for alms in the street.”

Then the Rabbi showed him a large mirror and said to him:

“Look in this mirror and tell me what you see.”

“I can see myself.”

“And you can’t see the others. Notice that the window and the mirror are both made of the same basic material, glass; but in the mirror, because the glass is coated with a fine layer of silver, all you can see is yourself. You should compare yourself to these two kinds of glass. Poor, you saw other people and felt compassion for them. Rich—covered in silver—you see yourself. You will only be worth anything when you have the courage to tear away the coating of silver covering your eyes in order to be able to see again and love your fellow man.”



...TO TAKE THESE POINTS OF EQUALITY, PRIESTHOOD, AND TITLES, AND THEN TO ASSUME THAT THERE WAS NO CONCEPT OF A CLEARLY SET APART AUTHORITY IN THE EARLY CHURCH IS GOING WAY TOO FAR. WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL LEST WE "THROW OUT THE BABY WITH THE BATH WATER!"

continued from page 7

It is also true that in the New Testament the Bible teaches a "priesthood of all believers." This simply means that as Christians we do not need an intercessor or a "go-between" other than Christ to stand between us and God. These are all true points. However, to take these points of equality, priesthood, and titles, and then to assume that there was no concept of a clearly set apart authority in the Early Church is going way too far. It is jumping to false conclusions in a way that is either blindly erroneous or regrettably dishonest. We have to be careful lest we "throw out the baby with the bath water!"

Once we get past the fact that the titles for early Christian leadership were indeed taken from common Greek terms, and that Christian leadership should not be abusive, then we can stop and honestly consider what the Bible actually says about leadership in the church. When we do this we can see that the Scriptures actually give some very specific instruction concerning authority in the church. I have listed a few examples from Scripture. It might be a good exercise to ask yourself after each question, "Is there an idea of authority being mentioned here?"

- ◆ "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves (1 Thess 5:12-13). Notice the words "over you in the Lord." It would seem that this represents at least some kind of authority.
- ◆ At another place the apostle Paul gives qualifications for ordinations to the specific place of "bishops" and "deacons" in the local assembly. Paul said that a bishop must be, "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity". Then he went on to say, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God" (1 Tim 3:4-5)? I think that the

analogy that Paul gave between "ruling" their house and "ruling" the church of God should not be overlooked.

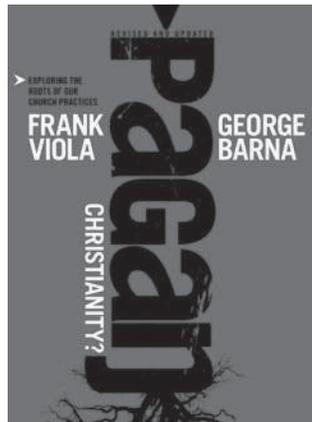
- ◆ Peter tells the elders to "feed the flock," giving the analogy of a shepherd to his sheep. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2-3). An interesting note about this passage is that the word "feed" there is the verb form of the Greek word pastor. It is also worth mentioning that in this passage Peter tells the elders to "take oversight."
- ◆ Paul tells Titus "that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5).
- ◆ Interestingly, when Judas' position was replaced by Matthias in the book of Acts, the apostles quoted the Psalms saying, "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take" (Acts 1:20).
- ◆ Also note in the book of Acts that Luke preserved Paul's admonition to the elders of Ephesus saying, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Another few revealing passages come from the writer of Hebrews. He chose to use a very strong word for his description of Christian leadership. He used the word—*rule*. I heard someone once challenged an elder by asking him if he would ever use the word "rule" to describe his

ministry. “Absolutely not,” he answered. He then added, “—but the writer of Hebrews did.” Look at these passages.

- ◆ “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation” (Hebrews 13:7).
- ◆ “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).
- ◆ “Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you” (Hebrews 13:24).

Many of today’s new writers try to play a lot of Greek gymnastics in order to get away from this strong word “rule.” However, if we really want to look at the Greek, the original word there is actually *hegeomai*. This is where we get the English word for “hegemony.” I’ll be honest, I don’t like the word...but it is there and it must be reckoned with. There is simply no way to take the meaning of authority out of this word. Seriously, even if you could... trying to plug in just about any other softer word there in its place really doesn’t change the meaning all that much. No matter how much you might soften up the word, we are still instructed in this passage to “obey them,” and “submit to them,” because they “watch our souls,” and must “render an account” for how they led us. Yes, the titles may have been very non-specific in the early church, but the positions were very exact.



History—by Revelation

When twisting scriptures is not enough, I have seen—without exception—that *all* of these modern writers have turned to the writings of the early church for a defense of their position. This is perhaps the most dis-

honest part of their argument. It seems that no matter what historical evidence these people find, *nothing* will change their mind from what they *believe* the early church looked like. Like the incident I mentioned earlier involving James Rutz and Gene Edwards, these people simply won’t let *truth* get in their way.

The newest book sensation *Pagan Christianity* is a prime example of history by “revelation.” In this book, after the premise was made that the Christians of the Bible had no organized leadership, Viola heads straight for the early pre-Constantine church. The problem here for Viola and others like him, is that they find no witness—no, not one—in the early, pre-Constantine church that holds to their view.

So what do they do?

- ◆ Do they admit that their view is quite a stretch and at least acknowledge that all around the world, separated by geography, language, and culture, everyone in the first century uniformly held to an opposite view?
- ◆ Do they then recognize that the apostles might have never held to anything even remotely close to their view?
- ◆ Do they admit that this view would make the apostles the worst teachers of any world religion in history?
- ◆ Do they admit that considering all these historical findings they could actually be wrong? —Hardly.

Instead, they come up with reasoning like—“They’re *smiling!*”

For example, finding no pre-Constantine witness to his view of church leadership, Viola begins his discussion about the early Christians by indicting them in his long litany of people who he claims messed everything up. He starts with the letters of Ignatius. This early bishop wrote these letters to his surrounding churches on the way to his martyrdom around the year 90 AD. It is clear that Ignatius had a completely opposite view of church leadership than Viola. But instead of admitting that it is a little embarrassing that such an early witness was so completely contrary to his view, Viola instead claims that Ignatius made it all up. In fact, Viola actually says that Ignatius “spawned” this early view of church leadership. The only problem with this however, is that Viola fails to mention that every other witness [includ-

ing much earlier witnesses] also agreed with Ignatius. For instance....

Looking At the *Actual* History

Perhaps the earliest Christian document outside of the New Testament is the Didache. This was written around the year 90 AD. Fortunately for us, they actually recorded how they felt about church leadership in this very early document.

“Appoint, therefore, for yourselves, bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek, and not lovers of money, and truthful and proved; for they also render to you the service of prophets and teachers. Therefore do not despise them, for they are your honored ones, together with the prophets and teachers”(Ch 15).

Clement of Rome

Another very early writer was Clement of Rome. It appears that he was actually a friend of the apostle Paul. When Paul was sending greetings to the Philippians, he said, “With Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.” (Phil 4:3). There are not a lot of writers that we could read that the Bible actually tells us that their name is written “in the book of life.” But Clement is one of them! Listen to what he said about ministry around the year 100 AD.

◆ “The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ has done so from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore re-

ceived their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the firstfruits of their labors, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. Nor was this any new thing, since indeed many ages before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus says the Scripture in a certain place, “I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith.”

◆ Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on account of the office of the episcopate (overseer). For this reason, therefore, inasmuch as they had obtained a perfect foreknowledge of this, they appointed those ministers already mentioned, and afterwards gave instructions, that when these should fall asleep, other approved men

should succeed them in their ministry. We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ in a humble, peaceable, and disinterested spirit, and have for a long time possessed the good opinion of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry.



I ASKED HIM IF HE WAS AT ALL INTERESTED IN ACTUALLY READING WHAT THE EARLY CHRISTIANS SAID...AND OF COURSE, HE DECLINED. TO HIM, LIKE SO MANY OTHERS, FANTASY WAS A LOT MORE FUN TO BELIEVE THAN FACT.

I once had a man challenge me that since our assembly had ordained ministry, that we were in essence following a pattern started by Constantine. I asked him if he was at all interested in *actually* reading what the early Christians said about church ministry 200 years before Constantine was even born...and of course, he declined. To him,



...WHILE IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THE ANABAPTISTS BELIEVED STRONGLY IN A CHURCH IN WHICH EVERYONE WAS PASSIONATELY INVOLVED; THEY DID NOT HOWEVER REJECT THE PLACE OF ORDAINED MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH...THERE ARE NUMEROUS TOUCHING TESTIMONIES OF THESE CARING PASTORS THAT GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR FLOCKS...

like so many others, fantasy was a lot more fun to believe than fact.

Reformation Fantasy

The reformation history coming from these books is also full of more fantasy than fact. Interestingly, Frank Viola holds the Anabaptists up as the shining example of the Reformation. Speaking of the idea of eliminating the role of ordained ministry, Viola says,

“It was the Anabaptists who recovered this practice. Regrettably, this recovery was one of the reasons why Protestant and Catholic swords were red with Anabaptist blood.... Tragically, Luther and the other Reformers violently denounced the Anabaptists for practicing every-member functioning in the church” (pp. 128-129).

While it is true that both Protestant and Catholic swords were red with Anabaptist blood; and while it is also true that the Anabaptists believed strongly in a church in which everyone was passionately involved; they did *not* however reject the place of ordained ministry in the church. As a matter of fact, there are numerous touching testimonies of these caring pastors that gave their lives for their flocks under severe persecution. From their earliest confession in Schleithem in 1527, it was obvious how the Anabaptists felt about church leadership. I have quoted it here. Keep in mind as you read it

that the “pastor” that penned this document, Michael Sattler, was tortured and burned at the stake just three months later!

- ◆ “The pastor in the church of God shall, as Paul has prescribed, be one who out-and-out has a good report of those who are outside the faith. This office shall be to read, to admonish and teach, to warn, to discipline, to ban in the church, to lead out in prayer for the advancement of all the brethren and sisters, to lift up the bread when it is to be broken, and in all things to see to the care of the body of Christ, in order that it may be built up and developed, and the mouth of the slanderer be stopped.
- ◆ This one moreover shall be supported of the church which has chosen him, wherein he may be in need, so that he who serves the Gospel may live of the Gospel as the Lord has ordained. But if a pastor should do something requiring discipline, he shall not be dealt with except on the testimony of two or three witnesses. And when they sin they shall be disciplined before all in order that the others may fear.
- ◆ But should it happen that through the cross this pastor should be banished or led to the Lord (through martyrdom) another shall be ordained in his place in the same hour so that God’s little flock and people may not be destroyed.”

Chinese House Church

As it was in the days of China about a century ago, our society is rapidly declining spiritually; and it doesn't seem long that persecution could be coming to the church in this country as it did for China. We now know from history that this persecution was actually a time of great strength for the Christian church in China. It could be a time of strength for us as well. However, Satan also watched the success of the Chinese house churches, and he will stop at nothing to destroy these little assemblies in other parts of the world right from their beginning. Ironically, a lot of newer house church writers lift up the example of the Chinese house churches. Because of their success, and the fact that they often met in homes, many writers read back into these house churches their own ideas and agendas. Once again, fact is more powerful than fantasy.

We would all do well to read from one of the early founders of Chinese house church movement, Watchman Nee. Reading his book, *Spiritual Authority*, you will quickly see that he would have seen this kind of talk against delegated spiritual authority as nothing less than the work of the devil. While I have to admit that I think Nee goes way too far, nevertheless after reading through the first few pages, no one could assume that the Chinese house churches embraced this negative kind of attitude toward church leadership, at least not those that started under Watchman Nee. As Nee put it—and admittedly a bit too strongly—“To overthrow God's authority is to overthrow God.”

“Throw Away Your Bibles”

So what's all the hype about? Isn't it all just big fuss about outward things like church buildings and church leadership? No, not anymore—I'm afraid that lately it's

going much deeper than that. The objective of these new books is no longer content to simply speak against steeples and offering plates—they now aim at the entire Word of God. Nothing is sacred anymore. The maxim, “Throw away your Bible and get a revelation” is actually gaining a following! Viola and Barna in *Pagan Christianity* now actually claim that they've discovered a whole new way to interpret Scripture. They say that by putting the books of the Bible in a series of different sequences, added by—believe it or not—“recent biblical scholarship”, Viola now claims this approach to scriptural interpretation will solve almost all of our theological problems.

Viola says that in order to understand the letters of Paul, we need to *know* what the other people were asking him. Well, thanks to Viola's new revelation, he claims we can do just that. Co-writer George Barna, speaking of this new method says, “We can now reconstruct the entire saga of the early church. In other words, we can hear the other side of the conversation!” (pg. 239). [*By the way, the explanation point was in the original.*]

Frank Viola introduced his new method in a book he entitled *The Untold Story of the New Testament Church*. The likeness of this kind of talk to that of the Gnostics of the New Testament age is dangerously similar. Armed with their understanding of the “*untold story*” Viola and Barna conclude this section with this appalling resolve—“*When we learn the story, our verses must bow and bend to it*”—now that's scary! Added to that, the next chapter suggests that we should be willing to allow them (Viola and Barna) as well as other “church planter-apostles” to come into our churches and teach us!

Fact or Fantasy

Keeping track of all the new ideas can be both challenging and frustrating: Gene Edwards has a whole book entitled *Going to Church in the First Century* that portrays



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a collection of made-up scenes and ideas of what early Christianity was like. James Rutz portrayed the early Christian worship service like a frat party. And Frank Viola condemns church order and ordained ministry as pagan in origin. So just how *did* the early Christians really worship?

For one last quote, allow me to provide you one from Tertullian. You remember him; he was the one who Rutz claimed was advocating the Super Bowl party. Please note, this is not a made-up document *about* the early Church, this actually *was* a document written by an early Christian. The little work was called *A Prescription Against the Heretic*—still a fitting name for today. In this document Tertullian discusses what the *pagan* or rather, heretical groups were doing for worship. Listen carefully...

“I must not omit an account of the conduct also of the heretics—how frivolous it is, how worldly, how merely human, without seriousness, without authority, without discipline, as suits their creed. To begin with, it is doubtful who is a catechumen, and who a believer; they have all access alike, they hear alike, they pray alike— even heathens, if any such happen to come among them. That which is holy they will cast to the dogs, and their pearls, although (to be sure) they are not real ones, they will fling to the swine. Simplicity they will have to consist in the overthrow of discipline, attention to which on our part they call brotherly. Peace also they huddle up anyhow with all comers; for it matters not to them, however different be their treatment of subjects, provided only they can conspire together to storm the citadel of the one only Truth. All are puffed up, all offer you knowledge. Their catechumens are perfect before they are full-taught. The very women of these heretics, how wanton they are! For they are bold enough to teach, to dispute, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures—it may be even to baptize. Their ordinations are carelessly administered, capricious, changeable. At one time they put

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novices in office; at another time, men who are bound to some secular employment; at another, persons who have apostatized from us, to bind them by vainglory, since they cannot buy the truth. Nowhere is promotion easier than in the camp of rebels, where the mere fact of being there is a foremost service. And so it comes to pass that today one man is their bishop, tomorrow another; today he is a deacon who tomor-

row is a reader; today he is a presbyter who tomorrow is a layman. For even on laymen do they impose the functions of presbyter” (Tertullian’s *Prescription Against the Heretic*—Chapter 41).

Very interesting... from what Tertullian was describing, it sounds to me like the worship of these pagans and heretics “resembled a cross between a Super Bowl victory celebration and a frat party.” It makes me ask the question—“Will the real *pagan* please stand up!”

Wake Up

I’m not going to give up on house churches and other radical gatherings of saints. Those who refuse to compromise with modern Christianity and therefore gather themselves into committed assemblies of “called out” believers are friends to me. However, as these types of assemblies increase, we must beware that counterfeits will increase as well. John warned us, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). These new writers do not speak for me, nor for the churches that I fellowship with. Brethren—let’s wake up and be on guard against these subtle attacks of the enemy. I don’t want to throw away my Bible, and I frankly don’t want any of their revelations! I’m with Peter—“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16). □

The Remnant

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My life was always full of ease,
I ate and slept in summer's breeze.
My parents, too, and other kin
Have healthy, full, e'en sated been.

Our only purpose we have known
To find more grass; we're ne'er alone,
We live in welcome company
Of all our friends and family.

When enemies or pests accost
No time or energy is lost.
We huddle round or side by side
Defense for all the group provides.

Such close companionship is sweet
Our needs the streams and pastures meet
But lately I have heard the Call
That's constant, dear, and goes for all.

Just yesterday I gazed awhile
Across the fields for many miles
The wide expanse lies fallow, bare.
It's barrenness yields only tares.

And you by Master's tools, I see
An instrument, it seems to me
Whence all that sod would break and turn
Potential fruits which now are spurned.

The only lacking part, you see,
Which is of dire necessity
Is one or two to bear the yoke
To pull that plow; it needs my folk.

But wait! I see my Master kind;
He's gathering rocks. I see the signs
Of something more I soon will learn
Of service true for which He yearns.

The rocks in order now He lays
As tier by tier an altar's raised.
The wood he brings and all is set.
An offering free is needed yet.

And deep within myself I hear
A witness quiet, first, but dear.
It's once again a task defined
For one like me or of my kind.

So as I contemplate, my sights
Are widened in my Master's light.
I think I've started now to scan
The greatness of His perfect plan.

I yield myself, all Yours to use
For labors long my life I'll lose.
Or may that altar be my place,
Aromas round Your throne to raise?

So if for work that bears much fruit,
Or offering full Your purpose suits,
My Lord, if life's prime morn You'll spend
That altar's still a welcome end.

For now, dear Master, these lush fields
No lasting satisfaction yield.
How can I love perpetual ease,
Till altars burn and fruits increase?

So Lord, I give myself away,
For either or for both, I pray.

Poem by Matthew Kauffman
Picture by Dorothy Calhoun

... Ready for either or both!

