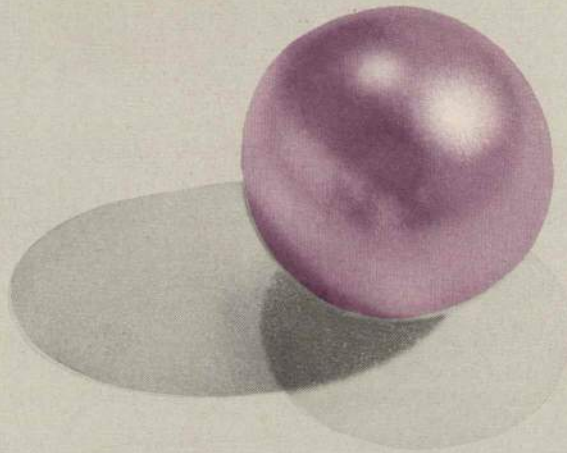




# new wine

JUNE 1974

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE  
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH



The KINGDOM OF GOD  
is like one pearl  
of great price....

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD  
What is the Gospel • Simpson • Page 4  
Church Government — Let's Be Practical • Sumrall • Page 8  
City Government — Can It Work? • Longino • Page 15  
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I just finished reading the article, "These Two Shall Become One Flesh." I think this is one of the best articles I have read on this subject. As I read the message I could see my family in that picture as well.

Since there is so much trouble in the American home today, I would like to suggest that you put this message in booklet form. With a booklet we could feel free to share it with many others who have similar needs. It could also be given to newlyweds with a wedding gift.

A big thanks to the couple who were willing to open the door of their home and share with us the things that the Lord has taught them. I'm sure many will benefit by what you have willingly shared.

Mrs. M.J.  
Elmira Height, N.Y.

*Copies of this booklet may be ordered on the back page. — Ed.*

I especially enjoyed the timely article "These Two Shall Become One Flesh," by Dick and Lydia Key in the April issue. Our pastor has been teaching a series of lessons on Christ in the home using Larry Christensen's *The Christian Family* as a textbook and guide. So the articles (all of them) in the April issue were very timely for our family.

Mrs. B.M.

It is encouraging to realize that although we all may come from vastly different backgrounds, we still are no different from one another in that we all have similar "weeds in our gardens." Similar — but not always the same.

There are two sentences that still cause me grave concern. Lydia said, "... God began to open my eyes. He showed me that Dick was my husband, and right or wrong, God expected me to obey and honor him ... even if it cost me my life and the life of my child." This may have been what God revealed to Lydia for their lives, and it might be the general rule for most wifely rebellion against husbands; however, God more often than not has exceptions to His general rules. It would seem to me that God makes His own rules to suit each individual family situation. My spirit truly cried out that these two sentences could be a stumbling block if for some reason (known to God alone) He commanded some other woman differently than He commanded Lydia.

D.L.G.  
San Luis Obispo, Ca.

# Letters to Editor

## FAITH OR PRESUMPTION

It's been a long time since I've read anything that put me under bondage as much as the article entitled, "Faith or Presumption."

It seems we have again completed the cycle — once more we have to depend upon the professors of theology. We must be Greek and Hebrew students to interpret the Bible. We cannot accept what the Word says because perhaps that is not what it really means to us. Once more, we must pray, "Not my will but thine be done!" Once more simple faith and belief are no longer enough — we must needs have the priests — even though they do not believe that the Bible does mean what it says — to interpret.

As for me — give me the faith of Smith Wigglesworth and Charles Finney; the positive faith of Derek Prince, Kenneth Hagin and others who accept His Word and have the courage to shout it and put it to work.

D.M.  
Mountainlake Terrace, Wash.

## STICK TO IT!

In the Letters to the Editor section of *New Wine* I find scattered references to many's desire that you include evangelistic teaching within your scope. May I say please search diligently for God's mind on this matter before doing so. There are many good periodicals of a purely evangelistic nature already in print. *New Wine* is one of the few meaty publications designed primarily for charismatic Christians. If your calling as a publication is to this group, for God's sake and ours, stick to and in the purity of that calling!

Mrs. R.K.  
Smyrna, Ga.

## DISCIPLESHIP

I have just finished reading your March issue. I was truly blessed by "Making Disciples" by Charles Simpson. It was just what I needed at this time. If we will pray and ask God to show us how to be better disciples and how we can put these teachings into practice, I'm sure He will be more than glad to show us. Reading about it is one thing — doing it is another!

J.M.N.  
Kent, Wash.

I pray that you will release more on what the Lord has taught His people in Argentina and other South American countries. They have learned how to become disciples as I have never heard it spoken of or taught here in the States. They have learned to live the gospel of love toward their brethren much in the same degree that Jesus Himself did. Their lives of "fruit bearing" and not "gift showing" have really touched our lives here and is much needed throughout our land. We find that we are quite indifferent to others around us. Hence, the Christian community has no real impact on society or our communities. We do not hear, as in Acts, that these people have turned our country upside down!

H.K.  
Chesterland, Ohio

## TO THE POINT

Your articles are generally very clear, to the point, and well-grounded in God's Word. I particularly favor the way in which you deal "head on" with difficult issues, instead of merely pussy-footing around like many other magazines do.

R.E.B.  
Spring Arbor, Mich.

We have a two-year-old daughter who the other day was sitting on the floor along side of her big sister, pretending to spell words. Suddenly she looked up at her daddy and asked, "Daddy, how do you spell Derek Prince?" You can imagine the laughter!

C.Y.

*P.S. As stated in the May issue, New Wine will begin to publish the names of those writers whose letters we publish in this column, unless writers specify otherwise. Allowing for the fact that this notice and some letters may have crossed in the mail, we are withholding names in this issue.*



# Editorial

As the pressure of Satanic activity in the form of pornography, immorality, political agitation and corruption increases in our society, the temptation comes to throw up our hands and watch our world go down the drain.

In the middle of it all, we must ask ourselves, "Where is the church?" Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Yet from all appearance hell is prevailing.

Deep in our hearts we know that the church was meant to be the vanguard of the kingdom of God; but as evangelicals we must admit that the impotence of the church in society is frightening. Perhaps part of the problem is our concept of the mystical church. We picture legions of angels and saints doing battle in the heavens in answer to our prayers, and that is the warring church. However true all of this may be, we are the church and a good portion of the warring will have to be done by us.

God has begun to speak to us about social action. It is time for us to stand up and be counted with brethren who dare to stand against the evils of our society. All too often they stand alone. We must not only strengthen them with prayer, but with a vocal commitment to stand with them.

When pornography was legalized in Denmark, many Christians began to fast and pray feeling that something had to be done. One night a group of believers led by two brothers went through the entire city of Copenhagen blanketing every piece of pornographic advertising with posters *against* pornography. The next morning the entire city was buzzing with the news of what a few Christians had done. Out of that one stand, because a few dared to step out on their faith in God, there is today an outstanding work being done for Christ in Copenhagen.

The Scripture says, "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him." We, the people of God, are that standard. If the church is going to have an impact upon the world around it, we must begin to stand together openly against the forces of evil.

## new wine MAGAZINE

JUNE 1974

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New Wine is published monthly, except combined July/August issue, by Christian Growth Ministries, 260 S.W. 31st St., Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315. Second class postage paid at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and at additional mailing offices.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: New Wine is a non-subscription magazine supported by the contributions of its readers. Single copies and back issues (except December issues): 50 cents each. Bulk prices for regular issues (Minimum order of 6) 6-24, 40 cents each; 25-49, 35 cents each; 50-99, 30 cents each; 100 or more, 25 cents each. Foreign contributions, except Canada, should be made by International Money Order.

Material submitted for publication should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope if return of manuscript is desired. All material becomes the property of New Wine when published.

The views expressed in New Wine are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Editors or Directors.

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**T**he question, "What is the gospel?" is a most serious one. It fundamentally affects all creation. Virtually all religions have a gospel . . . all Christians agree that we ought to, in some manner, proclaim the gospel . . . but the question upon which we have not yet agreed is, *What is the gospel?*

The seriousness of understanding just what the gospel is, is reflected in the Scriptures. Statements like, "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; and *whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it*" (Mark 8:35 NAS), clearly portray the picture that the gospel is that for which we are to lay down our very lives. The New Testament gospel is not cheap.

### THE GOSPEL — A DEFINITION

The word *gospel* means to announce good news. So, the gospel is the good news! So far, we would all agree. Now the question comes: What good news? Again we look to the Scriptures for a definition. The Apostle Paul furnished this definition when he said:

Now I make known to you, brethren, the *gospel* which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved if you hold fast the Word which I preached to you unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to

you as of first importance what I also received, *that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised again on the third day according to the Scriptures* (1 Corinthians 15:1–4 NAS).

Paul adds in Romans 14:9:

For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be *Lord* both of the dead and of the living.

The gospel, then, is that Jesus died for our sins . . . rose again . . . and became Lord. In verses 22–28 of that same chapter, Paul discusses the fact that Jesus Christ must *reign* until He has put all His enemies under His feet (vs. 25). When all has been subjected to Him, He, in turn, will be subjected to God the Father and deliver the *Kingdom* up to Him.

The early church summed up the gospel in this phrase, "Jesus is Lord . . . He is King!" The heathen said, "Caesar is Lord," to which the Christian disciples countered, "Jesus is Lord!" For this, many of them laid down their lives unto death. All that Caesar professed to be, Jesus was — the rightful governor of the kingdoms of this world! This is the "full gospel." The full gospel will not have had its intended effect and fulfillment until Jesus *reigns* in all creation. The aim of the gospel is to declare and enthrone

Jesus as King, which is His rightful place. Every spiritual experience and doctrine — the new birth . . . baptism . . . healing . . . baptism in the Spirit . . . or deliverance, is a means to the establishment of God's government in our lives and in the earth.

### FULL GOSPEL OR HALF GOSPEL?

In Luke 2:10–11, the angel of the Lord announces the birth of Jesus this way: "Do not be afraid; for behold I bring you *good news* of great joy which shall be for *all the people*; for today in the City of David there has been born for you a *Saviour*, who is *Christ the Lord*."

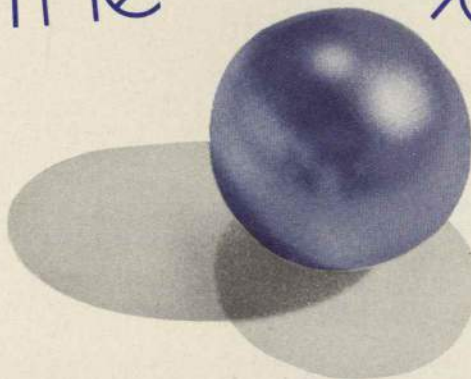
The announcement made by the heavenly messenger is termed Good News Gospel. We join our voices triumphantly as we declare, "Jesus is our Saviour," — but they trail away when it comes to saying, "Jesus is Lord." We need to remember that Jesus was *first* Saviour; *then* Lord. But He was Saviour, so He could become Lord. The purpose of the cross was that He might become Lord of the redeemed. Without Lordship, that purpose is frustrated. If we preach "salvation" without presenting His Lordship, we preach only half the gospel.

Likewise there is a tendency (among

### The Kingdom of God

The first in a series of five articles on the Kingdom of God.

What is the Gospel?



The real gospel  
will cost us  
everything we have.

by Charles Simpson



evangelicals particularly) to quote the following two verses from Romans, chapter 10, emphasizing "saved" to the neglect of "Lord."

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as *Lord*, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved (vs. 9 NAS).

For whoever will call upon the name of the *Lord* will be saved (vs. 13 NAS).

We conclude, therefore, that the desired end is to "get people saved," when this is not the case. The desired end is to make Jesus Lord!

It is not calling on the Saviour that saves, it is making Him *Lord* that saves. The thrust of the gospel is not "get saved"; but rather, "make Jesus your Lord and King" — and *that* will *save* you. *Salvation* is the by-product of God's *rule* in our lives — not vice-versa. If people are led to believe that they can be saved without letting Jesus be Lord, it is difficult to show them *why He should be Lord*. It is His Lordship or government that delivers us from Satan now and the power of *this* world. Salvation is not in eternity, but day by day. To preach salvation apart from Lordship is a "half truth."

The issue at stake in the New Testament is not merely theological assent to the great doctrines . . . or going to heaven . . . but practical obedience to His rule. The issue is: does Jesus Christ govern your life?

### THE GOOD NEWS IS ABOUT A KING AND A KINGDOM

The Jews initially rejected Jesus as the Messiah because they were looking for a king, not a suffering servant. Ironically, we Gentiles who know Jesus as the suffering servant can easily miss the truth of His kingship.

The prophets of the Old Testament prophesied of a king and the kingdom He would establish. Hear Isaiah 9:6—7 NAS:

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His

shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

A child will grow up to be governor — King of Israel! His Kingdom will be established, ordered and peaceful forever. He will be a descendant of David. Many such references are made in the Old Testament. The Jews understood that a king was coming. They erred in that they did not know the principle that *humiliation* must precede *exaltation*. Jesus had to serve and suffer before becoming Lord. Nevertheless, the good news was that God's government would be established by His anointed Messiah. Isaiah also prophesied that Messiah's Kingdom would be governed by *delegated* authority. All kingdoms must operate this way. That is, the central authority is delegated to eschelons of sub-rulerships. No successful governor does all the governing. He appoints others to assist in the administration. It is a better administrator who teaches others to govern, than he who must do it all personally.

Behold, a king will reign righteously, and princes will rule justly. And each will be like a refuge from the wind, and a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry country, like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land. Then the eyes of those who see will not be blinded, and ears of those who hear will listen. And the mind of the hasty will discern the truth, and the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak clearly (Isaiah 32:1—4 NAS).

Notice, Isaiah states that the King (Jesus) will rule. Under the King's rule, princes will rule also. The princes derive their authority from the King. So it is in God's Kingdom. All offices within the Kingdom are established under Jesus' Lordship.

Isaiah continues to prophesy that the princes governed by the King will

be like a refuge from the winds, storms and blistering heat. Also under God's delegated authority will be streams of water in a land that is parched.

One who relates to the princes, who relate to the King will see, hear and speak plainly.

Isaiah, among other prophets tells of a coming King who will rule on David's throne, delegate His authority, establish His Kingdom with peace and justice in the earth. Every reference to Christ is a reference to these facts. The announcement of the angels was about a Lord, or King. When John the Baptist came preaching, he proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:1—3). He was the official envoy sent before the King to proclaim and prepare (Matthew 3:1—3). When Jesus came, He, too, came proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15, Matthew 4:17—23).

It seems abundantly clear that Jesus came to govern and establish God's government. We can only come into that government as we are born of the Holy Spirit and lay our lives at His feet. If we allow Him to govern, the result will be righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). These results can only be achieved by His government.

As a part of God's government expressed in the church, we are no longer "of this world." We live in the world . . . we obey the authorities God places in it . . . we pray for it — but we are ambassadors here who represent another Kingdom (2 Corinthians 5:20 and Colossians 1:13). We are a new race . . . a new nation . . . strangers in this present world (1 Peter 2:9—25). The church is a colony of heaven on foreign soil. It speaks heaven's language, has heaven's character, is ruled by heaven's authority, and expresses heaven's message in this world. Outside its borders are anarchy, wickedness, uncertainty and death. Inside is righteousness, peace, joy and the love of God. No one can *join* the Kingdom of God. One must be born into it by the Holy Spirit and placed in the church, under Jesus' Lordship.



## THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS PRACTICAL

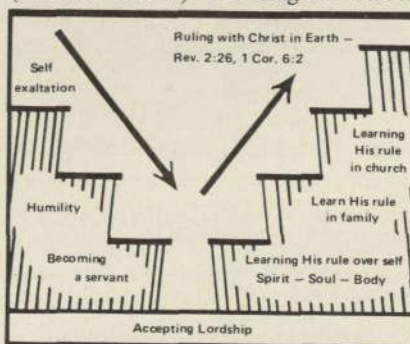
Several years after becoming involved in charismatic ministry, I became over-involved in traveling, teaching and other ministry-related activities. I became tired, physically weak and spiritually vulnerable. I made an appointment with three close friends to meet in a certain city and to seek the Lord for two days. Immediately after gathering, we began to worship and refresh ourselves in His presence. Then we knelt and began to earnestly seek the Lord's leading. Soon I heard myself begin to pray the Lord's prayer: "Our Father," . . . I groaned out of deep weariness, . . . "Hallowed . . . be Thy name" . . . the words lingered in my heart . . . "Thy Kingdom come!" I sobbed. From deep within gushed the frustration and hurt of one who had slipped out of the Lord's yoke into the whirling currents of pressures, expediency, good intentions, needs and many other driving forces.

"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," echoed in my mind over and over. Awareness came that I had taken His name, His Word, His ministry and often done my own will. I was broken by my own lawlessness. I began to more deeply than ever desire His government in me and in the earth.

We are warned in God's Word that our ways are not His ways (Isaiah 55:8). When we are born into the Kingdom of God, we have an immediate need to be trained in its language, laws, principles and promises. This process is followed, to some extent, when any alien is naturalized into a new government. It is far more needed when one is born into the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit has been given to us to guide and teach; and Jesus has set certain ministries in the church to conform the new citizens in the ways of God. Discipleship is the process Jesus used and commissioned in order to teach others His ways.

Once Jesus rules in our lives, He immediately begins to teach *us* how to rule. First, we are taught to rule our-

selves — spirit, mind and body. (See Proverbs 14:29, 16:18—19, 32; 25:28; Romans 12:1—2; 1 Corinthians 9:27). Then, when we have established the Kingdom in our personal lives, we are taught how to rule (administrate) in our family role. Whatever our relationship to the family, we all have areas of responsibility. We oversee that area under the authority God has set in the home. By right relationship we have righteousness, peace and joy in the family. When one walks into a Christian home, he should sense that he has just walked into the Kingdom of God . . . *there* is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). See diagram below.



In order to practically manifest the Kingdom in this way, authority and love are required. Each member must sense both of these qualities of Jesus. I must as father convey a practical sense of the Lord's rule in our home.

"Son, Jesus is Lord in our home. He has given me the responsibility to lead our family and govern it for Him."

"Yes sir." A godly child will honor his parents, as unto the Lord.

"Now, I delegate you, Son, as ruler over your bedroom. I want you to bring the Kingdom of God into your bedroom. I want it to be a clean, orderly, peaceful and a happy place to be. When you have governed that, we are going to help Mother bring the Kingdom in the kitchen. Eventually we will govern the whole place — even the yard."

This is practical; perhaps, too practical for some of us. We would rather be "spiritual." Of course, the son must see the Lordship of Jesus in his father's life if he is to receive such instruction.

*After* one has learned to rule his

own life and take his responsibility in the home, then he is ready for responsibility in the church (1 Timothy 3:5,12). To promote those who have neither governed themselves nor their families into church leadership, is to encourage anarchy in the church.

When God rules in the church, the church will be able to rule in the world. Many Christians are unaware that we are being trained to rule with Christ (1 Corinthians 6:2,3; Revelation 2:26; 3:21). The Kingdom will be established *within* us, *among* us (church), and *around* us (world). This can only be done as we are under His Lordship. When the time comes on His clock, He shall appear and manifest to the world what He has already revealed to His own — He is Lord!

## THE KINGDOM REVOLUTIONARY

It would be wonderful if there were no contest — just universal acceptance of Jesus' Lordship. The fact is, however, that authority is the most provocative aspect of the gospel. The good news is bad news to some people. Accepting grace . . . gifts . . . prosperity are mild issues. They can be received or ignored. Authority, however, is another matter. Self-will, family disorder, church democracy, world rebellion and satanic opposition will resist Jesus' Lordship every inch of the way.

To merely say that Jesus is Lord scarcely raises an eyebrow; but to *make* Jesus your Lord and then say it — that is to shake the foundations of every illicit force. For years I preached on the Holy Spirit and my preaching never caused trouble. Then one day I was baptized in the Holy Spirit and the trouble began! So it is with Lordship. The early church experienced persecution for saying, "Jesus is Lord." The world took them seriously.

At the time of the birth of Jesus, wise men from the East journeyed for weeks and, finally, with much expectation they arrived in Jerusalem. They would soon see the Lord — King of the Jews. Almost out of breath with excitement, they came to Herod's



servants. King Herod was a descendant of Esau — an Edomite. He had been maliciously installed as King by Caesar — an insult to the Jews, who were descendants of Jacob. Herod's rule was contrary to the prophecy of Isaac concerning his sons, Esau and Jacob. Israel had sunk to a low level in Jesus' time — cowering before a decadent pagan government.

"Where is the new King . . . this one just born King of the Jews?" the wise men naively asked. They might have put it this way: "Where is the *real King of Israel*, Herod?" Do you think their question made Herod nervous? You know it did!

"When you find him, tell me where he is so I can *worship* him, too," Herod lied. When the wise men did not return with this information, he issued orders that all males under two years of age in Bethlehem, the city of the prophesied birthplace of the King, be killed. Authority threatens.

The issue that the Sanhedrin used to bring about the crucifixion of Jesus was the Lordship He claimed. The thought of Him being the Christ . . . King . . . enraged the existing hierarchy (Matthew 26:63–66). The mockery and torture that followed was the mockery of a king (Matthew 27:11, 27–29, 37, 42). Pilate's question to Jesus at the time of His sentence was, "Are you the King of the Jews?" The scarlet robe, the crown of thorns and the reed all spoke of His Lordship. It was not miracles or bread that they had rejected — it was Lordship.

Later when Peter preached Jesus at Pentecost, he preached that He was Lord and Christ. From that flame spread the gospel of the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. Persecution resulted and their accusers cried, "These men are preaching that there is another King!" And they were. They also said, "No man can serve two masters." It is this that brings about persecution.

We are told in 2 Timothy 3:12, "*All they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*" One day the Lord asked me, "Where is yours?" That question left me wondering as to

the extent of Jesus' Lordship in my life.

Matthew 7:21–29 presents the following awesome words spoken by Jesus:

Not every one who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father, who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness. Therefore every one who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall; for it had been founded upon the rock. And every one who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall." The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Jesus knew the storms that were in the offing and the human need for an unshakable Kingdom.

### THE KINGDOM IS OUR PRIORITY

Jesus, in speaking to His disciples, gave them the requirements for receiving the Kingdom. Many of these are found in Matthew, chapters 5–7. Considering these requirements, one gets the distinct impression that the Kingdom must be our *priority*, as it was in the lives of Peter, John, Paul and others of the early believers. The words, "Seek ye first the Kingdom . . ." and "Pray, Thy kingdom come . . ." impress us that if we give priority to His Kingdom, God will take care of other matters of lesser importance.

Hebrews 12:2 gives us insight into what Jesus saw that made all the suffering and deprivation worthwhile. He was able to communicate this to the disciples — for they willingly left all to receive the Kingdom. Paul, too, saw the goal to be gained and counted everything else loss (Philippians 3:8 and 2 Corinthians 4:7–18). Others, on hearing the gospel, saw only a momentary blessing to be received.

Coming into the Lordship of Jesus, and seeing His Lordship established in our midst, requires a certain violence. This, all these believers saw and embraced. Hear these words of Jesus: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force" (Matthew 11:12 NAS). Paul states this fact, too, in Acts 14:22. "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much *tribulation* enter into the kingdom of God." Do you see that no half-hearted person will fight through the tribulation required to enter the rest of His Lordship?

One day while on a plane returning home from a meeting, I was searching Matthew, chapter 24 and considering it in the light of the days in which we live, along with the meeting just closed. "Lord," I thought, "if Matthew 24 has something to say about the end of this age . . . and I am living in the end of this age . . . then the words contained here ought to give me some direction as to what I should be doing."

Then my eyes fell on verse 14 (NAS): "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."

Yes, the good news of the Kingdom will be preached! When kingdoms are falling and uncertainty abounds, we *have good news* to give to the lost, unstable and confused.

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe . . . (Hebrews 12:28 NAS). ♡



# CHURCH GOVERNMENT—

by  
Ken  
Sumrall

# LET'S BE PRACTICAL

God has a workable plan for governing His church.

"Ken, may I spend a few days with you and observe Liberty Church at work?" This question was recently asked by a minister who is interested in a practical approach to church government. He had heard about the plurality of elders here and our attempt to build a New Testament church according to God's pattern. His request has been voiced by many who have tried man's ways and are hungry for God's direction whatever the cost.

Jesus said, "I will build my church." He could have added, "Woe be unto those who build a segment of the church or an institution and call it *The Church*."

I was asked by a very sincere brother: "Isn't there a danger of Liberty Church becoming another denomination?" In all honesty I had to answer "yes" to his question. If Jesus tarries and history repeats itself, Liberty Church will probably bear good fruit approximately two more generations and then become sectar-

ian, competitive, and very dead. That will be true not only of Liberty Church but of the entire charismatic move.

However, let us not let this fact keep us from building according to God's pattern. David "served his own generation well." I have decided to do the same by establishing "new wineskins" for the new wine and letting God be concerned about the future dried-up wineskins (Luke 5:36-39).

The title of this article may imply that I believe church government should be practical even at the expense of the scriptural pattern. This is not what I mean. Rather, I mean that the scriptural pattern of church government is practical and not mystical and idealistic.

Government is necessary, but let us not worship divine order. Jesus is no more interested in government for the sake of government than He was in the sabbath for the sake of the sabbath. "The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Even so, church government was made

for believers and not believers for church government.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is vitally concerned with the care of His sheep. He desires that they be led, fed, protected, corrected, unified and matured. When Jesus ascended, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:11-14).

Church government can only be understood by those who feel the heartbeat of the Lord Jesus for His flock. Governmental authority can only be trusted to those who have



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God's love for His people and who assume responsibility of oversight with a divine call and sense of awe.

It is with much caution that I attempt to set forth principles of divine government in the church. To speak of government is to speak of authority, and that word carries with it implications that terrify many of God's people. I suppose some have reason to be uneasy at the mention of authority of man over man. Authority can be abused and become legalistic and cruel. Some have suffered under the overlordship of groups or individuals who had no concept of true spiritual authority and who have controlled believers with a domineering attitude.

On the other hand, there is a great reluctance on the part of "the old man" to submit to anyone. Oh, we are quick to admit that God has all authority, and we would not dare declare our independence of Him. It is when God sends His delegated authorities that flesh resists with "I submit only to God." Any person who has been set in the place of authority has received the anathemas of fleshly crowds who "despise dominion" (2 Peter 2:10). If anyone doubts that this is true, let him read the biblical accounts of Moses with Israel and Paul with the Corinthian church.

Those who desire a place of authority usually do not know what they desire. James and John approached Jesus with the following carnal request:

Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what you ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said, we can (Mark 10:37-39a).

Jesus drank a bitter cup and was baptized with suffering. Oh, He was accepted by the crowds as long as He was healing their sicknesses. It was when He began to demand obedience and teach authority that He was rejected and crucified. To be a delegated authority of the Lord usually brings rejection and suffering from those who reject authority and desire to be boss of their own lives.

James, the Bishop of the Jerusalem Church said: "My Brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (James 3:1). No doubt James was speaking of the great responsibilities of those in places of authority. However, I believe he also had reference to the fact that those in authority are often slandered and abused by the tongues of the lawless and the immature. He therefore set forth an entire chapter on the control of the tongue.

I am sure that James did not mean that God's ministers are to flee their calling for more popular fields as some have done. But let those who are in the place of authority be warned that they will be misunderstood and rejected by many. "The servant is not greater than His Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you. If they have kept my sayings they will keep yours also" (John 15:20).

Liberty Church has been blessed by having a flock who recognizes God's authority and have submitted to it. More than any other factor, I attribute this spirit of submission as the major reason for the rest, the stability, and the growth of this work. No amount of authority has been forced, but the operating authority could not have been effective unless recognized and submitted to. This is not to say that all churches must operate exactly alike. I fully realize that God allows for "differences in administration" (1 Corinthians 12:5). However, God's Word does set forth divine principles of government, and the same Spirit who inspired the writers of the Bible can teach us how to apply its principles to our situation in our area of ministry.

## GOD'S GOVERNMENT

Anything of significance that God has placed in the New Testament has already been portrayed in the Old Testament. (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Colossians 2:17; etc.) Israel was called "the church in the wilderness" by Stephen (Acts 7:38). Without attempting to give the details of God's government as shown in the Old Testament, let me simply say that it was *theocratic*.

*Theo* is the Greek work for *God* and *theocracy* means government by God. This is the purest type of church government. When the children of Israel were led out of Egypt, they were placed under a theocracy. Moses was chosen by God as the first leader of this "church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). Later, elders were chosen to help bear the burden of caring for the flock of God (Exodus 18:13-26; Numbers 11:16,17). After Moses died, Joshua became the general overseer of the people, and the elders served with him.

After the children of Israel settled in Canaan, Joshua died, and God chose a judge to replace him. After a number of Judges had served, Israel rejected theocracy and desired a monarchy (1 Samuel 8:6,7). God allowed and tolerated this type government as He allows and tolerates different kinds of church government in the present time. However, God's ideal is to administer the affairs of the church through Holy Spirit-chosen-and-anointed men of God (Ephesians 4:8-16 and 1 Corinthians 12:28). Actually, I believe that God's kind of government is apostolic in nature.

Before I explain this statement, I shall list several types of church government presently practiced:

(a) **Congregational government:** This is a democratic system which gives each member of the church as much authority as any other. Business meetings are conducted regularly to determine the main direction of the church. Pastors are elected or dismissed by a majority vote of the congregation. Most Baptist churches are governed by this system.



(b) **Episcopal government:** The word "episcopacy" is derived from the Greek word "episcopas" which is translated "bishop" in the New Testament. Bishops are elected by ministers at an annual conference. One bishop has authority over a number of churches. Under him serve the district superintendent and the local pastors. Episcopal (Anglican) and Methodist churches are governed by this system.

(c) **Presbyterian government:** The word "presbuteros" of the New Testament is translated "elders." Local churches under this system are overseen by a body of elders. The Presbyterian churches are governed by this method.

(d) **Hierarchy government:** Absolute authority is given to one man who is infallible when He speaks *ex cathedra*, which means speaking from his throne. The Catholic Church is governed by this system. Order of authority under the Pope is Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

(e) **Autocratical government:** One man has all the power, owns the property, and governs all the activities of the church.

(f) **Apostolic government:** "The Office of Apostle is a permanent and continuous function in the body of Christ." (*One Lord, One Faith*, page 242). \* Jesus gave apostles; "till we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13). The apostles are "sent forth ones" to pioneer churches. They establish doctrine and give direction and leadership to the churches under their care. Apostolic government is seen in the early church in Jesus' leaving the eleven apostles in charge of the church in Jerusalem. After Pentecost the church "continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine. . ." (Acts 2:42). After the church at Jerusalem was scattered through persecution and missionary work was begun, more apostles were chosen and ordained by God: Acts 13:1-5; 14:4 - Saul and Barnabas; 2 Corinthians 8:23 - Titus (messenger-apostle here);

Philippians 2:25 - Epaphroditus (messenger-apostle here); Romans 16:7 - Andronicus and Junia; Galatians 1:19 - James and Jude, half-brothers of Jesus. Timothy and Silas were probably apostles also (1 Thessalonians 1:1). All of these men were commissioned by the Lord Jesus and given to the body of Christ. The most noted among these additional apostles was Paul. The record of his journeys and his epistles to the churches that he pioneered make up a great part of the New Testament. It is from Acts and Paul's Epistles that we are given the major principles of New Testament church government. For example, Acts 14 shows Paul returning to the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia to establish churches and ordain elders in every church (Acts 20:28; James 5:14). Paul later sent Timothy to oversee the elders of the churches in Asia. (Read 1 Timothy, especially 5:17-20). Therefore, apostolic government is God overseeing the churches through His anointed men, beginning with apostles (1 Corinthians 12:28) who ordain other Holy Ghost-chosen men to help oversee the churches under his care. These men include prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers and other governing elders.

Since Paul made it clear that church apostles were not given until Christ ascended and will continue as a part of the church until the church is perfected (Ephesians 4:11-13), how can a present-day apostle be recognized? Paul said to the Corinthians "for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." Bob Mumford says that this means that the seal of an apostle is a complete, functioning local church. (*New Wine*, February 1973, page 22). Paul also stated: "Truly the signs of an apostle are wrought among you in all patience (endurance), in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." (2 Corinthians 12:12). An apostle endures and has signs following his ministry. He can be tested by the seal and the signs. God's people should make sure that a person is not recognized as an apostle merely by his signs. Jesus warns us that Antichrist would

work mighty wonders (Matthew 24:34; 1 Thessalonians 2:9). The Ephesian church tried some who claimed apostleship and found them to be liars (Revelation 2:2). Paul spoke of false apostles (2 Corinthians 11:13). As prophets are known by their fruits (labors and results over a period of time - Matthew 7:16), so must an apostle prove himself among those who know him. An apostle is not church-appointed, but he must be recognized by the church as God-appointed.

It would seem that this system of government would not allow for all the believers to have a part in the administration of the church. I believe that any God-chosen leader should keep open to the moving of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the flock. At Liberty Church we do not have monthly business meetings of the whole church, nor do we determine major decisions through majority vote. I feel that it is not the voice of the people, nor the voice of the leaders that need to be heard the most. The voice of God makes a majority. God may speak through any member of the body. Overseers of Liberty keep in close fellowship with the flock, keep them informed and determine if God is saying something to us through the flock; but the congregation recognizes God's divine order of administration and respects the final decisions of the recognized authority of the church.

### OVERSEEING THE FLOCK

Personally, I do not want the full responsibility of overseeing the flock nor of making all decisions of administration. Fifteen other elders pray with me and help me to know God's direction for us.

In Liberty Church we have six full-time pastors and teachers. I am recognized as the overseer of the other five brethren, and each one is assigned areas of responsibility. Each Monday we meet to discuss victories, problems, and any new responsibility.

Liberty Church is divided into ten fellowships, each overseen by a counseling elder. These fellowships will be



divided into more fellowships as the number in each increases and other counseling elders will be chosen to oversee these new fellowships. This system is patterned after Exodus 18:13-26 and Numbers 11:16-17, 24, and 25. I quote Exodus 18:21,22:

Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all seasons, and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself and they shall bear the burden with thee.

We do not follow these exact procedures, but the principle seems to be to choose some elders who are not apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the official sense, but who are counseling and ruling elders assigned to help bear the burden of the flock. Every person or family who comes under the covering of Liberty Church is assigned to a counseling elder. The congregation has chosen twenty deacons to help the elders with the flock and to "serve tables" (Acts 6:2,3) — that is to do anything to relieve burdens and to make sure the ministers can have time to pray and minister the Word. Once each month, all of the elders and deacons meet for prayer, fellowship and reports. This meeting has proven to be a time of great blessing and edification for Liberty ministers.

All apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are elders (1 Peter 5:1-2), but not all elders are in the five-fold ministry. For this reason we make a difference in the pastors and the counseling elders. These elders may perform as pastors at times just as all members of the body can prophesy without becoming prophets. Personally, I think Scripture shows a difference in kinds of elders. For example, Paul told Timothy: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, *especially they who labour in Word and Doctrine.*" The ministry of the pastor

is not swallowed up in the local overseers. If so, then Paul made a mistake in listing the pastor in the list of Ephesians 4:11. I believe the pastor should serve as presiding elder. It is for this reason that Liberty Church has practiced pastor *plus* counseling elders. Presently, we have several pastors and teachers, in addition to the counseling elders. This makes Liberty Church similar to the church at Antioch — a center for many churches. Normally, churches which are born under our ministry have one pastor plus counseling elders and deacons. If one of these churches becomes a center like its mother church, it too will have need for more than one pastor and other of the five-fold ministries.

### AUTHORITY OF THE ELDER

You can readily see that I believe in plurality of elders and different kinds of elders, but I do not believe the New Testament teaches equality of authority. It would not be feasible in this article to discuss this principle in detail, but suffice it to say that there was not equality of authority portrayed in the Old Testament. Moses did not leave Israel under the supervision of a plurality of elders, but when Moses died, God chose Joshua to be chief elder. There was a "chief elder" in each synagogue when Jesus was on earth (Luke 8:41). Let us not assume that plurality of elders in Ephesus (Acts 20:28) meant equality of authority. Ephesus could very well have had many congregations scattered throughout Ephesus, each one with one pastor plus counseling elders. Even the early church historians, Eusebius and Hegesippus speak of a chief pastor in local churches.

Because of the authority involved, we have set only men in as elders. Paul qualifies the overseer as "the husband of one wife" and not "the wife of one husband." It is true that "in Christ there is neither male nor female" (Galatians 3:28), but this obviously refers to our position in grace and not to authority. God has a place for sisters as helps, intercessors, teachers of women, and even preaching in

public so long as they do not usurp authority over the man. I have invited certain sisters to speak at Liberty Church, and they have done so with great profit to us. There also seems to be a place for women deaconesses in the church (Romans 16:1 and 1 Timothy 3:11). May God keep us from extreme teachings that make wives or single women slaves rather than helpmeets. Extremes or one-sided truths bring bondage. Truth is always balanced and results in liberty, peace, and joy.

I am not defending my position, but simply stating it. I certainly have no desire to prove myself right and another brother wrong. I do believe that theory remains theory until put into practice and proven. Liberty Church's government has proven effective up through the present time. There is genuine communion; most of the believers under covering here are participating in prayer, sharing, spiritual gifts, praise and other ministry. They feel "shepherded." The anointing of God on the elders and deacons is increasing. For all this we give praise to the Lord Jesus.

Let me say in conclusion that I see through a glass darkly concerning church government. I am honestly trying to keep Jesus preeminent as the Head of the church and trying to work according to His plan. In doing do, it is my desire to be flexible to any change the Holy Spirit makes known. Thus far Liberty Church has had peace and unity which has presented a solid front against the devil. May God grant that we not become satisfied with past attainments, but allow the Spirit of God to change us from glory to glory. "For where the Spirit is Lord, **THERE IS LIBERTY**" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

To all believers, I recommend reading Paul's words given in 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13 and Hebrews 13:7,17.

To my fellow elders, I would repeat Peter's words given to us in 1 Peter 5:1-4. 🍷

*\*by W.A.C. Rowe, Puritan Press Ltd., Yorkshire, Eng.*

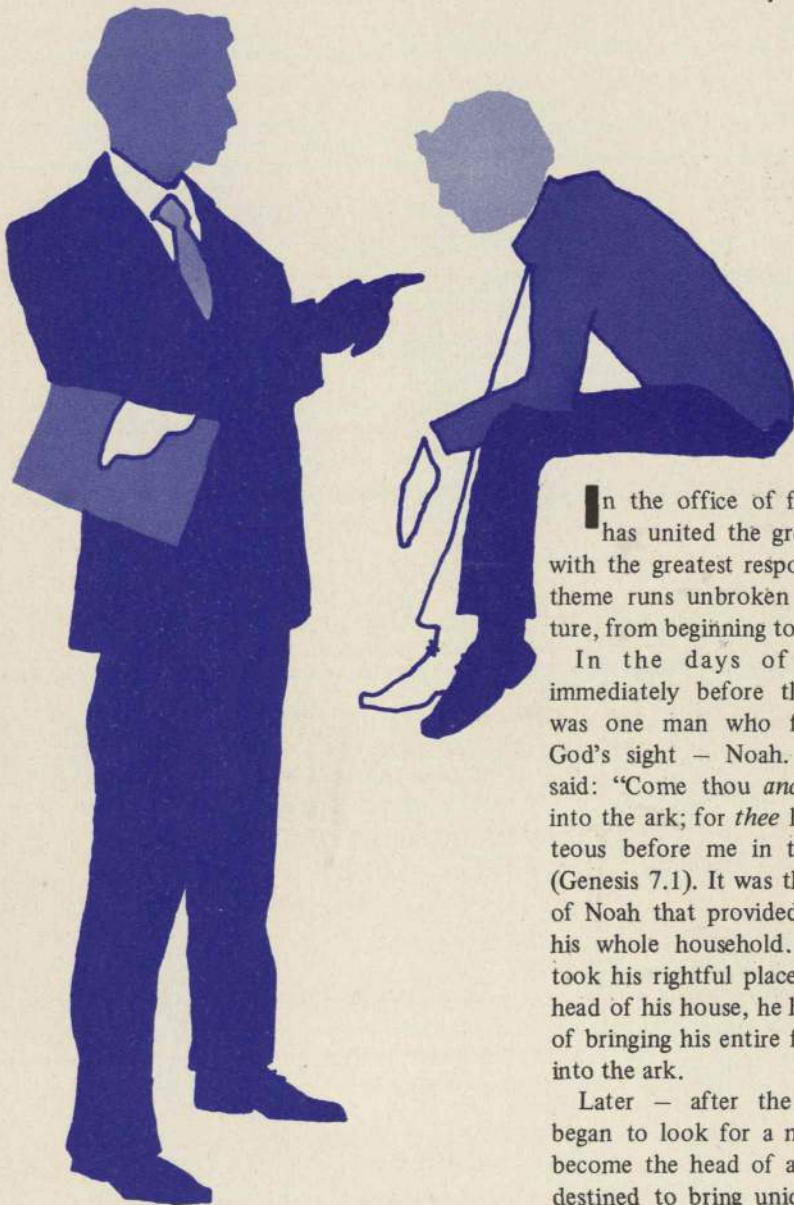


Third in a series of articles on "fatherhood."

# FATHERHOOD

The father chooses the way his family will go.

by Derek Prince



In the office of fatherhood God has united the greatest privileges with the greatest responsibilities. This theme runs unbroken through Scripture, from beginning to end.

In the days of fearful evil, immediately before the flood, there was one man who found grace in God's sight — Noah. To Noah God said: "Come thou *and all thy house* into the ark; for *thee* have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (Genesis 7.1). It was the righteousness of Noah that provided a covering for his whole household. Because Noah took his rightful place before God as head of his house, he had the privilege of bringing his entire family with him into the ark.

Later — after the flood — God began to look for a man who would become the head of a special nation, destined to bring unique blessings to

all mankind. Eventually God found the man He was looking for in the person of Abraham. Genesis 18.19 reveals the special element in Abraham's character which caused God to choose him before all the men of his day: "*For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord*, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

God chose Abraham for one primary reason: He knew that He could count on him to train and discipline his children and his household in the way of the Lord. What tremendous importance God must attach to this aspect of a man's character!

God expected Abraham to "command" his children and his household. The word *command* sounds undemocratic in some western ears. But it is the key word in this passage. There are times when a man has both the right and the duty to command. When he stands as God's representative and governor in his home, he must not be weak and compromising. He must say firmly to his wife and children, "I require you to do so and so."

Some of you men may ask, "What will my wife and children say? They aren't used to hearing me speak like that!"

May I suggest how they will react? It may take them several minutes to recover from the shock, but eventually they will say, "At last — we've got a man in the house!" Both the wife and the children know in their hearts who ought to lead, and they will respond to a father who takes his rightful place. Most women have taken the lead in the home by default, because the man failed to do it; and they will be happy to give it up, if the man will take over.

We have seen that it was the character and conduct of Abraham in his home that commended him to God. However, Abraham's nephew, Lot, stands in sad contrast. Lot had been with Abraham. He had seen God's blessings and had heard God's



promises. Nevertheless he made a wicked and foolish decision. He chose to lead his family into the degraded city of Sodom (Genesis 13.10–13).

The lesson of Lot moves me deeply each time I ponder it. He led his family into Sodom, but he never led them out again! When God's judgment fell upon the city, Lot lost his entire family, save two daughters (Genesis 19.15–26).

Fathers, let me say it to you as plainly as I can: If you know the way of the Lord, do not take the same foolish course as Lot. You may lead your family into Sodom — into the world with its sinful pleasures and enticements. You may make these things the center of life in your home. Then the day may come when you tire of these things and turn back to the way of God. But remember this! Your family may not be willing to follow you any longer. You who led them into Sodom may never be able to lead them out again!

Let us look at another leader of God's people — Joshua. At the end of his life, Joshua — having brought Israel into the promised land — challenges them with a decision: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" — either the heathen gods of Egypt or Canaan, or the Lord Himself, your Deliverer. Then Joshua adds, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24.15).

For years I marvelled at these words of Joshua. Obviously he could make his own personal decision to serve the Lord. But how could he be so sure that his family would serve the Lord? Then one day I understood the basis of Joshua's assurance. He had taken his God-given position as priest, prophet and king in his home. Therefore he knew he could count on the faithfulness of God to honor him in that position — by answering his priestly intercession for his family, by confirming his prophetic declaration made on their behalf, and by upholding his kingly authority over them. Joshua's assurance was based not on what he was in himself, but on God's faithfulness to the office of fatherhood which he held.

Let us turn on to one of the most frequently quoted passages of the New Testament — Acts 16.30–31. The Philippian jailer, under deep conviction, asks of Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Their answer is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house.*"

One day I was quoting this promise to a lady who was concerned for the salvation of her family, when the Holy Spirit spoke gently but firmly to my spirit: "You are misapplying that promise. It was not spoken to woman, but to a man. As a husband and father, he had a God-given right to claim the salvation of his whole family." God has given to every father, *by virtue of his position*, both the right and the responsibility to exercise faith for the salvation of his family.

Does this mean that the other members of the family can be saved solely on the basis of the father's faith, without exercising individual faith for themselves? No, it does not mean that. It means that, through the faith and ministry of the father in his God-given office, each member of his family will come to personal faith in Christ and will thus be saved.

This is not to say that a family cannot be saved through the faith of a believing mother or some other member. Rahab the harlot, in Jericho, provides a beautiful picture of a woman whose faith and courage brought salvation to her whole family. Out of the midst of the total destruction of the city where she lived, "the young men . . . brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had . . ." (Joshua 6.23). All these were the fruit of Rahab's faith.

However, the father has a different relationship to his family from that of any other member. If he takes his God-given *position* as head of his house, there goes with it the God-given *right* to claim the salvation of his household. This right is based not merely on the father's individual faith, but on the *office* of fatherhood which he holds. God's obligation is to the *office*, not merely to the man.

## RESULTS OF DELINQUENT FATHERS

The Word of God offers many warnings concerning the evil results that will follow when parents — and especially fathers — fail to fulfill their God-given responsibilities in the home. In Deuteronomy 28.15–68 we find a long list of curses which God warned Israel would come upon them if they were disobedient to His law. While reading through this list one day, I was struck by verse 41: "Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them: for they shall go into captivity." (This is addressed primarily to fathers, since the word "beget" describes the father's part in procreation.)

The simple thought occurred to me that children are given us by God that we may "enjoy" them. They are intended to be an ever present source of delight to us as their parents. Yet how many parents today are really *enjoying* their children? I remember once hearing a Baptist preacher with a large family pray, "Lord, help us to remember that our children are blessings, not burdens!" Somehow I formed the impression that he did not have much faith that he would receive an answer to his prayer.

Of one thing we may be sure, as parents. Our children will recognize our true attitude toward them — whether we feel them as burdens or blessings — and they will react accordingly.

If we fail to discipline and relate to our children in such a way that we enjoy them, what will be the alternative? Deuteronomy 28.41 tells us plainly — "they shall go into captivity." Has this not happened to millions of the children in our western civilization? They have "gone into captivity" — captivity to drugs, to illicit sex, to the occult and to countless other snares of Satan. Such children are in captivity just as surely as if they had been carried off into slavery by some foreign power. The responsibility lies at the door of the fathers who have failed to teach their children the law of God.

Malachi 2.7 pictures the priest as

(continued on page 18)



# BIBLE STUDY

## The Kingdom

Jesus is establishing a Kingdom! The Kingdom of God, and its gospel was the compelling force that motivated the early Christians to lay down their lives. An understanding of the Kingdom of God and its laws is vital to entering the inheritance which God has for us. This Bible Study may have some questions which require some thought to see the answers, but the challenge should be rewarding.

Answers to Bible Study are found on page 31.

1. Isaiah 9:6-7, a messianic prophecy of Jesus, tells us many things about the Kingdom or government of God. From this passage answer the following:
  - a. Who will be responsible for the government of God's Kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How great will be the increase of His Kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. What spiritual quality is identified with His Kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. What two things will He do with the Kingdom which He inherits? (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. By what means will He accomplish this? (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. How will this be performed? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Besides being a Savior, what else was Jesus announced to the world as? *Luke 2:10-11* \_\_\_\_\_
3. a. What is the Kingdom of God? *1 Corinthians 15:23-25* \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Where is the Kingdom of God? *Romans 10:9 & 1 Cor. 15:23-25* \_\_\_\_\_
4. a. What message did John the Baptist preach in preparing for Jesus? *Matthew 3:2* \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What was Jesus message? *Matt. 4:17* \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What did Jesus instruct his disciples to preach? *Matthew 10:7* \_\_\_\_\_
5. Certain qualities in the life of Jesus allowed the Father to give Him the position of authority He had in the Kingdom of God. In His earthly walk, what was His:
  - a. Position with the Father? *Matthew 8:5-10* \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Attitude? *Philippians 2:5-11* \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Way of life? *John 5:30; 8:28; Phil. 2:8* \_\_\_\_\_
6. If we are to enter and walk in the Kingdom of God, what must be our:
  - a. confession? *Romans 10:9* \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. attitude? *Matthew 18:1-6* \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. way of life? *Matthew 7:21* \_\_\_\_\_
7. What typifies the presence of the Kingdom of God on earth? *Romans 14:17* \_\_\_\_\_
8. As Christ entrusts the rule of portions of his Kingdom to us, what is the first thing we are told to bring under His Lordship? *Romans 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:27; Romans 6:12* \_\_\_\_\_
9. After bringing ourselves under His Lordship, what are some other areas He may tell us to administrate or rule for Him?
  - a. *Ephesians 5:22-6:4* \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. *1 Peter 5:1-5* \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the testing ground for a man to prove he is worthy of a position of authority in the Kingdom? *1 Timothy 3:5&12* \_\_\_\_\_
11. Why are we learning to rule in Christ's Kingdom here on earth? *2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:21* \_\_\_\_\_



# CITY GOVERNMENT— CAN IT WORK?

A look at the church in the city of Louisville, Kentucky.

by Frank S. Longino

"The best government is the least government." So advised Thomas Jefferson. The incomprehensible size and complexity of modern government at every level would probably "blow" his mind were he alive today. Many of us in the church, fettered for years by the demands and distractions of institutional church government, came out feeling as Jefferson did. The best is the least. Because of this feeling, we were also guilty of over-reacting to every semblance of government and organization in the church. In the name of spiritual freedom, we almost became irresponsible. In fact, one of the persistent weaknesses of the "charismatic-pentecostal" movement has seemed to be an almost paranoid reaction to government or organization — even God's brand of it. Part of this reaction is understandable in the beginning. But most of it may be charged to spiritual rebellion and refusal to submit to God and to one another in any real or practical sense. This results in spiritual bondage, not freedom.

## THE INEVITABILITY OF GOVERNMENT

The fact is that every group of individuals has a set of rules by which they relate to one another and recognize leadership. It may be a formal constitution or a few agreed upon but unspoken rules of conduct.

Even chickens in the barnyard develop a highly complex system of relationships called a "pecking order." A few years ago when we left a denominational church to form an independent work, we found ourselves falling into a form and order, even in our flight from another form and order. Government is inevitable; the question is — which kind will it be? When charismatics in a city emerge from the rapture of the initial experience with the Lord ("Jesus and me") and begin to notice some other people around them and start to realize they are going to have to relate to them in some way, they are moving toward government.

Is the best government the least government? If we mean the human variety — yes! But if we are talking about God's government, then the answer is no. We need all the government by God we can stand. The Lord's Prayer is a collective prayer of God's people. "Thy Kingdom [rule] come, Thy will be done on earth . . ." Many people labor under the delusion that theocracy (government by God) is just something between them and God without respect to others around them. This "Lone Ranger" complex of many charismatics causes them to flee government and therefore the Kingdom itself. But God rules and governs *a people* (Exodus 6:7; 1 Peter 2:9), not a loose collection of individuals and conference goers, each doing his

own thing, exercising his own ministry. And God has always governed His people through other humans. Here lies the difficulty. Some real questions arise at this point: Which other humans? How are they chosen? What form of government does God have? and more practically, How do we recognize and come under God's government in a city?

First we need to answer the question, What is the church in the city? Most Christians understand what the "universal church" is. Most of them know what a local church is. These concepts are scriptural. But the only other scriptural form of the church — the city church — has been confused by the development of an unscriptural form, the denominational church. Most people's view of the church in the city is of many churches, each with a pastor. All churches within a denominational grouping are interconnected, but this is as far as the connection between them goes in any significant sense. The New Testament pattern was that of just "the church" in each city with many pastors or shepherds. The whole church came together in one place for fellowship and edification (1 Cor. 14:26). However, denominational groups pose a serious obstacle to realizing the "church in the city" in any practical way. This brings up the question of church union. Relationship or union in a city may be of two sorts: organic or



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spiritual. Both are possible, but only if the spiritual comes first. Organic unity would mean the dissolving of all denominational structures, and the submitting of all Christians in the area to one unified governmental structure. Although this is the dream of many liberal churchmen, it is not the plan of God to bring *His* church together this way. Spiritual union, however, is already going on and we are beginning to see that this spiritual union and government can work pretty effectively all around, under, between, and beside these other institutional structures — for the present at any rate. Still, how do we go about all this? I'm not fully sure. Nevertheless, let me share a little of our pilgrimage in the city of Louisville, Kentucky.

### GOD LAYS THE GROUNDWORK

Over nine years ago, several hundred seminary students and their wives in Louisville received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We associated rather informally and were satisfied with the operation of a few of the gifts of the Spirit. We knew nothing of "body ministry." Many of us pastored churches away from Louisville. Most were finally scattered over the world. Almost all these at the seminary received the the baptism under the ministry of other Spirit-filled Baptists. In the meantime, many lay persons in Louisville were receiving the baptism in Full Gospel Business Men's meetings, in home prayer groups that were springing up, and in a growing Pentecostal church in the city. A large Catholic Pentecostal community sprang up, influenced much by the ministry of Father Duane Stenzel and others. About four years ago God began bringing some of us back to Louisville in strategic ministries. I came to a small but influential full-gospel work in February of 1971. It was about ten years old and indepen-

dent. When I came back to Louisville, there were several strong "house churches" and many prayer groups in the city. I knew little about them and really did not know how to relate to them. I believe they were not sure how to relate to us either! Many of them regarded any expression of the church other than a "house church" as unscriptural and, therefore, out of the will of God. Most of them seemed very reactive to the institutional church or to anything that faintly resembled it.

Three weeks after I moved to Louisville, I was introduced to one expression at least, of the church of Louisville. I heard indirectly through the "grapevine" that there was going to be a meeting of the church of Louisville in a public building about two blocks from our own church building. A visiting apostle from out of the state was the occasion for the meeting. Since I had read a little of Watchman Nee, I thought I knew something of this meeting even though it seemed a little exclusive. I called several other pastors to see if they had been invited. They had not, but we decided to go anyhow since we felt we were part of the church of Louisville. We went and had a good experience of fellowship although our coming probably surprised the twenty-five or thirty who were there.

This initiated my thinking about the "church of Louisville." Where was it and how was it going to be realized, practically speaking? What was my place in it? I began to look about me more closely. Mostly, these house churches, prayer groups Pentecostal and full-gospel churches were not related to one another in any real sense. Ephesians 4:3 assured me that unity was in the Spirit, therefore, those churches who claimed most of the Spirit must take the initiative in this matter of unity and coming together. The Full Gospel Business Men's monthly meeting was about the only catalyst in the city, but it was not the church in Louisville, nor was it ever meant to be. I began to hunger for fellowship with the men who were leaders in the charismatic movement over the city. About that time, the

pastor of the First Presbyterian Church called and asked me to call a meeting of pastors and leaders in the city who shared our experience of the Holy Spirit. With that confirmation of what I was already feeling, I did. In the first year we had as many as forty-five or fifty breakfast meetings once a month to praise God and seek his face. We sponsored several teaching seminars for the whole area which were very edifying. When several heretical groups tried to establish foot-holds in the city, we were strong enough in our unity to pray them out.

At that time we "recognized" anyone as an elder who called himself one. We called ourselves the "elders in Louisville." We were not quite sure what an elder was, but it sounded scriptural anyway. Besides, Watchman Nee said that was what we were and several traveling apostles confirmed it, so that settled it. We spoke of ourselves as the "church of Louisville" and were all concerned to use correct scriptural terminology. I remember some Spirit-filled clergymen, very much a part of their own denominational structure, visiting the meetings from time to time. They said little and were visibly concerned over the prospect of becoming involved in another church structure. They were also turned off somewhat by what to them were irresponsible and irrelevant comments by persons they would call "laymen." They were confused by our terminology. Needless to say, they did not return. The gulf was too large for them. We began to ask the question, What is an elder? We began to see that some of the "elders" were not really elders. Prayer groups led by them began to be in trouble. Some had produced nothing but division and hurt in their groups. Added to all this was the uneasy feeling that we were like ostriches with our heads in the sand regarding the *real* church in Louisville. We had no practical relationship with non-charismatics in the city and most of the Pentecostal churches were apathetic about the whole idea. I knew that God was restoring the church in the city, but where were we in the whole process?



## BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNING

As I sought God in the matter, I was reminded of a principle which God had taught me in another connection. That was: God starts with us *where we are*, not where are not. That sounds so obvious as to be simple — and it is. Just as we begin with birth and childhood in our personal physical and spiritual lives, we must also begin there in our corporate spiritual growth. We had partially digested much teaching on house churches, city churches, body ministry and so on. We thought we saw the completed pattern and set out to establish the reality of it ourselves. We were going to bring in the Kingdom. What presumption!

One of the first things we realized was that just meeting montly with such a mixture of ministries could not result in any real commitment or submission to one another. Yet all the while, persons who had no real connection with any other body in the city were believing that they were in submission to the “elders in the city.” We were unwittingly giving “covering” of a sort to persons and ministries which were not in scriptural order or real submission anywhere. What should we do?

We decided to fall back and regroup. Among those meeting were three or four men who were shepherds of relatively large groups. These men began to meet informally each week for fellowship and prayer. The other meeting was stopped. (We had not really known what to call it for some time anyway.) In my own section of the city, I began to concentrate on establishing a deep and significant relationship with those men who felt led to flow and minister in and around what was going on at Valley Community Church. We became something like a Christian Center though we still had our eye on the spiritual unity of the city and on our part in submitting to it. We certainly did not want to build a “kingdom” which would compete with the “church in the city.” Several house groups came in submission to the local ministry there for covering. The other men with larger groups

began doing the same with some variations.

We still had a vision of the church of Louisville meeting all together in one place, praising and lifting up Jesus with one accord. We still anticipated the raising up of more apostolic, prophetic and other ministries in the body as Jesus gave more ministry gifts to the church here. But we realized that we had tried to leap-frog in one or two jumps to a place which could only be arrived at by orderly steps of growth. So, instead of trying to bring the whole city together in a big meeting at once, we backed up and tried to establish strong relationships in local bodies in areas of the city. Meanwhile, the recognized leaders or shepherds in the city kept meeting weekly to keep lines of communication open. One by one, other men were invited who had proven ministries.

## THE GROWTH OF RELATIONSHIP

These meetings of the shepherds were and are vitally different. All ministerial meetings I had ever attended before were made up of men representing their church or denomination. No matter what name they gave to the meetings, it was always every man for his own group. But this meeting was different. We just came as Bill, Frank, Roy — men before God who needed to share their natural selves with one another. We were not in competition with each other, or out to impress one another. We are now really beginning to trust one another and to feel free to discuss theological positions with which we may disagree without feeling threatened. We have found in Ephesians, chapter 4 that the unity of the Spirit comes before unity of doctrine. As a result, we are sending some of our sheep to each other for ministry in the area we each “specialize” in.

In all of this I began to see that the Holy Spirit was bringing about some very deep relationships and some real submission all over the city. The practical working out was taking place in manageable groups. Because we were delving more deeply in each

other's lives, we began to have confrontations arranged by the Holy Spirit. As we moved closer in relationship to one another, sparks began to fly. I became involved in more of these confrontations in the city and in my own local body than I had ever been involved in before in my entire life. In the past, these “face-offs” have resulted in new churches or new denominations. Naturally, I was apprehensive. But this time we *had* to work things out because we were committed to one another. Besides, the validity of the Spirit-filled life was at stake. Could brother be reconciled to brother? In each area of the city we were finding out what real submission meant. There were still some, however, who rejected the whole idea and went running off again. Over all, though, we were experiencing a quiet strengthening of the body in Louisville.

I recall one confrontation between two elders. One elder had been cut-off from a local fellowship by the other presiding elder of that body. As presiding elder of the group of elders who meet regularly, I was asked to be present at the confrontation along with two elders from another large body in the city. We prayed and then began. Charges and counter-charges flew. Misunderstandings were aired and things were said in scorching honesty that made me doubt that any free relationship would be possible afterwards. I was feeling that we had better just agree to disagree, get it over with, and try to pick up the pieces. Time was running out. We got up and joined hands to pray. When we did, a miracle happened! The Holy Spirit fell on us and covered the whole situation with love, respect, and forgiveness. I could not believe what I was seeing, even in myself. By following scriptural principles and by submitting to the counsel of the other elders in the meeting, the men were reconciled. God sovereignly acted. There *was* city government! As I drove away from the meeting, I realized that God was really working to establish His government in the city of Louisville. He was doing it — in His way and in His time. For the first time I began to see that divine



order is mostly right relationships and not merely right form. Whatever form we have in the government of the city will stand on the quality of relationships we have one with another in Christ.

### WHERE WE ARE NOW

Several things are beginning to emerge just now, but we are still a long way from a complete realization of the city church. We have begun to hold believer's meetings for the whole area and the results are overwhelming. The last meeting at the time of this writing had 1400 persons in attendance, most of whom were submitted to one another in their area and to the shepherds of those bodies. There was solid and powerful worship. The beautiful order of the entire service impressed many visitors who had been in many "big" services before. There are many ways to get a crowd together, but if that were our emphasis we would fall into an old trap. In that same connection, God showed me

recently that the beautiful worship we share in our local body here is a result not of the big meetings themselves, but of the ministry in the counseling rooms, prayer rooms, disciples meetings, home meetings and countless informal confrontations. In all this, the Holy Spirit is teaching us to submit to one another and to anointed ministries that Jesus is bestowing on the body in Louisville. These lessons are not learned in monthly meetings or in big praise meetings, they are hammered out on the anvil of daily living in close proximity.

We have come to realize a few things. One has to do with leadership in the city. Those who have learned submission can very easily recognize the leaders God has chosen. Second is that Jesus is still the One who will build His church (Matthew 16:18) and the government will be upon His shoulders (Isaiah 9:6). Shoulder ministries are apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists and elders that Christ chooses and anoints unmis-

takeably with the oil of the Spirit. Many such ministries among us are now being sent out to minister over the country. The anointing on their several ministries is a product of their vital relationship here. Third, we have come to realize that God is faced with problems in restoration that He was not faced with in creation of the first church. Making too close a comparison between the first- and twentieth-centuries can be dangerous. There are almost nineteen centuries of time-encrusted tradition to deal with. And finally, we have about come to the conclusion that no one except the Lord has the complete picture of the church of Louisville or of any other city for that matter. This in itself is enormously liberating. We are more content to wait on the Lord rather than force the issue in getting great "spiritual" gatherings organized and prematurely "recognizing" all sorts of ministries and governmental structures. So we pray, "Thy Kingdom, come, Thy will be done in Louisville as it is in heaven." ❧

### FATHERHOOD

(continued from page 13)

the guardian and interpreter of God's law: "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth . . ." (The "knowledge" here referred to is the knowledge of God's law.) As priest in his home, each father has this responsibility — to guard and to interpret the law of God for his family.

What if the father-priests in a nation fail in their responsibility? In Hosea 4:6 God sums up the tragic situation which results: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

What a fearful thing it is when God Himself tells us that He will "forget" our children! When a father rejects the knowledge of God's law, he is no longer fit to exercise his priestly ministry on behalf of his family. As a result, the children lose the protection

of a father's authority and covering, and become a prey to all the snares and deceptions of Satan. Why is our land today filled with *God-forgotten children* — children who are strangers to the covenant promises and provisions of God? Because their fathers *have forgotten the law of God!*

In Malachi 4:5-6 the final word left to us in the Old Testament is a curse; but it is also a promise: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

By prophetic revelation the Bible here depicts the most urgent social problem of the period immediately preceding the close of the age. It is the divided, strife-torn homes, with parents and children alienated from each other. How accurate God's Word is! It is precisely this situation which confronts us today. Unless it can be reversed, there is only one possible

outcome — a curse upon the whole earth.

However, God promises to send a ministry that will "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." Thank God, the situation is not hopeless! Reconciliation and restoration in our homes are yet possible. This is the message of God's Spirit to us today.

But we must observe the order which God's Word establishes. First, the fathers must turn to their children. Reconciliation in each home must begin from the father's side. If the fathers will repent and humble themselves before their children, then the children will also turn to their fathers. But the first move is with the fathers.

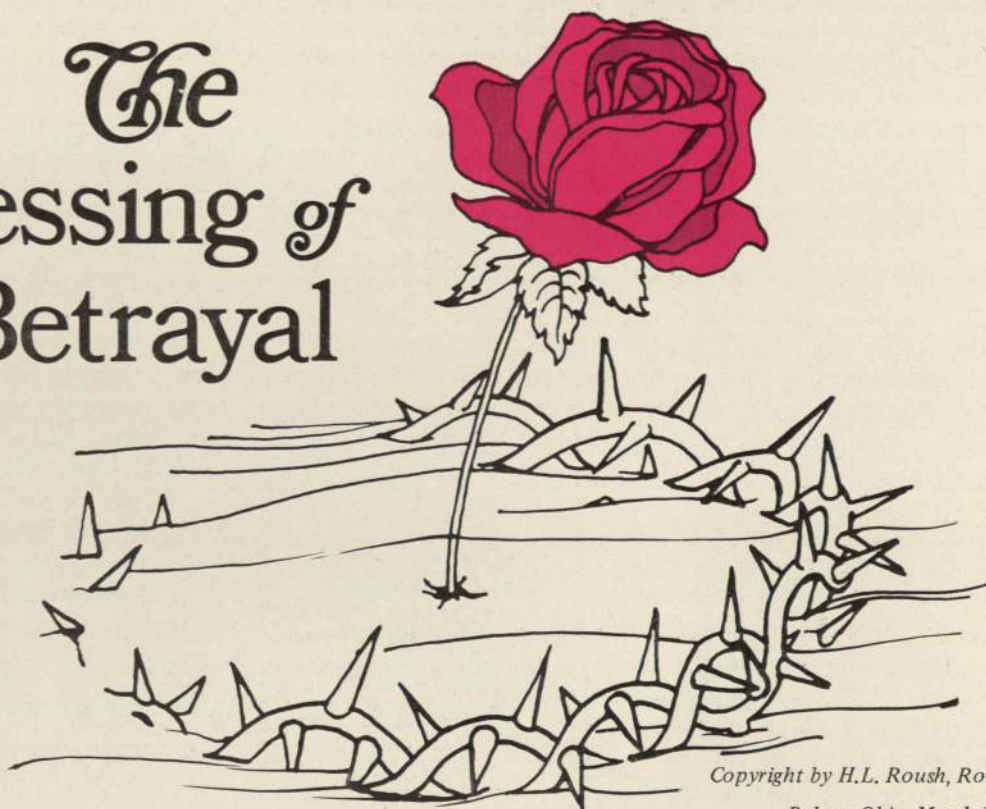
Fathers, I challenge you to be men! I challenge each one of you to rise up and take your position, under God, as the head of your house! If you have been a renegade, repent and ask your wife and children to forgive you — be reconciled with them. Then lead your family into God's full provision for them. ❧



# The Blessing of Betrayal

by H.L. Roush

A divine maxim  
of deriving good  
from evil.



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Belpre, Ohio, March 1967.

**T**he snow fell silently like drifting feathers and soon covered the drab and soiled earth with white. It had been snowing all night and I looked from my study window with a warm quiet heart on the first snow of winter. It was the day after Thanksgiving and the snowfall gave me all the excuse I needed to slow down my busy schedule to take the needed time to enjoy the fellowship of my family. We had much to be thankful for that year, as always.

The precious calm of that morning was soon shattered by the insistent ringing of the phone. It was the first link in a heavy chain that was soon to bind me in despair and sorrow; for the voice on the other end of the line informed me that great trouble had just entered my life. Circumstances had been brought to pass that now endangered my whole ministry, as well as the potential ruin of my personal and family life. It is amazing how quickly the whole world seems to change when our circumstances change. Truly, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, for the quiet white of the snow now seemed to me to be

only hypocrisy that covered the hard, cruel facts which I knew lay beneath its deceptive cover. Serious accusations had been made against me by an unknown accuser, and God knew my heart that I was an innocent victim of distorted circumstances. I could only cry, "Oh, Father, who would do this?" My prayer was answered in a few short days and with it came the deepest pain of all, for my betrayer was discovered to be a friend who professed to love me.

For two days I brooded in stunned silence and blackest despair. The trouble which I found myself facing was serious enough but was compounded beyond that which I felt that I was able to bear by the unbelievable fact that the one who had brought this grief into my life was one who broke bread with me around the table of the Lord and spoke often his love for me.

Our "personal" experiences are not so personal as we might imagine — what is happening in our lives as members of the body of Christ is happening for the comfort and help of others (2 Corinthians 1). It is "happen-

ing" because it is the mutual inheritance of the members of Christ's body to share in the sufferings of the Head (Philippians 1:29; Colossians 1:24).

## THE CERTAINTY OF BETRAYAL

The withering experience of being betrayed by our friends and loved ones must of necessity come in every believer's life. I base this observation on much experience in the Christian life plus the clear and simple teaching of the Word of God. It is an interesting discovery to learn that the word "betray" and its forms are only used in regard to Jesus' betrayal by Judas except a single time in Luke 21:16. In this passage, which is prophetic, it is used to depict the end of the age of grace and is stated to be one of the identification marks, or signs of, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The verse simply reads:

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall be put to death.

This is a terrible thing to look forward



to, but it is the plain promise of the word of Christ. The age of grace is to end with a world-wide religious deception. It will be the time of the great counterfeit — perilous times in which the truth will be resisted by deceit and trickery. (Study Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:1-8).

I believe that every man, in whom Jesus dwells, will in these last terrible times have his own personal Judas; for, in the age of the counterfeit the false brother will be prominent. Also, betrayal is the common experience of every man whom God has ever used for His glory.

Our verse in Luke 21:16 says that betrayal comes by the hand of "parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks and friends." Startling, but true and for a good reason. First, our enemies cannot betray us. We do not let them close enough to our hearts. We are not intimate enough with our enemies. It is with our brethren and our friends that we share our hearts. Since our enemies cannot hurt us, it is our friends who wound us. So, the Psalmist said in Psalms 55:12-14:

For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have born it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

So all Bible history echoes the fact of betrayal at the hand of our friends. Abel was betrayed by his only brother, Esau by his twin brother, Isaac by his son, Uriah by his trusted king and by his lovely wife, Jesus by His devoted disciple, Paul by "false brethern." We need not go on, for this solemn truth remains: it is often our friends that rise against us and so magnify our troubles in the Christian life.

### THE METHOD OF BETRAYAL

The method will always be the same. First, our betrayers will choose the time carefully. In the case of Jesus, He was betrayed at the exact moment

in His life when He needed human fellowship the most (Mark 14:37); at the hour of His greatest need; and when He stood at the threshold of His greatest work (Calvary).

Our betrayers also know the *place* to strike us. John 18:2 shows that Judas knew the secret place of Jesus' retreat. They observe us and know our place of agony and prayer; and so having the advantage of intimacy, they smite us in an opportune place.

Their means of betrayal will always be the kiss. They encourage our love that they might strike us in an unguarded moment. The Word of God says:

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me (Psalms 41:9).

There is a precious word picture in this verse. The original meaning portrays a trusted family horse viciously kicking from behind an unsuspecting and trusting friend.

### VICTORY OVER THE BETRAYER

What became of Judas? History has written his tragic end, but lurking in the seeming vagueness of the brief accounts of his death is a drama that has remained untold too long.

In order to see it in its real perspective, we must look briefly at the relationship between Jesus and Judas. Jesus chose Judas and prayed for him (Luke 6:12-13), as He did for Jerusalem that rejected Him and for those who crucified Him. Jesus desired Judas to eat the last Passover with Him (Luke 23:14-15), loved him and offered him the place of love and communion at the table in the Passover chamber (John 13:26). Jesus washed his feet (John 13:5) and, hence, expressed to him a love that was indeed unfeigned and worthy of the Son of God. Jesus gave Judas full recognition and never revealed him as His future betrayer, referring to Judas as His "friend." Careful meditation on the events leading to the betrayal will reveal that Jesus offered to Judas every token of love and was unwilling

to disown him even at the moment of his crime.

Jesus taught in Matthew 5:44 that we love our enemies and He practiced all that He preached on the subject. Even though He knew full well in advance the evil which Judas would work against Him, He demonstrated His sincere love in every conceivable manner.

In Mark 14:45 Judas agreed to betray Jesus with a kiss. There are two words in the original for kiss. One means the kiss of friendship and one means to kiss fervently or the kiss of real love. Now come to Gethsemane and see the final scene. Judas comes with the multitude armed with staves and swords to take Jesus prisoner. Judas greets the Lord and kisses him; but, according to the original, not with the kiss of friendship as he agreed, but with the kiss of genuine love! Only eternity will reveal what happened that moment in Judas' heart. Perhaps, in the flickering light of the torches, Judas sees in the face of Jesus the shocking truth that in spite of his betrayal, Jesus loved him yet, for He called Judas, "friend." Jesus is taken away and Judas cries that he has betrayed innocent blood; he had learned that Jesus' love for him was real. His heart must have experienced a crushing blow, and now he cannot rationalize his madness or justify his dastardly deed.

Did Judas die at his own hand? It seems apparent to me that Judas died under the force of the irresistible love of Christ. Judas destroyed himself because he could no longer live with himself or others and all of this was worked by the unfeigned love of the Lord Jesus Christ. It seems to me that the words of Romans 12:20-21 are suddenly clear:

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Is not the Word fulfilled that states: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal . . ." (2 Corinthians 10:4)



and "Charity (love) never faileth" (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Indeed we desperately need to settle in our hearts that the Word of God is true. We only give reason to the hatred of our enemies and cause to the betrayal by our friends when we recompense evil for evil.

### THE NEED FOR BETRAYAL

There is another consideration in the fact of Judas' betrayal. He was chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ, although the Lord knew beforehand that Judas would betray Him (John 6:64). In my own personal experience of betrayal at the hand of a friend, the dear Lord showed me this precious truth. While in the fire of this trial, I went to bed one night brooding over this one who pretended to love me and used his profession to betray me into the hands of enemies. In the night I awoke in prayer to be answered with these thoughts: the Lord Jesus chose His own friends and knowing in advance the treachery of Judas, He chose him anyway! He said of them that He had chosen them twelve and one of them was a devil. I was made to thank God for that devil, as he was necessary to the ministry of Jesus, and for my betrayer since he must be needed in my life as well.

What possible need could a believer have to be betrayed by friends or loved ones? What good purpose could the pain and sorrow of a wounded heart serve? I asked these questions and found answers in the night that met the need of my heart.

We have need to learn the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Consider the fact that Jesus was never deceived in Judas.

... for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him (John 6:64).

I am sure that in every experience of betrayal in the believer's life he can look back and remember the faithful warning of the Holy Spirit. In one case, I recall I could have known from the beginning if I had only listened to

the witness of the Spirit within. Who can explain the nature of the warning of God in the soul against a false brother? It is not easily put into words but all saints know the uneasiness that reason cannot take away about some who profess to be our friends. The betrayal experience brings into sharp focus the truth that public acceptance among believers, using the phraseology of the saints, doing religious works, preaching or any other outward mark that is often accepted as "proof" of a man's salvation and trustworthiness, does *not* tell always the true story. "... for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Let us give to every man the standing which he professes to have with God, but never let us go beyond the testimony of the Spirit of God in our hearts in our relationship with others. We read of many who came to Jesus and professed faith in Him, based purely upon the miracles that He performed and not upon a real heart faith in Him as the Son of God. Drawn only by the impression of His outward works, they numbered themselves among His followers:

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:24-25).

Our obligation is not to open our hearts to every man who seeks entrance into our inner man, but to let our hearts be affected toward others by the Holy Spirit who will never fail to warn us of those who seek to deceive us. Let us learn that "fellowship" is the work of the Holy Spirit and not of man. Let us not seek to establish it without His help or to ignore it when He has so obviously created it between our hearts and others in the body of Christ.

What is the need of betrayal? Perhaps it comes to light through Peter's words in his first epistle when he observes that the "heaviness through manifold temptations" of his readers "need be." Needed because, as he so beautifully explains, there is a

future and present fruit of such heart-searching experiences. In the future, this trial of faith, like gold tried in the fire, will be brought out of the furnace of our lives as praise, honor, and glory for the Lord Jesus Christ at His appearing. If we could only lay hold of this tremendous potential in the midst of our trials, how differently our hearts would respond to the challenge of the hour! Yet, besides this, (grace upon grace), the heavy trials of life are used to do a work so necessary to all of us — the work of increasing our love and joy in this present life. Read 1 Peter 1:6-8 and remember that out of every furnace of affliction, we have come out loving the Lord as never before and rejoicing in the reality of His fellowship.

We need the betrayal experience to learn true submission to the Lord. The greatest prayer which the child of God can utter is the prayer of the perfect Son: "... even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Luke 10:21). When we can thus cry from our wounded hearts, the sting is gone and we have triumphed; for our submission to the pleasure of the Father in our lives brings victory over every attack against us (see 2 Corinthians 2:14).

Read 2 Corinthians 4:15-18, which gives more reasons for the seeming unreasonableness of life's great disappointments. Paul gives the proper perspective to our heartaches by telling us that the attack is not against the outer man, but against the inner man. We so often tremble under the fear of what this will "do to me," and forget in times of trouble that nothing can harm us in the inner man, if we have taken to ourselves the full armor of God. These things are only for a moment compared to eternity and will one day work an eternal weight of glory. These deep waters will only serve to lift our eyes from earthly ties and "things" and put them upon the values of eternity. The enemy would overwhelm us and darken our reason by causing us to concentrate on the fearful details of the outer experience; thus, while we occupy ourselves with meaningless worry about the outer,



we are often smitten in the inner man to our own defeat. Many a saint has survived the outward experience only to fall mortally wounded by bitterness, resentment, malice, and an unforgiving heart. In times of betrayal let the saint first learn to gird up the loins of his mind in Christ and to appropriate the full armor of God, which is actually putting on Christ in all of His strength and might.

### THE BLESSING OF BETRAYAL

Consider the blessing that betrayal brings when through it we learn to recognize no hand but the faithful hand of our loving Father in heaven. We give far too much glory to the devil, the world and the flesh in the circumstances of our lives. We blame our enemies when we are buffeted; but great peace and quietness of heart become ours when we refuse to recognize second causes in our lives. God is sovereign and He is our Father. He has been pleased to allow this to happen to us and our part is to believe that "... all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

In the blessing of this quietness, David endured with a patient spirit the cursing of Shimei and forbade any evil to be returned to him for the evil rendered. David saw but one hand behind it all — the loving hand of God working good through Shimei's evil.

Joseph was bitterly betrayed by his brothers, placed in the pit and sold as a slave only to be befriended by Potiphar's wife and then cruelly betrayed again. Placed in prison, he made friends with the butler and soon knew the agony of the kiss of betrayal once more. But the years passed and Joseph was remembered of the Lord and exalted to the throne of Egypt in victory and the blessed secret of his sanity, yea, of his triumphant, conquering patience is revealed in his words to his brothers: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good..." (Genesis 50:20).

Peter manifested this same truth in

his perspective of Calvary's cross. Although he accuses the nation of taking Jesus by wicked hands to crucify and slay Him, Peter viewed it as no tragedy, saw in it no victory of Satan; but, triumphantly announces that the Lord Jesus Christ was "... delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God..." (Acts 2:23).

And so, my dearly beloved saints of God, who at this moment find yourselves in perplexity over the betrayal of a friend, admit this moment that God could have overruled it if He had wished, but allowed it for your good. Rejoice in this blessing, as He is owning you as His son and preparing you for the comfort and the blessing of others (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). He has graced your life with the glorious privilege of sharing with you the most intimate of the sufferings of Christ (Philippians 3:10). This fellowship is with a select company, for not all are privileged to know the agony of betrayal that we might share in some degree the depth of the love of Christ. Your betrayer has meant it for evil, but God will make it all for good; and as Jesus chose Judas, since He had need of the betrayal in His own life, so God in His faithfulness has chosen our betrayers — He knew full well that if the choice had been ours, it would never have been made.

You ask — "Chosen our betrayers? What good can they do for us?" You have forgotten that Judas' betrayal delivered Jesus Christ to His greatest work and put in motion the events that fulfilled the eternal purposes of God in Christ. Eternal redemption through the blood of Christ was the fruit of Judas' despicable deed! It remains a fact that our friends will not do this work for us. Only our enemies will deliver us to the pain of circumstances beyond our control; and hence, perform a real service to the saints of God.

A betrayer delivered me to circumstances that changed the course of my ministry and released me to the greatest work of my life. A betrayer worked hardship in my life that

resulted in my being freed from dependence upon man and made me the Lord's free man!

The blessing of betrayal? Only God could make it thus, but I have found the paradox of these words to be a reality. Betrayal, at the hands of those whom we have trusted with our hearts, can yield blessing that we are not able to contain. Through betrayal I have learned what the Psalmist meant when he sang —

By this I know that thou favour-  
est me because mine enemy doth  
not triumph over me (Psalms  
41:11).

Also, what the Prophet meant when he wrote —

No weapon that is formed  
against thee shall prosper; and every  
tongue that shall rise against thee in  
judgment thou shalt condemn. This  
is the heritage of the servants of the  
Lord, and their righteousness is of  
me, saith the Lord (Isaiah 54:17).

Through betrayal I have learned that the strength and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in my life can only be worked in the blessing of weakness brought to pass by the buffeting of Satan's messenger as a thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Through betrayal we are prepared for the blessing of being used to comfort others in the same trial of faith with the same comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Through the experience of betrayal by false friends, I have received one of life's greatest blessings in learning how to love my enemies and to bless those who persecute me.

When the blessing of betrayal is realized, when we look back and see how much we have reaped in increased joy, love, grace, strength and fellowship with the dear Lord Jesus, we are overwhelmed with the realization of how much good our betrayer has worked for us. His intentions are of no concern. It is the blessed fruit which he had brought into our lives that matters. ♥





# HOMOSEXUALITY

A problem  
the church can  
no longer keep  
outside its walls.

by Bob Sutton

The last in  
a series of articles  
on the moral  
and ethical crisis  
in our society.

In a major denominational magazine the pastor of a homosexual congregation in San Francisco states, "I'm a gay man, and a minister. I expect to go home tonight to my gay lover with whom I have lived for thirteen years. Tomorrow I expect to preach to my congregation and to administer communion to them. And I thank God that I feel quite good about it all."

The Gay Liberation Movement is demanding that homosexuals have the legal right to marry and adopt children. Homosexual movies and slick pornographic magazines are available on newsstands showing homosexual acts between both men and women. Why the seeming explosion of open



homosexual activity in our society?

Over the past few decades society's view of homosexuality has changed radically. Until recently homosexuality was generally viewed as a perversion and a sin of the grossest sort against God and nature.

After the Enlightenment and the beginning of modern science, man began to try to find explanations for himself and the world around him through scientific investigation apart from the Word of God. From this intellectual climate came psychology — the study of behavior. Unwilling to accept a biblical concept of man's nature, psychologists sought to ascribe unusual or deviant behavior to a cause and effect pattern.

Carried to a logical conclusion, homosexuality was no longer a sin, but a behavioral pattern which was merely *different* from the norm. It was caused by a set of circumstances in the life of the individual — parental problems or a traumatic childhood, for instance; more recently, the theory that it is caused by genetic patterns within the person.

Following the trends of modern medicine and psychology, many sections of the church have sought to open their doors to practicing homosexuals, not just as members, but as part of the clergy.

On June 25, 1973, the United Church of Christ ordained William Johnson, a practicing homosexual, to the ministry in their denomination. Johnson says, "I am gay and I make that affirmation with joy and pride." He is now the executive director of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual for his denomination; and he states firmly that his position "... is rooted in the gospel of Christ."

The July/August 1973 issue of *Trends Magazine*, a publication of the United Presbyterian Church for older youth and adults, dealt extensively with the issue of homosexuality and featured the story of William Johnson. What was the magazine trying to get across to young Presbyterians? Homosexuals should be accepted as individuals with a variant life style. It is neither sick, sinful nor unnatural. On

the contrary, homosexuality is practiced by wholesome, normal people. What should be the Christian's view of homosexuality among both men and women?

### A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING

Our society has become the victim of subjective moral standards — or doing what is "right" for you as you see it. The crying need is for a clear, objective, impartial standard — and who better qualifies to set that standard than man's Creator. God's word in the Scripture offers us an objective standard which is not affected by time, current philosophy, or popular opinions.

To understand the biblical position of homosexuality, we need to examine God's design and purpose for sex. Essentially there are three biblical purposes for sex:

*First:* Sexual relationships were designed by God to bring a man and a woman into a physical/spiritual union. God said of man, "He shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be *one flesh*" (Genesis 2:24). Paul identified this with the sex act in 1 Corinthians 6:16 where he says, "The one who joins himself to [has sexual relations with] a harlot is *one body with her*. For he says [quoting Genesis 2:24] 'the two will become one flesh.'" (NASV). Sexual relationships cause the man and the woman to enter into a union of body and soul called "becoming one flesh."

The sexual union is only part of "becoming one flesh," but it is the essence of the nature of man and woman in that they were not created complete without the other. After God had made all creation and pronounced it "good," He looked at man and said, "It is *not good* for man to be alone." Man, God's own creation was incomplete! So God made woman to complete man. The Scripture says, "*male and female* created he them." These two words speak of the sexual identities of man and woman which is more than just physical organs; it is a part of the total emotional and mental make-up of the person. It speaks of

*maleness and femaleness.*

Bob Mumford expresses it this way in *Living Happily Ever After*:

God designed marriage to bring to man and woman the ultimate in blessings. In order for this to be accomplished, God says in effect, "When I made man, I only made a half. Then when he meets his mate, he meets the other half." That which is inadequate in itself must have these "missing parts" supplied if happiness is to result. (p. 18)

Sexual relationships are an expression of God's design for the union and mutual fulfillment of male and female.

*Second:* Sex and marriage is to be a physical picture of the union between Christ and the believer. Paul compares the relationship of the husband and wife to that of Christ and the church in Ephesians, chapter 5. He says, "Husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies . . . just as Christ also does the church." He concludes by referring to our original passage from Genesis, "And the two [the man and woman] shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to *Christ and the church*" (Ephesians 5:31-32 NASV). God designed marriage to be a picture of His relationship with us.

*Third:* God made sex for procreation. To the man and woman God said simply, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1:28).

Anyone ministering to homosexuals to any degree has realized that it is a bondage practically unequaled in the spiritual world. The degree of bondage will vary, usually depending on the intensity and duration of homosexual activity. In any case, the man or woman who engages in homosexual activity to *any degree* opens himself, either actually or potentially, to one of the deepest bondages in Satan's arsenal. History and Scripture give us clues as to the seriousness and depth of this bondage.

First, in God's eyes homosexuality is flatly called an abomination. It was an act that the Mosaic Law considered punishable by death (Leviticus 20:13). So closely does God guard proper



sexual identities that even the switching of articles of men's and women's clothing was called "an abomination" (Deuteronomy 22:5). Homosexuality amounts to a mingling of God ordained sexual identities innate in male and female and is considered a perversion or a twisting of divine order.

Secondly, history has shown that a national acceptance of homosexuality is a point at which divine judgment usually falls upon a civilization. This can be seen in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18 & 19); the perversion of the nations which inhabited Canaan when Israel was ordered to drive them out completely (Leviticus 18:19-24 & Numbers 33:51-53); and from the historical records of Rome, Greece, Egypt and other great civilizations which have fallen under divine judgment.

Thirdly, there is a quality in the very nature of homosexuality that links it with the perverted rebellion of Satan and the demonic spirits. History and experience show that demonic forces, by their very nature, when left to run unchecked will eventually lead to perversion. Romans 1:18-32 pictures vividly the nature of this rebellion which ends in a perversion of divine order. So strong does this power become that those committing these acts receive, "in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (Romans 1:27 NASV). This is the personality change that occurs when one completely opens himself and gives himself over to a life of homosexual activity. The spiritual forces behind homosexuality are of such magnitude that they can completely change the God-given sexual identities of men and women. This personality change is recognized in 1 Corinthians 6:9 where Paul says that homosexuals and those effeminate (or masculine) will not inherit the kingdom of God. He speaks, of course, of personality changes because of sexual perversion.

### SOME CURRENT THOUGHTS

Within the church there have risen various lines of thought concerning

homosexuality; mostly from the influence of modern psychology and the Gay Liberation Movement, that could use some examination in light of what we have just discussed from the Scripture.

One of the most common statements that is heard is: *Homosexuality is not wrong; it is only a different or variant life style.* Scripture only recognizes one normal, healthy sexual relationship — a heterosexual relationship within the marriage context. Homosexuality, it says very plainly, is *against nature* (Romans 1:26-27); there is nothing natural about it. Also, if we apply this logic to homosexuality, then we must also say that adultery, fornication, incest, and a host of other sins listed with homosexuality are only "variant life styles" and drop the offensive label of "sin."

Another statement often heard is:

*Homosexuality is a sickness or a genetic deviation for which we must have compassion and understanding.*

First of all, Scripture never remotely suggests that homosexuality is an emotional sickness. If it were, then the Scripture would have commanded that we visit and comfort the homosexual as we are to do for the sick, afflicted and feeble-minded. Rather the Scripture flatly calls it sin and states that the homosexual is responsible for his actions. As far as a genetic defect goes, the only genetic defect God recognizes in regard to homosexuality is the genetic defect within all of us that we inherited from our father Adam, and that is a nature that wants to sin.

Without question, Christians are to be compassionate and understanding when dealing with people's problems. There is a danger, however, in allowing compassion to be shaped by humanism rather than by the Holy Spirit. It is possible to become more humane than God! Critics of the Christian stand on homosexuality have pointed out that Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you." They forget that He added, "... go and *sin no more.*" A Spirit-filled Christian who lived for years in bondage to homosexuality commented to a Christian friend who had led him

to Christ, "What I needed most was a shoulder to cry on; but I also needed someone who would not tolerate my ways and would tell me so."

The charge is often leveled at Christians that they *discriminate against homosexuals* who desire to be a part of their churches or fellowships. To make this statement is to totally misunderstand the nature of the church. God has given us no right to discriminate against the unregenerate; they are all the same in His sight. Yet, in the body of the church the command is plain that we are to discriminate and deal with those in the church who will not live according to the Word of God. Paul told the Corinthian church that he had never commanded them to stop associating with the people of the world no matter how bad they were, but he did say:

I wrote to you not to associate with a so-called brother if he should be an immoral person. . . . For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves (1 Corinthians 5:11-13 NASV).

The church should have open arms for all who desire to repent and be changed by the gospel. But the church has the obligation to not allow those in their midst who stubbornly refuse to admit their sin and adhere to the commands of God.

### MINISTERING TO THE PROBLEM

What do you do if a homosexual comes to your group and asks for help? If you are a practicing homosexual — or someone who has stopped practicing but is still bound by the desires — how can you be set free? For too many years Christians have pasted religious bandages over the mortal wounds of homosexuals with glib little phrases like, "Jesus can set you free," and "Just trust the Lord." Then they leave the homosexual to struggle alone to find victory. If a homosexual is our brother in Christ and desires to be free



from his sin then we have an obligation to stand with him in his struggle.

There are no quick and easy cures to the homosexual problem. The problem is deeply ingrained and the roots are often hidden and complicated. To promise quick deliverance or instant freedom is to build up false hopes that can lead to failure and discouragement. Though there are no easy answers, there are several factors which *must* be considered and dealt with if eventual freedom is to be obtained.

### FACING SIN

One of the first and most important bridges to be crossed is understanding homosexual desires and practices as sin. When we speak of sicknesses, genetic patterns, parental failures, early influences, and so on, as the reason for the problem, we are not dealing with the root problem, *which is sin*. The cruelest thing anyone can do to a homosexual is tell him he is a homosexual because of his parents, of genes, etc. If it is the parents' fault, then there is no hope. If, however, it can be seen as a *sin* problem, then there is hope. Christ died to release us from the penalty *and* power of sin.

When a homosexual can come to the place that he can admit honestly, "I am a homosexual . . . I am responsible for my life and actions . . . I know it is a sin and I want help," then — because of his honesty and humility, the Holy Spirit is free to begin to minister new life and strength to him.

Even in this area the watch word is "tread lightly." There are those who, because of experiences over which they had no control, e.g., a homosexual rape or seduction before they were morally or physically capable of resisting, will have been trapped in this type of life. In these areas we must ever so gently allow the Holy Spirit to minister the conviction of sin and the need for repentance. Our legalism and Pharisaism can easily compound an already massive feeling of rejection by the "straight" world.

At the point where a homosexual wants to turn from his old life or repent, there may be a need for the ministry of deliverance from evil

spirits, especially if the bondage is long-standing and deeply rooted. Here the help of other Christians is important. After the repentance and denunciation of the sin of homosexuality, the demonic spirit associated with it may be commanded to leave the person's life in the name of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

The possibility of demonic possession, however, can never be allowed to foster a devil-made-me-do-it attitude. The homosexual must realize that *he* is responsible for the presence of the demonic spirit for two reasons: (1) because the spirit was *invited* to enter by participation in homosexual lust or activity; and (2) because in Christ we have the authority to command the demonic spirit to leave. To allow it to stay is disobedience to God for which we are responsible. Deliverance, however, should be *preceded* by true repentance and a commitment of our lives to the Lordship of Christ.

### PATTERN FOR FREEDOM

Paul gives us a pattern of freedom for those who have been in bondage to sin. In 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, he lists several types of people who, because of sinful lives will not have an inheritance in the kingdom of God — among these are homosexuals. But along with the fearful thought of having no inheritance in the kingdom of God, there is a wonderful statement of hope. To those in the Corinthian church who had been in bondage he says, "And such *were* some of you. But you were *washed*, but you were *sanctified*, but you were *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the *Spirit* of our God." Five words speak to us from this passage.

First, *washing*: The word speaks of a cleansing of sin by the blood of Jesus that cleanses our conscience and hearts of the guilt of sin (1 John 1:7 and Hebrews 10:19–22). This occurs initially at salvation and must be applied daily.

A second washing is in water baptism. See Acts 22:16 and Romans 6:1–11. Water baptism, properly understood, deals with the power of sin in our lives and should be part of

the foundational experience of every Christian.

The word *justified* speaks of our legal standing before God on the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross. Condemnation from himself and from others is one of the greatest battles for the homosexual. Once he has repented he must stand in the belief that God is standing with him and for him, even if he fails again and again (Romans 8:1; and 31–39).

The word *sanctified* is one of the most important. Sanctification means to consecrate or to set apart to God. Sanctification is both a separating *from* and a separating *to*. If the deliverance of a homosexual is ever to become complete, there must first be a complete separation from all the habits and associations that filled his life. Often a homosexual will continue to associate with old friends under the genuine concern of witnessing to them. Even this should not be allowed. The break must be *complete*! Friends and places associated with the life . . . clothes, literature, speech, expressive habits, etc. . . . every vehicle of temptation must be removed. Without this step, there will always be an avenue of temptation open.

The separation *to* involves a consecration to Christ and His will whatever the cost and whatever the sacrifice. Watchman Nee's book, *The Normal Christian Life*, (Chapter 6) deals with being set apart and consecrated to God and should be read. As a matter of fact, the entire book should be read and reread as an aid in understanding the battle with the flesh.

The next area this passage opens up is the *Lordship of Christ*. As Christians we sometimes tend to say, "Just follow Jesus" while we forget that many people not only do not know what we mean when we say that, they would not be capable of doing it if they did know. If we ever expect a new or immature Christian to experience the fullness of the Lordship of Christ, then we must be willing to be the pastors and fathers to bring them to that relationship.

One of the root problems of the homosexual is often a life source that



was tragically deficient in true authority. A domineering, pushy mother and a receding passive father — or in some cases a seemingly opposite pattern in an over-protective, coddling mother and a harsh hyper-critical father — will confuse the divine authority which was established in the home. The loss of the authority will not only produce sexual role identity problems, but leave a child spiritually uncovered and vulnerable to malicious attack.

Establishing a healthy relationship under the authority of a pastor or elder through the leading of the Holy Spirit will do a great deal to re-establish the needed divine authority. Because of the commitment involved in such a relationship there will be someone to whom a homosexual must be responsible for his actions and at the same time he will have someone to stand with him when the going gets rough. In this type of relationship under a qualified mature leader he will be able to learn the principle of serving within a relationship which will help break the pride and rebellion that fosters this type of

sin, and it will turn his eyes from a life style of self-gratification to serving others.

*The Holy Spirit* is mentioned as part of the instrument by which divine grace is ministered and as with every new Christian there should be a flowing baptism in the Holy Spirit from which strength and edification may be derived.

In spite of the depth of this bondage, there is hope. Many whom we know personally testify of many instances of full and complete freedom for those who have desired to walk free from this life style.

### WHERE THE NEED IS

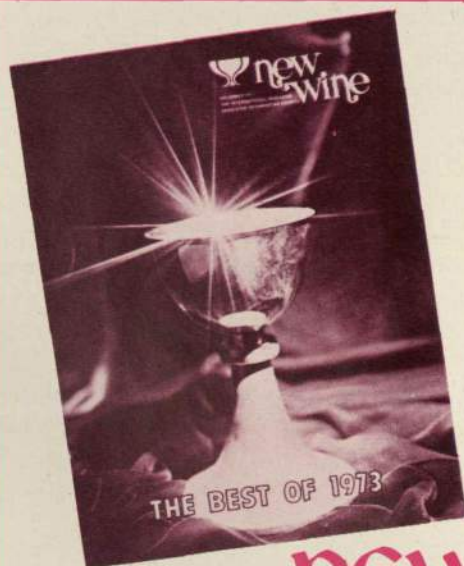
Through ignorance and lack of compassion, the church, which was to have been the bearer of salvation to the sinner, has often done more to frustrate and drive the homosexual from Christ than to help him. For this we have only ourselves to blame.

First we must understand the depth of the problem. Homosexuality, by virtue of its very spiritual nature, is tied up in a total life style that often

involves medical problems, failures and inadequacies in social and family relationships, self-pity, financial pressures, marital problems, shortcomings in work or school and a host of others. We must be prepared to minister to and deal in each of these areas.

Before we may stand as a minister of Christ we must be willing to do as He did: *identify* with the sinner. When Ezekiel went to minister to a nation in captivity he was required to sit "where they sat" (Ezekiel 3:15). We, like Jesus, must be willing to bear the sin and burden of the homosexual. Suppose the Lord were to say to us, "Would you be willing to so commit yourself to the deliverance of a homosexual that you would ask him to live in *your* home and partake of a healthy family atmosphere? Are you dead enough to your own self-pride to walk unashamed with him in the love of Christ?" What would we answer? 🍷

<sup>1</sup> Recommended reading: *Expelling Demons* by Derek Prince; *A Manual for Spiritual Warfare* by Don Basham. (Both books may be ordered on back page cover of this issue).



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# Forum

## GOD'S GOVERNMENT

Bob Mumford — Author, Bible Teacher • Derek Prince — Bible Expositor, Conference Speaker, Author •

Ralph Martin — Author, Leader in Catholic Charismatic Renewal •

How can God's government be established in my life? This month's Forum seeks to lay the groundwork and establish some principles needed to allow God to govern and reign, first in us as individuals, then in the family unit, in the church, and finally, in the world.



What is the structure of God's government? (i.e. democratic, representative, etc.)

**PRINCE:** The correct term for God's government is "theo—cratic" — where "theo" stands for God and "cratic" stands for "power." In other words, all power — or authority — is vested in God Himself. God rules His kingdom from above. His laws and decisions are not subject to the vote or approval of any of those over whom He rules.

However, God does not rule directly over all His creatures. He delegates His authority to others to be exercised on His behalf. In the New Testament we are told that God has delegated supreme authority over the entire universe to Jesus Christ. In Matthew



Ralph Martin, a leader in the current Catholic charismatic renewal, serves as editor of *New Covenant Magazine* and director of the International Communications Office (serving the Catholic charismatic renewal worldwide). He is the author of two books, and also coordinates "The Word of God," a Christian community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he resides with his wife and two children.

28.18 Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and in earth is given unto me." In Ephesians 1.20–21 we are told that God has exalted Christ at His right hand "far above all principality and power and might and dominion" — i.e. over every other form of government or authority. In Revelation 19.16 Christ is called King of kings and Lord of lords" — i.e. He is Ruler over all rulers and Governor over all governments.

**MUMFORD:** If we can see that government begins and ends in God, it helps us to place proper importance on the terms of God's government, i.e., theocracy and kingdom. These denote the rule and ultimate control of God.

This divine government was more open and apparent in the Old Testament than it is in the New Testament. God's government is now in spiritual and mystery form (Matthew 13:11). It is administrated by Jesus Christ and those delegated by Him as His representatives (Luke 22:29).

Strange as it seems, people are willing to submit to God's authority as long as it comes directly from Him. That is, we do not have problems with the *concept* of God's government and absolute authority, but we do get into some real difficulties when we seek to apply this truth to daily living. However, once discovered, the reality of spiritual government becomes foremost in the life and understanding of the serious Christian.

**MARTIN:** God himself desires to rule in the church and order its life, and the way He wishes to do this is through His appointed shepherds. To be sure, they themselves are not the Lord and they do not share absolutely in His power and authority. However, in a real, if limited, way they are agents of His authority.



We need to carefully test and weigh the efforts today to "democratize" the Christian churches. In so doing we should keep in mind what the New Testament has to say about the function of order and authority in the Christian church. Some elements in these "democratization" pressures can be healthy. One in particular is the valid recognition that every member of the Christian church needs to take an active part in its life and not just "leave it to the pastor." But if these pressures intend to eliminate from the church's leadership any real authority to preserve order and unity they are misguided. By doing away with that authority, they would completely undermine the ability of that group of Christians to function as a body in an effective way.

**What are the daily conditions for God's divine rulership in my life?**

**MARTIN:** Before I talk about daily helps in submitting our life to God's rule, I'd like first to say a word about the necessary foundations in a Christian's life. At least in the part of Christianity that I speak from, we have too often given people help in "growing" in the Christian life before they are in a right relationship with God. These aids in daily growth aren't really effective for a person until His Christian life is on a solid foundation of true repentance, faith, and submission to God. We need to pass from relating to God on our terms, no matter how pious these terms may be, to relating to God on His terms; we must be eager to know His truth, and to do His will, in His way, at His time. Even after we have personally accepted Jesus as our Saviour, had our sins forgiven, and been baptized in the Holy Spirit, we still may not have fundamentally decided to live life on God's terms. This needs to be done first for "conditions of daily growth" to bear their maximal fruit.

God's divine rulership in our life consists essentially in two things: The

first is God speaking to us. This can happen through His Word or by His Spirit or through His servants. The second is our eager obedience, doing His will. Therefore, a fundamental condition in our daily life for being under His rulership is arranging our life so we can hear His voice. Unless we still our hearts and turn to Him as a part of our daily schedule and wait on Him, I don't think we're in a position to fully hear Him. Another important condition, of course, is that once we hear a word from Him — once we receive wisdom from Him, or encouragement on a course of action, or conviction of further sin in our life — we need to be eager to obey and act on it. Obviously there are other conditions but these two go a long way in allowing the Lord to establish His divine rulership in our daily life.

**PRINCE:** The basic condition for being under divine rulership is an inner attitude of spirit which we may call "submissiveness." In 1 Peter 3.4 we are told that "a meek and quiet spirit" is an inner ornament which "in the sight of God is of great price." This inner attitude goes beyond mere outward acts of conformity or obedience, which may proceed from a spirit that is not submissive, perhaps even one that is rebellious.

In the first instance we must cultivate this submissive attitude toward God Himself. In Hebrews 12.9 this is presented as an essential condition for enjoying true spiritual life: "Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and *live*?"

However, since God rules by delegated authority, submission to God Himself entails submission also to those whom He has set in authority over us. In most cases, this is where the real test of submissiveness comes. Each one of us needs to ask himself questions such as these: Am I in submission to the authority which God has placed over me . . . in my home? . . . in the place where I work? . . . in the city and country where I live? . . . in the Christian group of which I am a member?

Here are some specific test ques-

tions that I may put to myself: Do I fret and complain if circumstances outside my control thwart my plans? . . . e.g. if I miss a plane connection and have to wait six hours for the next plane — or six days? . . . or if the weather suddenly changes and prevents some outdoor activity I was looking forward to? If these things do cause me to fret and complain, then my attitude toward God is not one of true submissiveness. I am resisting God's kingdom which "rules over all" (Psalm 103.19), or I am questioning God's wisdom which causes "all things to work together for my good" (Romans 8.28).

On the human plane, here are some further test questions: Do I resent commands that are contrary to my own will? If I am reproved, do I want to answer back? When driving, do I cheerfully observe the legal speed limit, or the requirement to fasten my seat belt?

**What is delegated authority and how do we recognize it and relate to it?**

**MARTIN:** At the present time, God doesn't govern the world and the church directly but through "delegated authority." The key scripture passage here of course is Romans 13.1-7, which says, in part, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment." This passage refers mainly to worldly authority. The Scripture seems to exhort us to respect authority wherever it is found, not necessarily on the basis of the authority's legitimacy or outstanding wisdom, but because it is the authority.

There are some people who dismiss this scriptural injunction on the grounds that the authority they are encountering is not "legitimate," that it is not "spiritual" or "enlightened"



or "righteous." I believe they are on very thin ice. The actual authorities that Paul was talking about in Romans 13 were the imperial Roman authorities who launched "unjust" imperialistic wars, subdued whole peoples and provinces, exacted tribute, and promoted immoral activities and games. Yet Christians were still urged to be submissive and obedient to them. Christians are asked not primarily to judge authority but to obey it. They are to do so not because the authority is righteous, or because obedience to it is easy, but because it is authority, and God has reasons for wanting authority respected.

Scripture passages such as 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 and the whole New Testament picture of early church life call us to apply this counsel to church life as well. I am concerned about a tendency I see among Christians to pick and choose which church authorities they will obey on the basis of their personal attractiveness, spiritual life, or charismatic gifts, their personal warmth, preaching style, or views on the charismatic renewal. It seems that the main thrust of Scripture teaching is to obey the authorities we already find in our lives, rather than shop around to find the authorities we're compatible with or find "spiritually acceptable."

**MUMFORD:** There is one difficulty in the realm of authority that we never seem to overcome and that is: *all* authority is administrated by men. Whenever man is involved, we have problems . . . failure . . . complications . . . rebellion. We also experience neglect and absence of authority — as well as the potentate and tyrant!

We sigh, "If God would only rule over us Himself!" He literally did this for Israel and they rejected Him. See 1 Samuel 8:7. In the resulting warning, God explained that authority of the human kind would be oppressive and burdensome.

Once we come into the New Testament, we find God's Law Enforcer is our Lord Jesus Christ. It is written of Him: "He will bring forth justice and right, and reveal truth to the nations"

(Isaiah 42:1); and "The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of absolute righteousness — of justice and straight forwardness" (Hebrews 1:8, Amplified).

The authority (the Lord Jesus Christ) calls disciples. He teaches and trains them to function as authority over His kingdom *in His name!* This is delegated authority. Jesus Himself is committed to these, and He expects us to receive them *just as if* we were receiving Him (Matthew 10:40-42).

The fact that men neglect and abuse the authority they have been given is a foregone conclusion. This does not, however, give us excuse to withdraw from spiritual authority which God has set in the church.

Understanding and embracing God's delegated authority is the key to spiritual progress in the day in which we live.

If I am truly living under  
"God's government," am I  
still to obey the laws of man?  
Are there exceptions?

**MUMFORD:** Yes, there *are* exceptions to obeying the laws of man. But let us not begin there. We need to start with the basic rule *before* we consider the exceptions. Remember when you were being taught a language? You were first carefully taught all the rules of grammar and then introduced to all the exceptions. *First*, the rules, *then* the exceptions. Error comes when we major on the exceptions, or seek to make them the rule or norm.

As a *principle* we are to obey all the laws of the land. *Exceptions* (as in Acts 4:17) do not constitute a rule or text that permits us to walk in rebellion or independence from the laws of the land. The rebel, sometimes unconsciously, seeks for failure in delegated authority or weakness in human law, in order to reject and discard the bit and bridle that it forces upon him.

Obey the laws of man as a *principle* and trust God for direction when you are forced into a situation which would be considered an *exception*.

**PRINCE:** Christians living under "God's government" are by that very fact obligated to obey the laws of man. Submission to divine authority entails also submission to human authority. This is emphasized in various places in the New Testament. For example, Romans 13.1-5, which begins with "Every person must submit to the supreme authority. There is no authority but by act of God, and the existing authorities are instituted by him . . ." and ends with, "That is why you are obliged to submit. It is an obligation imposed not merely by fear of retribution but by conscience" (NEB).

Again, 1 Peter 2:13-20, from which we may select the following brief extracts: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him . . . Servants be subject to your masters with all fear: not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward . . ."

However, the New Testament recognizes exceptions to this. In Matthew 22:37-38 Jesus says that the first and great commandment is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . soul . . . and mind." In other words, this commandment to love and obey God takes precedence over all other commandments or forms of authority. If any other commandment or authority demands of us acts that are contrary to true love and obedience for God, such requirements are not binding upon us.

An example of this is found in Acts chapters 4 and 5. The high priest, the captain of the temple and the religious leaders of the Jews had commanded the apostles to cease teaching and preaching about Jesus. In face of this prohibition, however, the apostles continued to preach. When they were brought before the religious authorities the second time and questioned about this, Peter replied, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Here was a clear-cut issue between obedience to God and obedience to men, and obedience to God took priority. However, even





### DEREK PRINCE

"The basic condition for being under divine rulership is an inner attitude of spirit which we may call 'submissiveness.' "



### BOB MUMFORD

"If we can see that government begins and ends in God, it helps us to place proper importance on the terms of God's government."

when obedience to God requires us to go counter to human authority, it is still possible to retain a submissive spirit.

#### How will "God's government" be totally established on the earth?

**PRINCE:** The establishment of God's government upon the earth will take place in successive phases, which we may briefly outline as follows:

(1) At the present time God's government is being established *within the church*. As God's government is being established within the church, the church in turn becomes an instrument through which God's authority is extended — by spiritual means — over earth's nations and rulers.

(2) Thereafter at Christ's return, Israel will be reconciled through Christ to God, as a nation, and will become the instrument through which Christ's government will be exercised over the other nations on earth. Christ will then rule on the earth with the church and Israel as His administrators. The church will exercise authority in the spiritual realm, while Israel will be the center of Christ's earthly administration.

(3) Looking further ahead still, the

time will come when Christ will in turn "deliver up the kingdom to God the Father . . . For he [Christ] must reign, till he [the Father] hath put all his enemies under his feet . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him [Christ], then shall the Son also be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him that God may be all in all" (see 1 Corinthians 15:24–29). This final phase of the establishment of God's kingdom is called, in Ephesians 1:10, "the dispensation of the fulness of times." It represents the complete and final establishment of God's order and government in the universe.

**MUMFORD:** Let me use two prefixes and explain their meaning. *Micro* — *miniature*; *macro* — *enlarged or great*.

God involved Himself in our universe in the form of an infant — born of a virgin — in a time/space situation. This Christ child was a *microcosm* — small and insignificant in the eyes of the world and the Roman Empire. By means of this Christ, God invaded the lives of others — the twelve disciples . . . then the seventy . . . the five hundred, etc. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He said, "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all nations."

Can you see how God has chosen to establish His kingdom within the

confines of the heart and life of each follower? As He does, He then uses that "beachhead" to reach out to conquer others. As each of these *microcosms* is conquered and brought under the government of God, they become significant contributions to the conquering of the *macrocosm* — the world system itself.

I do not mean by this that the kingdom will simply "evolve"; but as God, in Christ, conquers us individually (*microcosm*), it is His preparation to conquer the world system (*macrocosm*). John, the Revelator, saw this when he described the scene in Revelation 11:15–18.

**MARTIN:** It is clear from Scripture that God's government will be totally established through the work of Christians: by the preaching of the gospel of repentance, faith, baptism, and the gift of the Spirit; by the incorporating of Christians into the body of Christ, that is, into concrete disciplined Christian communities in every part of the earth. But it is also clear from Scripture that this work won't be completed until the Lord himself intervenes by coming again personally to judge the living and the dead, fully establishing his kingdom. ♣

"The Second Coming" will be the topic for discussion in next month's Forum. Jamie Buckingham of Melbourne, Florida, will be our guest panelist.

#### BIBLE STUDY ANSWERS:

(1) a. Jesus Christ; b. There will be no end to it; c. Peace; d—1. Order it, d—2. Establish it; e—1. Judgment, e—2. Justice; f. By the zeal of the Lord. (2) Christ the Lord. (3) a. The reign of Christ; b. Where Jesus is Lord. (4). a. The Kingdom of heaven was at hand; b. The Kingdom of heaven was at hand; c. The Kingdom of heaven was at hand. (5) a. He was under His authority; b. Humility; c. Obedience to the Father. (6) a. Jesus is Lord; b. Humility, like a little child; c. Obey the will of the Father. (7) Righteousness, peace, joy. (8) Ourselves. (9) a. The home or family; b. The flock of God — the church. (10) The home. (11) We will rule with Him in eternity.



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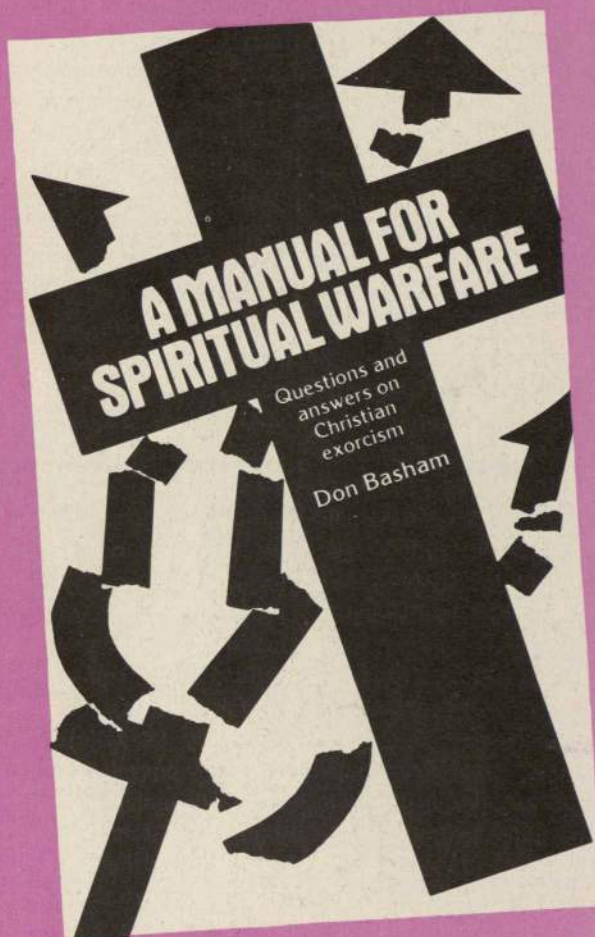
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