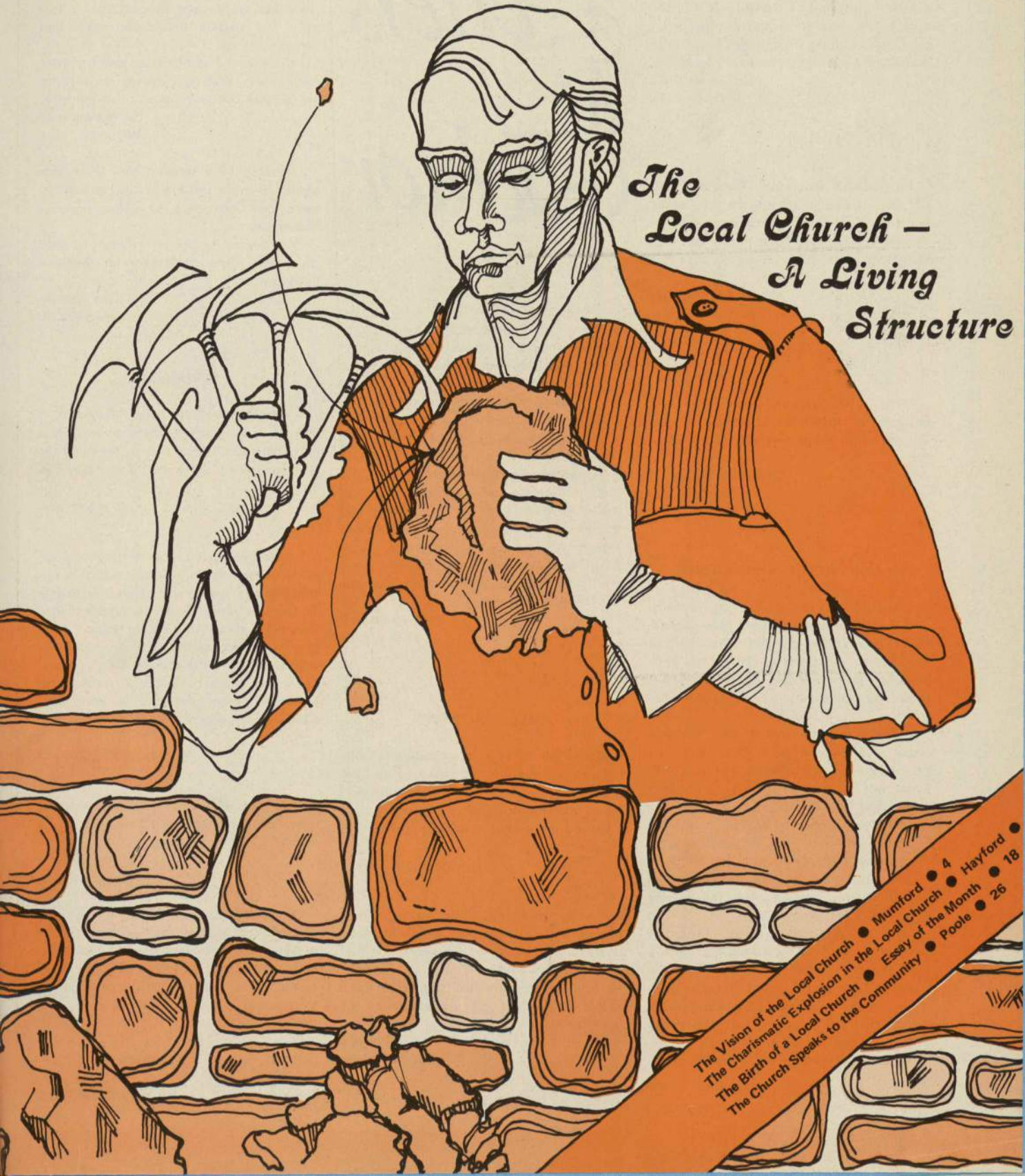


new wine

JULY/AUGUST 1975
THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

The Local Church – A Living Structure



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"PRAYER" RESPONSE

The articles on "Prayer" in the April 1975 issue truly stirred the spirit within me and opened my eyes and heart to the real need for persistent, intercessory prayer. There is not one of us who can truly claim we come up to the Christ-given example of a proper prayer life. After reading, I was buoyantly uplifted on the wings of intercessory prayer for others and experienced a beautiful worship period with the Lord. His presence became so very real and close!

Mrs. James Clark
Latrobe, Pa.

Ern Baxter's article on "The Prayer Life of Our Lord" helped me see Jesus' humanity — in need of total dependence on the Father for His holy life. I can now believe that holiness is possible in man — in me.

Mrs. Marwan Haidary
Rancho Cordova, Cal.

Your latest issue of *New Wine* has provided me with a broad scope of prayer. The discipline and perseverance is now up to me.

Charles W. Mudge, Jr.
Stamps, Ariz.

A LOOK FROM THE OTHER SIDE

I wish to comment on a trend I seem to find in many Protestant charismatic publications. The article entitled "The Wall of Resentment" in the May 1975 *New Wine* Magazine prompted the writing of what I guess you could call a look from the other side.

In this article, the author says, "My stepfather was Catholic, and for a while my parents would pack us all up and send us to Mass. But it was in Latin, so I couldn't understand it." All the prayer books I ever used had the English translation next to the Latin. She goes on, "Still, for some reason, I would keep after my parents to take me to church, even though it was always so cold and dead when we got there that I wondered why I had wanted to go."

Many of the stories of the conversions of people in Protestant magazines have a similar vein. People who were in the Catholic faith had to leave the church in order to find meaningful relationships with the Lord. I cannot argue with the things that these people experienced in their lives. They know what happened to them; I don't.

Letters to Editor

The purpose of my letter is to let the general public know that there are hundreds of thousands of Roman Catholic charismatics who have experienced and are living the baptism of the Spirit in their lives and are finding fulfillment in the Roman Catholic faith. The number who attend the yearly international conferences in Notre Dame attest to that. I weep for those who are or were in the church and could not find that fulfillment. Just as I do not question their experience, I do not wish them to give the impression that there is no one who has experienced exactly the opposite. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are very much alive and well in the Roman Catholic Church, too!

Wayne Cashatt
Eldora, Iowa

"OLD" VS. "NEW"

I question the wisdom of including work by men like Finney. His message may have been fine for his time, but brings confusion when applied today. One problem we all seem to have is holding spiritual giants from the past in awe.

Mrs. Ann T. Collins

I enjoy the articles about and by leading men of faith of the past. When so many seem to want to throw out everything that is not "charismatic" or "new," it is wonderful to know that some still appreciate those things of the past that contribute to our growth today.

Fred & Janet Venable
Center Hill, Fla.

INTO THE PRISONS

I am in Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women and am serving time on a 21-year sentence. I accepted Christ as my personal Savior and Lord of my life in March 1973 while awaiting trial in the Birmingham County Jail.

The joy I have known these past two years has truly been unspeakable. I feel truly free despite the locked doors and barred windows.

I share your fine magazine with my sister inmates after reading it from cover to cover. My prayers continue for this fine ministry.

Sandra Marshall
Wetumpka, Ala.

Thank you for sending *New Wine* each month. Being a prisoner is very difficult at times, but Christ-centered reading material is always good.

Thank you for caring enough to send them free. I do pass them on to other prisoners.

Kent Norman
Vacaville, Cal.

FEEDBACK

I appreciate *New Wine* Magazine. I haven't seen another Christian magazine that seems to "hit the nail on the head" so well concerning the issues of real Christian living.

Bill Hrubik

I would appreciate your taking my name off your mailing list as I have been very disappointed in the quality of your magazine. To be quite honest, I have found the articles have been written in a boring fashion, and I have often had my thoughts more confused than clarified by the articles. This is in spite of the fact that the subjects being dealt with have been of real interest to me, which only added to my disappointment.

Mr. G. F. Duncan
Auckland, New Zealand

You have made it possible for me to see many things about myself I have closed my eyes to even when I knew them long ago.

Patricia G. Gault
Coos Bay, Ore.

It makes us rejoice to know there are men of God, such as those who write the articles in *New Wine*, who will speak out and deliver the unadulterated word of God, even though it may hurt, for thus it causes death to our old nature and brings about our perfection in Christ.

Mary E. Schulz
Bowmansville, N. Y.

Editorial

A great deal has been taught and written recently about the local church. Several groups, some large, some very small, have sprung up and grown on the assertion that they are *the* local church in a given city or area.

It is time, we feel, for all of us to admit that none of us really knows exactly what the local church is to be like. The blueprint, which may be different for each city or area, is known in its entirety only to God.

What is expected of us is that we become the kind of people that God can use for building material in His church. This will probably require some adjustment not only in our understanding, but in our attitudes.

First, there must come in us an openness to what God is doing in other groups and individuals. This requires us to be willing to be adjusted and admit we don't always have all the answers.

Second, we need to recognize that the Lord's Body has many *different* members; not only individuals, but groups. Each member may have his own responsibility from the Lord to fulfill, which may be very different from our own. We must give the breathing room for others to walk in truth as they see it. Difference is not division!

Third, we all have a calling and responsibility to stand under the leadership in our area. It becomes very easy to be critical of leadership without supporting it. We are called to pray and fast for, support, and uphold the leadership God has set over us.

Last, and perhaps most difficult, we must be willing to pay the price for the local church to come together. It will require painful adjustments, laying down our lives, learning to yield, and being willing to submit to those we do not always agree with.

In all of the adjustments we must bear in mind that structure is not as important to the Lord as a people who will possess a quality that He can build on and work through. If we can strive for that quality, then the local church can become a reality.



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READER SERVICE CARD

Our reader service card is now included on the inserted envelope. For change of address or new names please refer to this envelope.

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SEPTEMBER SHEPHERDS CONFERENCE

All reservations for the National Men's Shepherds Conference in Kansas City, Missouri must be sent in as soon as possible. (See the ad on page 15 for further details.)

Catching sight of the nature and function of the local church.

The Vision of the Local Church

by Bob Mumford

Did you ever have the experience of seeing something and almost wishing that you hadn't seen it? Something so tremendous . . . of which the implications are so great . . . the view so mind-expanding! *But once you see, it is impossible to close your eyes and block out the sight.*

One of my teachers in Bible college was a man of deep insight and distant vision. He traveled extensively and was the envy of many of us students. One day this man said to me, "Bob, the day will come when you will wish you didn't see what you are beginning to see." At that time, I couldn't imagine such a possibility. But since then there have been occasions when I wished I

could just sit under my little fig tree and enjoy the things I see, instead of feeling as if the Fourth of July were exploding inside me.

Always there are people who "see" and others who don't. This is true in realms of science, medicine, economics, etc., as well as in the spiritual. When Jesus walked this earth, there were those who *saw* Him as the Son of

God. They were captured to His cause because of what they saw in Him. Others saw only one more Jew making claims to messiahship . . . only a carpenter's son . . . a Nazarene.

Churches have been guilty of being blind, too. Revelation 3:17 tells us of one: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked . . ." This church of Laodicea didn't know that she didn't know. This is the epitome of not knowing . . . of not seeing.

For years I felt that there was something about the Church of Jesus Christ that we were not seeing. Something was missing. Paul speaks of it in Ephesians 5:32 as "a great mystery."

PAUL'S VISION AND OURS

Paul, along with his fellow-laborers, was privileged to establish many of the early churches of which we have any record. His letter to the Ephesians covers numerous aspects of these local churches. He also unfolds to us some of the majesty and might of the *Church of Jesus Christ*, of which each local church formed a part. What was this "great mystery" which Paul saw? Have the centuries obscured or changed his message?

First, Paul saw the Church as the Body of Jesus Christ — not like His Body — *but His Body!* He saw it glorious . . . filled with God's glory! We need to see this, too. But, do these conceptions coincide with our view of the Church? If we are honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that we have been more apt to look upon the Church as a group of timid saints who don't smoke or drink, or go with those who do . . . waiting here on earth for the Lord Jesus to return and snatch them out of this wicked world . . . before the anti-Christ overpowers them.

Listen again to Paul: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of

times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph. 1:9,10). God is going to sum up everything in Christ, in His Church — both in heaven *and on the earth*.

Now what about our picture of His purpose? No one ever taught me about "earth" salvation. I only learned about "heaven" salvation. No one ever told me about economic salvation — that God wanted to save me economically and heal my finances. No one ever told me about political salvation — that the Kingdom of God was an "alternate society," the most important political entity on this earth.

Paul saw this glorious Church moving toward the consummation of the age, a powerful force in the earth — a people redeemed, fitted together and magnified because of the glory of Christ which rests in that Church. When we begin to see the magnitude of God's plan, *we see the Church as the answer to the world's problems*. When we can couple this vision with the fact that when God starts out to do something, He doesn't stop until He finishes it, we begin to catch a glimpse of this glorious mystery which so inspired Paul. Even though he was writing to the Christians at Ephesus from a prison cell in Rome, he saw down the corridors of time this alternate society . . . God's people being brought together in a redemptive community, rightly related to God and each other.

My seven-year old son recently made a remark to us along these lines which had all the earmarks of a theological dissertation:

Eric: Mother, I don't think God is going to come tomorrow.

Mother: How come you don't think He's coming tomorrow?

Eric: Because there's too much work to do yet.

When we study Ephesians in the light of Paul's enthusiasm, we see that there is more to God's purpose than just the salvation of the soul. For years we have been laboring under a limited concept of the work of Christ. We tend to think in terms of merely the

translation of our souls from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God. There we sit on the Kingdom borderline, never realizing that Jesus wants to save the whole life — never claiming our full inheritance, either as His children or as His Church.

JESUS' VISION OF HIS CHURCH

Jesus only mentions the Church twice in all of His recorded teachings. Both references are in the Book of Matthew. In the first (16:18), Jesus tells of His vested interest in the Church; and in the second (18:17) He gives an example of the Church in one of its many operations, a spiritual fortress. Let us here examine Jesus' words about His Church in relation to Himself.

(a) "*I will build my church . . .*" It is His Church! He is going to build it! This is not an organization, but an organism. He left no hard and fast rules or dogmatic diagram for its establishment. He did not even define exactly what He was planning on building or when it would evolve.

(b) "*. . . the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" He is going to protect His investment. Neither the atheists nor the communists, nor any other force upon the earth will ever prevail against it! He said so.

Looking at the Church from Jesus' position as Builder, we note that a body is a living organism made up of living cells. It has the ability — even the necessity — to change, adapt, and flow with other cells as it grows. Together, these cells can withstand forces which alone it could not.

Thus, the Body of Christ can thrive anywhere, in any society, and under any circumstances. It is able to flow and function in all ages and cultures. It is supernatural, and it is fortunate that it is — for man has tried to capture it for himself . . . construct it according to human plans and specifications . . . and even tried to kill it. We have managed to put all kinds of rules on it . . . restrict it to buildings . . . reduce it to cold storage tactics. But the Church of Jesus Christ just bends

and rolls and pops up again; at times, where we least likely expect it to appear.

Looking at the Church from Jesus' position as Defender, history records that the forces of hell have been unleashed against this establishment which He is building. There have been pressures, abuses and persecutions throughout every century since its inception. But His Church continues to withstand and prevail. If we are not for it, we are against it, according to Jesus' statement in Matthew 12:30. This means that if we don't get into His Body, we are going to get left behind. Jesus loves the Church and it exists only because of His protection. It is His Body and those who persecute, malign, and tamper with its progress will have to reckon with God.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Simply stated, in the structure of the local churches, those geographical expressions of the Body of Christ, there are three foundational basics. These are found throughout the entire Word of God, for God has been planning for this Church from before the foundation of the world. *These basics are: pattern, principles and power.*

PATTERN: In Exodus, chapter 40, we find Moses conforming his work according to the pattern God had given him for the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness. This was to be a dwelling place where God would meet with His people of that generation. There is one phrase repeated many times, "... just as the Lord had commanded Moses." Then, in verses 33 and 34, we read, "So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

When we build according to pattern, the glory of the Lord fills that place. That is why we need to search the Scriptures for the pattern given for establishing a New Testament church. For when we see the pattern and build

accordingly, then the glory of the Lord rests upon that place.

PRINCIPLES: In both Old and New Testaments there are basic principles which will work in any society and age. These are not laws, remember, but principles. Consider a few of them with me.

Matthew 7:12 tells us: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them . . ." We often refer to this principle as the golden rule. Men have perverted it, in some instances, to read, "He who has the gold makes the rules." But God's principle stands firmly against all attacks or misrepresentations.

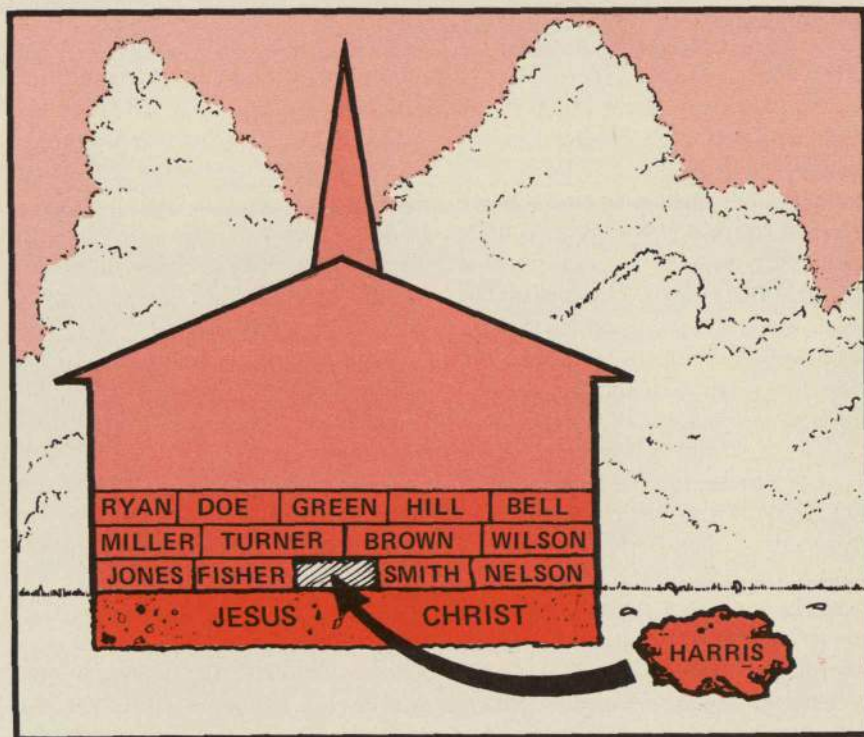
Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If you sow criticism, what do you get back? Criticism. You give it, you get it back.

Matthew 6:33 states, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." One man who was learning to accept this principle, wrote me, "I have just discovered something. He that seeks the Kingdom first will have problems. But if he seeks it second, he will have greater problems." Principles always work.

There are principles on tithing, praying, fasting, judging, avenging ourselves. *These are inviolable absolutes.* In all of my years of counseling, I have seen them in operation and seen many who tried to go against these principles and found it impossible. But when you can see these principles, and God's purpose in placing them before us, we can begin moving into a right relationship to God and our fellow believers; as well as showing to the rest of the world the validity of these principles which can revolutionize civilization.

POWER: Paul saw the essentiality of this basic in building a local church, as well as in "building up" the individuals who formed that Body. In Corinth we hear him stating his case: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:4,5).

Without this power, we cannot even know Him, let alone have a faith which will be able to stand. If we do not have the power of God in the local church, we have a club. It is the power of God, through His Holy Spirit,



which brings into being the Body of Christ in any locality and makes it a living, breathing, flowing, yielding organism.

Could we safely say that some churches are trying to get along without this power? Would some keep on with "business as usual," even if God died? Would they have to read it in the newspaper to learn about it?

One young woman, upon returning from the mission field, was attending a business meeting of her denomination. After sitting through hours of reports and recommendations, she finally burst out, "Let me ask you a question. What do you do any differently than the world does? You don't need the power of God for this!" What a sad commentary.

Without the power of God moving through the local "business" proceedings, and without His redeeming and restoring, there would be no Body of Christ. There might be a structure labeled "church" — but the Church which Jesus is building must lay hold upon this power. It is the sap of the Vine, of which we form the branches.

The power of God enables us to build according to His pattern and to apply the principles He has placed within His Word.

SEVEN ASPECTS OF THE NATURE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Using the Book of Ephesians as a guide, we look at seven aspects of this structure which Jesus Christ is building — His Church. Paul is teaching the believers in Ephesus, a local church, about requirements and expectations for their church. They apply to every church of every age, for only one structure can be built which will stand against the forces of the world . . . that which is built according to His pattern, incorporating His principles and utilizing His power.

(1) The local church is a dwelling place for God — 2:19–22:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are

built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

When we come together as a local church, we are builded together in God. This means that every man, woman and child should find his place in the Body of Christ. A house built of living stones! What a sight to behold! Can you almost hear God saying, "Oh! A house where I can go and dwell with my people!" This means these stones are going to have to love each other enough to come into proper relationship to each other. Learning to "fit together" isn't always easy. Building with living stones is costly, but commanded. *We come together to form a dwelling place!*

(2) The local church is the Body of Christ — 1:22,23:

And [God] hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Body — the very word has "earthly" connotations. Applying it to the local church, this means that the local "body" is for the purpose of extending Christ's redemptive work to the ends of the earth. It is the uniting of physical bodies that God has in mind. From these, He forms a working unit, empowered and equipped for service. The gifts of the Spirit form a portion of this equipment. Note that in every instance in which the gifts of the Spirit are mentioned (1 Cor. 12, 1 Pet. 3 and Rom. 12) they are in the context of the Body of Christ. These gifts are given, not as toys, but as tools. They are instruments placed in the hands of the local members of the Body of Christ to do His work in His ordained way and place. The restoration of these gifts to the churches today shows us that God desires that we be properly equipped to carry

forward His work. *We come together to function!*

(3) The local church is an assembly for corporate worship — 3:17–19:

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

This is true worship — being filled with all the fulness of God! So often we withhold parts of ourselves. If we would only open our entire beings to God's fulness, we would experience His cleansing and restorative powers. The local church is that place where we come together and worship together. It is not enough to worship alone. There is a benefit derived from corporate worship which cannot be approximated by oneself — rewarding as private worship is. There is an expression of worship coming from the joining of "bodies" which God honors in a very special way. It pleases Him and He responds. He finds Himself at home among worshipping people. This is portrayed in Psalm 22:3, "But thou art holy, *O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" *We come together to worship!*

(4) The local church is a spiritual school — 4:17–21:

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.

Most of us have had many years of practice in how to be a sinner. Then,

upon being saved, we think immediately we are going to be transformed into an instant saint. That isn't how it works! We must *learn* Christ. We must be taught in the school of discipleship. There we learn how to redeem our minds, pocketbooks, marriages. Every part of our lives comes under His control. *We come together to learn Christ!*

(5) *The local church is a spiritual hospital* — 4:11, 12:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

What is the purpose of our military hospitals? To welcome home wounded military personnel and do all that we can for them physically. We put decorations on them . . . give them ticker-tape parades . . . house them in our finest institutions. What about spiritual casualties? If one gets wounded doing battle for the Lord, the saints at home usually "finish him off." We may have maternity wards in our "local" hospitals, but what about provision for the weary, wounded Kingdom workers? We label them backsliders and whisper, "Did you see that . . .?" "Do you know what I heard . . .?" It is true that we need discipline and correction, but these must be administered in love and understanding.

Literally, Paul is saying that God gave ministries for the equipping of the saints for the work of the Kingdom. And *equipping* is the same word that is used when Peter and John were "fixing" or "mending" their nets on the shores of Galilee. Have you ever known saints who needed repairing? Have you ever needed fixing yourself? When I minister overseas, I spend much time working with wounded soldiers — missionaries who have fiery darts stuck in them — who have been wounded, hurt, betrayed. As a rule, we don't provide tender, loving attention and intensive care units; but these are

needed! *We come together to restore and heal!*

(6) *The local church is a spiritual deliverance center for POW's* — 6:10–12:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Do we need a place where we can reclaim and rehabilitate our prisoners of war? Spiritual warfare is "for real." Paul continued in chapter six to delineate the weapons we are to make use of in this deadly warfare. It is not an easy task to free prisoners of the rulers of the darkness of this world. But God has provided for this much needed ministry and we need it in every local situation. Let me construct a hypothetical, but often repeated, scene.

Frank: Hallelujah! I'm saved and delivered. Now I'm going out to rescue those other fellows who are still in the clutches of Satan!

Bill: My son, you had better grow up a little first.

Frank: Who needs to grow up? I can manage. (And off he goes to seek out some of his former friends.)

Friend: Hey, Frank, how would you like a little grass while we talk about this new high of yours?

Frank: Me? Never! I rebuke you, devil! Uh . . . what was that you said about some grass?

There is our "deliverer" back on grass — captured by the enemy. Demonized? Perhaps. But are POW's still citizens? Yes. We need a local church which has a deliverance ministry flowing — not as an emphasis, but a part of the whole spectrum of services to the saints. *We come together to recapture prisoners of spiritual war!*

(7) *The local church is a spiritual home* — 3:14–15:

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

Is there a difference between a house and a home? Certainly. We can tell the difference, and God knows and appreciates this, too. A home is where the family gathers in unity and love. There one feels loved, accepted and confident in that love and acceptance. There he can kick off his shoes, should he be so inclined! We need a local church where we can feel "at home." We need a genuine spiritual family. This is where we have a sense that we are not performing, not a spectator, not an outsider, not the whole show — just one of the family . . . and when Father's family gathers together, we want to be there! When we enjoy each other, God enjoys us. We experience His peace and presence. *We come together to enjoy each other and God!*

IN CONCLUSION

We need the first six aspects of the local church in order to be able to experience the seventh. We need to:

- (1) find our place in the dwelling of God;
- (2) be a part of a functioning, working body;
- (3) assemble for corporate worship;
- (4) receive instruction — have a spiritual training school;
- (5) have a spiritual hospital where we welcome home wounded soldiers;
- (6) provide a deliverance center for our prisoners of war; then — we will enjoy our "spiritual" home.

However, this involves being willing to be built together into one divinely ordained organism — the local church. If we want to become a part of that spiritual home, each must find his place, fit there, and become conformed to the Builder of that local body. There will be someone over us . . . someone under us . . . and someone beside us. And God will cement us together by His Spirit. This completes the structure in any given geographical location — the Church, which is His Body! 🕊



The Charismatic

EXPLOSION

in the Local Church

by
Jack Hayford

Examining the constructive aspects of the present outpouring of the Spirit.

And suddenly, there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting (Acts 2:2).

A charismatic explosion!

I felt it best to begin with that textual definition of the title of this article, because I don't believe our language contains any word better than that suited to the dynamic workings of the Holy Spirit: *Explosion!*

However, our terminology ought to be qualified, for we are not interested in explosiveness for the mere drama, shake-up, or sensation which one creates. Unfortunately, there are some whose definition of a revival or stirring of the Holy Spirit is satisfied with such features. If it's colorful, enthusing, disrupting, or surprising, a given meeting or event is said to have been one in which "there was a great move of the Spirit."

But any thinking person, whose thoughts draw their stimulus from the eternally durable nature of the Word of God, has to ask himself, "What good did it do?" Explosions hold the potential of either destruction or edification. Under the control of an engineer, explosives can carve through a mountain creating a highway that expedites progress, or blast into granite to prepare foundational footing for a magnificent structure. Yet, in the hands of a child, a dynamite cap can deafen, destroy, maim, and kill.

In my contact with the charismatic movement, I have witnessed both. We

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must confess that accusers of the charismatic revival may well cite instances of "child-managed-explosions" as evidence against the validity of the Holy Spirit's present workings. But I want to evaluate some constructive aspects of the upheaval caused by God's breath-winds of power that have "blown up" in such proportions that granite-like tradition has been removed, flesh has been disintegrated and the shock-wave has been universally felt.

SURVEYING THE EXPLOSION

Acts 2:2, quoted at the beginning, indicates that such a dynamic breakthrough was taking place in the spiritual realm that it could be heard in the natural realm. Unexpectedly, out from the spiritual dimension — the heavenlies — came the sound of a great, sweeping wind. A scriptural counterpart is the dramatic term used

at Jesus' baptism: "The heavens were being torn open (skidzomenous), and the Spirit like a dove descended upon him" (Mark 1:10). No less a happening ever occurs when this same Jesus bestows that same Spirit upon His Church.

On the basis of these two instances — Jesus at Jordan and the Church at Pentecost — the nature of a *true* Spirit-begotten explosion can be tested by two criteria. (1) There should be evidence of an unsettling of the superficial. When the reality of the spiritual world penetrates the natural world, dead habit, plaster platitude and unworthy motive are shattered. As John said, when Kingdom power is at hand, the ax is laid to the root. (2) There should be an experience of fulfillment and loveliness worthy of the signature of the Creator: "It filled all the house . . .", "like a dove . . .". Fullness and tenderness; enrichment and peace.

Mere *sound* or just *tearing* is not sufficient to define a truly *charismatic* explosion. "Charismatic" conveys by proper definition the idea of something given by God to benefit mankind. It will be as refreshing as needed rain, as tender as a baby's new life, as awe-inspiring as creation and as lovely as God's Son. Let all else be branded as other-than-true "charismatic." Much foolishness claims the name, much carnality persists in the Body under its guise, and in the name of "charismatic" much lovelessness sprouts forth authoritatively.

But beyond the failure of the flesh and the captivity of human ignorance there is a prevailing preciousness being experienced. Indeed, this explosion is "filling all the house" at many locations. Local congregations are experiencing a fulfilling fallout as a result of what has transpired in the past few years. Whether it is manifest in the sweet refreshing of an old, established, historic church group, or in the formation of a small nucleus of saints brought together in home or church buildings, or in the rise of large congregations virtually nonexistent before the present outpouring — the focus is on the local church.

What has the charismatic revival meant to the local church? A fair question. For if permanence doesn't result, if deepened spiritual insight cannot be found, if continued fruitfulness is not present, then revival hasn't really happened. The illusion has been conveyed, but is without substance — tearing down without building up.

Some solid things *have* resulted. But as certainly as the charismatic revival has made a permanent contribution to local church life, just as certainly this has not come without cost. The birthing of even a *promised* child is not without travail, and following the birth is a long-termed responsibility. So it is with the receiving of new life in the Body of Christ. Like young parents, many congregations and pastors responded with joy, but often fumbled in uncertainty as to what to do, and thus the "child" has experienced different upbringing in different local church "houses."

My exposure to the charismatic community has afforded me the considerable privilege of fellowship among many different segments of the movement. But nonetheless, pastoral duty has distinct schedule confinements, and my perspective doubtless has certain limitations. Still, I have sensed the steady pulsebeat of the pleasant aftershocks rumbling forth from the charismatic explosion. *There are recognizable traits of the revival which deserve observation, analysis and development.*

OUTWARD AND INWARD GROWTH

In the context of the local congregation, the most visible trait of the charismatic renewal is *growth*. Testimonies abound throughout the world to the point that, happily, the concentration on numbers is becoming less and less significant. The revival is experiencing a return to the New Testament report, "believers were continually added to the Church," and the emphasis has effectively moved from, "We are *having* this many in church," to "The Lord is *adding* to the Body." It's more than semantic sword-play. It is the result of hosts of pastors

and people who are learning that the Builder of the Church is no less than Christ the Lord, and His project needs no promotion or fleshly fanfare.

This is not to denigrate the matter of enumeration or the practicality of reporting. Enough crowd sizes are mentioned in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles for us to know it isn't wrong. The difficulty is with the fact that historically it has become an obsession, producing "success consciousness" and a falsely based zeal dependent upon competition. The current renewal seems to be surmounting much of that characteristic formerly found in local church life, and replacing it with another: a concern for just plain Holy Spirit-begotten, Lord Jesus-directed growth.

However, growth does not occur without reason. It is probably this next trait at the root of the growth that explains why it is continuing. This is a revival of *teaching*.

A RESURGENCE OF TEACHING

The phenomena which mark every revival — gifts, signs, wonders — are present, but distinct in this movement is the emphasis on "feeding the flock of God." The increasing rise of pastoral and eldership training conferences is an indication of the increased awareness of men who lead the Church, who know that they must grow in the knowledge of the truth if they are to fulfill their given ministries. Local churches are becoming more centered in teaching than in programming. Leaders are becoming more concerned with study than with methodology; more concerned with truth than with technique. Our own congregation has sponsored three leadership conferences open only to those with the responsibility of pastoral oversight. The tenor of these week-long seminars has been one of an earnest inquiry into exactly what the *Bible* says the Church is to be. It has been both disconcerting and delivering for many of these men to discover the tragic imbalance in the ratio of their study for teaching to their other pastoral work.

The preceding paragraph may possibly sound like an attack upon all structure or institutional organization. Make no mistake. Not only is that *not* the case, but the above has been said as a context for a much needed observation: The charismatic *explosion* will subside in time. Any churches or leaders who take pride in their non-structuredness, non-programmedness or non-organizedness, are destined for failure. The emphasis on teaching does not exempt the local church from a responsibility to develop specialized ministries.

It is frightfully common for the teaching ministry to give rise to God-given growth in one's understanding, with a proportionate irresponsibility in follow-through. Teaching that enlarges understanding requires practical developments within the life and program of the local assembly, to help believers apply what they are learning. There are too few practicums on home-life, singles' problems, employee conduct, moral questions, life planning and devotional habit. We have nearly failed on this point in our own church, but we are learning fast. The record of thousands in attendance can be terribly deceiving, particularly if individuals are only given the truth as a *pointer*, and not helped step-by-step up the *pathway* toward exercising that reality. Revelation without practical discipline will breed confusion and frustration, and ultimately cynicism and unbelief.

Possibly there are some who take exception to the statement made previously that: "The charismatic explosion will subside in time." However, that potential reaction from readers points up another aspect of the current revival, one desperately needed at the local congregation level: *Balance*.

A VIEW TOWARD BALANCE

How hard it is to discover a degree of balance in the melee of voices which constitute the collective "sound of charismata" today. Aside from the uncanny, uncouth and near insane

verbal barrages of the "weird," so many different things seem to be spoken by the leading voices of the movement that local pastors often face a dilemma. I hasten to say, it is not necessarily the fault of the spokesmen. In most cases the teachings going forth on such themes as church government, submission, ministries, gifts, deliverance, discipleship, etc. are soundly based. But individual readers of books, listeners to tapes, and attenders of conferences have a way of only hearing one thing. They either hear just what they want to hear, or they hear the only radical remark the teacher has made in three years. In addition, they often miss the balancing remark made by the same teacher, if one was made. The burden of establishing the balance falls on the pastor who has to *live* with the person all year long. The call to greatness of spirit and largeness of perspective is incumbent upon every charismatic believer.

Rich revelation *is* coming forth today. Truth unexperienced since the Church's founding is coming back into circulation. And as the Holy Spirit works His restoring process in the Body, wisdom and balance are in high priority.

The local church in the charismatic explosion can be a hotbed of confusion and the scene of multiple splits unless pastors and their congregations learn a basic rule of life. Truth and patience are related. There is no truth so fragile that it will collapse if it isn't implemented before next Tuesday! Well does the Scripture admonish, "Let patience have her perfect work," and "Let brotherly love continue."

A NEW EXPERIENCE IN WORSHIP

Then there is *worship*! How precious has been the progressive recovery in this feature of the living Church's life. The Holy Spirit's outpouring in rivers of renewal has transformed the nature of the average service in countless congregations. My own, linked with the historic pentecostal revival at the turn of this century, was not without a willingness to exercise worship *patterns*, but

worship *presence* was something to be newly discovered. "In thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures evermore." That word in Psalm 16:11 does indeed point the way to the "path of life"! The most transforming *practice* of the charismatic explosion in terms of impact upon the local church is what it does to the congregation's liturgy.

May no one scoff at the word, "liturgy." Everyone — every group, every home meeting, every congregation — *everybody* has one. *Liturgy* and *ritual* are not synonyms. The first refers to order of service, the other refers to ceremony or ceremonies conducted in a service. Rituals are dead, but liturgy doesn't have to be. The "explosion" has blown the lid off of empty tradition and breathed life into previously practiced patterns. Often, valid practices were exercised ignorantly or observed lifelessly. In our church, for example, upraised hands, verbalized praise, clapping of hands and full-hearted singing were already in vogue. The present working of the Spirit of God, however, has made their practice electrically alive. These biblically-based, timeless expressions of worship and praise not only bless and empower the abiding congregation, but also those who come into our midst who experience the transforming power of these practices. "Come Together," the musical which has taught millions the place and power of properly-ordered worship patterns, was a spiritual by-product of God's shaking of our own traditionalism. Jim and Carol Owens, who authored that work under the touch of the Holy Spirit, testify to the fact that they learned the subject matter as a part of our congregation — one experiencing "charismatic explosion."

But the significance of this point is more than a lauding of the virtues of worship. The key to freedom in charismatic worship is wrapped in the word "liturgy." The focus of the Greek term "leitourgia," from which we derive our word, is on *service*; and it apparently became a conviction in many congregations that their "services" needed redefinition. Ours did.

We discovered that our "service" was best defined by a volleyball player's announcement. He calls, "Service!" and then slams the ball across the net toward the other side. Similarly, thousands of pastors — with choirs, musicians and participants in alignment — have gone into "services" to confront the congregation "on the other side" with their program. Each meeting was, so to speak, an inquiry as to how they (the congregation) "will field this one."

DEVELOPMENT OF BODY MINISTRY

The charismatic refreshing has touched thousands of churches as it has touched ours. "Service" now means something more akin to what you or I receive when care is shown to us in a business establishment. With that in mind, we determined to manifest a different *order of care* for those who regularly attend, and for those who would come to share with us. There were two things vitally affected by this judgment; both of which require understanding and discipline.

The first was *explanation*. Before there was little, if any. Now, for the understanding of all in attendance (and don't take the understanding of old-timers for granted) we explain those facets of our general practice which *must* be understood to be continually meaningful and thereby, continually powerful. Space does not allow for detailed illustration, but the operation of spiritual gifts is explained when observable occurrences are in manifestation. This eases visitors and teaches regular members how to respond to Holy Spirit prompting themselves. Vocal gifts are *heeded*. In other words, we don't simply *hear* them and then respond with praise, but we talk about them. We "think through" what the Holy Spirit has had to say to us. We exhort on the basis of these teaching words He gives. Further, we give Bible-based reasons for our worship practices. Every move isn't explained in every service, but over the course of a few weeks most of

those "power-points" of New Testament life are briefly observed and explained in the flow of the regular services.

The second is *ministry development*. In this theme we touch another great foundational stone of the Church which our Lord Jesus Christ set Himself to build. It is being raised from the quagmire of confusion that 1500 years of clergy/laity division has caused. The charismatic explosion has shaken the status quo of ministry attitudes. Millions are beginning to believe that Jesus has filled them with the Holy Spirit for a purpose. Now, the issue lies with the local church to lead each one into the discovery of *how* he may *begin* to function as a ministering member of Christ's Body.

The charismatic community is virtually crawling with people who *attempt ministry* but who will not *accept responsibility*. There are dozens of sincere people in any city who are apt to do *anything* in the name of Jesus. Their aggressiveness and absence of wisdom eventually repel them from even those unschooled, innocent victims of their earlier "ministry." But a far more tragic thing happens. The majority of believers in local congregations often stifle a valid ministry developing in themselves, because they are afraid that what they have seen in the objectionable examples mentioned above is what will happen to them if they ever attempt to "move out into their ministry."

Hereby, the present revival lays a great challenge at the door of the local church. Pastor and people, elders and congregation, *must* find ways to begin moving the individual member of the Body toward ministry development. It is imperative because unless the power related to the baptism in the Holy Spirit finds direction, the fire is turned in upon itself. The river of blessing backs up, and the stoppage of outward moving toward ministry will result in a warped personality: "burned out" or "a stagnant pool."

To answer this challenge, local churches must bring Spirit-filled saints face to face with the opportunity and the responsibility for ministry develop-

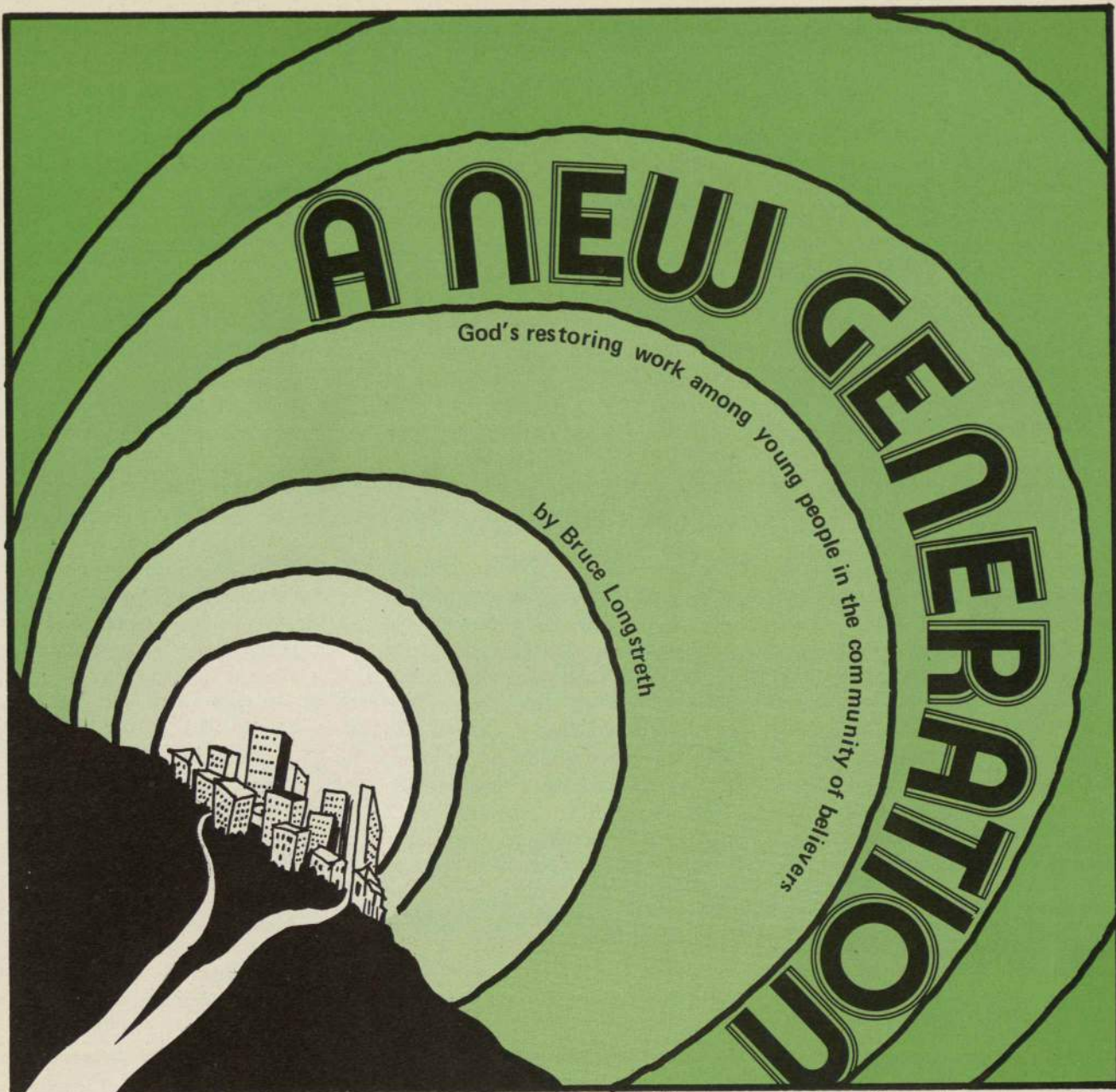
ment. Even in our public services, we emphasize interaction among believers — encouraging the individual to believe in his own "usability" as an instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God. Space again prohibits illustration, but the risk of some abusive or careless word or manner is accepted by myself and our elders. The reason we risk this, and are willing to challenge the threatened-ness felt by people, when *required* to interact and relate to one another in the public gatherings, is because of a larger risk if we don't. We risk people coming and going week after week — Spirit-filled believers — who are permitted an *option* that the local church shouldn't permit them; the option to minister or not. By our forcing the issue, hundreds in our assembly attest to new-found readiness to minister *away* from the congregation, because they began by ministering *with* and *among* their fellow believers.

But much more than this is needed. *In the local church* there must be developed a training program that is willing to let people — no, *help* them — to go as far as they can in developing ministry. The emphasis on "*in the local church*" is placed in that fashion, because it places a high challenge upon a pastor. Not only is it a challenge to study and prepare for many additional training sessions beyond the general, public teaching times; it requires a willingness to share *everything* he knows about ministry — a trait that professionalism will prohibit, but one which Jesus demonstrates in His teaching and ministry with the twelve.

The impact of this concern has brought me to semi-monthly training seminars with more than one hundred of the men in our congregation. I am ready to share everything I have, know and am with them. The goal: to raise them to ministry.

Had you even hinted at such a possibility six years ago, I wouldn't have known what to answer. I couldn't have even conceived of doing so. But an explosion has shaken my own life, and the life of the congregation I pastor. It is a characteristic shake-up being

(Continued on page 16)



Now the man had relations with his wife Eve and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord" (Gen. 4:1 NASB).

To Eve, the birth of Cain was the fulfilled promise of Genesis 3:15 of a deliverer who would bring judgment upon the serpent who had deceived her and brought about the separation of her family from close fellowship with God. Cain, however, proved to be a disaster. But God, true to His promise, gave Eve another son, and

Genesis 4:25 records that, "she gave birth to a son and named him Seth for she said, 'God has appointed me another offspring.' " The scripture further states that the generation of Seth "began to call upon the name of the Lord."

It is interesting to note that, "Cain

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went out from the presence of the Lord" and his generation built cities, developed art, music, agriculture, and learned to process bronze and iron. By contrast, the most outstanding thing written about the descendants of Seth is that in the seventh generation a man named Enoch was born and he "walked with God and he was not for God took him."

Evidence of Cain surrounds us in our present-day situation. There probably has never been a time of a more talented, more gifted, more creative people than the present generation, and with these very resources

we have "zeroed in" on today's youth. In many ways, we in Christianity have sought to produce the godly generation of Seth by the fleshly methods of Cain, and we have been left wondering why they have not lived up to the expectations of a "peculiar people of God's own choosing." In attempting to win young people by elaborate methods, we have missed the simplicity of God's plan.

After four years of college and a year of seminary, I was called to be a youth pastor in a large church in northern California. I was given the responsibility of ministry to several hundred young people from the junior age to college and career age. This youth ministry was both an exciting and a frustrating time for me.

The challenge of evangelism was ever before us and to meet this challenge we had the best available resources. The very best in music and musicians; stirring testimonies from famous Hollywood and sports personalities; parties and projects; summer and winter camping programs; movies and dramatic productions; teach-ins, walk-outs, stand-ups and sit-downs — all of it geared to reach, convert, educate and maintain a godly generation. Although many good things were accomplished and a number of young people had a new birth experience, there developed in me a deepening sense of frustration. All of our flashy activity was rapidly becoming a feeble substitute for proper parental involvement and responsibility.

After two years of being responsible for kids with problems that only a well-ordered home could solve, we resigned. Today, exactly three years later we have a sense that God has appointed another offspring.

A PRODUCT OF RESTORATION

With great joy we have observed the work of the Holy Spirit in the restoration of the home. From restored homes is coming a new generation which may well be the final one that will walk with God in His full purpose

till we are all caught away by the Lord's return. The fruit of restored family order is slow in making its appearance, for the process of restoration is often painfully slow in being accomplished.

"Submission," a dreaded word and an equally dreadful work, emerges again and again as families are re-ordered. Some wives are "cut to the heart," and skillfully dodge that word looking for another one indicating a more glamorous ministry than mere "servitude" to an unappreciative husband. Others, however, receive the word with joy and begin by the Spirit to fulfill its requirements in their life. Because of their faithfulness, the hearts of stubborn husbands are being successfully plowed to receive God's word for them . . . "shepherdship."

Men are beginning to assume their place in the home. The meek and quiet spirit of a submitted wife draws from them the much needed ministry for her of "overseer" and "protector." In the revealing light of the principle of submission, husbands are no longer able to run from such responsibility.

Parents seeking to obey the Spirit's leading in their lives, provide a new atmosphere in which children can hear more clearly the words of honor and obedience to their parents in the Lord.

The order of restoration is not always the same, nor has it yet been brought to its full completion. Many men are responding to the Holy Spirit's urging and are taking their rightful place as husbands and fathers. In so doing, they become an encouragement to their wives to submit and to their children to come into obedience. At times, children honor parents who, in a natural sense are unworthy of honor, and this act on their part enables God's word to direct them to their place in family order. But whatever the order, we are engaged in a time of restoration of the home.

Today's Christian young people are a product of this restorative work in the home. They are not, as we have long believed, a peculiar species of human beings who must be coaxed with special tools or professional

handling designed to help draw them into a deeper walk with the Lord. What they have needed is more simple than that: they have needed a home! Their dedication to Christ finds its source of strength in homes successfully coming into order by the Holy Spirit.

Several observations can be made about this "new generation."

A NEW FREEDOM UNDER AUTHORITY

We have noted that young people that come from a home where there is a strong "father image" have very little need to be continually "brought into line." It's a joy to fellowship with them and to be at ease knowing that harsh rules and threats will not be needed to maintain order. They are an extension of the spiritual authority found in the home.

At a recent weekend retreat on the beach, we took about thirty minutes to explain the schedule and then made no further mention of it. We were gratified to see that without shouts, bells or whistles everyone appeared at the proper place on time. After a time of planned recreation we dismissed the group (about 100) for an hour of free time on the beach. We stayed behind for a brief staff meeting and afterward went to join them. We were amazed to see them all assembled, unsupervised, and enjoying an old fashion Sunday School picnic time of relays. They romped up and down the beach enjoying the carefree fellowship of three-legged and wheelbarrow races. We watched this activity for awhile and then, without saying a word to them, we turned to go back to the camp for dinner. One of the staff members turned to me and said, "Take a look behind you." Behind us was the group of 100 quietly following us back to camp in orderly fashion. I cannot remember a time that I ever felt more like a shepherd with sheep than I did at that moment.

When today's young people assemble together they vividly represent the work of their homes

with regard to discipline. If a lack of discipline is seen in their behavior, it's not the job of a youth director to bring it about. Lack of discipline is referred back to the proper authorities — the parents.

A NEW FREEDOM TO LOVE

Another fresh aspect of this generation of young men and women is their freedom to enjoy each other as God intended. Each person under authority is realizing a new freedom to reach out and love without fear of being shut down for the attempt. In this atmosphere close relationships are developed and maintained in a different way than we have ever seen before.

In the times of group fellowship we come together as a whole body. Isolated circles of "special friends" disappear quite naturally as everyone becomes absorbed into the large fellowship. "Couples" defer the development of their private relationship for times other than when the entire group comes together.

In regard to couples, the whole area of courtship is undergoing some important changes. We attribute these changes to a new awareness of spiritual authority and a new criteria for choosing a mate.

Each young man in a courting situation recognizes that his responsibility is not to a set of rules and regulations but rather to spiritual oversight. Couples evidence a sense of relief in knowing that their relationship is being lovingly supervised and protected by those in authority over them. This frees their relationship from a grasping, possessive attitude, and enables them to relax and to trust its development to the timing of the Lord.

Because of the Spirit's emphasis on family order, the requirements of looks and personality come farther down the list of "things to look for in a good mate." A young man looks for a woman with the meek and quiet spirit which will enable her to submit and honor him as her head. She, on

the other hand, looks for a man who will truly be the head of her home; one to whom she can fully submit.

Another development among the young people is a new attitude of preferring the weaker members of the group by the stronger. We have seen much of the competitive spirit in our recreational activities set aside to help those less athletically-inclined to participate and enjoy themselves.

Our group is a large one covering a wide range of ages. In a group of 100, the ages run from 13 to 28. In this variety of ages, we have seen the development of "older brother" and "older sister" relationships. No longer are the younger ones grouped by age, ability or interests. The older ones reach back and help the younger ones make it over the rough places which they themselves have recently experienced.

A NEW FREEDOM TO WORSHIP

This generation is seemingly unhindered in their praise and adoration of the Lord. The attitude of "we've never done it that way" or "this is the way we've always done it" hardly poses a threat to them. Because of an openness to hear and a willingness to obey, the times of worship have been fantastic. Praise is explosive. There is a feeling in being with them that praise is under tremendous pressure and needs only a slight touch to release it. To one visitor, it was the most "uninhibited worship experience" she had ever seen.

One of the things that we are most careful about is that all of the enthusiasm and desire to "get-on-with-it" does not make of this generation of young people a special group. There is an understanding that when they come

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together they are representatives of the whole fellowship and are not the spiritual "in crowd." They also feel a sense of gratitude to the faithful generation which preceded them in opening the way to their freedom in worship.

THE FREEDOM TO BE

In this new generation, we find the means of evangelism which has been lost for so long. We see the pure delight of each one that has found the place of rest in the home, and thus been freed to be an example to others yet to be brought into relationship.

Psalms 68:6, "God setteth the solitary in families; He bringeth out those which are bound with chains, but the rebellious dwell in a dry land." A striking parallel passage in Acts 2:47 reads, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

In both passages God is in need of something. In the first, families for the one who is alone, desolate, solitary. In the second, a church, to add those

who are being saved, a process which doesn't end on earth. Because of God's need, there is a sense of loss for the people who are "copping out" on the Spirit's work of restoration in the family. They may feel that it is more important to be involved in some personal ministry at the expense of the home. But God needs families — and a Church composed of many families to which He can add a great harvest of men and women for the Kingdom.

In addition to homes, opening for the "solitary," faithful men are being raised up to shepherd young people who are away from their homes in the armed service, college and business.

There is a sense that this generation of young people has a freedom to be those to whom God can add others. Freedom to *be* gives the proclamation of the Gospel the credibility it has lacked for centuries. The society of related and committed people, young and old, is a living answer to the question of "To what shall we liken the kingdom of heaven?" Although it is like a sower, and a mustard seed,

and a host of other parables, most importantly it is like the redeemed community, observable in every area. Freedom to be that kind of witness is an answer to the prayer we have prayed so often, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"The grapes are big but the giants are bigger," was the majority opinion of the survey party returning from the Promised Land. However, as we view the promises God makes to His chosen generation, His peculiar people, we take our stand with Joshua and Caleb, admitting to the giants, but believing that God will bring this generation into the Land; into the full purpose of our salvation.

We see dimly the birth of a new generation and we bless God for it. We know that what we now see dimly the world will someday see as a city set on a hill whose light cannot be hid. Our joy is to be asked by an observer what makes it shine and what is the source of its radiance. He adds daily those seeking such an answer. ☞

CHARISMATIC EXPLOSION (continued from page 12)

experienced by many. It is good. It costs considerably, *but* it is worth it.

DISCIPLINE: A SAFETY VALVE

One final word: Discipline. Notice, I said, "discipline," not discipleship. I point that up, not in opposition to the latter term, but because it is the currently "in" truth being taught.

Discipline never has been "in." But it is the safety-valve on all charismatic life. It deserves study as to the development of distinct guidelines — not rigid rules, but specific principles — which must be observed to preserve the freshness and the purity of the revival. In a period when the freedom of the Spirit is so rejoiced in, discipline — correction, reproof, rebuke, control — tends to be anathematized as "bondage," "quenching" or "insensitivity." However, the first Corinthian epistle along with the Galatian letter makes it clear that leadership is responsible to both stimulate *and* modulate the activity of the Holy Spirit in the local church. Individuals in the Body need to learn to expect loving correction, and leaders need to learn to give it in the power of the Spirit.

It will finally prove to be, I believe, the factor that keeps this explosion we have discussed as an instrument of construction rather than one of high-rise dust clouds and just so much noise. ☞

NEW WINE IN SPANISH

We are happy to announce that *New Wine* Magazine is now being published in Spanish under the title *Vino Nuevo*. Through the efforts of Hugo Zelaya and the brethren at the Center for Christian Development (Centro Para Desarrollo Cristiano) in San José, Costa Rica, the teaching ministry of *New Wine* is now extended to our Spanish-speaking friends all over the world.

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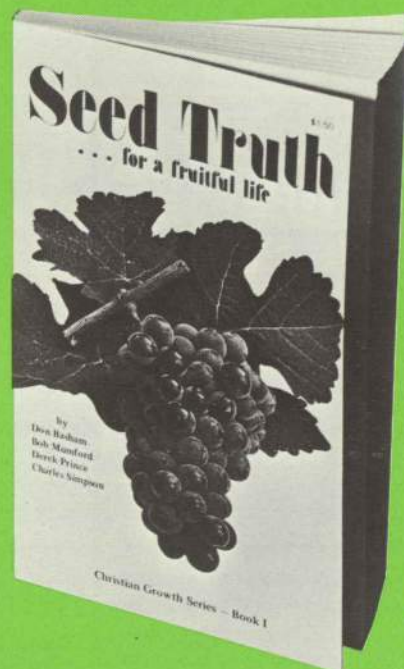
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BIBLE STUDY

THE LOCAL CHURCH

While Jesus was on the earth, He was not only the personification of God, but also the living demonstration of His infinite power. Significantly, after Jesus' physical departure from the earth, His first followers, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, were bonded together as the corporate expression of His person and the visible testimony of His miraculous power. City by city, this first unit of the Body of Christ was reproduced, and city by city, the Gospel of the Kingdom took hold of the known world.

Similarly, as the Holy Spirit overflows in our day in preparation for Jesus' return, the instrument by which the person and power of Christ are to be tangibly represented to a dying world can be no other than the one to which the Scriptures attest — *the local church*.

(Bible Study answers are found on page 29.)

1. The book of Acts gives us a picture of some of the local churches that were established after Jesus' resurrection. What event in Acts preceded the founding of the first church? (*Acts 1:8; 2:1*) _____
2. Answer the following questions concerning the occurrences among believers in the early Church:
 - a. What four activities did the new believers devote themselves to? (*Acts 2:42*) _____
 - b. What two statements are made in Acts 2:44 about their life style? _____
 - c. What did they do with their possessions? (*Acts 2:45*) _____
 - d. How were the believers received by the people in the community in which they were living? (*Acts 2:47*) _____
3. What does Acts 4:32 say about the unity of the early Church in general? _____
 And what about the matter of finances in the Church? _____
4. In Acts 2:43 and Acts 5:11,12 what attitude came upon the believers in the early Church? _____
 What were the results of this attitude as evidenced in the apostles' ministry as cited in both these passages? _____

5. What was the continuous function of the apostles as the early Church began to grow? (*Acts 5:42*) _____
6. After the deacons were appointed by the apostles in Acts 6:1-6, what three statements follow in the next verse?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
7. According to scriptures like 1 Corinthians 1:2 and Revelation 3:1,7,&14, what geographic unit is the site of each separate church in the New Testament? _____
8. What five ministries among a body of believers does Paul mention in Ephesians 4:11? _____
9. To what three purposes does God supply these ministries? (*Eph. 4:12*)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
10. What was the first order of business in providing governmental structure to each new church formed in a given city? (*Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5*) _____
11. What three basic classifications of people does Paul recognize in his greeting to the Philippians? (*Phil. 1:1*) _____
12. In Acts 15:22, what three groups in the church at Jerusalem agreed together to send the message to Antioch? _____
13. In speaking of the diversity of gifts among believers, what analogy does Paul use to describe the united operation of the Church? (*1 Cor. 12:11-31*) _____
14. What two exhortations are made in 1 Corinthians 12:25 in regard to our relationship to each other? _____
15. What statement did Jesus make in Matthew 16:18 of the active part He would play in the Church?
 What additional promise did He make concerning the Church's power? _____
16. What state will the Church be in when Jesus reclaims it? (*Eph. 5:27*) _____
17. Until Jesus does come, what two things should all Christians emphasize? (*Heb. 10:25*)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

The Birth of a Local Church

by Michael Ford

Principles in establishing God's Kingdom in a city.

The following essay was chosen by our editorial staff as the Essay of the Month for July/August.

It was the Master's prayer that His Kingdom would come. We are hearing clearly today that He is desirous of establishing His Kingdom, or government, in the hearts of His people. Discipleship, submission, and authority, words often heard today, all speak of divine government. The Master's perfect will for the city of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, is that His Kingdom be instituted in place of lawlessness and spiritual anarchy; that there be unity rather than division; trust rather than suspicion; humility rather than ambition; and joy rather than jealousy.

For more than a year two other shepherds and myself have been meeting together with one increasing desire: to see the Lord Jesus sitting as King over His people in this city; a people who are in right relation to one another, and whose homes are in proper order.

WHERE WE STARTED

Six years ago the Lord raised up a small group of people, mostly college students, who desired earnestly to see His body functioning as one in this city. From the beginning there was at least head knowledge of the proper order for the church, thanks to Watchman Nee and his writings on the normal church life. But, how do you go about bringing Christian people so far apart together? There is surely no set formula, but we began to see that there were principles crucial to the establishment of the Kingdom.

COVENANT

In 2 Chronicles 15:12 (NAS) the people of God under Asa, "entered into the covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and soul." Again, the word says "Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king, that they should be the Lord's people" (2 Chron. 23:16 NAS). As the Lord spoke that word to our hearts people began to turn down lucrative job offers in other cities to stay and labor with their brothers to see His Kingdom established here. We began to experience community life in a way we had not known heretofore. (This should not be confused with communal living, for the Lord always maintains the sanctity of the family as an individual unit.) We shared a common vision, and worked at developing that loyalty one to the other, which is the sinews of the Body of Christ, holding it together.

SUBMISSION

Hot on the heels of covenant loyalty came submission. It was salvation for us. For even if the people of God covenant together by the Holy Ghost to seek the Lord, and to be his people in a city, that people will quickly degenerate into either anarchy or religious democracy if they do not have submissive hearts and teachable spirits. For us, submission was simply a matter of recognition; recognizing those who were broken, and through whom the life of Jesus flowed. (We found out the hard way that a label

will not make a man something he is not.) As the proper authority was established the covenant relationships began to solidify.

During this time there was one principle that was again and again burned into our hearts. It is a simple principle, but one that is easily forgotten. The men of God must always seek the Lord.

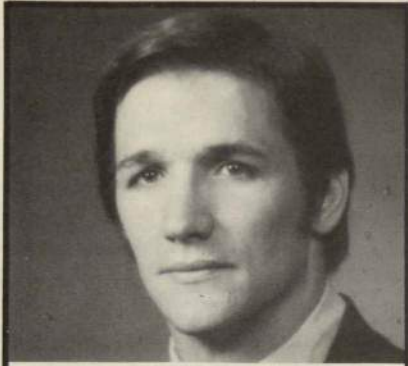
Every three or four months, the men would gather on a Friday or Saturday evening to spend all night praying and seeking the Lord for the church in Tuscaloosa. As we interceded we noticed a change taking place — not in the city, but in us. The closer we came to the heart of the Lord the greater our burden was for the city. It also increased our appetites for Him.

There is no objective standard to measure how much was accomplished in those times together before Him. But one thing we did learn. If we ever become so proud or efficient that we will not humble ourselves and fall on our faces before Him to seek His will, we will miss Him. How simple Father's ways are.

BREAKTHROUGH IN FASTING

In January of 1974 our flock covenanted together to fast on Monday of every week and pray for the city and the nation. This came about as a result of a conference in Miami in November of 1973. Derek Prince ministered on the power of corporate prayer and fasting. Up until that time there had been frequent but uncoordinated periods of fasting by different individuals. As we gathered together on Monday evenings for an hour of prayer we could sense that something definite was happening in the heavenlies.

We began to harvest the first fruits of our fasting covenant four months later. The Lord raised up and established over another flock a shepherd with a like heart and a common vision. One month later in a different section of the city another man was set in as a shepherd by the Spirit to oversee a group of people. We got in touch with



MICHAEL FORD is an elder in the Body of Christ in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He has had experience in teaching and just recently graduated from the University of Alabama Law School. He and his wife, Candy, have two children.

one another, and began to meet every other week in one of our homes, wives included. Father began to knit our hearts together.

So, within a five month period the Lord brought about the basis for unity that for five years we had tried to achieve. How we bless God for the revelation and power of covenant prayer and fasting.

WHERE TO GO

Over the past year the flocks have come together for sheepfold meetings several times. The order and the purity of praise at these meetings speak of the Lord's blessings when His people dwell together in even a semblance of unity. We have seen to some degree the outworking of some of the principles that we had heard about before.

1. To the degree that the shepherds are one, the sheep will also be one. The way to unity in a city is definitely through the shepherds. If sheep trust their shepherd, then they will embrace the ones their shepherd embraces. In our particular situation the three flocks were all of different character and from different backgrounds, denominationally and naturally. But because the shepherds were submitted to one another, there was little problem with distrust, doubt, or doctrine amongst the sheep.

2. "Iron sharpens iron; so one man sharpens another." (Prov. 27:17 NAS).

We have all become a little sharper over the last year. As the Lord welds our hearts together the sparks fly. It would not only be idealistic, but unrealistic, to think that men of God will come together in love without some disagreement. There have been times we did not see eye to eye. At that point we could have done one of two things — work it out, or walk out. It seems that it is when friction occurs that the true motives of the heart are manifested. If our motive is to build our own kingdom, then we will probably walk out. But, if it is to "preserve the King," we will roll up our shirtsleeves and work through the problem.

3. "Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed." (Prov. 27:5 NAS). The Lord has encouraged us to walk in the light with one another. As the Lord has prompted us to exhort one another we have become aware of a very important truth. There is no room in the Kingdom of God for hurt feelings. If we want to be in the family, then we must expect to be treated like family.

We prayed often that the Lord would teach us to love like Jesus loved. As he began to answer our prayer, I, for one, was surprised. To love with the love of Jesus is not always comfortable. It may mean to love a man enough to let him go, as the Master did with the rich young ruler. Or, it may mean challenging a brother that is out of order, or speaking the truth in love one to the other. This is safety and health. We know that to stand alone now only invites deception. What security there is in knowing that there are fellow shepherds who love you enough to tell you when you are wrong.

4. We are moving from the unscriptural to the scriptural. Looking back over the last six years it seems as if the church here is "backing in" to proper governmental order. There have been times when we could find no black-letter scripture to substantiate what the Lord was doing here. He established functioning elders with no formal ceremony. And, we have yet to see "hide nor hair" of a true apostle.

There have been times when we were almost apologetic about the way the Lord was doing things here, since it did not measure up with our preconceived ideas of doctrinal order.

Patently now, He is defining the relationships within the family; plugging every one in under a shepherd in just the right place. As the message of discipleship has filtered down from the Head there has been a comfortable settling in.

5. "And the things which you have heard from me . . . these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2:2 NAS). God really dealt with us about numbers. We would like to have a whole bunch of little ole scraggly sheep. (A big flock makes you look rich.) But, He is interested in a few healthy ones that can reproduce. As shepherds, we have had to exhort one another to remember that "pollution comes from dilution." The life is diluted when one man is giving himself to too many.

The harvest of lost sheep in Tuscaloosa is ripe. But the Lord is wise not to bring them in until the shepherds are prepared. It would destroy us if He added very many new sheep (babes) right now. We just do not have enough parents to go around.

6. The true reflection of a man's spiritual condition is in his family. Most of the time spent in ministry over the past year has been in the home and concerning the family. In God's economy the home is *the* top priority. We have been trying to make it ours. There is no fruit that is sweeter to taste, or longer in production than that of harmony and order in the home. As men, we are having to learn and relearn the basic lessons of how to love our wives, and train our children.

There is much work to do, and we have so much to learn. Every time we think we have the corner on God's "Blueprint for building the Kingdom," and become somewhat impressed with the job we are doing, He gracefully pulls back the curtain of our remembrance, reminding us that He chose the foolish, weak, base and despised things of the world with which to build His Kingdom. What a tribute to His mercy. ❧

THINK BEFORE YOU STRIKE!

by Derek Prince

Preventing the damaging
fires of the tongue
among God's people.



A few years ago I wrote to the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture requesting information on forest fires. In response they sent me the material along with a letter signed by the director of fire control. The letter stated, "This year has been a particularly critical year with many fires and severe losses. Total acres burned are the highest in 36 years for acres protected by the National Forest Service. Approximately 14,500 forest fires have burned in excess of 550,000 acres." That is almost 300 forest fires per week. I would further imagine that an acre of timber would normally average not less than \$1,000 in value, which would mean over half a billion dollars of timber was destroyed in the United States in that one year.

The concluding paragraph of the letter says, "In the eastern United States the majority of fires are man-caused and could be prevented! In fact, 9 out of 10 fires nationwide are man-caused. We appreciate the interest of persons like yourself who can help in the effort to prevent forest fires by being careful with fire and telling others to do the same."

I did not tell them my full motivation in writing. While I endorse 100% the efforts to preserve the forests of the United States, and

would not feel I was wasting my time urging fire prevention, my primary purpose in writing was that I needed some teaching aids.

Most of us are familiar with Smokey the Bear posters and the slogan: "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires." I like another one even better which says, "Think Before You Strike." I am going to take this as the title for my message. If you haven't already guessed, my subject is "the tongue." The damage done within the inheritance of God's people by the tongues of believers is infinitely greater than the half billion dollars' worth of damage done by natural fires in the natural inheritance of the United States. If it is important to prevent natural forest fires, then it is infinitely more important to prevent spiritual fires that devour whole areas of the inheritance of God's people and leave them a burned up wilderness. And the truth is exactly the same — only you can do it!

DIVINE ORDER

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican (Matt. 18:15-17).

There are only two passages in all four gospels where the word *church* is used. The first time is in Matthew 16 and the second is in this passage in Matthew 18. Without going into a lot of background, it is clear to me that in Matthew 16 Jesus is talking about the universal Church. He says that the way into that Church is through acknowledgment and confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God; and that in essence is the basis of admission to the universal Church. In Matthew 18, the word *church* refers to

the local body of believers in one location. Obviously, from the context of the instruction given, it cannot be referring to the universal Church, for Jesus says to "tell it to the church." You would have to gather the believers from every continent and island and have a meeting of all believers to be able to tell it to the universal Church.

In Matthew 16 Jesus lays the foundation truth for the universal Church, and in Matthew 18 he lays an equally basic truth for the local church. This truth in its context in regard to the local church is every bit as important as the truth in Matthew 16 in regard to the universal Church. He tells us what action to take if another believer offends us by doing something that is not right, fair or justified, whether in word or deed.

First, we are to go alone to the brother who offended us. Secondly, if he will not satisfy us, we are to take two reliable witnesses that everything that is said may be attested and established by witnesses. Then if he will not hear those witnesses, there is only one more step, and it is not optional whether we take it. It is required of us! We are to go to the local church.

Any believer who, at the end of this process, refuses to submit to the decision of the church, forfeits his right to be treated as a Christian brother. From then on, until he repents, he is to be treated "as an heathen man and a publican."

How many Christians do you know who have ever followed this process through to the end? It is my observation that this simple, basic requirement for keeping the local church in order has been systematically set aside by 80% or 90% of believers. Most believers would never dream of doing what Jesus said to do. When they get offended by someone they fly off to anybody else and start talking about the person who has offended them. We have no right whatever to do this, and we are guilty if we do.

Let me also point out that there are two sides to this issue. In a murder case the person who commits the crime is called the murderer. But there

may also be an accessory after the murder. An accessory is one who aids the murderer in some way, perhaps by hiding the murder weapon or keeping certain information from the police. Likewise, if a Christian brother comes to me and begins to stab another brother in the back by his words, and I listen to him, I become an accessory after the crime.

Many people wouldn't think of going and talking about somebody who has offended them, but they will provide a good listening ear when somebody comes to them. For example, when believer A goes to believer B to complain about believer C, believer B listens to him. Then believer B goes to believer D and says, "Do you know what believer A told me about believer C?" By then the forest fire is raging, and no one can stop it! Who knows how many lives, how many homes, how many ministries and how many congregations will be burned up by that fire? This is not a little matter. I have become convinced in prayer and meditation that Jesus said the one thing that absolutely has to be said about a local church, the one thing that is essential to keep its life and relationships in proper order. Everything else is secondary in importance to grasping this command. I have come to the conclusion that you can preach and talk as much as you like about church order, discipline, structure, elders and apostles, and it sounds beautiful, but it will never work until this principle of Jesus is applied.

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

James 3:1-10 discusses the nature of the tongue.

(1) My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. (2) For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. (3) Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. (4) Behold, also the ships, which though they be so great, and

are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. (5) Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! (6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell! (7) For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind. (8) But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (9) Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude [likeness] of God. (10) Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

James says, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." In other words, if you can control your tongue there is no member of the body that you cannot control.

Two comparisons which James uses in this passage with regard to the control of the tongue are that of a bit in the horse's mouth and the rudder of a ship. The horse in the Bible is always a symbol of strength. One can control the whole of that strong beast if he can control his mouth. All that is needed to make him stop or turn is a bit in his mouth.

Likewise, a ship is controlled by just a small piece of wood or metal called the rudder. The whole destiny of the ship depends upon that one little instrument at its stern. If the rudder is rightly used the ship will get safely to harbor, and if it is misused the ship will be wrecked. Even so the tongue, rightly used will get you to heaven; wrongly used will land you in hell.

"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" In my margin it reads, "How much wood is kindled by how small a fire." It does not require more than one little match to destroy hundreds of acres of timber. Likewise, one sentence spoken when it should

not have been spoken can do an equal amount of damage in the Church of Jesus Christ.

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God." We can sing in the spirit in tongues like an angel, and thirty minutes later murder someone by character-assassination on the steps of the church.

We must conclude with James: "... My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

I want to stress to you the two-way responsibility, not merely that you do not offend actively by going around and speaking evil of your brothers and sisters in the Lord, but that you do not offend passively by listening to those who do, because if you listen you are guilty. Bearing this in mind, I am going to give you a number of passages of Scripture on the tongue.

Exodus 23:1 "Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." Notice the two-way application: you are not to start a false report and if a false report is brought to you, you are not to be associated with it because that is putting your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

Leviticus 19:16 "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people [Who are thy people? The people of God]: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour. . . ." When you spread, or receive, unverified charges against your neighbor, you are as much guilty of his blood as if you had given false testimony against him that resulted in his being put to death.

Psalms 15:1-3 says it as clearly as I believe anything can: "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. [As Christians we have an obligation to say with our mouth what is in our heart. We don't say one thing with our mouth and have another thing in our

heart. If we have the wrong thing in our heart, we have an obligation to get it out.] He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." We are not to backbite with our tongue (active) but neither are we to take up a reproach against our neighbor (passive.) When somebody else comes with a reproach against him we are not to receive it.

Proverbs 6:16-19 gives us six things that the Lord hates; and a seventh that is an abomination unto Him: (1) a proud look, (2) a lying tongue, (3) hands that shed innocent blood, (4) a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, (5) feet that be swift to run into mischief, (6) a false witness, that speaketh lies, and (7) he that soweth discord among brethren. Note that out of these seven things, at least three — those numbered (2), (6) and (7) — have to do with the misuse of the tongue.

Proverbs 18:21 is so short and so simple, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." You can minister life and you can minister death, and you can do it with your tongue. In *Jeremiah 18:18*, Jeremiah's enemies said of him, "Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." It is possible to smite a person with the tongue, even to death. Many a dedicated servant of Christ has literally been killed by the tongues of God's people.

Proverbs 26:20 "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth." There cannot be strife amongst God's people without a talebearer.

Let us turn now to the New Testament. *1 Timothy 5:11-13* discusses the problem of widows and the church's responsibility toward them. Paul is warning Timothy about the kind of widows to receive into their program of support and the kind of widows not to receive. "But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off

their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Have you housewives ever met anybody like that? Just put yourself in this situation: You have gotten the children off to school and the husband off to work. You have vacuumed the living room, made the beds and dusted the house when there is a ring at the door. It is one of your lady neighbors. You are rather surprised to see that she is carrying in her arms a brown paper sack which looks kind of soggy and smells anything but fresh! When you look inside the bag you see coffee grounds, grapefruit rinds, egg shells, used kleenex, etc. As you watch, she begins to tip it all out on your living room floor. What are you going to do? Praise the Lord?

You know what I would do? I would say, "Please don't dump your garbage in my living room. There's the door; take your garbage where it belongs. I don't want the atmosphere in my home defiled!" And after the lady had gone I'd get out one of those air-fresheners and squirt it all around. There is a spiritual air-freshener too — praise!

If this scene literally happened, most of us would not be so religious that we wouldn't tell the lady to take her garbage elsewhere. But when it comes to the sins of the tongue, we get so religious that we are afraid to hurt someone's feelings. We spare the feelings of the talebearer and hurt the rest of the Body of Christ! To me that is the reverse of logical; it is absurd. If anybody has to suffer, let it be the guilty.

The Church today is so permissive of almost any kind of silly, wrong and even immoral behavior that we have infected the world. I would say that one of the big problems in the secular life of the United States is permissiveness. The Church is the salt of the earth, and if the salt has lost its savor, there is nothing more to make the earth savory. Do you know why the United States is full of ill-behaved, undisciplined and unthankful brats?

Because God's children, in His house, are ill-behaved, undisciplined and unthankful brats. And what the Church is spiritually, the nation becomes naturally.

Finally, *1 Peter 4:15* says, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." Notice that the busybody is listed with the murderer, the thief, and the evildoer. He is just as guilty and just as dangerous.

THE TONGUE AND THE MIND

Once when I was pointing out the evil of criticizing or gossiping about our neighbors, one brother spoke up and asked, "Well, what are we going to talk about?" I would say he was probably just a bit more honest than a lot of other people who were thinking the same thing but didn't say it.

First, we must realize that what we talk about cannot be divorced from what we think about. Alternately, our speech is largely the product of what we think, and our thinking is affected by our speaking. It is a two-way relationship. I understand that an angel once told William Branham, "Men's thoughts sound as loud in heaven as their voices do on earth." If the thoughts that have passed through your mind in the last six hours were to be flashed on a screen here, would you be embarrassed? There should not be a gap between what we think and what we say. I should say what I think, and think what I say. If it isn't fit to be said, it isn't fit to be thought. So what we are to talk about is the same as what we are to think about. They go together.

I want to give you some things we should be thinking and speaking of. My favorite is *Joshua 1:8* "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." What are we to think about? *The Word of God*. What are we to act on? *The*

Word of God. What are we to speak about? *The Word of God*. And what will happen if we do? Our way will be prosperous and we will have good success. The rules of success are to think right, speak right, act right. You cannot think wrong and live right. It is impossible.

Psalms 5:1 "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation." I am deeply impressed first of all that David would invite the Lord to look into what he was thinking about. Secondly, I am impressed to realize that Almighty God is so gracious that He listens to what I am thinking about. It is not just the words of my prayer, but the meditations of my heart that He hears.

Psalms 16:9 "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope." When the psalmist said, "My glory rejoiceth" what did he mean? Turning to *Acts 2:26* we find scripture interpreting scripture. "Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad . . ." Where David said, "my glory," Peter said "my tongue." Our tongue is our glory because it is the one instrument and member above all others in the body with which we may glorify God. It was put in our mouths for one supreme purpose — to glorify God! Any use of the tongue which does not glorify God is a misuse. At the baptism of the Holy Spirit the tongue really does become our glory. When a believer yields his tongue to the Holy Spirit in speaking in tongues, he never says a word that is not to the glory of God.

Psalms 29:9 "The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory." It is in His temple that everything says, "Glory." If you are in His temple — the Body of Christ, the Church — you speak of His glory.

Psalms 34:1-3 "I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

Psalm 35:28 "My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise and of thy honour all the day long."

Psalm 71:24 "My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long." If we talk of God's praise, honor and righteousness all the day long, we do not have time to gossip.

Psalm 77:12 "I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings."

Psalm 104:34 "My meditation of him [the Lord] shall be sweet." You can think of lots of sour things, but when you think about the Lord, it is sweet.

Psalm 145:1-12 "I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name forever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom."

That's something to talk about! You won't run out of conversation in the first five minutes if you follow this recipe.

Let's consider also two or three passages from the New Testament. *Acts 2:3* "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." What happened was that a new kind of fire came from heaven. The tongue of the natural man is set on fire from hell, but by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the tongue of the believer is set on fire from heaven. And the difference is as

great as the difference between heaven and hell.

Acts 2:46-47 "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God and having favor with all the people." Every house was filled with the praises of the Lord. They didn't have time to talk about all the negative things, they were so busy talking about the good things.

I don't mean to imply that we never have to talk about unpleasant things. There are times when we have to do so. But we never need to dwell on unpleasant things. We don't have to advertise the unpleasant, blow it up or carry the garbage around from house to house. We face facts, deal with them as facts and when they are properly dealt with, the book is closed and no one has a right to reopen it. That is the whole beauty of proper church discipline. It deals with the matter, and then the book is closed. But the way most Christians deal with problems causes the thing to blow up until no one can close the book.

In closing, let us look at *Philippians 4:8* "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." On this basis, Paul promises, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds . . ." Peace in our hearts and minds depends largely upon thinking and speaking about the right things.

God has given us the tongue to glorify Him, and He wants our hearts and our tongues to be united in speaking of His glory. Within the local church He has provided a means whereby we can stop the abuses of the tongue. This places upon us the responsibility not to speak evil of a brother or sister, nor to listen to an evil report, but rather to follow the steps Jesus outlined for us in dealing with offenses.

Remember, only you can prevent the forest fires which ruin the inheritance of God. Think before you strike! ♡

Essay of the Month

We again invite our readers to submit articles on the theme of the month. One essay per theme will be selected by our editorial staff for publication.

Listed below are the themes for the next two issues and the deadline by which they must be received in our *New Wine* office.

October — "The Restoration of Manhood" DUE: July 18

November — "Covenant" DUE: August 22

Essays should be written from the writer's own experience and observation (preferably in the form of a testimony) and should be 1500 to 2000 words (or 4 — 6 typewritten, double-spaced pages). Please include a photograph and short biography of yourself.

Send all manuscripts to *New Wine* Essays, P.O. Box 22888, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33315. If you wish to have your manuscript returned, enclose a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

All published material becomes the property of *New Wine*.

Foreign Outreach Report

Developments in the Body of Christ around the world.

Beginning with this issue, one page of New Wine will be devoted every other month to a report from a vital part of Christian Growth Ministries and New Wine Magazine — our foreign outreach. (On alternate months, Echoes of the Spirit will appear in this space.)

Since our last report in the November issue of 1973, the demand for Christ-centered teaching has grown steadily all over the world. Because of increased correspondence and personal contacts with missionaries and foreign nationals, it became necessary to assign a person full time to this task, and in September, 1974, Hans Fischer joined us to coordinate the many aspects of our foreign outreach.

NEW WINE

The number of foreign subscribers to *New Wine* continues to increase, with 11,616 issues of last month's magazine sent to 122 countries in all five continents, including three Communist countries behind the Iron Curtain. We have recently heard from brothers who visited Budapest, Hungary, that several people there are regularly receiving their *New Wine*.

New Wine articles have been translated into Danish, Swedish, German, and Icelandic; reprinted in English in Australia, Canada, England and South Africa; and permissions for other translations have been granted. Even more exciting is the fact that entire issues of *New Wine* are now in print in Spanish, and a Chinese edition is soon to be published. Charles Simpson recently wrote the following letter concerning these developments:

Dear Friends:

I am happy to announce that *New Wine* is now being published in Spanish under the title *Vino Nuevo*. This has been made possible by CGM's Foreign Outreach Fund.

Hugo Zelaya of San José has been instrumental in providing *Vino Nuevo* to our Spanish-speaking friends. He is the Director of the Center For Christian Development (Centro Para Desarrollo Cristiano) in San José, Costa Rica.

I have known Hugo for twelve years. He was filled with the Spirit at Bay View Heights Baptist Church under my ministry and later he became a deacon, then an elder. Then God called him to return to his native Costa Rica for mission work. He is a most beloved brother, both gracious and diligent. In Costa Rica, God has given him other brethren. One of them is Noé Martínez, an experienced editor, who is assisting Hugo in publishing.

I want to personally ask you to pray about CGM's *Foreign Outreach*. All money so designated goes to projects like the one I have described. *New Wine* is also going into Chinese — in the language of Communist China — standardized by Mao Tse Tung. With English, Spanish and Chinese we are well on the way to providing the Gospel of the Kingdom to a major portion of this world's population.

Sincerely,

Charles Simpson

TEACHING MATERIALS

We have sent a great number of books and tapes all over the world to satisfy the ever-increasing need for sound teaching. Recently, after sending some books and tapes behind the Iron Curtain, we received a letter acknowledging the receipt of these materials. We feel this was only possible through God's intervention, since Christian materials are usually confiscated by the authorities.

BOOK TRANSLATIONS

Much has been accomplished in translating books authored by the resident teachers into other languages.

Bob Mumford's *Take Another Look At Guidance* has appeared in Swedish and Spanish; *Christ in Session* is available in Japanese. A Japanese edition of *The Problem of Doing Your Own Thing* is ready to come off the press. Further translations into Spanish, Swedish and German are planned or already underway.

Don Basham's *Face Up With A Miracle* has been in print in German for some time. Recently, *Deliver Us From Evil* was published in Danish. Contracts for two books have been signed with a publisher in Sweden.

Derek Prince's entire *Foundation Series* is available in Dutch. Parts of it have been published in Hebrew, Danish, Swedish, Korean and Indian dialect. *Three Messages for Israel* is available in Hebrew and Dutch; *Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting* in Danish; *Praying For the Government* and the *Self-Study Bible Course* in Korean.

A Scandinavian group has published much of Derek's teaching in small booklets in Danish, Swedish, Finnish and to some extent in French. This group will be starting to incorporate materials from other teachers in their booklets, which have made an impact all over Scandinavia.

THE BURDEN GROWS

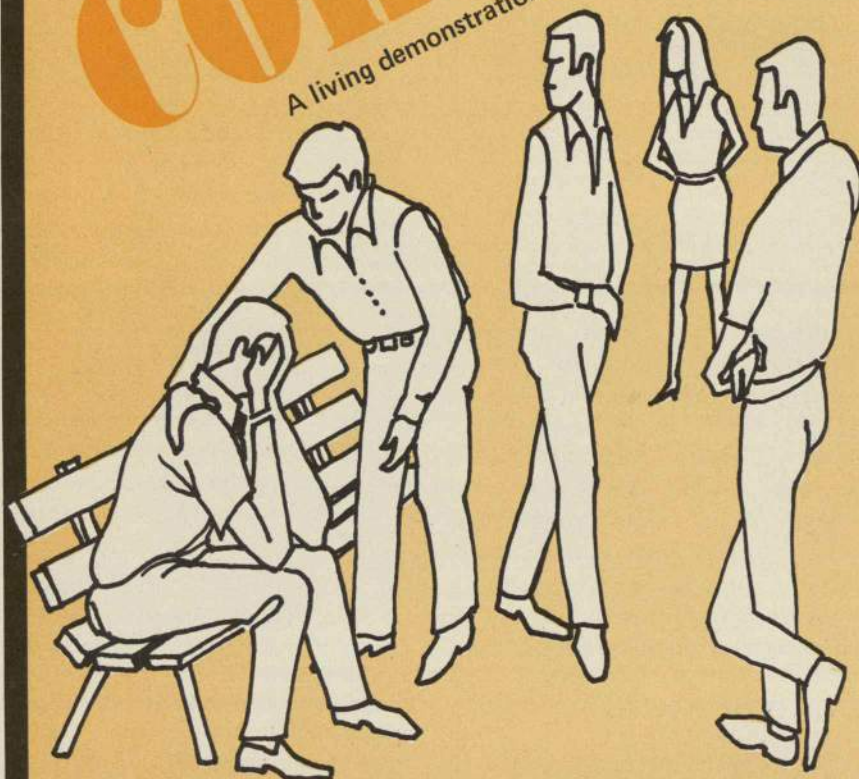
Obviously, all of these projects have entailed a great amount of time, work, and especially, finances. We are grateful for the financial support you have shared with us thus far which has enabled us to accomplish what we have related in this report. If, however, we are to continue with what God has called us to do, we need your continued contributions to this ministry.

Send contributions to: Christian Growth Ministries Foreign Outreach, P.O. Box 22888, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315.

The Church Speaks to the Community!

by
John Poole

A living demonstration of the Kingdom of God within its locality.



The crucified Lord was now risen from the dead, having triumphed gloriously over sin, death, and hell. He had ascended into heaven and in response to His request, the Father had poured forth the Spirit on the one hundred and twenty who waited with prayer and praise. The news of unusual happenings spread throughout the city of Jerusalem, and a great crowd of perplexed, wondering people came together to be challenged by Peter and the rest of the apostles to "repent and be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit." Three thousand responded joyfully to the invitation to save themselves from the generation without direction and enter into a new life.

Now the question became — "How would these individuals, some, followers of Jesus since the beginning of His ministry, many newly convinced of His lordship, continue the work that He had begun. God had so loved the world that He had sent His only begotten Son that men might

find their way out of the darkness into the Kingdom of light. In what manner would those who followed Him continue this ministry? What course of action would be taken? How would they tackle the job of showing to the people in Jerusalem the love and forgiveness of God? How would they confront the wrongs and injustices with which they were surrounded? What would they say to the corrupt political and religious systems that flourished in their country? All of these questions and many like them demand our attention and consideration if we are to adequately answer the challenge — “How does the local church relate to the community?”

FOLLOWING JESUS' EXAMPLE

To gain insight into the situation, it is necessary to go back to the life and ministry of Jesus. Remember, those who came after Him were taught to do and act as He had during His earthly life. They were not called upon to develop programs and ideas of their own, but rather to follow in His steps. He was for them the great example; they were to go and do as He had done. It is at this point that many of us have made a serious mistake. In our desire to maintain the teaching of the deity of Christ, we have neglected the fact that He was here to be an example. He was more than an example, true, but an example He was. He expected that His instructions would be obeyed, and the pattern of ministry that He had set forth before His followers would be carried on.

Remember the situation. Jesus had come to earth as the representative of another government. He was an ambassador of the Kingdom of Heaven here on the earth. When He entered His ministry there were a number of different courses of action that He could have followed to show the difference between the government that He represented and the government under which the people lived. He could have spent all of His time dealing with the corrupt religious system that was everywhere prevalent. Or, He could have spent all of His time

speaking out against the injustices that abounded on every hand and under which the Jewish people were forced to live. He could have endeavored to stage a political revolution, or tried to reform the religious system. But what did He do?

First of all, He did indeed speak out against the religious hypocrites on many occasions. He did talk about the day of justice that would come for those who were denied their rights and freedoms. However, there can be no argument about the fact that the main emphasis of His ministry was *the building of an alternate community*. He spent the largest part of His time laying the foundation in the lives of the apostles, for the inaugurating of the Kingdom of God on the earth. He was working to produce an example of what life is like lived under the reign of God. He would establish a working model, something men could look at and see, and then say, “That is what it’s all about. We can see it in operation.”

It was to this end He labored, persuading those who followed Him that the most important thing in their lives was to learn how to relate to God and to one another. He was building a Kingdom where men would learn to give up their lives for one another in genuine love. He made it quite clear. He was different and so was the Kingdom. In an age of rebellion, He was under authority and teaching that principle. In an age marked by selfishness, He showed the joy of giving. Surrounded by people with a lack of self-control, He was disciplined in His life style. He did not simply speak about alternatives, He was an alternative. To follow Him was to embrace a new way of living. He called men to live under a new government, and showed by His own life that to come under the authority of the Father was to have a joy that was full, peace that

could not be taken away by the world, and a righteousness that was genuine, not simply religious.

THE CHALLENGE OF AN ALTERNATE SOCIETY

It is not surprising then that after the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, those who followed Him continued the pattern that He had begun as described in Acts 2:

All whose faith had drawn them together held everything in common: they would sell their property and possessions and make a general distribution as the need of each required. With one mind they kept up their daily attendance at the temple, and, breaking bread in private houses, shared their meals with unaffected joy, and they praised God and enjoyed the favour of the whole people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those whom He was saving.

In the middle of the city of Jerusalem a new Jerusalem was taking shape — an alternate society was coming together. By the demonstration of a new way of life, these early believers were prepared to challenge the life style, habits and customs of the people who surrounded them. Just as in the personal ministry of Jesus, in the middle of a greedy, grasping world of “me-firsters” there were living a caring, sharing people who obviously loved God and others.

This is the way in which our fellowship of believers has chosen to speak to the community that surrounds us. Because we were scattered over a large geographical area and located in numerous cities and towns, the question of how to relate to the community has been one that was totally ignored for years, or at best a source of bewilderment through other periods. But more recently, the same question has become a source of excitement and action. After numerous false starts, we have become convinced that we cannot significantly challenge the life of the community in which we live until we first have a viable alternative to offer the individ-

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uals who sit in the confusion and frustration of the world.

When I speak of offering an alternative to worldly people, I am not talking about the issue of heaven. Since this is not the place for a discussion of life after death, it should be sufficient to say that telling people that "we know where we are going when we die" is not the power-packed statement of decision that we have thought it was. What must be shown is that a true alternative exists here on the earth. Talk about heaven and what it will be like "up there" is not going to do the job. People must be *shown* that a better way of life exists here on this earth. How can men be expected to believe that an all-powerful God can produce a utopia in the sky but cannot get His own people to live together in peace and joy here on the earth? What are we showing to them? What can we say to people who are tired of easy word answers to the practical problems of this world. Everybody has his idea of what should be done. There is no shortage of suggestions or solutions. But where are the people who have lived out a workable answer to the difficulties that confront the people of our nation day after day? The politicians, the religious leaders, even the rabble-rousers all cry with loud voices and people grow weary and cease to listen to promises that are not kept — clouds with no rain, wells without water. Is the answer for us to add our voice to the others and shout more loudly than they do? Is it enough for us to say that we are right and all the others are wrong? Is telling people that Jesus is the answer sufficient to meet the needs of people surrounded by hurts, poverty, prejudice, violence, and injustice?

I submit that in a country such as ours, more words about Christ and His Kingdom will not effect the long-sought result. We must *be* a living demonstration of the Kingdom that Jesus founded on this earth. Most Americans have heard something of the Gospel message, but few of them have ever actually *seen* the Gospel in action, fleshed out in the lives of real people. A true nationwide awakening

awaits the production of such communities of faith.

We are learning something else. When you start to think in terms of living out the message of the Gospel, you soon become aware that this must be done in plurality. I am not speaking now of individual witnessing, but of the witness of the corporate man. Although one changed life is an effective tool in God's hands, the demonstration of the message in a people who have learned to live together under His authority will have a greater impact. The true test of my conversion is not only how it changes my relationship to God, but how does it effect my relationship with others? Let's take a look at all of this in practical terms. For the Church to function with integrity, we must have answers to the problems that confront the citizens of our nation. We have to face the question, "How does the Kingdom of God speak to the issues of the day?" "In what concrete way can we demonstrate to the world around us that there is a better way?"

A LIVING DEMONSTRATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I am going to begin with something that is very simple, yet often overlooked. Everything begins with the renewed individual life. We are prone to forget what the Gospel message working in the life of a man or woman means in terms of the community in which they live. One of the greatest blessings of my life is to look out over our congregation weekend after weekend and see people who previously contributed to the problems of our communities now transformed by the power of God into active, constructive citizens. They range all the way from teen-agers causing problems for the teacher at school, and for the police, to the adult who missed day after day through alcoholism, or the person who floated through the day's work with little commitment to excellence. The youths of the Kingdom are not troublemakers; the adults of the Kingdom are valued workers on the job. Time after time

we have seen bosses come to individuals of our fellowship for recommendations of other people like themselves who may be in need of work. In a day when so many are careless and indifferent in their work habits, the people of the Kingdom are working "as unto the Lord."

Moving out one step at a time, we go from the renewed life of the individual to what is happening in families. It would be impossible to calculate what the Kingdom of God has done in terms of rescuing families from the brink of disaster. Not only the homes that have been put back together again after the enemy has brought division, but the marriages that have been revitalized and changed from a "silent truce" situation to a joyous sharing of love and respect. Only God knows how many children have been rescued from bickering, arguing, tension-filled days and nights. Only eternity will tell what scars have been erased, what deep hurts have been healed. But one thing is certain — there is a chain reaction in such restoration. Friends, neighbors, relatives soon begin to realize that something has happened in that family that has brought peace to the troubled waters and calm to angry spirits.

In an age where homes are coming apart at the seams, the Kingdom of God is providing an answer. While men and women wrestle with the questions of who should play what role, we speak with assurance, instructing individuals from the Bible that God, who started this whole business, has given clear direction. While children go undisciplined, living in rebellion and anger, in the Kingdom of God, parents are instructed on the principles of raising their children by the teachings of the Word of God, and submissive, loving children continue to stand out in our society as testimonies to the truth of God's word.

In this context the circle of love widens and many of our families have now extended themselves to include within their circle of love individuals from broken family situations. Teen-agers with problems, unwed mothers with children, even whole families

with difficulties are incorporated into a normal family life. While the secular community wrestles with the problem of what to do with people like this, the Kingdom of God is quietly ministering peace and joy to troubled lives. And the word gets around. "Here are a people who care, who are concerned about others, who love." The difference that comes into the life of an individual simply when they know that someone cares about them is amazing. Compare the ministry of the best-intentioned institution with that of a loving family. What a difference!

Another important area for our witness to the community is in terms of meeting the material needs of our people. It is very interesting to note that one of the first facts mentioned in the account of the early Church in Acts is that people's care for one another soon took on practical proportions. They began to take care of each other's needs. This can happen in a multitude of ways, the most obvious of which is through sharing teaching on money-handling.

Our attitude toward finances is exactly the opposite of the one espoused by today's society. In the community of faith, people are taught to buy what they need with money that they have saved for it. They are taught how to get out of debt, and if necessary, are helped to achieve that goal. They are instructed and shown the joy of giving and sharing their resources with others, and with the growing balance of love and discipline, we are no longer afraid of spoiling people by giving them money or other kinds of material help. It is part of our responsibility to help them get out of bondage into the freedom that God intended them to have.

Help comes in other ways too. I can still recall the look of amazement on my neighbor's face the first time a gang of men from the fellowship came together to paint the trim on our home. My neighbors have gotten used to it by now, but it never ceases to "preach" to them. "There is something about that group of people. They really take care of one another."

Comments are made like, "That's the way it should be. I wish more people were like that." And all the while the Kingdom message is being preached, not only in word but in deed.

When tragedies occur either close to home or far away, we respond to the best of our ability. If a local family loses its home through a fire, or if tragedy strikes, we help as we can. A tithe of the income of the church is set aside to minister to famine-stricken and disaster areas, so that the poor and hungry are not neglected.

We endeavor to keep the people of the Kingdom informed regarding the issues that face them as citizens. We speak to the moral issues of the time, and letters written to representatives express our views on matters such as abortion, legalized gambling, unfair practices within the community. We teach people to understand that politicians do read mail, and can be made to face up to the views of the people at home. If Christian candidates are running for offices in elections, we inform the congregation and urge their support. God has given to us men and women who feel that God has called them into the political arena as a ministry and we share their convictions.

Within the community of God's people there are individuals who can help us to understand what it means to live under oppression, and we listen to them so that an understanding can be gained, and a course of action adopted.

KEEPING OUR GOALS IN BALANCE

Is it possible for all of this to get out of balance? No doubt about it. I have sat with many people who have become so preoccupied with political and organizational answers to people's problems that they made no provision for spiritual answers. We must always remember three vital things. First our motivation must always be the love of the Father. There can be no other motivation. God so loved the world—that is why He acted, and it can be no different for us. If we are not moving out of a loving, caring spirit, we will

only end up frustrated do-gooders, bitter at the people that we are working with trying to help. Secondly, we must never lose sight of our goal: to see people conformed to the image of Christ. We are called to lift up Jesus and make Him known. The focus of our activities is to preach the risen Lord by word and deed, so that men will be drawn to Him. Thirdly, our activities must be carried on with a firm reliance upon the work and power of the Holy Spirit. When we resort to the arm of the flesh, seeking to become simply another lobby or pressure group, *we have lost the battle*. Ours is not a warfare against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.

Can we speak to our local communities? We must. But, the voice of the local church will only have integrity as it comes from a fellowship of people who not only speak about solutions, but demonstrate with their lives the godly alternative to the world's systems, and the new way of living awaiting people who are willing to make Jesus the Lord of their lives. The danger in most of our fellowships is not that of an overemphasis upon the problems of the community, but rather a neglect of the responsibility that we have. Above all, we of the community of God must not fail to remember that we are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. ☞

BIBLE STUDY ANSWERS

(1) The coming of the Holy Spirit. (2) a. Apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer; b. They were together; they had all things in common; c. Sold them and parted them to all men; d. With favor. (3) They were of one heart and one soul; didn't own anything, but had all things in common. (4) Fear; signs and wonders. (5) Teaching and preaching. (6) a. The word of God increased; b. Number of disciples multiplied greatly; c. Great company of priests were obedient to the faith. (7) City. (8) Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. (9) a. Perfecting of the saints; b. Work of the ministry; c. The edifying of the Body of Christ. (10) Ordaining elders. (11) All the saints; bishops; deacons. (12) Apostles, elders, and the whole church. (13) The Body. (14) There should be no schism in the Body, members should have care for one another. (15) I will build my church; the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (16) Glorious. (17) a. Not to forsake assembling ourselves together; b. To exhort one another as we see the day approaching.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

This month's answers by Charles Simpson



Although a person who has been born again is no longer under the law, to what extent is he to obey the rules and regulations of the Old Covenant? Where do you draw the line between applying the laws of the Old Covenant and the law of liberty in Christ?



When we speak of the law we may be speaking of the entire Old Testament or of the Ten Commandments, or of the ceremonial law — it all depends on the context. To say that we are free from the law is a statement that needs some clarification.

My personal convictions are that we are free from the ceremonial law which applies to the things pertaining to the tabernacle, the Levitical priesthood, etc.; however, I do not believe we are free from the Ten Commandments. That does not mean I believe we are saved by keeping the Ten Commandments; I believe we are saved by the grace of God. However, the Ten Commandments are like natural laws — they still operate. The problem with keeping the commandments is it can be an outward compliance rather than an inward obedience motivated by the heart. That was the problem with the scribes and Pharisees.

We are "free from the law," in that we are redeemed from sin and the consequence of breaking the law. However, that does not mean we are free to continue in sin, or free to go on deliberately transgressing the law. (Study Romans 6.) In the new birth God has written His law in our heart, and because of our understanding we desire to do the things that please God. This is expressed in the command to "love the Lord God with all our heart and love our neighbor as

ourselves." This is the sum total of the law.



What is the scriptural basis for under-shepherds?



When Jesus ascended up on high He gave gifts, and among the gifts that He gave unto men or unto the Church was that of "pastors" or "shepherds" (Eph. 4:11). These pastors that He gave are His and under His authority and oversight; therefore, they are called "underpastors" or "undershepherds," Jesus Himself being the Chief Pastor or Shepherd. (See 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4.)

When the apostles went out to establish churches, they always appointed shepherds over the flock. (See Acts 14:22,23; 20:17-38.) In Jeremiah 23 God promises to raise up faithful shepherds who will shepherd his flocks. These shepherds are undershepherds in that they answer to Him. Many other scriptures support the truth that Jesus is the Shepherd of all God's people, but that as the Shepherd He delegates authority and raises up undershepherds who give an account to Him for the sheep that are allotted to them for oversight.



What is the significance and importance of receiving communion?

Does it lessen the significance of communion to partake of it with people that you don't feel especially committed or properly related to?



This is a most difficult question since communion has divided the Church through the centuries. There are

several significances that I believe are generally held by most Christians: (1) When we receive communion we are remembering the Lord Jesus Christ, His death, burial and resurrection and all that He taught us to remember in the Scriptures. (2) When we partake of communion we are sharing in His life, that is, we are actually becoming recipients of the Spirit of God. The word *communion* or *fellowship* means to be a partaker. (3) When we partake of communion we are also acknowledging that we share a common life-source with other members of the Body of Christ. Communion cannot be taken alone. The very nature of the word implies a corporate experience. Communion is a physical demonstration of the corporate nature of the Body of Christ, that we are not whole within ourselves, but that we are parts of the whole which is the Body of Jesus Christ. (4) Communion is a celebration of our covenant relationship with the Lord Jesus in His blood. Whenever covenants were made in ancient times they were followed by a meal to celebrate. Communion is kind of a supper or a meal in which we celebrate the consummation of our covenant with the Lord made by His blood. (5) It is also an acknowledgement that we have a covenant with our brothers in the blood of Jesus, that in Christ we have laid our lives down one for another and we're bound together by that life.

Partaking of communion where there is not real spiritual communion does destroy the significance of the ceremony. As a matter of fact, I believe that communion has become very meaningless to many people because they partake of it with people with whom they have no real fellowship or personal relationship. Willfully taking communion where there is unforgiveness and broken relationships

INSIGHTS

"Leaders do not lead to lead; leaders lead to serve. They serve by leading; they lead by serving."

— Howard Butt

"Our unity with one another is not a nicety, it is a necessity."

— Ralph Martin

"As we lose ourselves in the family of God, we will find ourselves as God has uniquely created us to be."

— Robert Frost

"Let the church be a new community on the earth, the most powerful social datum not by electing senators or congressmen, but by providing an alternative lifestyle."

— Clark Pinnock

can bring serious problems upon the participants.



Is there a conflict between the principle of submission to a shepherd and the individual priesthood of the believer, or are these principles both involved in a sheep/shepherd relationship?



There need not be any conflict between spiritual authority and the priesthood of the believer. The same God authored both. Romans 13 tells us that all authority comes from God. 1 Peter 2 teaches us to honor authority for the Lord's namesake. The Bible also teaches us that we are a kingdom of priests and that we all have access to God through Jesus Christ. I'm afraid, however, that we often interpret the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer to mean spiritual independence. Some of us feel that because we have access to God through Jesus Christ that means we do not need anybody else, just "me and Jesus." Nothing could be further from the truth. It is our access to God and our relationship to Him through Jesus Christ that imparts to us the attitude of submission which causes us to recognize our need for spiritual government. One of the first evidences

that a person is not exercising his spiritual priesthood properly is rebellion against spiritual authority or withdrawal from the fellowship of the brethren.

As I discuss these principles of submission and authority with people under our oversight, I tell them that only Jesus Christ is the High Priest and that He alone can reside in the spirit of men and provide direct access to the Father. But because Jesus Christ dwells within them they will also be brought under the discipline of the Holy Spirit and will acknowledge divine authority placed in human vessels.

True spiritual authority cannot be imposed from without: it starts with a spiritual attitude. You cannot lead anyone who will not follow, and God does not appoint us to "drive" people. If a man has not yet heard from God that he is to submit to his brethren and to his spiritual leaders, then it is not good to try to impose that upon him. It will only bring death, rebellion and spiritual anarchy to the Body of Christ.

I believe that part of the shepherd's responsibility is to bring forth the leadership of all the people under his oversight. If I have a man under my oversight who is a husband and a father, reaching over his position to tell his family what to do only destroys his role. It is very important that I recognize that he is their leader

even though I am his leader. My job is to help him do his job better, but not to do his job for him.



How is the New Testament concept of the church in a city (e.g. the Church at Ephesus) to be applied to modern cities where there are many churches of many denominations, individually moving in many different directions?



It is my feeling that in the New Testament Church there was only one main body of Christians in each locale. There was the church at Ephesus, the church at Corinth, etc. I believe if God is going to restore the Church to its original glory, and even greater glory, then we must return to this kind of unity within geographical areas. As the Lord Jesus looks down upon His church in any given area, he sees all of those whose names are written in the Book of Life. Therefore, the problem is primarily getting us, as spiritual leaders, to recognize what Jesus already sees, rather than getting us to create something brand new. Trying to organize the one true Church has throughout history only brought about another denomination.

The more local leaders acknowledge the lordship of Jesus Christ, and relate to one another as shepherds in the Body of Christ, the more we're going to see the Church in the city manifest the unity which Jesus Christ has prayed for. Instead of seeing many divided local churches, each with its own leader going in different directions, we will then see one Church with many shepherds flowing together, leading their flocks into the unity of the headship of Jesus Christ. ♥

Each month *New Wine* receives questions from our readers covering a variety of topics and issues. If you have questions for this feature, send them to Questions and Answers, c/o *New Wine Magazine*, P.O. Box 22888, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315.

