

Restoration

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Church Foundations

Then Came The Storm — *Jones*

What is a Christian? — *Parris*

Fitly Framed Together — *Williams*

Gifts of Healing — *Mansell*

Master Builders — *Tomlinson*

Restoration is published bi-monthly. It does not represent any organisation and is not intended to convey the emphasis of any particular section of the Body of Christ.

The name **Restoration** expresses our conviction that the Spirit of God is moving within the church today, not merely to Renew what exists, but to Restore so much that has been lost or neglected. This work of the Spirit is a prophetic fulfilment of the scripture concerning Christ, "Whom heaven must receive until the time of restoration of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all His Holy prophets since the world began . . ." Acts 3:21. The teaching articles deal with issues about which the Holy Spirit is speaking in the church today to bring us all to the perfection God desires as seen in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Focus

Why do so many Christians fall away?

Why do so many Churches tear apart?

Why are so many Charismatics disillusioned?

Of course, we could be like the ostrich and bury our heads in the sands of optimism that neither hears the questions asked, nor considers them to be valid if heard. After all, don't the unbelieving Christians that keep asking such questions know that we are in the midst of the greatest spiritual awakening of the century? Right around the world news reports inform us of great ingatherings to the evangelical fold, and some ten to fifteen million are now enjoying a charismatic experience. Let's stop being negative and enjoy God!

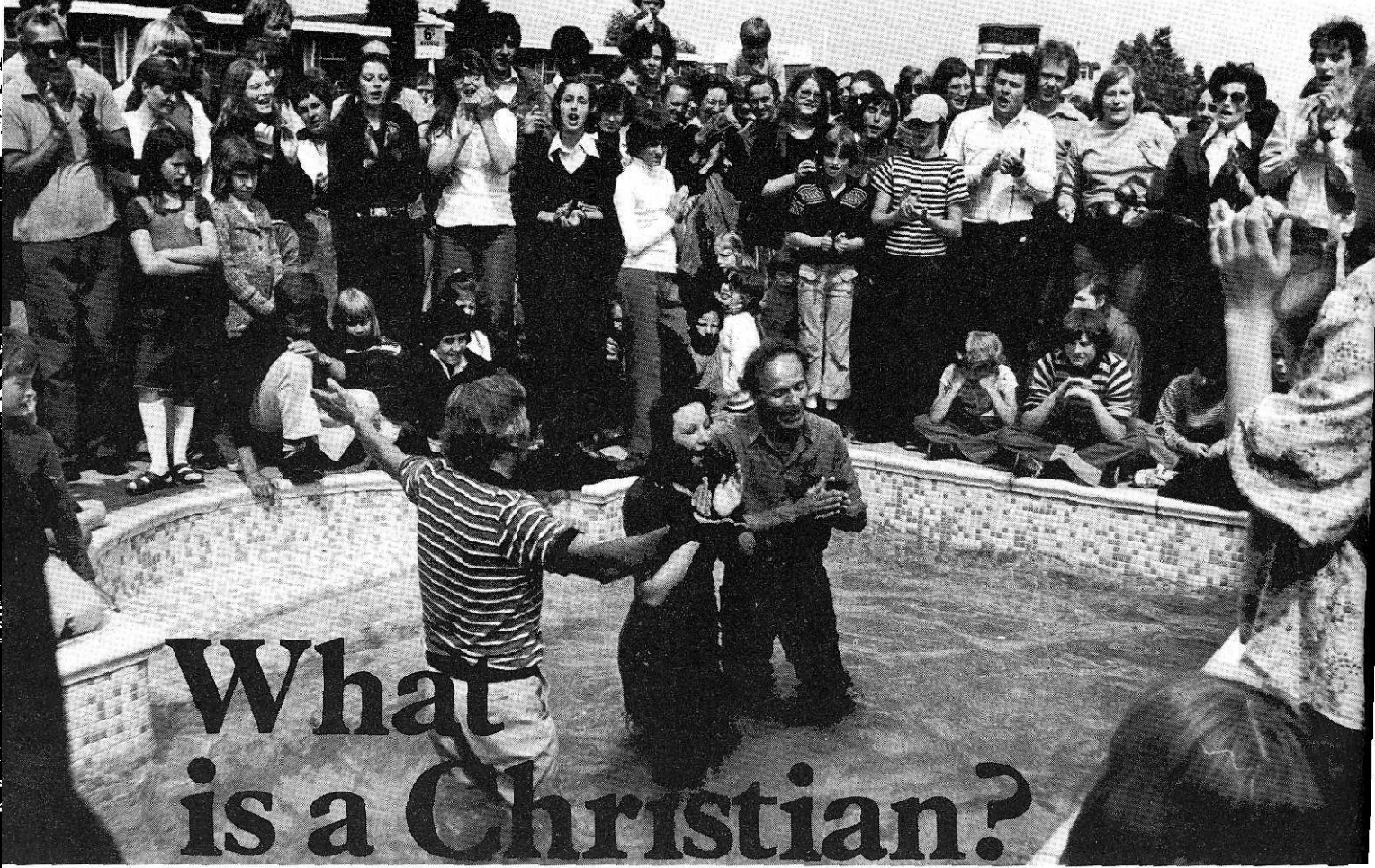
We consider it is no more negative to ask these questions than it is positive to pretend the questions do not need asking. The questions are very valid in view of the real needs they highlight. Over the past eighteen years I have observed large numbers of professions of faith made in various evangelistic outreaches, with little abiding fruit. That is not to say evangelism is wrong and futile, as some have done, but to ask: Is there some missing dimension in our evangelistic preaching that brings people into Christ with inbuilt deficiencies that are going to leave them open to a later falling away?

Likewise, the rise and fall of so many churches in vigour, zeal, life, and growth over the same period has been as disappointing as the evangelistic scene. Even more recently the growing disillusionment of increasing numbers who have had charismatic experiences that they thought heralded a final answer to most of their problems. They anticipated living constantly victorious, their churches aflame, the minister and deacons and other leaders were going to be mighty men in God, tearing down enemy strongholds in the kingdom of darkness and performing miracles and healings with a joyous regularity. But now growing disillusionment. What has gone wrong?

In this issue of '**Restoration**' we seek to examine a neglected area of our individual and church experience – **our foundations, our roots**. For a building is as strong as its foundations, and a tree only as healthy as its roots. We trust that our examination of these areas will provide some answers to our main questions.

You will find enclosed the special Dales Bible Week report. Extra copies of this are available for circulation if you would like to send to your friends. These may be obtained by requesting the number you require, and please could you enclose covering postage which will help keep our costs down.





What is a Christian?

Peter Parris

The professing church has faced a barrage of problems in post-war years for which it has found no adequate answer. Too often it has asked itself the wrong questions. And, one thing is sure, if you ask a wrong question you are sure to come up with a false answer to the real issue. We can safely say that our title (What is a Christian?) poses a 'right' question, and the answer to it will solve many associated problems. For instance, the problem of unity will remain unresolved until we understand what things are mutually incompatible.

Paul boldly declared, "They are not all Israel who are of Israel." To have attempted to unite 'Israel of the flesh' with 'Israel of promise' on the basis of the common denominator 'Israel' would have proved a vain task. Equally so, to try to bring together everything that is named 'Christian' would be a frustratingly useless undertaking, because not all that is called Christian is of Christ.

The relevance of this question was highlighted by our Lord in His great prayer at the end of His earthly ministry when He asked

concerning His followers that "they may all be one as We are one . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." The world will become aware of the reality and authority of Jesus only when they witness a demonstration of His life in His disciples.

Who, then, are these people?

Born from Above

"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6).

The Reformation unearthed many long-hidden aspects of truth. Regeneration by faith, or 'being born again', was plainly spelt out by the reformers as the only valid entrance to the Kingdom of God.

Paul pointed out a vital principle (when writing to the Corinthians concerning resurrection), ignorance about which has caused many an unholy alliance – namely, that the spiritual does not come first, but the natural; the spiritual must invade the natural supernaturally. Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a man is born again (or 'from

above') he cannot see the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The term 'in the flesh' describes a man's natural birth. This holds true for all mankind; through the natural process of procreation we were all born of the seed of our earthly father. But a Christian is one who, having been born first naturally, has an experience of birth again; the second time he is born of incorruptible seed and God is his Father (1 Pet. 1:23). He **was** 'in the flesh', that is to say he only knew a nature that was corruptible and at enmity with God – a nature that had no eyes to see or ears to hear God, and was incapable of life 'in the Spirit'. He bore the marks of his parentage physically, and his heredity was transmitted to him through them, being generated by natural seed. These things **were** true of the Christian, but now other things are true of him which distinguish him from the natural man. A Christian is one who has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and has consequently become a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). As surely as he was joined to humanity when he was born of the flesh, now, being born of the Spirit, he is joined to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17).

The reason that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren is because "He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father" (Heb. 2:11). At His resurrection Jesus bid Mary Magdalene, "Go to My brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God'" (Jn. 20:17). A Christian, then, is one whose Father is God, who has been born again by the seed of God, and who lives by the power of the Spirit of God.

When the convicted crowd asked Peter on the day of Pentecost, "What shall we do?" he replied concisely, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Here we have the essential ingredients for Christian initiation. No scripture contradicts that, but

some traditions do. For a walk with God in which a Christian will grow up into the likeness of Jesus all three of these experiences are vital. They did not always occur in the same order, but where any one of them was missing the apostles intervened post haste to make up the deficiency. Peter commanded water baptism after Cornelius and the Gentiles in his household had experienced the Holy Spirit falling upon them. But in the case of the Samaritans who had received the word through Philip, they were prayed for by Peter and John with the laying on of hands in order to receive the Holy Spirit after their baptism in water by Philip. According to Heb. 6:1-3, unless we **leave** these principle doctrines of Christ, God will not permit us to go on to perfection. Of course, they must first be experienced in order to be 'left'. The question is not, What is the least that need happen to scrape into heaven? but, What is a Christian? and that entails new birth and growth unto perfection.

Led by The Spirit

"All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

The failure to differentiate between natural and spiritual birth always creates a problem of unity. That which God has put asunder let no man join together. But unity of the Spirit is a constant fact, for there is only one Spirit and those who are born of that Spirit are united by that same Spirit. To call natural birth, spiritual birth is a mistake, to say the least; even when the environment of your natural birth was a Christian home and whose parents held membership in a Christian church within a 'Christian country'.

The substitution of a ritual for repentance is another tradition that can never produce a Christian. For, without repentance a man is still in the flesh, but through repentance the gift of the Holy Spirit can be received. "You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he

does not belong to Him" (Rom. 8:9). Here is a yardstick for unity. If a man has not the Spirit of Christ he is not Christ's. However, if God's Spirit dwells in a man that man is not in the flesh but in the Spirit (Rom. 8:9). And if these things are true of a man, that man is in unity with God and therefore with His people. Because he is in the Spirit he can be led of the Spirit and demonstrate that the Father of his life is God. For, being led of the Spirit is not something that occurs only when major decisions are required, but is constant communion that knows the forbiddings and the sanctions of the Spirit concerning life. The peace of God is known, and the loss of that peace is also known when disobedience or even unwitting error has been indulged.

"My sheep hear My voice," said Jesus; and the promise that the Spirit of truth would guide us into all truth reminds us that God's voice to us, although not audible, can be known. Just as we must eat to live, so a "man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." God's direction in our lives is not limited to verse and chapter of the Bible, although the scriptures are our ground for attesting our guidance. If God is prompting me to go to a place or meet a person, I can't get that sort of guidance from the pages of the Bible. Principles of conduct, rules of life and so on, can be learned from 'the faith once for all delivered' and taught in the scriptures; but there are a thousand and one decisions that have to be made every day for which no verse of scripture would be adequate. To be led of the Spirit means that if I were to be cast into solitary confinement, without the Bible or any 'thought for today' book, in my utter loneliness I could still know the voice of my Shepherd and the leading of my Comforter. The Lord counselled His disciples how to act when called to give an answer before the bar of men: "Do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you" (Matt. 10:19-20).

A Christian, then, is one who knows God in these terms and who is led by the Spirit until, through obedience to the word within him, he grows into maturity where his thoughts, words and deeds are in agreement with the Spirit so that he manifests Jesus Christ in his mortal flesh.

Known by God

"But now . . . you . . . know God, or rather (are) known by God" (Gal. 4:9).

A Christian is one who was known by God before ever he knew God, but who has now come to know God. He does not just know about God, having certain information concerning Him, but knows Him through the intimacy of a living union with Him. He enjoys a **love relationship** with God, finding that God's love is a reality to be felt and savoured and not just believed 'by faith'. He knows that God knows how genuine is his responsive love to God. The Lord told Moses that the day would come when He would circumcise the heart of His people and they would love Him with all their heart and all their soul (Deut. 30:6). That day has arrived and, through the circumcision of Christ, the flesh has been cut off from our hearts, God's promise that we shall all know Him from the least to the greatest applies to every Christian since the revelation of Himself has come in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit has been sent to make Christ known to us. You can love someone you cannot see, but it is impossible to love someone you do not know. "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him" (1 Pet. 1:8), for to know God is to love Him. And the more we know Him the more deeply shall we love Him.


Jesus equated **eternal life** with knowing God and Jesus Christ (Jn. 17:3). A Christian knows God because God has revealed Himself to him and in him (Gal. 1:16). Physical senses and tangible natural life become mere shadows and illustrations of this experience of spiritual life, even though eternal life is invisible. A person who is a **non-Christian** doesn't have to be convinced of who he is; he **knows** who he is. Above and beyond that

natural awareness, the Christian knows his life is in and from God; he is aware of this as a reality at the deepest level of being – in his spirit. He needs no convincing – you might as well try to tell him he is not who he is naturally as try to argue with him that there is no truth in Christianity.

Joined to the Brethren

“Members one of another” (Rom. 12:5)
From this foundational relationship of birth from, and knowledge of, God follow two dimensions of relationships with other Christians, namely locally and internationally. God has ordained that I should know Him through others who share His life. The church builds itself up through that which every joint supplies and in this manner grows with a growth that is divine. Whilst the Christian must have his foundation in God and know a direct communion with Him, he cannot go it

alone under normal circumstances. The gifts and abilities of others are needful if all Christians are to be built up. To say, “I have a good relationship with God but I can’t get on with His people, therefore I am making my own way through life” is to declare that I am deceived. God has assuredly given Christians His very own life – but not one of us has all of it. Together with others in our localities we can display a richer, fuller picture, for it is only **with all the saints** that the life of Jesus in all its facets and glory is made known. So, then, not only is a Christian to be clear in his relationship with God and his relationship with other Christians in his locality, but open in his relationship to all other Christians so that what he is involved in locally can be joined to that in which God is involving Himself universally. A Christian is one of many millions who **together** make up one new, perfect man, Jesus Christ.



Voices...

I would rather have a mere shanty of deal boards, if it was safe on a rock than I would have the most pretentious building if it only rested on quicksand.

John Wesley

If history teaches us anything it is surely this that man needs God to lay his foundation for him, and that he cannot dispense with God’s help.

Professor J Orr DD

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Paul

The wise do not neglect the superstructure because they have a good foundation. Rather the knowledge that he has begun well is an encouragement for him to go on well – with confidence and care.

James Foote MA



“Then Came The Storm”

Bryn Jones

... The rains came down and the floods went oops, and the house on the sand went crash . . .

With great delight and childish exaggeration the children fell about all over the place graphically illustrating the utter collapse of the foolish man's house.

As I watched, smiling, it suddenly hit me, the gravity of what Jesus was saying in the parable of the two men in building their respective homes.

It would be tragic to lose its significance by relegating it to the nicety of a Sunday School story, or ideal for an action chorus for the kids.

If we had only learned its significance and heeded its moral, so much of the disastrous collapse of churches and the weakness of many Christians could have been avoided over the years.

The Crunch Issue

The parable has to do with the Lordship of Christ in our lives. Jesus began this parable by speaking of the inconsistency of many who

“call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say” (Lk. 6:46).

To call Him Lord involves acknowledging His undoubted authority to direct our lives. To recognise His lawful right to govern us by His own will and command and our absolute obligation to obey Him.

It is not enough to have understood the message of the gospel intellectually, or to have been excited emotionally by the fervour of its presentation. It is our practical obedience to the laws of the Kingdom that prove the reality of our words when we say, “Lord, Lord.”

When Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven”, he exposed the unreality and sham of so much religious profession. The word *does* doesn't mean ‘intends to do’ or ‘promises to do’ but it is the utterly practical doing of it. We are no better for knowing the will of God, we must

obey it, do it.

We are building our lives, our homes, our families and our churches by **doing** the will of God, by practicing the principles of the Kingdom as given us in the life and teaching of Jesus.

Deliberate Forethought

The contrast in the parable is not of two men deliberately selecting different foundations on which to build their houses, but the two men, one of whom is careful, and after serious deliberation determines where his foundation must be, and the other who gives no thought or consideration to foundation whatsoever, but is in a hurry to build his house, without over-much effort and with as little cost as possible, and consequently builds on the surface.

Here is where we are first challenged – what considerations have we given to the foundation of our lives? Is our Christian life a haphazard building, a life lived with as much blessing for as little cost as is possible? The contrast in the whole approach of those two builders is stark and glaring. The wise man began by “digging deep, and laid the foundation on the rock” (Lk. 6:48). He, on hearing Jesus preaching the principles of Kingdom life, began to get rid of the dirt in his life, got down below the surface of his heart and allowed the Spirit of God to work deep within him. He had seen the Pharisees and other religious leaders whose religion was like that of the foolish man, who ‘built his house on the ground’, it was built on the surface. It called for no deep inner change, its whole base was the exterior trappings of religion, the outward forms and ceremonies, laws, traditions, self righteousness.

This man wanted his house to be different, he wanted a solid foundation for he knew the building is only as sound as the foundation is firm. The apostle Paul makes ‘the foundation’ a principal part of his wise master building (1 Cor. 3:10). How often I have passed modern high rise buildings and seen the scaffolding all around as repairs are going on, due to cracks in the walls; the result of a poor foundation.

Many minds are breaking, families splitting up, marriages falling apart, churches dividing, because of poor or wrong foundations.

God’s Foundation

A right foundation to life is always neglected to our personal loss and often to our eternal peril. There can only be one foundation. God has already established what it is: “Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone, the Foundation firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed” (Is. 28:16). “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

The foundation to life is our abiding relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, it is knowing Him as the centre and spring of our existence; that He is the very Lord and sovereign of our life; that all else in our life is as related to Him as to ourselves. We are not built on His teachings apart from Him, we are not building on an ideal, but on Him who is the sum total of every concept of ideal man. In Christ we see the perfection of manhood, so exquisitely portrayed in word, in attitudes, in action, in being – and our whole desire is to ‘dig deep to lay our foundation on such a rock’. Our foundation is not prayer, nor faith, nor understanding, nor relationship to others, but Christ – the perfection of all these various parts of the whole.

All decrees of councils, synods, committees or boards, all ordinances or traditions of men, all rules and regulations, all tenets of faith or consitutional beliefs, all religious practices that differ at all from the law of Christ our foundation are treasonable insults to the majesty of King Jesus.

He has laid the foundations of the earth; God has made Him the foundation of His own eternal purpose and counsel; God has laid Him as our foundation in the ancient promises and declarations. He laid His life down and then God raised Him again to be the foundation and capstone of the Church – the author and finisher of our faith. Dare any man seek to lay another foundation?

The principles by which we live our lives are to be those displayed in Jesus. We are to train our children in His ways. Our schools and society at large assault their minds with beliefs, practices and values contrary to the law of Christ, but our confidence is that as we "train our child in the way he should go, when he is older he will not leave it." We will have given him or her a foundation to life.

We are to do our work not as unto the 'boss' or the 'firm' or the 'government' or the 'union', but as unto the Lord. He is the foundation to our whole attitude to our job.

As already mentioned, to reach the rock he had to 'dig deep'. It is amazing how obscured the simplicity of life in Christ has become by men's additions to His gospel. We have often to dig down through what we have been taught, through our misconceptions, through our prejudices and narrowed beliefs, getting rid of wrong attitudes and feelings until we reach Christ and build our lives on Him. Jesus said, we build by doing or practising His words. It seems to me we have been happy to do those things that call for little self discipline, little personal denial of self, little cost to time, money or reputation, but where any of these is likely to be involved we have invented explanations to His words, that have blunted their penetrating thrust. Sometimes we have devised doctrines that have relegated whole areas of Jesus' words to the history of Israel in the past or to be outworked only by the Jews in the millenium. Such doctrines are very convenient for those who wish to go through life without the challenge or cost to fulfill the principles and commands of Jesus now. However, though slothful and devious men devise comfortable teachings, God will continue to pierce the complacent heart and conscience with the sword of the Spirit, His own Word, which demands our attention and defies all attempts to be explained away.

Darkening Skies

Jesus then went on to give the imperative reason for securing such a firm foundation, because the

'storm is coming'. This is not only the final day of Divine Judgement, but throughout life crises and trial will arise that will discover the state of your foundations. Again the contrast in our story is glaring – not the two builders now, but the two buildings. The identical storm beat against both houses, the one with no foundation shook, tottered over and utterly collapsed. The other did not even shake!

Ominous clouds are already darkening the skies of our generation filling us with the tense uneasiness that usually precedes calamitous times. Divinely instituted moral standards are brushed aside as outdated, Victorian, hypocritical legislation. Faithfulness in marriage is no longer expected or prized. Permissiveness and moral impurity threatens to gain the respectable label 'normal behaviour'.

The violent assaults on the forces of law and order, with street demonstrations unleashing a holocaust of political and racial hatred has brought terror to large areas of our land. A spiralling crime wave, the exit of large numbers of demoralised police from the force, increasing militancy of trade unions, the mushrooming of numerous extremist groups on the right and left highlight the seeming inability of government to arrest the decline of our nation. All this indicates a growing storm is beating on the structure of family life and society in our land. In no way can we pretend as Christians to be untouched by these stresses and strains.

Our homes and jobs, our minds and morals, our children and churches are feeling the violent winds of adversity beating on our doors.

Our foundations are being tested now.

The Rain Came...

Here is a man whose whole foundation was his good church, happy choruses, bright meetings, understanding pastor. Then the storm came, the church tore apart over some contention, pastor left, meetings waned. His faith ebbed and he grows cold, eventually leaving the faith altogether. How could it be? How has he lost

his foundation? The truth is, he had never discovered it and the storm showed it up.

...the Floods Rose...

Here is another man – intellectually brilliant, a business executive of great prospects. He was very strong in his religious convictions, a regular attendee at the meetings. Very scathing with those who did not ‘grasp the doctrines of the faith’ as clearly as he, to his mind they lacked the foundation (“What will they do when challenged by the Jehovah’s Witnesses to explain the Trinity?”). Then came the storm. The firm’s shares collapsed on the stock exchange, he is redundant and joins the pool of unemployed executives. Months pass without adequate income; his mortgage drifts into arrears. He becomes bitter and desperate: “Where is God? Why does He do this to me?” His faith shatters – how could such a man lose his faith when he had such a strong foundation of Bible knowledge?

The point is, he had not dug deep beneath his intellectual grasp of truths to anchor his life in the Rock who is **Truth**.

...the Wind Blew

In contrast, here is a man who was well placed in life, a successful and wealthy business man with a beautiful home and fine family; then came the storm – a tragedy. One night his children were all killed, his business raided and within weeks he was stricken with a strange and dreadful sickness – his wife blamed God, his friends blamed him, yet he did not shake. He said at the height of the storm, “I know that my Redeemer lives and in the last day will stand on the earth” (Job 19:25).

The storms are coming, you will be ridiculed, taunted, accused, humiliated, pressured in every conceivable way. What is your life-building like? Will it collapse or remain unshaken?

Listen again to the children’s voices happily singing, “The rains came down and the floods went oops, but the house on the rock stood firm.”

Will yours?



Master Builders

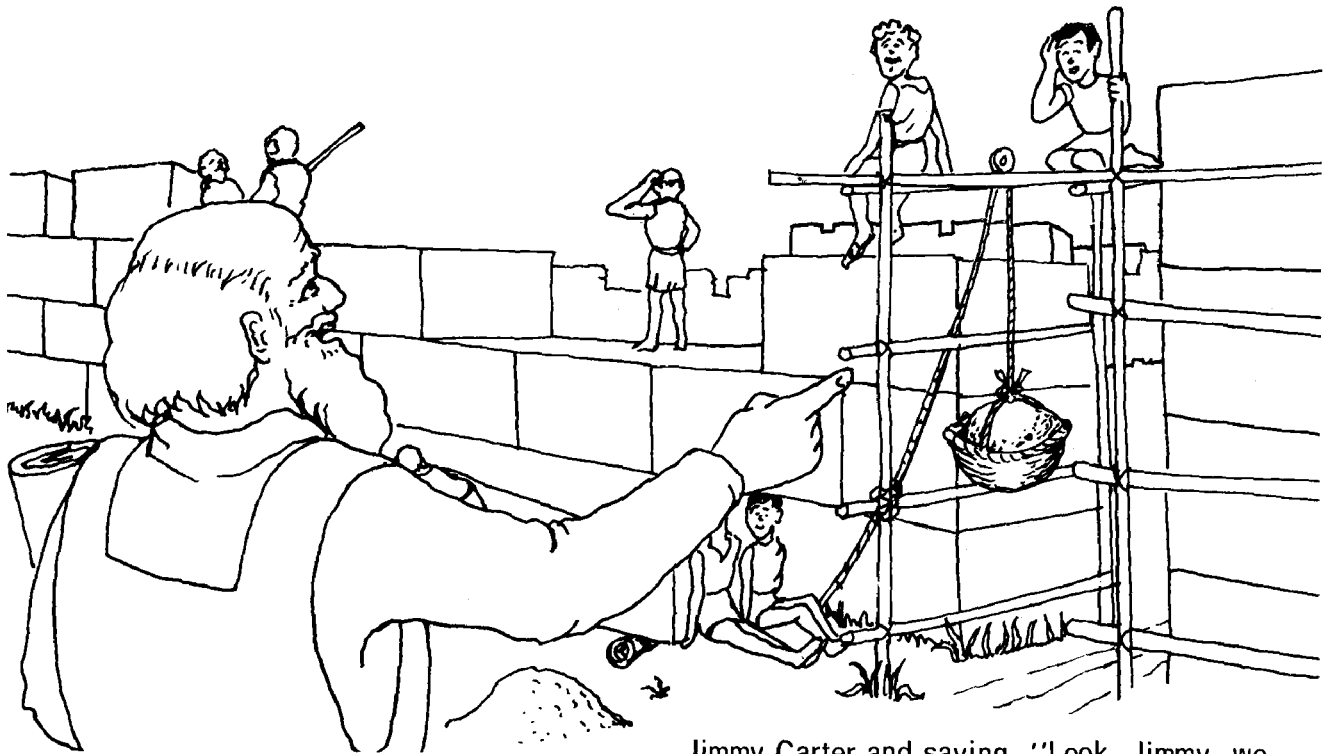
David Tomlinson

If you believe that the charismatic gifts died out with the apostolic era prepare yourself for a surprise: the ‘apostolic era’ hasn’t passed away either! ‘He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers . . . until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the (full) knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man’ (Eph. 4:11-13). As I’ve never met any group of Christians claiming to have reached that level of perfection I find it incredible that we can perform such mental gymnastics as to dispose of two of the five ministries and retain the other three.

Perhaps our main difficulty is a conceptual one. ie. No longer having a relevant use

of the word ‘apostle’, we just do not know what one should look like and we are afraid and suspicious of any one claiming the honour. He can be a pastor, an evangelist or a teacher but not an apostle!

Why all the fuss about the term ‘apostle’? I think we’ve lost touch with the down to earth humanity of our forebears. Peter and Paul and the others were men, not semi-gods. Peter no doubt wrestled with his children on the dining room floor while lunch was cooking. Paul wandered Athens feeling very lonely because his friends hadn’t turned up. The time-lapse coupled with our conservative backgrounds has disturbed our view and made the word ‘apostle’ almost sacred.



But Why Do We Need Them?

"If they are so important, how come we've got by quite well without them so far?" The truth is we haven't got by quite well and, we haven't been without them either, of course. We haven't called them apostles and prophets but remember the old saying, "A rose by any other name smells as sweet." I believe all major movements of the Holy Spirit have had their apostles and prophets. Take the emergence of early Methodism as a classic example. John Wesley's structural leadership clearly sets him apart as an apostle. With wisdom and authority he led the people of this country into one of the most amazing spiritual awakenings we've ever known. Meanwhile, the prophetic insight of his brother Charles undergirded the whole operation with a rich depth of understanding.

"Alright," you say, "if these ministries have always been there, why do we have to call them by these names all of a sudden?" The question is not, Why should we? but Why shouldn't we? "We don't have to call a plumber by his rightful title, we could say, A man who fits pipes together." What a ridiculous idea! "But isn't there a danger of pride," someone inevitably asks. Of course there is, just as in any other ministry, but imagine approaching

Jimmy Carter and saying, "Look, Jimmy, we would like you to be President of the United States, but if you don't mind we won't call you that just in case you get any big ideas about yourself." Clear recognition releases a man to function fully in his ministry. Paul seemed to think the recognition of his apostleship important enough to write chapters on the subject to the Corinthians. If it was anyone other than the apostle Paul, we'd probably accuse him of personal insecurity or ego-seeking.

In our blindness about apostles and prophets we've tended to fall into an unfortunate pattern. Things are not going too well in the church so we decide we need a couple of weeks campaign from a well known evangelist; or we begin feeling that it's time the pastor moved on. We need to consider that it may be a prophet we require, not an evangelist. What is needed is someone who can really bring the Word of the Lord to the situation, unlocking problems and uncovering the works of darkness. Perhaps the pastor is the right man, but he needs someone who can shepherd him and stand alongside him in building up the body. Churches all over the land are dying and hobbling on for need of apostolic and prophetic ministries. To understand this a little more fully, let's consider Solomon's statement on



Bible Survey

HUGH THOMPSON

Creative Living

NOTES

“Christ . . . is our life ; . . . you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him” (Col. 3:4, 9f).

A. Accept God as Your Source

1 OBEY HIM AS LORD

Paul presented Jesus Christ as the only adequate foundation to a full life – not just theological facts about Christ, but an experience of His Person (1 Co. 3:11). But the blind man of John 9 didn't even know if Jesus was a sinner or not to start with, yet he encountered the reality of His Person and responded honestly (17, 30-38). Repentance is vital to such faith, of course. And the Christ we meet in 'the gospels' made 100% demands on His followers (Lk. 14:25-33; Matt. 4:18-22; 9:9).

2 FOLLOW HIS INITIATIVE

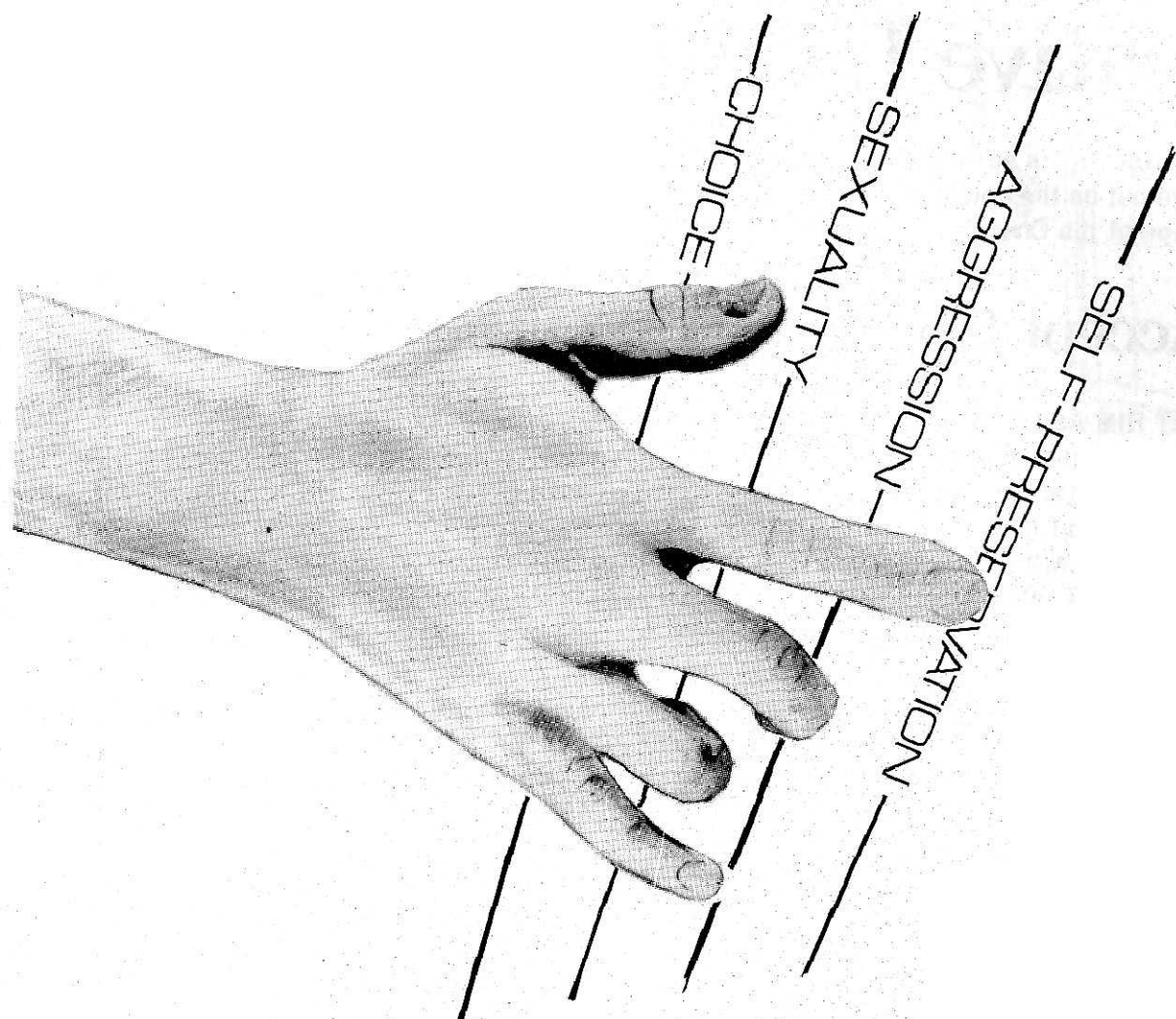
“If the Spirit is the source of our life, let the Spirit also direct our course” (Gal. 5:25 NEB). He can only be our Omega if we allow Him to be the Alpha of each plan and activity (Gen. 1:1f; Rom. 11:33-12:2; Phil. 1:6; 2:12f).

3 TAKE HIM “JUST AS HE IS” (Mk. 4:36)

The disciples were soon panicking because they would not let the Lord be Himself. They thought He had no right to sleep while a storm raged! Did they suppose He would wake up and say, “Thank you, lads; another ten minutes and we should all have . . .”? “Who then is this?” (41) was the issue to face. Some of us need to accept Him in His awesome majesty; but not a few of us still cannot believe in His informality and ‘naturalness’:

- (a) **He started training** His disciples, not in an intensive intercessory conference, but **at a week's wedding feast** (Jn. 2:1-11; Gen. 29:28; Jdg. 14:12).
- (b) **He has a face** (2 Co. 4:6) which wears expressions; eg. can you not see the twinkle in His eye when He asked Philip “Oh dear, however shall we get enough bread to feed this crowd,” **knowing** what He would do! (Jn. 6:5f)?
What smile did Mary read on His blessed face when she heard Him say at Cana, “Your concern, ma'am, is not Mine. My hour (of departure, 7:30; 8:20; 13:1 – to save the bridal party embarrassment) is not yet come” (Jn. 2:4, see NEB). Mary didn't know that His hour of miracle-working had arrived, but she could see by His expression that He had some good plan in mind.
- (c) **Never ask, “What is God trying to say?”** If He has anything to say He says it without **trying!** And if He sleeps in the storm don't try to force a fresh word from His mouth. Carry on on the basis of what He said before: “Let us go over . . .” not under (Mk. 4:35-41)!

- (d) **Rest in His love.** "We love, because He first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19).
Enjoy His love; take time to meditate upon it; open your hearts wide (2 Co. 6:11-13).
Start by enjoying His forgiveness: forgiven much you will love much (Lk. 7:47).



B. Accept Yourself as His Instrument

- 1 **YOU ARE YOU;** so be yourself!
 - (a) **Stop pretending:** eg. giving the impression you know a lot, name-dropping, etc. Cut out false modesty; if you insist that you are only a country bumpkin, someone may agree with you – then you'll smart!
 - (b) **Stop complaining** – 'if only, . . . my low I.Q. . . . my husband . . .
 - (c) **Live your own life** 'in the flesh' (Gal. 2:20), not on pseudo-spiritual 'cloud nine' not a synthetic, external copy of assorted great saints. Accept your limitations
- 2 **YOU ARE CLEAN;** so come to terms with all your basic drives. When you ventured your life utterly upon the Lord Jesus and received the Holy Spirit you became a new creation with a new heart (2 Co. 5:17; Ezk. 36:26).
 - (a) **Sexuality** was designed by God. Enjoy being male, or female. God made mankind male and female in His image and declared it good (Gen. 1:27).

GOD WAS WITH US AT HARROGATE

Special Report of Dales Bible Week 1977

Angelic Days

The BBC reported the evacuation of whole campsites in Yorkshire because of flooding during our first night in the Dales – yet we had experienced the merest sprinkling of rain.

God was pleased to confirm the preaching about His angelic armies by manifesting their presence to numerous individuals throughout the week. At least 30 different persons reported 'choral singing in the small hours of the night'. Local newspapers such as the

'Telegraph & Argus' carried reports of U.F.O. sightings as glowing lights and friery flames, throughout the area that week. One 6 year old boy lost at 11.30 pm one night turned up to anxious parents at the cafeteria and brightly announced that he had been frightened but 'a nice ghost' had taken him by the hand and then vanished! Teresa Parris (14) witnessed angelic beings dancing outside her tent at about 2 am one morning and wasn't sure whether to be thrilled or afraid! On returning inside she was aware of the glowing light of their presence.





Keeping Festival

Some 4,500 adults gathered in the Flower Show building morning and evening – in addition to the teenagers and children meeting in other places around the Great Yorkshire Showground. They responded to God's presence in a variety of ways ranging from resounding praise to awesome hush, including grand applause and rapt attention to the Word of God.

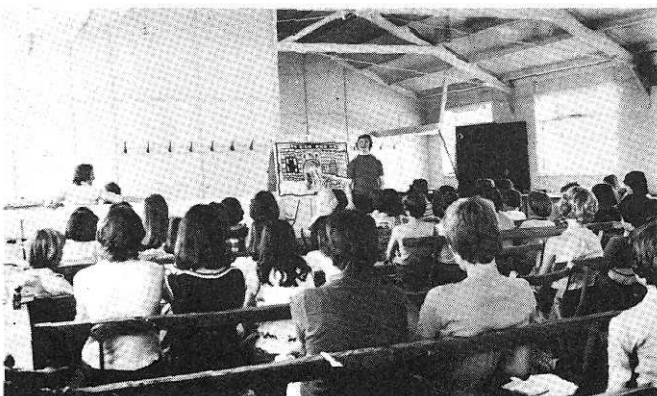
Bryn Jones pointed out the implications of the violent wind and tongues of fire that launched this age – God's vindication of Christ's work of the cross, His declaration of intent to personally establish the rule of His Son upon earth, the eagerness of the Spirit coming with

the element of violence to tear down enemy strongholds. The glorious yet ordered freedom of the Spirit, and the means of the word of faith as a tongue of fire.

Peter Parris and David Mansell added their support – calling us to become what we are in Christ and to let Christ be to us what He is in all His sovereign ability.

Ern Baxter's teaching extolled the present government of God in Christ – resting upon His shoulders, i.e. of His Body. He urged us to take corporate dominion over regional principalities and powers (legally chained since Calvary and the empty tomb) and so take the nation for the Lord. Not by military force and protest but by "first binding the strong man" in intercession.

Youth Aglow



Of the 250 teenagers about 18 were born into the kingdom of God and 70 to 80 received the Holy Spirit.

One lad was instantly healed of a perforated eardrum after prayer and rejoiced that he could now hear clearly with both his ears. He was not the only young person to experience divine healing under the ministry of Gwyn Daniel and his team of workers.

Many lives were literally transformed.

On one occasion, whilst teenagers were praying for their friends to be baptised in the Holy Spirit, the leaders watched the Spirit of the Lord move from one person to another melting them to tears, causing them to tremble with His power, and to break forth into new tongues of praise. Before the prayer time began one girl asked many questions (Do we have to speak in tongues? What is the importance of tongues?) After simple prayer the Holy Spirit fell first upon this lass instantly. She shook from head to foot, her hands shot in the air as she exploded forth in a new language. She laid hands on the person

sitting next to her who in turn broke down and wept and started praising God in tongues.

Not all the teens at first appreciated the meaning of Em's ministry in the evening session. Gwyn was amused to be asked by some non-Christian lads that he had taken to camp, "What do you mean when you say you are going to take over the government? We don't understand you getting involved in this warfare business with swords and that!"

There were times, too, to enjoy different sports, a film, bar-b-que, barn dance, 'It's a Knockout'.

Babes and Sucklings

The 900 or so children on the site were not left to their own devices nor were they merely amused although puppets, films, and games featured in their daily programme. David Halls (4 – 5 years), Jonathan Day (6 – 7 years), Hugh Thompson (8 – 9 years) and Michael Stevens (10 – 11 years) with stalwart teams of volunteer helpers led them in praise and worship, instructed them in the very practical theme of "Thoughts and Words" (based mostly on the

early life of David) and discussed the practical meaning of these matters with them as they filled in their morning worksheets.

No exact statistics were recorded, but among those who trusted the Lord for the first conscious time in their lives were several 'Preachers' Kids'. Others were healed and released from problems, and scores were filled with the Holy Spirit and overflowed in new tongues as God "adjusted praise" from their lips.



Waiting to Trouble the Waters

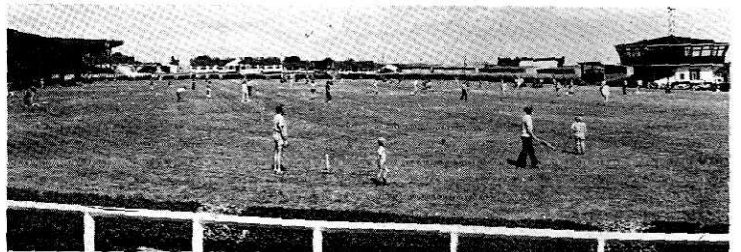


When Ern had ministered on repentance, baptism and receiving the Spirit as the keys of the kingdom about 200 adults were baptised in the Spirit and the final two days of camp found queues of pastors and members of their local sheepfolds joyously witnessing baptisms at the bathing pool as they awaited their turn.

Wherever you went around the camping areas you would bump into groups of praying people touching the throne of God for the furtherance of His kingdom. No wonder we enjoyed seven days of heaven upon earth.

Not Four Months to Harvest

We have returned to our homes not to dream and dither until next convention, but to reap the spoils of the victories realised in that momentous week of spiritual warfare.



RECREATION IN THE ARENA

DALES INTERNATIONAL BIBLE WEEK 1978

We have planned an International gathering for next year.

Church bookings may be accepted from October onwards.

Camping, Caravans and some limited full board dormitory accommodation is available on site.

For full details please write to:

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**DALES WEEK SECRETARY
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Guiseley,
West Yorkshire, UK.**

**28 JULY-4 AUG
1978**

Enclose a S.A.E.

- (b) **Self-preservation** is God-like (Lk. 4:28-30) and God-ordained (Matt. 10:23).
- (c) **Aggression** lies in God's own nature (Ex. 15:3) and teaching (Ps. 18:34) – but our enemies are not flesh and blood!
- (d) **Freedom of choice** also derives from God's heart (Isa. 1:18; Matt. 23:37) and is inbred in our humanity (Jn. 5:6).

3 YOU ARE AN INSTRUMENT; so be careful to whom you yield your members. Think of your basic person as a stringed musical instrument (the tone and volume will differ from person to person). The tunes which issue forth depend on who plays upon the strings. Simon Peter, in the course of one brief conversation uttered two sorts of 'music' (Matt. 16:13-23). When God the Father strummed on this extrovert, forthright, salesman-type person, **He** produced the clear-as-crystal tune that "Jesus is the Christ". But when Peter yielded same 'up-and-at-'em' person to Satan's wiles a raucous melody emerged which jarred upon the ears in the form of "Pity Yourself, Lord!"

The devil-inspired 'ego' can perform in major or in minor keys on all of the strings of basic drives. By 'major' I mean the **active exploiting** of a natural drive; by 'minor' the **suppression** of that drive in **passive inactivity**.

- (a) Through **sexuality** the devil, via the flesh, can produce:
 - (i) active **lust**; eg. fantasy romance, self-indulgence, adultery, perversion;
 - or (ii) passive **frigidity** by the suppression of true masculinity or femininity.
- (b) By means of **self-preservation** works of the flesh of two extremes can arise:
 - (i) unnatural **fears**, by stirring up emotions of dread about the dark, germs, possible failure, death, people, places;
 - or (ii) **presumption**, by suppressing the healthy emotion of sound reason, driving the person to put God to the test by fool-hardy dare-devilry (Matt. 4:5-7).
- (c) On the string of **aggression** the enemy can cause:
 - (i) **hatred** (emotion-charged), resentment, jealousy, bitterness, grudges – ie. venting our aggression on flesh and blood rather than on injustice, disease, demons;
 - or (ii) **pacifism** which won't say 'Boo' to a goose. NB. Jesus drove the money-changers from the temple with a whip! and called the 'church-going' Pharisees "a brood of snakes" (Jn. 2:15; Matt. 12:24).
- (d) Via **freedom of choice** 'ego' can express:
 - (i) **rebellion** – "No-one will tell me what to do!"
 - or (ii) **'Yes-man-ship'** in 'minor' dischords, such as unwillingness to tell someone that we disagree. Leaders and parents ought not to suppress those under their care. Their task is to guide and confirm (or correct) the other's own discernment of the Good Shepherd's voice – not to replace it.

4 YOU ARE INCOMPLETE; so be sure to relate to others whose gifts differ from yours (Rom. 12:3-8).

5 YOU ARE CREATIVE – made in the image of your Creator (Col. 3:10).

What does your new heart **want** to do? Some have wrongly assumed that they had to abandon their painting and music when they came to Christ. But God Himself created things for His own pleasure (Rev. 4:11 KJV). He has galaxies of stars that appear to serve no other function than that God collects albums full of them! Why does He take the trouble to make every snow-flake different? – each a meticulous work of art; then He may breathe on millions of them within the hour of their creation and turn them to water once again. And among His handiwork you will find many fun products: the elephant with a 'tail' at each end; the ostrich with its ungainly run, etc!

C. Accept Now as His Opportunity

- (a) **Enjoy living today:** don't try to be a David in a Saul's armour. That may fit you alright later.
- (b) **Don't try to force prophetic promises to come to pass.** The hour of triumph for David, Moses and Joseph was assured by the Lord; but they didn't sit around dreaming of it. Live now.
- (c) **Rejoice in each stage** of your development. God did not have a weep and moan on Day 4 of creation week that He hadn't got the job completed yet. He got excited day after day at the progress made to date.
- (d) The surest way to **'bring the King back'** is to **do with zeal what your hand finds to do today.** eg. the housewives, priests, soldiers, scouts, financiers, counsellors etc. who surrounded David in his exile (2 Sam. 15–19).

D. Accept the Materials He Supplies (or Withholds) as Your Equipment

- (a) Adam began in a garden of gems, pets, fragrance, fruit . . .
- (b) Jesus was called a glutton and wine-drinker. He was never indulgent, but He did eat and drink to the glory of God.
- (c) All of nature is clean and to be enjoyed. After all, God need not have equipped us with taste buds or ability to distinguish colours. They are not vital to life's existence. (Look into 1 Tim. 6:17b; Ps. 24:1; Isa. 6:3; Ac. 10:15; Mk. 7:19b; 1 Tim. 4:4f; Rom. 14:20b; Tit. 1:15)
- (d) Adam began his employment with a Sabbath holiday, free from pressure.

E. Welcome the People He Sends as Essential to Your Perfecting

- (a) **Friends.** God knew that Adam needed a counterpart. He could not 'live' alone. Friends **stimulate** as they 'sharpen our countenance' (Prov. 27:17 KJV) and also **correct** us with 'faithful wounds' (Prov. 27:6). We have dealt with this in some detail in the study 'Rightly Related'.
- (b) **Enemies**
 - (i) **Recognise them.** Anyone (even a close relative or colleague) who misunderstands you or misrepresents you is (at least temporarily) your enemy.
 - (ii) **Bless them** (Matt. 5:43-48). Admit to the Lord you do not **like** them, and allow Him to fill your heart with His love for them. Start with a right disposition towards them: you want the best for them in heaven's blessing and help.
 - (iii) **Ask their forgiveness** whenever appropriate.
 - (iv) **Walk in weakness.** Rather than tell them, "This is your problem (eg.) you talk too much," ask their help with "My problem (eg.) that I am impatient with you when you go into so many fine details. Could you summarise more for me and bear with me, please?"
 - (v) **Provoke them to love and good works** by doing what encourages them (Heb. 10:24).

house building in Proverbs 24:3-4. "By wisdom a house is built and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches."

God Has Set...Firstly Apostles

"By wisdom a house is built." Wisdom – the hallmark of an apostle. "According to the grace of God given to me, as a **wise** master-builder, I have laid a foundation and another is building upon it" (1 Cor. 3:10).

The grace God gives to a man to fulfil a ministry in the body of Christ is not 'saving grace', but a divine impartation of the Holy Spirit to serve in a particular area. He graces a teacher with clarity and an evangelist with conviction but an apostle is essentially graced with wisdom. Not simply earthly wisdom called from years of experience, but supernatural wisdom to resolve and unblock hindrances to building progress. Paul's confidence in this divine ability was such that he would judge situations even when he did not possess all the facts. "I, on my part, though absent in body . . . have already judged him who committed such a sin as though I were present" (1 Cor. 5:3). I know myself that I have on occasions gone to a situation with a clear directive in my spirit and upon arriving I have allowed myself to be talked out of it by the 'facts', only to prove in the end that my original judgment was the correct one.

A 'gracing' or anointing of divine wisdom rests upon an apostle which cannot be found in any other ministry.

Let me share a couple of areas in which this wisdom will operate.

1. Knowing if the site is right

Sometimes I see very conscientious and gifted shepherds trying to build the unbuildable. Perhaps they've picked up some vital aspects of foundations and are busily attempting to lay them in peoples' lives; but if the site isn't right, it will never work. Let me give you an example of a brother I know who went away on a couple of leaders' and ministers' retreats. He came back to his church full of all the

wonderful things he'd heard. For a good year or two he laboured away on relationships, shepherding, family life etc., but he found that he made precious little impression at all.

When an apostle came on to the site he quickly uncovered two vital facts. Firstly, that the leading brother needed to leave the ministry and get a job and, secondly, that many of the people simply didn't belong together.

Their hearts were not set on working things out with one another and he was trying to join together the currently 'unjoinable'. In other words, the 'church' did not have a real beginning in God and so little wonder they couldn't progress. Now the superficial effects of the apostolic ministry were disastrous – a fellowship of forty or so people ceased to exist – but for many of the people it was a great step forward as they found their proper placing in God. We need 'building permission' from heaven before we can go ahead, otherwise our work may have to come down again.

2. Knowing the necessary foundations

Paul defined himself as a 'master builder' – one who designs and supervises the whole building programme. One of the first things a builder takes note of when surveying a site is the type of earth beneath him. Sometimes, particularly on a large scale venture, he will dig test holes before designing the foundations. As one visits different groups of people, one can begin to see that certain aspects of foundation require more firm laying in some than others. An apostle may not necessarily lay all that's needed but he knows, by God's grace, when a good enough job is done to get on with the building.

It's also interesting to note that the size of building potential is governed by the type and depth of foundations laid. Some fellowships though presently quite small have the potential for considerable growth whilst other larger churches will be in danger of collapsing (spiritually if not numerically) if they grow much more on their limited foundations.

3. Knowing who should build

In one sense, everyone of us as disciples of the Lord is a builder, but here I am particularly

referring to those who supervise the operation; not the architects and the master builders but the charge-hands and foremen. Of course, the local elders are the men directly responsible for the 'grass roots' carrying out of the work. In the New Testament those men were neither appointed democratically nor sent down from head office. They were 'set in' under the authority of the master builders responsible for their particular site (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5). "Ah," you say, "now we knew you were setting up a hierarchy." Well, I see from the Bible that God does govern through his own divinely appointed hierarchy but what I'm talking about here is a relationship. If a man has been instrumental in bringing a work to birth or has become respected on that level, then he is the obvious man to appoint the foremen. Naturally he will take into account the way the workforce view such men, but ultimately he will make his decision under the Chief Executive of the company – God!

In summary : the apostle possesses the overall wisdom to get the job done, not simply on the local level, but also in the broader sphere God apportions him.

Second Prophets...

"By understanding the house is established." The prophet's contribution in building the house of the Lord is understanding; not mere knowledge – knowledge can be acquired – but a depth of insight born out of revelation. They may not always be too easy to live with but without them we're lost. I favour the more modern translation of Proverbs 29:18: "Without a prophetic word (revelation) the people cast off restraint." In other words, the prophets make sure we're going somewhere. How many times did God send prophets to correct an erring and back-sliding Israel. They didn't always heed them, but when they did the nation prospered (2 Chron. 20:20).

Basically there are two dimensions in prophetic ministry: the directional and the explanatory. The prophet of direction really does tell us where to go and what to do. The initiation of

the temple restoration came from the prophet Haggai who commanded the people, "Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple" (Hag. 1:8). Moses as a true prophet directed the children of Israel through the wilderness; Samuel brought them to the Kingdom; and so we could go on. Amos says that God does nothing without revealing his secret counsel to the prophets (Amos 3:7). God never moves in a major way without prophets knowing about it beforehand; He doesn't **have** to tell them, He **chooses** to. In these days of deception and confusion leaders badly need to come under the prophetic word. I personally know of churches lifted from the doldrums to genuine prosperity through the input of prophets.

The prophet of explanation may not give the same clarity of practical direction but he establishes the house through his rich insight into what God is doing and his ability to make this relevant to the local church. The people take heart as they see the relationship of their own 'nitty gritty' efforts to the broader work of God. We are told that during the temple restoration Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the builders through their words and reminders of what God was doing.

For the sake of clarity let me say that I am not here talking about the people in the local church with a gift of prophecy. Such people have clearly defined areas of operation – edification, exhortation and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). The prophet has a recognized, reliable, directional revelation.

Thirdly Teachers...

"By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches."


The term 'teacher' covers a fairly broad field, and in some way most ministries teach. But there are specifically placed teachers in the body of Christ; some in travelling roles and some linked to local situations. Their job is not to bring the foundational dimensions of ministry which the apostles and prophets

bring but to fill in all that is left out and to be sure that people are grasping the whole message. You could say that they take us into all the rooms which the apostle has built, and beautify them. If you've seen a brand new house, uninhabited and undecorated, you'll know what I mean. Carpets, wallpaper and curtains may not hold the house up but try living without them!

"Precious and pleasant riches." Precious is a character word; pleasant is an aesthetic word. Teachers build both character and beauty into the lives of the saints and, if you read your Bibles, you'll find that these are qualities God values highly so, teachers, never underestimate the significance of your ministry. If you check through the epistles to Timothy and Titus you'll be surprised at the importance of 'sound words' and 'doctrine'. Again let me say: in days of deception we desperately need those who can furnish us with an undergirding of truth from God's Word. "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in

such things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (1 Tim. 4:16).

In closing, let me underline that the five ministries were given to operate in the church until we all attain perfection. Some people argue that apostles should not have an ongoing relationship with a church after it is established. Such people sadly underestimate the breadth of apostolic ministry; his task, along with the other ministries, is to bring the house to perfection. The depth of involvement he may have with them will change but the fundamental relationship cannot change. Apostles and prophets are not scaffoldings to be removed when the walls go up, they are foundations upon which the house continues to stand.

I believe we all – churches, leaders and elders – must ask ourselves whether we are lacking input from vital ministries that God has ordained for our establishing. 

Fitly Framed Together

Dick Williams

From the beginning it has not been good for man to dwell alone. The very nature of God, in whose image we are created, is expressed in the plurality of the Godhead. So throughout history God has been calling individuals to Himself in order to build them into 'a people'. God's desire for a people can be traced all through the scriptures. From Adam and Eve to Abraham's seed, from the nation of Israel to



the church which is the body of Christ, God calls forth His people. To understand this calling is to understand the purpose for which God created us. "I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31:33).

What does it mean to be the people of God? Certainly it means we are to be something different – something special. We live in the world, but we are not to be of it. It is not only our relationships to God that are different, our relationships to each other should express a quality of life that is distinct from the ways of the world.

In the Open

God is calling forth and building together a people whose relationships are described as stones in a building and who are to function like the members of a body. Peter called us living stones who are being built up as a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5). Paul spoke of all the building being closely joined together, growing into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:21). The whole elaborate process by which stones are prepared and fitted together pictures the developing of relationships between believers.

The primary purpose of the local church is to provide an environment in which growth of its members can most effectively take place. Our churches have not always done this. So often we have been activity-oriented, and the relationships that developed were functional rather than personal. The focus became getting the task at hand accomplished rather than relating to each other. Certainly building personal relationships will not exclude function, but so often function has excluded building in-depth personal relationships.

When we were born again into the family of God, we were accepted because we shared the common life of Christ. What will happen as we begin to be closely built together? Will we still be accepted as others come to know us as we really are? This is why commitment of our lives to each other becomes so important. As we learn that we can open our lives

to each other and walk in the light, we begin to enjoy deepening fellowship one with another. Instead of experiencing rejection as we become known, we find acceptance.

In Depth

As I reflect on my life and the traditional church I was raised in, I'm aware that as a teenager I had observed the relationships among the people as being superficial. I used this superficiality as justification for not committing my life to the Lord. Since the people only had a "Sunday religion", concluded that if God was real there had to be more than externals. I was converted when I was twenty five, and seven years later had the opportunity to begin building a body of believers. I soon learned that it was not easy for people to open their lives to one another. It was from the younger generation (those in their early twenties) that we learned about openness as they were not afraid to share what was really happening to them.

I found that as a leader I had to begin to be willing to be known as I really was. What would the people think if they knew I had fears of failure, that I didn't know God's direction, and that I sometimes was discouraged. Satan said I had better not let them know or they wouldn't follow me, I found the opposite to be true. As I was open before the people they could more readily identify with me and were that much more willing to follow my leadership.

In The Spirit

In the book of Acts, Luke has given us insights into the development of the first Christian community. It began with about 120 disciples, including the twelve apostles who gave leadership to the 3,000 souls who repented and came under the lordship of Christ. They sealed their commitment in the waters of baptism (Acts 2:41) and, as Peter had preached (v 38), they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, God's seal of His commitment to them (Eph. 1:13). A seed had been planted – the kingdom of God was to grow until it filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:35).

In Common

As we explore the life of the early Christian community, it is important from the outset that we have a clear grasp of what the word **community** means. It comes from the Greek word **koinonia**, 'to share in common'. The early church had passed from relationships based on sharing in the same activities – the Feast of Pentecost – to relationships based on commitment. They began to live with their whole lives in common (Acts 2:44).

Many Christians get nervous when they consider Acts 2:45 where the first Christians sold their material possessions and shared them as others had needs. Perhaps a bit of nervousness is healthy at this point – where a man's treasure is, his heart is also. It was not that they sold all they owned and put it into a 'common pot', for they continued to own homes (2:46) and still had possessions (4:32); but their attitude of heart had changed. Their commitment resulted in their caring for each other's needs.

The account in Acts 5 of Ananias and Sapphira illustrates the principles involved. They sold a possession (not all their possessions) and gave the monies to the leaders (5:1, 2). The possession was theirs to use as they chose – but they attempted to deceive their brothers and sisters to whom they were committed. Perhaps they thought that Barnabas, having sold his field and given the money, received praise from the apostles. Whatever their motivation, it was wrong and their sin was really against God (5:9).

Living together in one building or holding our monies and material possessions in common are not essential aspects of community; rather, caring for each other is essential. We are to share out of the abundance we possess (2 Cor. 8:11-15) so that none will be in need. Our heart attitude should be that having committed our lives to each other, all that we own belongs to each other (Acts 4:32).

It has not been the rich who share out of their abundance, but the most ordinary brother and sister. Time and again I have observed some-

one sacrificially giving to the need of another, when from the world's viewpoint, they could not afford to give (the world does not think they can afford to tithe). A young couple gave \$500 to help another couple move and get established in a new location – that money was all of their savings. A couple's car was wrecked and they didn't have insurance – another couple gave them their one year old station wagon (after having new tyres put on). Then the couple who gave away their car bought another one on hire purchase. A leader's car breaks down, a car is loaned to him to go on holiday – while he and his wife are gone enough monies are given to provide for a two year old car for them.

A brother lacks the monies to complete his last year of college – those in his small group pay his expenses. A family cannot afford to take a vacation – \$525 is given to send them away for two weeks. Each week hundreds of dollars are given as offerings (above tithes), as those who have 'a little' share to meet the needs of others – so that none may lack. These examples could be multiplied many times. This is part of the fruit of a community of believers who have committed their lives to each other.

And 'day by day' (2:46) they continued – they had moved from living in independence and isolation into relationship of inter-dependence – into a 'common life'. There is a need for balance between the shared life of the community and the life of the primary family units; but for so long we have lived in our separate spheres of activities that the present need is to emphasize the common life.



In Small Units

Having no modern means of transportation, they broke bread from house to house. They gathered together at Solomon's porch in the temple (Acts 3:11, 5, 12), as well as meeting in small groups in the homes. The community exceeded 3,000 believers yet was able to meet the needs of the individual believer through home groups.

Across the world the Spirit of God has been speaking concerning the need of small group meetings where close relationships can be developed. These are not 'Bible studies' or 'prayer meetings', as the gatherings are not primarily activity-oriented, yet Bible study and prayer are usually included. We cannot be closely built together unless we have opportunity to develop close relationships, hence the need for small groups. This building together requires spending time with each other. From experience we have found twelve to fifteen people as the most workable size for a small group.

For five years we have had our people meet in small groups. At first it was difficult because many were not used to looking at others sitting a few feet from them – a bit different from looking at the backs of their heads in large groups. After several months they began to relax and started to share what they were thinking and feeling. As the people found they were not rejected when they were open they began to be real with each other. Instead of loneliness and carrying burdens alone, they have found the others in their small group take genuine interest in their needs.

As the relationships deepened the people began to spend time together outside the weekly meeting. They started really to enjoy being with one another. Next we saw them beginning to see ways of serving each other – baby sitting, running errands, fixing meals, helping paint and repair homes. This is community – having our lives in common with each other.

When we first begin to open our lives and be

known, it can be threatening. Will we be rejected when our weaknesses are evident? Many of us have lived somewhat 'closed up' inside as a protection against the hurts of rejection – we are not secure in close relationships. All of us want to be accepted, but it is with real caution that we let others inside our lives. A little at a time we open up, testing each step and sometimes finding it hard to believe that we are still accepted. This is what makes the people of God different from the world. Our love is real.

We are to put away all falsehood, speak truth each one with his neighbour: for we are members one of another (Eph. 4:25). Our oneness with each other is not merely theoretical or mystical. It means living with an awareness that all that we do affects our brothers and sisters in the faith – our 'neighbours'. It is not easy to speak truth – to put away all falsehood. Pretending to be something we are not – or to put it another way, covering up what we are inside – has been a way of life for many people. In the close relationships that develop in small groups we can find the security to put away all falsehood and be honest with each other. Having committed our lives to each other, we don't turn away from one another – instead we learn to strengthen and encourage one another. None of us can grow into maturity alone. It is the corporate man – the community – the body of Christ as a whole that must come into maturity. Yes, the spiritual temple is made up of the individual living stones, but it cannot become a completed temple until the stones are built together.

The Old Testament law was summed up in the commands to love God with all our heart and love our neighbour as ourselves. These are more than nice ideals to aim for – they are to be the way of life for the people of God. Love has to find practical expression – ways of serving one another and building up each other's lives. So often I am reminded of the purpose of the ministries listed in Eph. 4:11. They are to mend the lives of the saints so the saints can find ways of serving and building up the lives of each other (Eph. 4:12).



...to Another, Gifts of Healing...

2

David Mansell

Healing the Body

But what if nothing happens? This nagging question has kept most of us firmly anchored in the realm of theory on the issue of healing the sick. Of course we believe that God **can** heal the sick and are quite convinced that He **will**, but as far as starting now is concerned we seem to have the handbrake of caution firmly on. Is it harder for God to heal the sick than save a soul? Has He put more stringent conditions on our being able to meet the needs of the arthritic than our leading a sinner to Christ? If there is no difference, then why do we hedge our prayers for the healing of the sick with 'if it be Thy will' and reference to the possible spiritual benefits of the sickness? We all have a story of some dear saint who suffered all his life and was a beautiful testimony to the Lord. But, do we say this out of a genuine conviction that the forward thrust of God's kingdom will be through sick Christians glowing on their crutches, beds and wheelchairs? Or do we really fear in case nothing happens? Of course it is quite true, sometimes we do pray and nothing happens, but rather than take a 'head in the sand' attitude to this we must find out why. The disciples didn't start by healing coughs and colds and then work their way up to cancers; they started with authority and power to heal all manner of diseases. If it really is God who heals, and sometimes nothing happens when we ask, then it can only be because somewhere we have violated a principle. Our aim must be to discover and abide by the principles by which God's kingdom, and healing in particular, are governed.

God's Attestation

Some have suggested that when we are in a certain place with God, then He will attest His

work in us with signs and wonders. But what exactly is it that God says He will attest? Is it us? Or the Lordship of Christ? "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will" (Heb. 2:4). We note that God bore witness **with** them and not **to** them; God and the church were a joint testimony to the salvation first spoken of by the Lord. They spoke on earth, He confirmed from heaven. Healings, miracles, men being baptised in the Holy Spirit all attested the Lordship of Christ. When the notable miracle of the healing of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate took place, Peter countered their looks of amazement with "Why do you gaze at us, as if by our power or piety we had made him walk?" (Acts 3:12). How is it then that we get hung up on healing over the question of our power and holiness when scripture states directly that these are not the basis of healing? Of course our walk with God is important, we are not denying that, but an ability to heal the sick is no guarantee of our character. Similarly, a holy life does not necessarily mean that we will possess the gifts of healing. Sometimes, when several have been healed and excitement rises, God whispers in my ear, "A little boy can do that" reminding me of an occasion when He used a lad in my presence. This gives me a deep sense of security that I am not expected to come up with something or to be God's man of faith and power. Lord, give us a man's understanding to find a child's faith.

Healing in the Atonement

Is healing in the atonement? This question, which has been the ground of theological argument, is clearly answered for us in Matt. 8:16-17. "And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill in order that what was

spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases.' " The ground of physical healing is exactly the same as that of every act of God's grace, namely, the death, resurrection and enthronement of the Lord Jesus. However, in saying this, we cannot divorce physical healing from the healing of the whole man. We must not preach a gospel of healing in which we offer physical cures to all, divorced from a proclamation of the principles of the whole kingdom of God. To say that Jesus bore our sins and sickness and therefore all can be healed is true, but that does not mean that we can call people out for healing and all will necessarily be healed. For some, healing may well be the next step in their experience of the rule of God; but to others, God may be speaking of repentance, baptism or being filled with the Holy Spirit. For such, no matter how much 'faith' we have that God can heal the sick, no matter how long we pray, nothing whatever will happen as God wants His kingdom to come to them first in the area of their obedience or attitude.

God holds the keys of sickness and death as well as healing and will use even these means to establish His rule. Certainly God wills to heal us physically but we cannot wield 'healing in the atonement', or 'God's power to heal' in order to demand a cure. He heals the body as part of His total kingdom rule in a man and may well use the pressure of sickness or situations to cause men to submit to His authority. God said, "It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal" (Deut. 32:39). So we are told that Saul was troubled by "an evil spirit from the Lord" (1 Sam. 19:9). Elymas found himself groping in the dark after Paul declared, "The hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time" (Acts 13:11). A double funeral followed the attempt of Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). The message of Pentecost was 'Jesus is Lord' not 'Jesus can heal'. But those who responded to Him as Lord were healed. Jesus healed the poor but rebuked

the Pharisee. He loved them both alike, for the healing and the rebuke were equally doors of entrance to the kingdom of God.

Jesus didn't pray for all and sundry with an "if it be Thy will" to cover the case of those who were not ready. He sorted out who was who. When a father came seeking healing for his son and saying, "If You can do anything, take pity on us and help us," Jesus immediately put the matter back to him again. "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the boy's father cried out and began saying "I do believe, help (me in) my unbelief" (Mark 9:22-24). At first the man doubted Jesus' ability to help, so questioning His lordship, but as soon as he confessed that the real problem lay in his own lack of faith and cried out for help over his own unbelief, his boy was immediately healed.

In praying for the sick, then, we are not looking for them to possess deep insight into the kingdom of God but to come seeking help of the Lord Jesus from a good and honest heart, a heart disposed towards Him. However, those who come to patronise Him from an attitude of proud determination to walk in their own ways will be sent away empty, unless they repent.

When one ministers to a single individual, it is a straightforward matter to establish a basis for praying for healing. If on the other hand many are seeking healing the pressure of the occasion and the waiting queue can lead to a striving to produce the cure quickly and get on to the next person. The safeguard is to work in the church as a team, with others being ready to share in explaining the kingdom and using words of knowledge as well as in the healing itself. In this way we can move in confidence and success with those we pray for being healed.

And He Healed Them All

"As long as some of those I pray for are healed I'll continue to pray for the sick on the same basis that I don't stop preaching the gospel just because everyone isn't saved." This argument, while sounding very logical, is

in fact false. Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom with some believing and others rejecting the message. On the other hand, Matthew tells us, "And many followed Him, and He healed them all" (Matt. 12:15). In preaching the gospel the message is presented to all for them to believe, while in healing the sick, all come already seeking the Lord and thus all should be healed. When we heal the sick we do just that, heal the sick, not throw the matter back on God to do something if He sees fit. We are made responsible to use the power of God and therefore to minister healing only to those we know will receive it.

We must not take this word 'all' in self condemnation as if it means we ought to be able to go to any hospital and clear out every bed. That is not the 'all' we are talking about. At the Pool of Bethesda the 'all' was one man; the others had their eyes only on the troubling of the waters. Our 'all' must be the 'all' of faith and not the 'all' of hit and miss.

Jesus only acted where His Father was working to create faith in the hearts of the people (John 5:17, 19, 30). How can we know where God is at work? By observing a reaching out in faith by the people. How do we know when He is not working? Because there will be hardness and a lack of response to the message of the kingdom. As we preach the kingdom of God, those in whose hearts God is quickening faith will be made evident. The healing of the one cripple at the Pool of Bethesda was a miraculous sign. To have had one healed out of a healing line of hundreds would have been a disaster; hardly a striking proof of the kingdom of God! If we start with God's 'all' then literally, all will be healed.

God's Healing Covenant

"There He made for them a statute and a regulation, and there He tested them. And He said, 'If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases on you which I have put on the

Egyptians; for I, the Lord, am your healer'" (Exod. 15:25-26).

God's covenant was that if the people obeyed His voice then He would be their God and they His treasured possession (see Exod. 19:5; Jer. 31:33). Healing or protection from disease was part of this promise. As Israel submitted to the rule of God in their lives then God would rule over the sickness in their bodies. The fundamental law of healing is that it springs from submission to God's rule in the terms of His covenant. In the Old Testament this was on tables of stone, while after the coming of Jesus it was on tables of men's hearts.

Forgiveness, healing, deliverance, heart obedience are all signs that God is ruling. These are never 'things', 'experiences' or 'gifts' apart from covenant. They are for those who 'come to Jesus confessing Him as Lord.' In other places, God warns His people that should they break His covenant then He would remove His protective covering of them with consequent sickness (see Num. 12:13; Ps. 107:17-20; 2 Chron. 7:14).

In the New Testament we find that those who abused the covenant feast of the Lord's supper were "weak and sick and a number sleep" (1 Cor. 11:30). Again, James makes it clear that sin can be the cause of sickness (Jas. 5:15). Although the "if he has committed sins" indicates that this may not necessarily be the case. If we step out from under the umbrella we will get wet. Thus, in presenting the question of healing, it must be seen as God's love covenant with His own. To the unbeliever it is often the first step towards covenant relationship and the forgiveness of sins, while for the believer (as in James 5:15) in seeking the covenant blessing of healing he must confess any sins he has committed and be loosed from them as well as being healed physically.

The ambassador of the kingdom of God moves with all the authority of the King whom He represents and for whom he speaks. When Jesus told His disciples to go in to all the

world and preach the gospel, He promised them, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). He went with them as their beloved Friend, yes, but also to implement the words that they spoke. They went into **His** world not Satan's; to a territory where **He**, and not the devil, had authority. Thus going into His domain as His ambassadors, they had the right and commission to impose His kingdom till it filled the earth.

We heal the sick because we are imposing the rule of God – a rule legally established in the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus to sit at God's right hand. The world is His and therefore ours; we are not on foreign soil, it is our inheritance (Matt. 5:5). We are simply in the process of dispossessing a defeated enemy who has no claim to it whatsoever. As we move in, he must move out, for the throne of God stands solidly behind us at every step. The restoring of 'healing' to its true setting in God's kingdom rule immediately exposes many of the reasons for past failures.

All gifts are corporate gifts as there is only one kingdom, with all authority coming from the Head who has set every man in his place related to, and working with his brother. Healing must then be uprooted from the setting of a 'one man spectacular' or 'God's man of faith and power for the hour' concept, and firmly replanted in the context of the daily life of the church.

Once we lose sight of the kingdom aspect of healing, our minds quickly become engaged with externals: the feeling of 'anointing', tingles or heat in the hand that is laid on the sick, people falling over and such like. None of these things heal people – God does, whether we feel anything or not. Whenever Jesus was approached over a healing He had performed He invariably replied to the effect that "the Father in Me does His works" (John 14:10 ; see also John 8:28, 29; 9:3, 4; 10:25, 32, 37).

We don't go round with power in our hands trying to find somewhere to put them. We go through life representing and sharing the Word of the

kingdom. If then some respond and we see God at work in them, we are able, while telling them how Jesus wants to heal their whole life, to pray too for their bodily healing.

What If...?

What if, after all this, on some occasion 'nothing happens'? Firstly, don't panic and secondly, don't pretend.

Don't panic. Shouting, wobbling or declaring, "We know You can heal" will not move God if there is a good reason for nothing happening. Don't pretend, either by word ("I'm sure something has happened"; "just trust God, it may happen later") or by attitude (when we never refer to the many still unhealed after our prayers over them, only mentioning the successes).

What do we do then? If the person seeking healing really is seeking the kingdom of God, then we say nothing has happened and seek God to know by which door He wants the kingdom to come into that person's life. Thus we take the matter up; we don't let it drop thereby giving Satan further ammunition to condemn the one still unhealed. We must minister the whole kingdom, not just a 'physical healing kingdom'. Perhaps other persons may need to be drawn in to minister with us, and here I mean in the context of the church life and not necessarily a meeting. As God is sought for wisdom and not simply implored to heal He will show perhaps our own lack of faith as in Matt. 17:20. Or He may indicate in the one seeking healing, the need for repentance from wrong actions or attitudes, commands that have not been obeyed, involvement in the occult, or simply a lack of understanding of the whole basis on which He heals. Whatever it be, God will give a door through which we can move forward; perhaps several doors until the person is whole. God doesn't leave situations locked up without explanation.

David Mansell has written more on Gifts of Healing which we hope to publish in booklet form in the near future under the title 'You too can heal the sick'.

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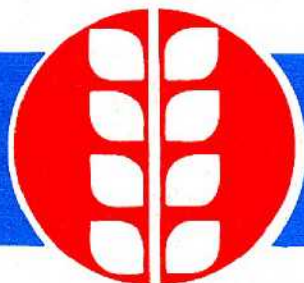
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