

IT TAKES A
COMMUNITY

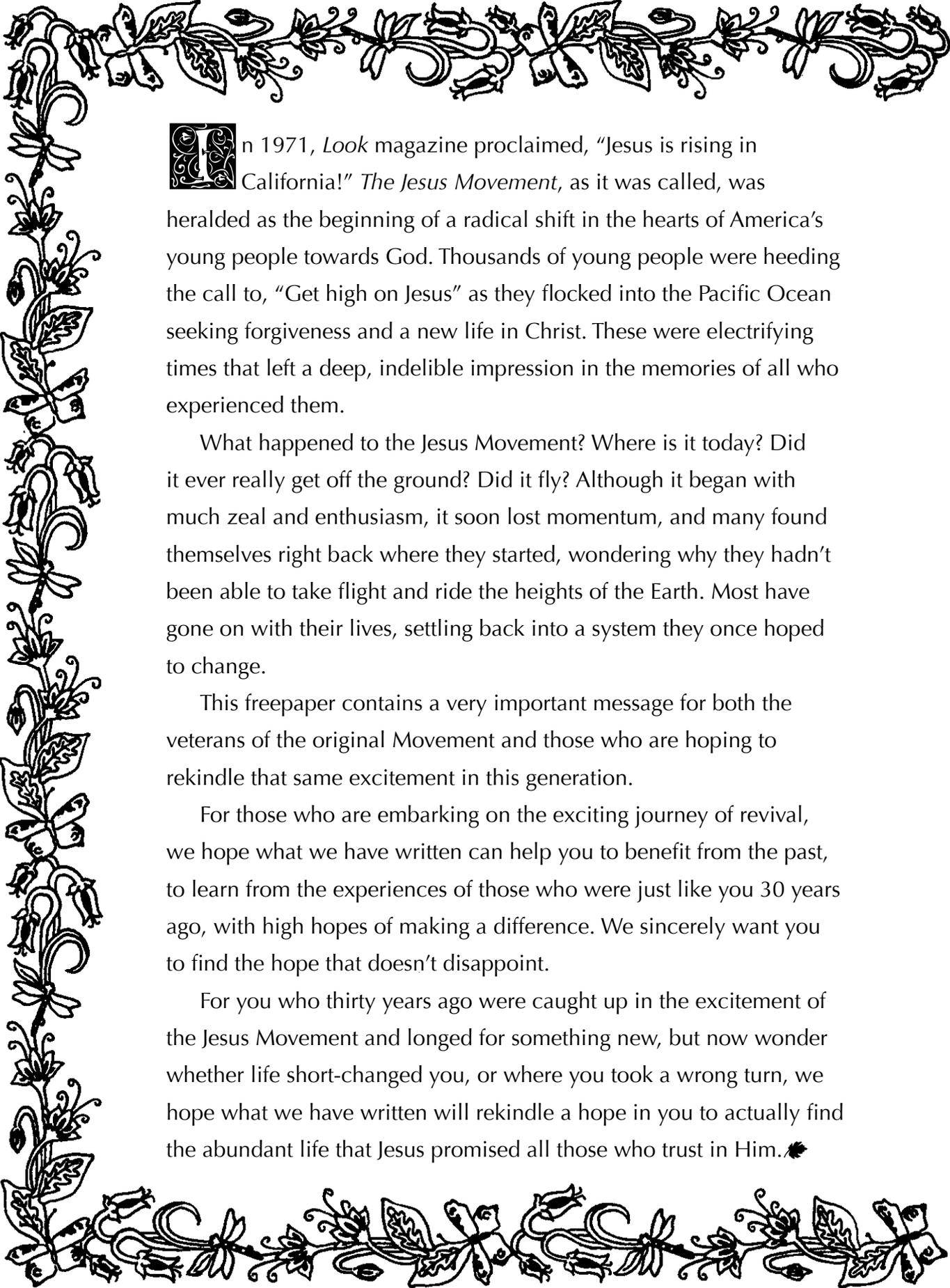
FREE

WINTER 2003

Why
She
Didn't
Fly

Special Double Issue
Remembering the Jesus Movement
of the Early '70s
—Part Two—



A decorative border of black line art flowers and leaves runs along the top, left, and bottom edges of the page. The flowers are stylized with multiple petals and long stems, interspersed with leaves of various shapes.

In 1971, *Look* magazine proclaimed, “Jesus is rising in California!” *The Jesus Movement*, as it was called, was heralded as the beginning of a radical shift in the hearts of America’s young people towards God. Thousands of young people were heeding the call to, “Get high on Jesus” as they flocked into the Pacific Ocean seeking forgiveness and a new life in Christ. These were electrifying times that left a deep, indelible impression in the memories of all who experienced them.

What happened to the Jesus Movement? Where is it today? Did it ever really get off the ground? Did it fly? Although it began with much zeal and enthusiasm, it soon lost momentum, and many found themselves right back where they started, wondering why they hadn’t been able to take flight and ride the heights of the Earth. Most have gone on with their lives, settling back into a system they once hoped to change.

This freepaper contains a very important message for both the veterans of the original Movement and those who are hoping to rekindle that same excitement in this generation.

For those who are embarking on the exciting journey of revival, we hope what we have written can help you to benefit from the past, to learn from the experiences of those who were just like you 30 years ago, with high hopes of making a difference. We sincerely want you to find the hope that doesn’t disappoint.

For you who thirty years ago were caught up in the excitement of the Jesus Movement and longed for something new, but now wonder whether life short-changed you, or where you took a wrong turn, we hope what we have written will rekindle a hope in you to actually find the abundant life that Jesus promised all those who trust in Him. ✿

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Remembering the Jesus Movement of the '70s

— Part Two —

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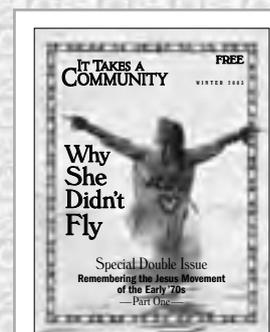
Outside the camp is where disciples ought to be, because that's where their Master was.

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After leaving the Jesus movement, I moved my family eleven times over the next 23 years through almost 20 different groups and movements that claimed to offer what I hoped for.



My Search for a Holy People

My name is David. Born in the Fifties, I was raised as a Catholic. My parents were good people who loved me and tried always to do the right thing. In spite of this, as an adolescent I rebelled against their middle-class expectations and discarded my Catholicism. I journeyed through my adolescence in the counterculture of the late '60s and early '70s, and then into the Jesus Movement.

I found in the '60s counterculture a moral compass I thought I could actually follow. At least in the beginning, the counterculture held out a much more worthy dream than just the pursuit of pleasure. My friends and I wanted to love one another. We rallied under the banner, "Make love, not war." We wanted to bring peace to the world, not more division. We wanted justice,

not exploitation. We wanted to do everything together and share, not compete with each other as individuals. We wanted to be real, and expose the hypocrisy we saw all around us. And we wanted to be a part of something significant, something momentous that could make the world new and better.

It seems laughable now, but back then, for a short while, the "Woodstock Nation" seemed very real and attainable. We were actually going to set up a new culture, a new nation, in opposition to the one we had rejected. Our hopes soared. Then they crashed and burned. The pursuit of pleasure together was not an ethic capable of making the rest of that dream real. On the contrary, it destroyed it.

By the time I was 21, I was burned out, torn up, lonely, and hopeless. Then in

1976 some of the “Jesus People” came to my hometown of Olympia, Washington. This particular group was from a ministry called Gospel Outreach. They had begun in Eureka, California, with a handful of young, burned-out druggies who had become Christians in the early days of the Jesus Movement. This handful of young men had gone to a local real estate broker, Jim Durkin, looking for a place to establish an outreach to the hippies. A former Assemblies of God pastor, he was leading a small Pentecostal church in addition to selling real estate and building up his own real estate holdings.

Jim gave these young men a place to establish an outreach in one of his broken-down buildings. In time, the leader of the group left. Those that remained asked Jim Durkin to be their “elder.” He agreed, and after some time he acquired an abandoned Coast Guard station south of Eureka, which they dubbed the “Lighthouse Ranch.” The young men moved their outreach ministry to the Ranch.

This small community exploded in size, drawing in hundreds of the multitudes of counterculture young people that were constantly traveling through the area, hitchhiking the Pacific Coast Highway. The Ranch would send out people to pick up hippie hitchhikers and bring them to the Ranch for the night. There they were introduced to a Jesus very different from the one they had known in the middle-class homes they had been raised in.

This Jesus, like them, was a rebel determined to expose the hypocrisy and unreality of the religious leaders and institutions of His day. He was so effective in exposing their hypocrisy that they tortured Him to death. This Jesus loved justice and mercy and wanted to set people free. He promised forgiveness of sin and eternal life to all who would believe in Him.

Over the course of three years several thousand of these hippies responded to Jim Durkin’s version of the gospel — the standard Charismatic

Evangelical Christian message with an additional “discipleship” step added in order to appeal to the radicalism of these counterculture young people.

They sent out dozens of groups of these young people to establish communities in other places, bringing their version of the gospel with them. Some of them came to Olympia. They set up a Gospel Outreach house called the House of Mercy on one of the town’s busiest streets.

“Very quickly the life we had signed up for virtually disappeared. All of the strong ones who had been supporting the weak left community life to seek selfish gain as middle-class Christians. The weak that needed care all scattered into the wilderness of society, completely disillusioned.”

In June 1976, in despair, I walked into their home looking for someone to talk to. They looked like freaks, just like me. They lived together and shared everything. Unlike any Christians I had known, they seemed real. They seemed radical and outside of the Establishment. All of this completely disarmed me. They preached their gospel to me, and I accepted it.

What was this gospel they preached? Realize that you are a sinner, ask for God’s forgiveness based on the fact that Christ died for your sins, and ask Jesus to come into your heart. Do this, and God will forgive you, give you His Holy Spirit, and write your name in the Book of Life. Overwhelmed with guilt and despair, I gave my life to God according to this gospel. I cried and had a huge sense of release. Then I went back home to the house I was renting at the time.

When I got there, I realized that I didn’t want to be alone. I wanted to be with those who had led me to God. I went back the next day and told them I really wanted to do more than I had done. In response, they told me about Christian discipleship.

Once you were saved, if you wanted to become a whole-hearted follower of Jesus, you had to be willing to deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow Him. You had to forsake everything you owned by giving it to Gospel Outreach and live in community with them according to the pattern in Acts 2 & 4. You should then “obey them that have rule over you” and serve the Body in whatever way you were asked. You were told that Jim Durkin was one

of God’s Apostles, sent in restoration of the government of God outlined in Ephesians 4:11. True discipleship was only possible under the authority of the government of God. Of course, all of this was for those who wanted to go the extra mile and be *disciples*, not just saved believers. It was an optional “second mile.”

Having realized that Jesus gave everything for me, it seemed completely reasonable to take the second step and pay the price to be a disciple. I went home, got my stuff, gave it all and moved in the next day. For the next eighteen months, I lived as a single brother in community with seventy other people. I gave myself to serving as best I could in whatever way I was asked. I found it a wonderful way to live. There were problems and messes and chaos at times. But we were together and it seemed back then that we could get through anything as long as we hung onto God and each other. My hopes for a meaningful life rose to the heavens during that time.

There were about 2,000 people scattered through the different branches of Gospel Outreach. Similar

My Search for a Holy People

things happened in dozens, even hundreds of other groups, to hundreds of thousands of young people. For a while, it seemed we had recaptured the reality of the early disciples of the Book of Acts.

In spring of 1978, I was sent to Phoenix to help plant a new community there. Stopping in Eureka on the way, I discovered that Jim Durkin had not forsaken his own real estate holdings. On the contrary, he was buying old fixer-upper homes, having the disciples fix them up, and then charging them high rents to live in them. Fish rot from the head down.

When I got to Phoenix a week later, I found that Gospel Outreach had decided that forsaking all and living in community was limiting our effectiveness in reaching the lost and isolating us from the rest of Christianity. The elders had already gotten their own homes, and staked out territories for their own personal businesses that the rest of us were expected to stay out of. We sheep who arrived later were free to live together if we wanted, but now it was optional.

Very quickly the life we had signed up for virtually disappeared. All of the strong ones who had been supporting the weak left community life to seek selfish gain as middle-class Christians. The weak that needed care all scattered into the wilderness of society, completely disillusioned. What was left was just another extremely small sect among 50,000 plus Christian sects. Within a few months, I left "G.O." for a large Charismatic church to pursue my own self-directed and selfish middle-class life while still being a disciple of Jesus.

What is astounding and tragic is that the most idealistic young people of that whole generation, who had dreams of countering the culture that they despised, were diverted into a totally hypocritical middle-class Christian life — a life that you could not have forced them into at the point of a gun in the beginning.

Within a few years, through the ministries of men such as Chuck Smith, John Wimber, and Jim Durkin, this explosion of hunger for God was diverted into either despair or a middle-class Christianity different from the world only in pretense. We began by living together and sharing the Word, and ended up in pews. The weak perished while the strong died inside from the cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches.

I expected my search to be easy. After all, what I was looking for was plainly in the Word of God; so surely it must exist in Evangelical Christianity.

In my first self-confident flush of freedom from the burden of having to pour my life out for the weak, I met the woman who became my wife. I still thought of myself as a radical disciple because of my experiences. I confidently got married, expecting to successfully pursue middle-class living and still be a true disciple of Jesus. I expected that my life would bear good fruit in my wife, my children, and the Kingdom of God.

Within a short time after I married, my conscience began to gnaw at me. I realized that the huge Charismatic Church we attended was not what it appeared to be. When we attended a young married class and the associate pastor justified abortion and gross sexual perversions within marriage, we could not go back. Within a year, three of the pastors at that church had divorced their wives. I then began a 23-year search for a holy people that could give my conscience peace. I knew I had to find a City that had foundations, whose builder and maker was God, or there was no hope for my wife, my children, or me.

I expected my search to be easy. After all, what I was looking for was

plainly in the Word of God, so it must exist in Evangelical Christianity! Here are a few of the Scriptures that drove me, the measuring stick that everything that I found fell short of:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

"I do not pray for these alone, but also

for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that you sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one; I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them as You have loved me." (John 17:20-23)

"Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need... The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need." (Acts 2: 42-47; 4:32-35)

My Search for a Holy People

True love, true unity, and true community, with genuinely apostolic leadership and vision, would be the self-evident fruit of the Gospel, it seemed to me.

I moved my family 11 times over the next 23 years, through almost 20 different groups and movements that claimed to offer what I hoped for. I would find a group that promised apostolic authority, community, and love, throw my life and family into it, and then get crushingly disappointed. This happened over and over and over again.

Three separate times I grew so hopeless of finding anything real that I took the proud step of trying to bring it into birth myself, starting at different times a street-level outreach, an urban neighborhood community church, and an apocalyptic rural Christian commune. I knew deep down I was in no spiritual condition to genuinely help anyone; it was the blind leading the blind all over again. I was unable to proclaim the true gospel because I had never received it or obeyed it myself, much less been sent from a people that had.

"Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple... So, likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor... it is neither fit for the land nor the dunghill. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"
(Luke 14:25-27,33-35)

According to the very words of Jesus, the most radical, self-congratulatory groups in all of Christianity, including the ones I presumed to lead, are not even fit for the dunghill. Of course, I got what I deserved. I tried to save my life and almost lost it. I tried to serve God and money and deceived myself. I even became a deceiver myself. I lost

most of my family. I utterly wasted the best years of my adult strength.

At first, my wife and children believed me when I told them the Kingdom of God was the most important thing on earth, that it was the only thing that had eternal reality. But they could not help but see that every time I claimed to have found God's Kingdom, it turned out to be a mirage. They could not help but see the hypocrisy in my life and the life I led them and others into. Gradually they lost respect for me. The nice Christian family façade by which I kept my conscience at bay finally crumbled completely. I was teetering on the brink of utter destruction behind my successful Christian businessman and family man façade.

Then, on November 21, 2002, I stumbled upon the Twelve Tribes website. The name seemed odd, but I was so desperate that I pushed past that. What I found astounded me. I read and read, and grew more amazed. I wrote four e-mails to them that night. To my

amazement, they wrote right back and invited me to a large wedding of two of their young people to be held on the next Saturday.

My oldest daughter and I drove 200 miles to the wedding. Within 30 minutes after I walked in, I was utterly undone. For the first time in 48 years on this earth, I saw the Gospel and the Kingdom of God in a real demonstration of the love of John 13:35, the unity of John 17:21, the life of Acts 2 & 4, and the good government of Ephesians 4:11. They preached the true Gospel to me in the power of the Spirit. I believed in it, and will forever.

In obedience to the true Gospel, the one that unlike all the others is actually found in the Gospels, I have surrendered myself utterly to God to serve Him where He is — with His people and nowhere else. I am a new man. For the first time in my life I have a clear conscience and the power to do the will of God with my brothers, rather than try and fail alone. 🌿

David



A Reason to BELIEVE

God doesn't demand that anyone believe without evidence. He wants people to see a true witness, a demonstration, something of substance that will prove to the world that the Father sent the Son

Every person needs something to believe in, a reason to live, a passion, something to cling to and invest everything in. Without it, life is futile.

Growing up hearing about the hippie movement of the '60s, I felt like I'd missed out. It seemed as if that generation had vision and passion, something worth speaking up about. My parents didn't talk about it much, but I knew they had been inspired to find a way of life different from what society offers. At one point they left everything to live in the rainforests of Costa Rica. They lived in a tent for six years in another culture, still trying to find their dream and live off the land. Their journey led them, not only to getting married and having children, but also to each finding a group to get involved with. My mother got involved with an obscure Eastern philosophy, and my father, a New Age religious group.

Inevitably, different paths led to different places and eventually my parents separated. My brother, sister, mother, and I all moved to a small community based on the path my mother had chosen. Years went by and the community changed, and we started going to public school, and eventually left that community. Perhaps because of the way my parents were, the public school system never could provide me with a reason to live. All the great options that were set before me didn't interest me at all, so I dropped out. Maybe college, I thought... but after one semester, I dropped out.

I thought about how my parents had lost so much of their original vision over the years and I was determined to find a true reason to believe. The idea of going to school to get a diploma, to get a job, to buy a house, to save for retirement and pay life insurance for when I died seemed like such a hopeless and meaningless cycle. Something deep inside told me there had to be true meaning to life, so where does one go to find it?

I didn't know where to go, but I knew I didn't have it yet, so I left. At first, just the idea or hope of starting over, on a quest of sorts, was so exciting. A friend and I headed west with just a small backpack each. We saw California as the "promised land." It is amazing what you can find when you start looking for something. We would run into group after group, person after person, each with another agenda, another belief, and another persuasion. I would talk to everyone I could, just hoping someone would have real insight into the purpose of life.

The Environmentalists were so set on saving the trees, even at the risk of personal harm. Some people were determined to protect the rights of the Native Americans against the coal mining companies. On and on the list went. I talked to Buddhists, the Hare Krishna's, all sorts of Christians, Jews, Muslims, hippies, health-food advocates, those with the New Age philosophies, and even people who thought life was just an alien experiment and one day space-

ships would come and take us all away. It seemed like there were so many choices and each choice had so many ways to believe. Some people would even say that it's all the same anyway, so it doesn't matter what you choose, as if all paths lead to the same goal.

Reincarnation, transcendence, heaven and hell, nirvana, live for the moment without thinking about the consequences, or dirt? Take your pick. I began to sense a little bit of a battle not to compromise and just take the first and easiest "cause" that came along. I wanted to really believe, but I was lost, tossed about. I wanted proof and figured that was the only way to trust anything. I always seemed to run into people who would tell me Jesus was the way and that I needed to be saved. I wasn't quite sure what that meant because their lives didn't seem so much different than anybody else's, and I knew that if I did "get saved" I would still have to figure out what to do with my life.

Sometimes I would wish I had grown up in some third-world tribal culture, with elders to look to for wisdom, some sort of heritage, and basic rites of passage, a foundation. The more I looked, the more I felt sick inside, like I had caught some deadly disease, and my spirit was dying inside me. Though I traveled from place to place, the goal always seemed just out of reach. I realized that I needed roots in something, and that I didn't have any. I

knew I wanted to love because I knew for sure, if anything, love gives life a purpose. But what does love really mean anyway? I knew that love is not the way of the world. I knew love is not so easy, especially as I saw more and more hurtful and selfish tendencies in myself.

I met so many people who, at one point, started out with vision, but lost it over the years. That made me so sad. Why hadn't their vision perpetuated itself and increased? I even began to wonder if it was hopeless to have hope. If everyone's passion is destined to dwindle, why even try?

Perhaps I was wrong all along and the way of the world is the best it is going to get. Maybe I should just surrender to the "American Dream" and put my hope in heaven one day, or reincarnation, or maybe even the spaceships that were coming. And what about love? Well, everyone has problems, nobody is perfect anyway, and maybe I just need to worry about my own life. Maybe the problems of the world are just too big; what can I do about it anyway?

Yet every time I would think this way, I would feel like I was on the verge of death, as if any spark of being a genuine human being was in jeopardy of being extinguished. Yet deep inside, I knew if there was a God, the true God who is love, the source of life, He could set me free and lead me out. So I did the only thing left that I felt I could do: I earnestly cried out, with all my heart and with tears to a God I didn't even feel like I knew, to set me free and show me the way.

A week later, I ran into some people who had just what I longed for — a reason to believe. I had actually met some of these people a year before, but I was cautious when talking to people, especially when the Bible would be brought up. This time though, I was much thirstier, nearly spiritually dehydrated. So I was eager to hear what they said. When I was invited to come and visit one of the communities, I was so thankful, especially because I could tell these people had something genuine. They were warm and kind.

So I went, full of momentum from all my searching and traveling, and although I loved the life they had, I still had thoughts of going to India to find a



The life of the Son of God was the light of men, so the way of life His believers live should also be a witness and light to persuade the one who doesn't believe.

guru, or some enlightenment, perhaps. Their life seemed simpler and less dramatic than what I expected.

Then they invited me to go to a wedding at one of their communities. What I saw there was something I had never really seen before. I heard people speak with so much passion and conviction. I heard authority in what people spoke but I could tell they were not proud — there was a certain humility about them. The more I saw, the more I wanted to listen to what they had to say. People repeatedly kept saying that it was all because of their Master.

Slowly, something started to dawn in my heart. I could tell that this was no light thing, not some spur of the moment occasion, but I could even sense it had come at a cost, an investment. I could also see that these people greatly treasured what they had. I cried a lot at that wedding and when people would ask me what was going on inside me, I barely knew what to tell them. I felt deeply comforted and pierced to the heart, all at the same time. The part of my heart that had started to harden and become skeptical of life was being stirred. Now, as the years go by, I recognize that feeling

A Reason to Believe

as the mercy of God. It was like finally being home, even though I barely knew these people.

Somehow, in all my travels, never before had anyone just opened up their home and welcomed me into their belief. No one had ever said I could be a part of them, build with them, and learn with them. It is the most wonderful thing to be able to really trust people, knowing that their intentions toward you are good, especially after being in the place where you always have to keep up your guard.

Still, I had to be sure this was what I wanted to commit my life to. I needed to count the cost, because that is what I was told were the "terms of the gospel," something I had never heard of before. As time went on I started to see some of my motives and intentions for holding back. They all seemed so shallow and selfish. I would see people selflessly meeting the needs of others, determined to learn to love and deal with the hindrances. I started to be convinced that these people were legitimate and dedicated because, living with them, I saw that they were consistent. They certainly weren't perfect and yet they still truly loved each other. That comforted me too because I knew that I had some ways that were certainly not perfect. I could see no one was hiding anything. Deep inside, I wanted to not have anything to hide. So after about a month of really considering, I decided to commit my whole entire life to the same thing these people had.

An amazing characteristic of God's heart is that He doesn't demand that anyone believe, or even just expect them to believe without evidence. He wants people to see a true witness, something that verifies the truth. He wants a demonstration, something of substance that will prove to the world that the Father sent the Son. This, I learned, is what the Bible clearly says. He wants to give people real faith. He wanted to give me faith.

Jesus said, "I in them [His disciples], and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that

you have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (John 17:23)

He said that the perfection of the bond of unity between His disciples would prove to the world that God is real and so is His Son. So what type of unity would prove to the world such a thing? It would take some weight of evidence to prove such a weighty matter and give a person what he would need to become a true believer. I remember that as an outstanding quality of these people, that whomever I talked to or whatever community I went to, the heart and the vision was the same. It was a completely real and tangible life of togetherness, caring and sharing of all. It was being proven right in front of me, the very love of God.

So what would be the nature of someone who was a disciple of His and what would prove authenticity?

Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

All will know, and see evidence, that His disciples are authentic because they love one another as He did. I was amazed more and more as I saw people dealing with the practical everyday situations with an attitude of love, meeting the pressing needs. I could tell by what I saw that these were real disciples.

"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:16)

What kind of love is that? Anything that is less than everything, a complete and total sacrificial love, would not match up or prove that one is a disciple.

Revelation has to be revealed, opened up, disclosed. Light reveals things, and apart from the light, a witness, no one should even attempt to believe beyond what is instinctively known in the heart. The life of the Son of God was the light of men, so the way of life of His believers should also be a witness and light that one who doesn't believe could look at

and become a believer.

If someone claims to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength, it should be evident from what he speaks from his heart and mind, and what he does daily with his strength. There is a saying that "deep calls to deep," meaning that if someone has true conviction and speaks from it, it can communicate to something true in the hearer, thus imparting faith. Genuine faith is persuasive. False faith or lack of conviction will be clear to someone who wants true substance and is thirsty. So Jesus, in His wisdom and knowing the way men's hearts work, spoke,

"A good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree bear good fruit. Therefore by their fruit you will know them." (Mt 7:17,18,20)

He left the decision up to the hearer. The thirsty ones will believe those who have what quenches the deep thirst in them, the life of love and care that even helps and assists them to believe.

I know my thirst has been quenched. After five years, I am still satisfied to be a disciple. That is not saying discipleship is easy in any way, but the more I come to know Him and His true character, the more my vision and passion increases. I see people who have devoted their lives to Him for thirty years and their conviction runs deep. True love will always produce a family. It will produce a community, a nation, and a reason to believe. It is the most wonderful thing to have a reason to believe. 🌱



We Are One in the Spirit

“We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord...

And we pray that our unity will one day be restored...

And they’ll know we are Christians by our love...”

This song was an endearing anthem of the Jesus Movement. Thousands sang it with the hope its words project — that when our unity is restored someday, the world would know we are Christians by our love. The person who wrote that song evidently knew there wasn’t unity in the church, but still he proclaimed, “We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,” which is a contradiction. How can you be one in the Spirit and one in the Lord as Jesus prayed we would be¹ and at the same time not be in unity with one another? As Paul said, “Who hopes for what he already has?”²

So what does the term *restored* mean? Restored to what? When was there unity in the church that we could be restored to? And how would restoration happen? *Restore* means to go back to the original, functioning condition. The original, functioning condition of the church is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles:

“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And

the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:44-47)

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. (Acts 4:32-35)

What is recorded in Acts 2 and 4 is the authentic original document that proves the authenticity of what the one Spirit of God produced in the believers after Pentecost. It is what Jesus prayed for just before He was crucified:

“...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” (John 17:21-23)

Paul also makes it clear how God intended the Body of Christ to be:

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)

But unity can't be restored until God's love is restored because unity is the fruit of love.³ It can't be the other way around. Love is the foundation upon which unity is built.⁴ So, love must be restored first:

"This is my commandment that you love one another. By this, the world will know that you are My disciples." (John 13:34-35)

To love Him with all your heart is the greatest commandment. This is what must be restored first. If a person does not obey Him, he does not love Him.⁵ If a person says "I know Him" and does not keep His commandments, he is a liar and the truth is not in him.⁶

God could not pour the new wine of the Holy Spirit into the old wineskin of Judaism. They loved their traditions more than His word. They weren't willing to do His will. So, the kingdom was taken away from the Jews. Jesus promised that the kingdom would be given to a nation that would produce its fruit.⁷ That fruit is the life that love *always* produces. The first church, which was inaugurated on the Day of Pentecost, was that new nation, the new wineskin that He

poured the Holy Spirit into through the apostles. God's love was poured out in the hearts⁸ of all who believed because they were willing to go outside the camp of Judaism and bear the reproach in order to have His life.

find the new wineskin. No one told them they had to go outside the camp of Christianity to find it. And if anybody did tell them, there wasn't the power and authority to actually call them out and give them the new wine.

"I have learned that although Christians do not always agree, they can disagree agreeably," and "within the true church there is a mysterious unity that overrides all divisive factors." Billy Graham

When this song, *We Are One in the Spirit*, was sung in the Jesus Movement, they evidently knew they didn't have the love and unity of the early church but that somehow they wanted to have unity and they wanted the world to see the love of Jesus in them. The reason there wasn't unity in Christianity at the time of the Jesus Movement is because it had become dry, rigid, and brittle like an old wineskin. God couldn't pour His new wine into that old wineskin. But nobody told them where they could

Instead, the Jesus Movement was an attempt to patch up the old garment of Christianity with new cloth. They tried to patch up the old cloth, but it required restoration, not reformation – going back to the original, not trying to put a new patch on the old garment. You can't doctor up an old wineskin. The only thing old wineskins can hold is old wine.

Without receiving the new wine of the Holy Spirit into a new wineskin,



believers will not be able to love one another the way He loved — that is having the power to lay down their lives for one another.⁹ Love that gives itself up is what produces the unity Jesus prayed for in John 17:21-23. If this unity is not present, it's because this particular love that signifies the presence of the Holy Spirit is not there. But who will admit to this?

Without real unity, the ranks of Christianity go forward with the master plan of ecumenism — uniting all of Christianity into a form of unity that agrees to overlook division and accepts disagreement among the members. Could the spirit that inspires ecumenism be the Holy Spirit? The ecumenical spirit says, in effect, that the Holy Spirit is not great enough to bring about the unity of John 17:23. Without the binding power of love, all that can be said is that there is a mystical unity, which ignores the reality of division.

There are two great examples of this kind of thinking and they come from two of the great leaders of evangelical Christianity — Billy Graham and Chuck Smith. Billy Graham bridged the gap between

mainline churches and old fundamentalism at his crusade in Madison Square Garden in 1957. From that time on, Graham has made “practical ecumenism” a hallmark of his ministry.¹⁰ On page 31 of his booklet, *Growing as a Christian*, Graham says, “I have learned that although Christians do not always agree, they can *disagree agreeably*,” and “within the true church there is a *mysterious* unity that overrides all divisive factors” [emphasis added]. This is classic “doublethink.” (For more on this subject, see the article *Tools of Control*, page 58 of Part One.)

Pastor Chuck Smith is a great doctor who gives out regular prescriptions of medicine to his flocks — the opiate of the masses — like this prescription from his book *Answers for Today*: “The more spiritual a man is, the less denominational he is. We should realize that we’re all part of the Body of Christ and that *there aren’t any real divisions* [emphasis added] in the Body. We’re all one.”¹¹ In other words, the more spiritual a man is the less he notices divisions. This statement is an indictment against Paul who said:

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Now I say this, that each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”
(1 Corinthians 1:10,12,13)

According to Chuck Smith, the apostle Paul was not a spiritual man, but a mere natural man, because he called attention to the divisions, the disunity, the denominations of Christianity beginning to form.

The fruit of the Jesus Movement was just more divisions in an already hopelessly divided religion. Ever since the first church lost its first love, the result has been the religion of Christianity, whose history is full of division and bloodshed. Some version of it has always been the favored religion in Western society. It is in the mainstream. It is the status quo. It is not outside the camp where Jesus always is. The world hated Him.¹² The

Jews rejected Him and had the Romans execute Him outside the gates of Jerusalem. He was an outcast from His own people. He went outside the camp and stayed there.

God still wants that new nation that will produce the fruit of the kingdom and be the witness of love and unity that will bring about the end of the age. This new nation is the prophetic fulfillment of Isaiah 49:6 which is promised in this age:

“It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”

It is the restoration of *this* nation in the last days that will have *efficacy* (the capacity to produce a desired effect) to fulfill the Great Commission.¹³ The desired effect is to be the universal witness of the kingdom, the demonstration that puts the evidence of God’s love and unity before *all* the nations so that the end of this age can come and Jesus can return to rule and reign on earth.¹⁴ When this foretaste of the undivided kingdom to come is seen on the earth, the words of that song can be changed to say:

*We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
And we know that our unity has finally been restored;
Because all men can see it by our love, by our love;
Yes, the whole world can see it by our love.* 🌿

¹ Jn 17:21-23

² Rom 8:24

³ Rom 5:5

⁴ Jn 13:34; 17:21

⁵ Jn 14:24

⁶ 1 Jn 2:4

⁷ Mt 21:43

⁸ Rom 5:5

⁹ 1 Jn 3:16

¹⁰ *U.S. News and World Report*, December 23, 2002; p.40

¹¹ *Answers for Today*, 1993, p.157

¹² Jn 15:18

¹³ Mt 28:18-20

¹⁴ Mt 24:14





*White bird, in a golden cage,
on a winter's day, in the rain.
White bird, in a golden cage, alone.
The leaves blow,
across the long black road,
To the darkened skies, in its rage.*



*But the white bird just sits in her cage, alone.
White bird must fly
Or she will die*

The haunting song “White Bird” sung by the musical group “It’s A Beautiful Day” in 1969 was sadly prophetic. Will its longing cry ever be realized?

WHITE

To a generation that was serious about changing the world, the image of that white bird is imprinted somewhere in the recesses of their minds. The imagery of that pure, fragile, innocent bird communicated soulfully to a raised consciousness, full of hope for a better world. The slow deep rhythm and the soft graceful lilt of the music captured the spirit of longing to be set free — free from darkness and death and the troubles strangling mankind.

Whatever the white bird was then or is now, in her heart she had the inspiration to fly. But she had no way to get out of the cage of this selfish human race and decadent world. An entire generation searched for the power and the authority to open that cage and let the bird fly. Despite the identity we took with that white bird and the heartfelt hope we had that she would fly, her destiny in the song was sadly prophetic.

You could say that bird was me; it was all my friends. She typified the whole Movement of the '60s and the Jesus Movement that came after it. Yes, all of us were trapped in the cage of human existence, waiting to die, longing to fly. The world in 1969 looked like a “winter’s day in the rain” as the threat of nuclear war in the face of the communism’s spread cast man’s future as uncertain as “the leaves [that] blow across the long black road to the darkened skies in its rage.” In the face of such darkness “the white bird just sits in her cage, alone.” In the end, the people in the '60s Movement were alone like everyone else, trapped in a plastic society that glittered like gold, but was nothing more than a golden cage that kept them from flying, from ever getting off the ground. The world was never changed into a new society established on the foundation of love.

Along came the Jesus Movement with her hopes of “radicalizing” Christianity. Like the white bird’s “dreams

BIRD

of the aspen trees, with their dying leaves, turning gold," so the dream of the Jesus Movement proved to be a mystical hope that never materialized. *"The white bird just sits in her cage, growing old."* Yes, the song is true: *"White bird must fly or she will die; white bird must fly or she will die."*

Thirty years of sunsets have come and gone and all the Jesus Freaks are back in the pews. Yes, *"the sunsets come, the sunsets go; the clouds pile high, the air moves slow... and the young bird's eyes do always know... she must fly, she must fly, she must fly."*

The white bird in that golden cage is the eternal hope that someday someone, no... some *movement* will break out and fly, bringing a true demonstration of love and of unity and of peace to the earth. Yes, the *"white bird must fly or she will die."* And if she dies, so will hope for all mankind.

The Messiah, the Son of God, promised to return to earth to usher in an age of peace on earth. But He will not come until the "white bird" flies and proves to the world that God sent His Son (John 17:20-23). Yes, the true movement must come — a people living by the love of God that has been poured out in their hearts. It must produce a nation that bears the fruit of the coming age — walking with one heart and one way, sharing everything they have together. Yes, it must come and it must get off the ground before the world is destroyed. The white bird must come out of her cage and be seen on the earth, flying, soaring in plain view for all the nations to observe. She must do it! Yes, the *"white bird must fly or she will die... white bird must fly or she will die... white bird must fly or she will die."* And if she dies, all mankind will be lost. 🌿

*White bird, dreams of the aspen trees,
with their dying leaves, turning gold.
But the white bird just sits in her cage, growing old.
White bird must fly or she will die.
White bird must fly or she will die.
The sunsets come, the sunsets go.
The clouds pile high,
the air moves slow.
And the young bird's eyes
do always know.
She must fly,
She must fly,
She must fly.*



*White bird, in a golden cage,
On a winter's day, in the rain.
White bird, in a golden cage alone.
White bird must fly or she will die.
White bird must fly or she will die.
White bird must fly or she will die.*

New Wineskin

The love of God that was poured out at Pentecost demanded of the disciples a total abandonment of their lives to the One who totally abandoned His life for them. This love created a community in Jerusalem, and it will always take a community to contain it.

Our Master told a parable about the days to come when the new wine of His Spirit would be poured into the hearts of a people. He made it clear that the new wine must be put into new wineskins, since the old wineskin (the religious system of Judaism) was old, dry, stiff, and brittle. It could not contain the active new wine.

"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough.'" (Luke 5:37-39)

Knowing that most would prefer the old wine to the new, Jesus did something miraculous at the wedding in Cana that was prophetic of what would happen when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost. After the old wine had run out, He turned water into new wine, which the master of the feast proclaimed to be better than the old wine.¹

Lessons from the First Century Church

The fresh revelation from God that Jesus Christ brought to Israel in the first century, and that He passed on to the apostles such as Peter and John, could not be contained within the religion of Judaism. This is why the Holy Spirit created a new home for Himself² on the Day of Pentecost – a new wineskin that could be filled with the new wine, the Spirit of love poured out into the hearts of the believers.³

The love of God that was poured out into their hearts at Pentecost demanded a total abandonment of their lives to the

One who totally abandoned His life for them. This is what their first love for Him was.⁴ This love created a community in Jerusalem and it would always take a community to contain it. As long as the believers maintained their first love, being filled with the Spirit (the new wine), the community flourished. Meeting the many demands of love kept their wineskin fresh and supple. This made it possible for them to continue to receive revelation from the Holy Spirit through the apostles' teachings. The purpose of this new wine filling the new wineskin was to establish a united twelve-tribed spiritual nation that would produce the fruit of the Kingdom.⁵ Isaiah prophesied that this twelve-tribed Israel would be restored to be a light to the nations and to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.⁶ Jesus told His disciples that when this gospel of the kingdom was proclaimed to all the nations as a living demonstration of His love and unity, the end of the age would come.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14)

Yet when Jesus spoke this, its fulfillment was over 1900 years away. We know this because the end of the age didn't come before the first church lost its first love and its lampstand was removed.⁷ It could no longer be the witness of Matthew 24:14. It was destroyed not from without, but from within.⁸ The vibrant life that had resulted from the new wine filling the new wineskin gradually became a divided institution, dried and cracked, rigid and brittle – an old wineskin unable to hold the new wine of revelation ever again. And once this first new wineskin became dry and

parched, the old wine began to taste better and better to them, even as it does to this day.⁹

The Jesus Movement — Something Old or Something New?

But in the late 1960s and early 1970s, thousands of dissatisfied young people left the stale traditions of organized religion, hoping to find the love of Jesus, a love that was real, that would not fail, that would not disappoint. The multitudes of young people in the Jesus Movement wanted something new – the new wine of a new wineskin.

But what is the fruit after 30 years? Haven't the harbingers of the Jesus Movement, Calvary Chapel, and its offshoot the Vineyard, led their followers through a revolving door, back to the same old form and traditions they left thirty years ago? They went from sitting on the floor in a circle playing guitars, worshipping outside the confines of church buildings, and ministering on beaches and in coffeehouses to sitting silently in the pews once again looking at the preacher and the back of everyone else's heads.

So was this Movement really a result of new wine being poured into new wineskins? If Jesus was truly revealing Himself to them, would He have led them to become just another denomi-

¹ Jn 2:3-10

² Jn 12:26

³ Rom 5:5

⁴ Eph 6:24; Rev 2:4

⁵ Mt 21:43

⁶ Isa 49:5-6; Acts 13:47

⁷ Rev 2:4

⁸ Dt 28:47-48; Rev 2:4-5; Heb 3:6

⁹ Lk 5:39

nation, as it seems Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard became so soon after they started in the '60s?

When the hippie movement of the '60s failed, the hippies went back to their old roots. They are now the established, successful ones in the mainstream of American business and society, having become the very thing they once hated. Just as the hippies found themselves turning into "hippie-crits," so the Jesus freaks became what they had first rejected — religious hypocrites.

Rebirth of a Nation — When Will It Happen?

Is it even possible that a new wineskin can be restored in this day to receive new wine from heaven? Can something old be re-born? What will it take? It will take something new — a people truly willing to do God's will (new wineskin) and the Holy Spirit (new wine). And how would anyone recognize this restoration if it happened? It would be evident by its fruit. It would produce the same life from the same essence as what was begun at Pentecost. It would remain soft and pliable, not become hard and crusty. We who write this paper believe that this restoration is taking place in our midst. It has been thirty years since we began to form and receive the new wine, and we are very encouraged to see our children taking on our hearts, being filled with that same new wine. A distinct culture is forming that fills us with hope.

Just as Jesus prophetically demonstrated at the wedding in Cana, the best wine will be poured into the new wineskins in the last days,¹⁰ and it will not fail. All who are not content with the flat religious ritual of the old wineskin will taste and see that the new wine is better.¹¹ The master of the feast tasted it before making a hasty judgment. In the same way, no one should make hasty judgments in favor of the old religion — the old comfortable religion



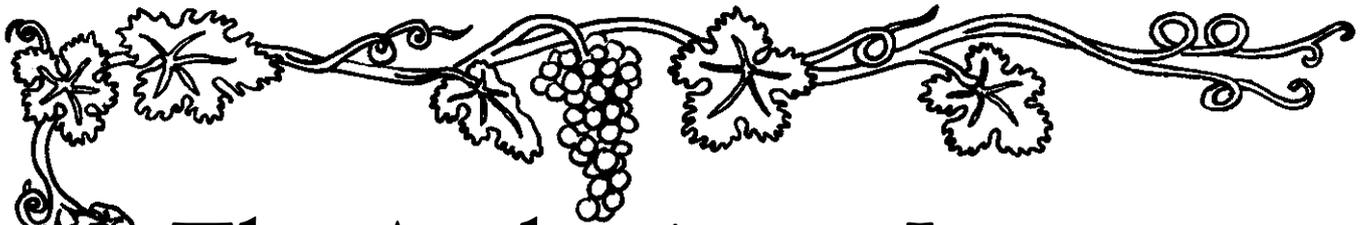
They went from sitting on the floor in a circle playing guitars, worshipping outside the confines of church buildings, and ministering on beaches and in coffeehouses to sitting silently in the pews once again looking at the preacher and the back of everyone else's heads.

of Judaism or Christianity. One should withhold judgment until the nature of the new is tested and made clear.¹² Only when the new wine in the new wineskin has had time to develop its own unique character can its worth be estimated. But in the last days this restoration will come about quickly — the new wine and wineskin will not grow old before it accomplishes its purpose.¹³

Most will continue to say the

old is better. But as this demonstration of the Kingdom becomes more visible and grows to full stature, there will be no valid reason for people to say the old is better, no room for the dogmatism that says that no wine is fit to drink until it is old. This is only a tradition of men. Old traditions will be left behind by those who thirst for the new wine. 🌿

¹⁰ Dan 2:28 ¹¹ Ps 34:8-10 ¹² Acts 5:38-39 ¹³ Rom 9:28



The Authority to Love

Revival! Reformation! Revolution! Everyone knows there is something wrong with modern Christianity. A wise person once said, "It doesn't take a spiritual person to see the problems." Many of those who have been able to recognize and define the problems have presumed that God endowed them with the needed faith and grace to lead the people out of confusion and into the true light. But if it is not truly a movement of God's Spirit, then it ultimately adds to the confusion and continues to devastate the souls of the sincere who truly want to know Him and do His will.

What does a movement of the Spirit look like? Is it something tangible, or just something that you know in your heart? Many have been deceived into thinking that they had the needed discernment to judge what is truly of the Spirit of God. If you trust your feelings you will surely be led astray. But Jesus said you will know the tree by its fruit.¹ So what kind of fruit should we be looking for?

What Kind of Movement Did Jesus Lead?

Jesus did not lead a movement to reform or revive the lifeless religious system of Judaism that He was born into. John the Baptist was out in the wilderness calling the sincere in Israel to repent and be washed of any connection

with that defunct religion.² Jesus went out to him and insisted that he baptize Him also. He was going *outside the camp*³ of the established religion of His day to begin His ministry. John watched the Dove (Spirit) come upon Jesus and heard the voice of God confirm, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."⁴ With this confirmation from His Father, Jesus was able to go forward with confidence and determination. He knew that His Father was sending Him to accomplish His will.

The life that Jesus shared with His disciples was very real and wonderful. They were together continually, sharing all that they had.⁵ Jesus diligently passed on the things He heard from His Father to the thirsty disciples.

He constantly encouraged them. And He corrected them when they needed it. He was very sensitive to their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. Jesus was a good shepherd to those who were with Him. He was laying a foundation for what God wanted to build on the Earth.

New Wine

Jesus said that new wine (*the Holy Spirit*) could never be contained in an old wineskin (*Judaism*). The Jews had long ago become set in their ways, losing their elasticity — their humility and willingness to hear. You can see that this was true by how the religious leaders hated the sparkling new wine of love and revelation that came forth from Jesus' life. Instead of recognizing their Messiah, they saw Him as

a dangerous cult leader and ultimately found a way to use the government to eliminate Him.

If Jesus were on the earth today, do you think that He would receive any better reception from the well-established Christian institutions of our day? Have they retained the elasticity and freshness of the new wineskin,

or have they become old and rigid — resistant to change? Where would God pour out the new wine of His Spirit today and how would you recognize it?

Authority to Love

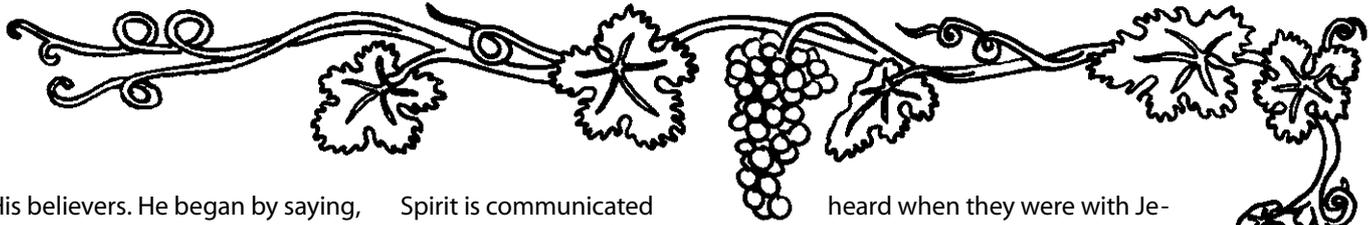
In John 17:20-23 Jesus prayed His famous prayer for the unity of

The life that Jesus shared with His disciples was very real and wonderful. They were together continually, sharing all that they had.



¹ Jn 7:15-20 ² Lk 3:9 ³ Heb 13:11-13 ⁴ Lk 3:22 ⁵ Jn 13:29





His believers. He began by saying, *"I do not pray on behalf of these (the apostles) alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word."* Faith has a Source (Author) and a channel (authority). In the same way that your body needs to maintain clear pathways for the signals coming from your head, so it is within the one Body of Christ. This is the ministry of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers. There is no life in the Body of Christ apart from these gifts being present and functioning according to God's Spirit.

Few realize that Jesus' so-called Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 was addressed specifically to the apostles. Jesus said that He had received all authority (from His Father) and He was delegating that authority to the apostles. He told them to make disciples, teaching them to obey all that He commanded them. In other words, *"You do with others, what I did with you."* Love them, teach them, care for them, encourage them — be a shepherd to them.

Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus instructed the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit would come upon them.⁶ He would empower them to carry out what He was sending them to do. The word "apostle" actually means "one sent forth; a messenger." These are the ones who have been given authority from God⁷ and are able to pass it on to others.⁸ This is how the

Spirit is communicated from one who has faith to one who is willing to do God's will.⁹ Paul (the apostle) made it clear in Romans 10:15 that one is not qualified to communicate this faith unless he is sent by someone whose authority had ultimately been given by God.¹⁰

It is very important for those who are looking for the movement of God's Spirit to understand that God works through delegated authority.¹¹ He finds a man who has the right heart to love Him and walk in His ways.¹²

Then He causes His authority to rest upon that man in order that he could lead others in the same way.¹³ His ultimate purpose is that He would have a Holy Nation of people who love Him with all of their hearts and walk in His ways and that they would work with Him to bring healing and restoration to all of creation.¹⁴

The Day of Pentecost

At the appointed time, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles who were obediently waiting in Jerusalem.¹⁵ They began to communicate passionately about what they had seen and

heard when they were with Jesus. They proclaimed His victory over death and the great mercy and forgiveness that was now available through His death and resurrection. They called people to repent – to abandon and for-

sake their old life and their sin and come with them to follow Jesus.¹⁶

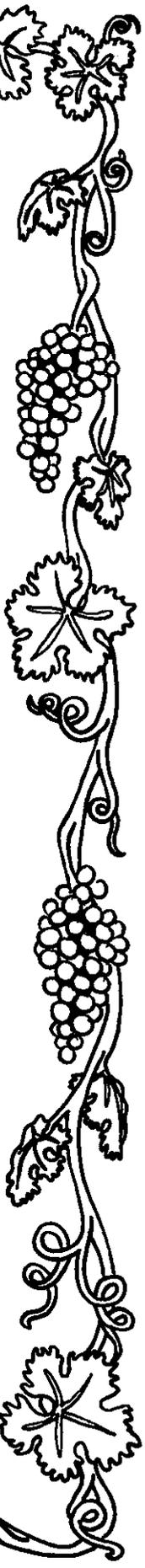
In Acts 2:41-45 you see the amazing result of what the Holy Spirit communicated through Peter and the other apostles:

"So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three

thousand souls. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need."

That was a very electrifying time! Everyone was so encouraged and thankful to be a part of this new life that

**"You do with others,
what I did with you."
Love them, teach them,
care for them,
encourage them,
be a shepherd
to them.**



⁶ Lk 24:49 ⁷ Rom 13:1-4; Rom 1:5; Heb 13:17 ⁸ Jn 13:20; 2 Tim 2:2 ⁹ Jn 7:17-18; Rom 10:14-17 ¹⁰ Mt 10:40 ¹¹ Jn 20:21; Ex 4:16 ¹² 2 Chr 16:9; Acts 13:22 ¹³ Gen 18:19; Rom 1:5 ¹⁴ 1 Pet 2:9-10; Rev 5:10 ¹⁵ Acts 2:1-4 ¹⁶ Acts 2:38-40





was emerging. It was alive and growing with the effervescence of the new wine that had been poured out in their hearts. They were learning more each day about God's ways and how to love each other and live together in peace. Abundant grace was upon them all, and day by day others were being added to them.¹⁷ This was to be the pattern, the blueprint of the life that would come forth in many places.¹⁸

What happened in Jerusalem 2000 years ago was a great movement of the Spirit of God. You can use the blueprint in Acts 2 and 4 as a standard to compare with other activity that people claim to be the moving of God's Spirit, and see whether it has produced the same results — the same good fruit. Does it bring people to the end of their own selfish lives and into a life of constant devotion to Jesus and to the apostles' teaching, sharing all things in common, and all the other things that made up the life of the early believers? Does it mirror the life that Jesus lived with His disciples, just as the life of the early believers did?

The Fall of the Early Communities

The life in the early communities flourished for a time, but then things began to break down. At the roots of it was the very issue of authority. The apostle John wrote to the communities that were going astray:

"... we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the

eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us — what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you may have fellowship with us (the apostles); and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 Jn 1:2-3)

To the later disciples who had never seen the Master, John felt that he had to make it clear that their fellowship with Jesus was only as real as their fellowship with the ones whom He had sent. They would never have even known the Master were it not for the message they heard from the ones who knew Him first! John would not have had to say these things unless this connection was breaking down in the communities. Consequently, the breakdown of authority led to a breakdown of love, which John went on to address in his letter.

Where there is authority, there is order. Where there is order, care can be expressed. Where there is an environment of order and care, love can make a home. This is the atmosphere that God's authority creates for His children to live in together. But the early disciples began to question the apostles' teachings and their authority.¹⁹ Just as Paul prophesied, they turned their attention to others who tickled their ears with teachings that appealed to their own selfish desires.²⁰

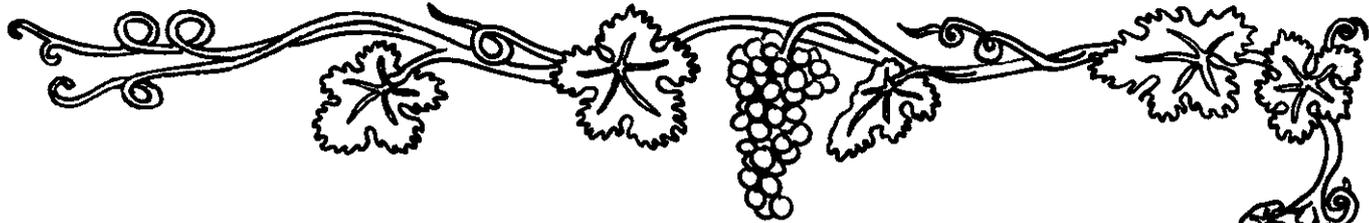
In Paul's letters he often warned them that they were in danger of losing their first love: *"I am jealous for you with a*

godly jealousy; for I [Paul] betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from pure and simple devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we (the apostles) have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received (from us), or a different gospel which you have not accepted (from us), you bear this beautifully." (2 Cor 11:2-4)

The Corinthian community was straying from the foundation that had been laid by Paul.²¹ In this you can see what ultimately led to the fall of the early church. Once they had stopped devoting themselves to obeying the apostles' teachings, everything else fell by the wayside, and they all began to do what was right in their own eyes. This is the essence of apostasy — to reject the former loyalty and devotion to the apostles and their teaching.

So here we are some 1900 years later, and it is obvious to most people that there is a lack of life and vitality in the modern church. It looks a lot more like the old wineskin of Judaism than it does the new wineskin of the vibrant community in Jerusalem. If you can understand these things, as Jesus did, you will know that you cannot expect God to pour out the new wine of His Spirit into the old wineskin of the fallen away church. It is going to take apostolic authority to call the sin-

¹⁷ Acts 2:46-47; Acts 4:32-37 ¹⁸ 1 Ths 2:14 ¹⁹ 2 Cor 13:5-10 ²⁰ 2 Tim 4:3 ²¹ 1 Cor 3:10-11



cere out so they can be washed and truly come into a community where God's love is expressed.

Though God continually speaks to the hearts of men through His creation, the prophetic voice of His Spirit has not been heard for a very long time. Many have claimed and continue to claim that they speak for Him. Over the last 1900 years there have been many supposed "movements of the Spirit." But the world has not seen the same fruit that came forth in Jerusalem so long ago, which would prove the goodness and genuineness of the tree.

The Jesus Movement

The Jesus Movement of the early '70s started out with a bang of enthusiasm and even sincerity in the hearts of many. But, what those who led the young people lacked was the authority from God to actually call people out of the old wineskin. They themselves were still trapped in that system. So all they could do was give the old wine a different flavor. They made Jesus a little more palatable to the hippies with folk music, casual worship, and free speech, along with the standard promises of forgiveness and happiness. It was really nothing new. It was just the same old wine in the same old wineskin.

Actually the Jesus Movement was an excellent example of the necessity of authority to bring about God's will on the Earth. If it had truly been from God, if the leaders had truly been under

His authority, then they would have been submitted to one another.²² They would have led all the believers into a life of love and unity where no one claimed that anything was his own, but all things would have become common property among them. On the contrary, the movement just made more Christians and more denominations within the divided house of Christianity.

A Pure Seed

In the midst of the Jesus Movement of the early '70s, God was able to find one man who had the right heart. All he wanted to do was love people and serve God with all of his strength, not seeking any glory for himself. Somehow a little seed of the life of those early communities was planted in his heart.²³ He hardly realized what had happened. He just set himself to tell everyone who would listen about the good news of Jesus' sacrifice, and more than anything he wanted to express it in his life by actually loving people.

Since that time this pure seed has been passed on to others. As we went along we began to understand that God had given us something new, and fresh, and alive. The old wineskin just

couldn't seem to deal with the fact that we love each other so much that we want to live together and share what we have. We began to realize that what we had was a lot more like the early communities than the old religious institutions of

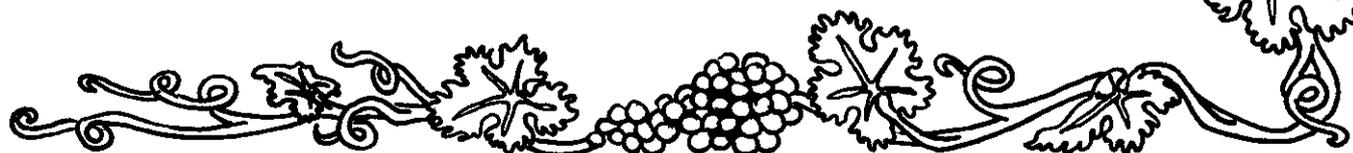
Christianity. The new wine that is being poured forth is causing us to continually grow in our revelation and our love for Jesus Christ and His people. This movement of the Holy Spirit is preparing the bride that Jesus is going to come back and claim as his own.²⁴

Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine. The steward at the wedding banquet was amazed at how much better the new wine was. He actually thought it was old wine, because everyone thinks that old wine is better.²⁵ The best wine will be poured into the new wineskins in the last days.²⁶ Like the steward at the wedding, you will have to taste the new wine to know that it is better.²⁷ Otherwise, you might just go on thinking the old is better, like everyone else. We warmly invite you to come and see what God is doing in these last days. 🍇

This movement of the Holy Spirit is preparing the bride that Jesus is going to come back and claim as his own.



²² Eph 5:21 ²³ Rom 9:29, NKJV ²⁴ Rev 19:7-8 ²⁵ Jn 2:3-10 ²⁶ Dan 2:28, 44 ²⁷ Ps 34:8





The Body and the Blood

Hippies wanted the Body without the Blood.

Christians want the Blood without the Body.

But Hippies could not have it without the Blood,
And Christians cannot have it without the Body...

As Hippies found out,
And Christians never learn.



No one can have Community without the Blood;
And no one can have the Blood without Community.

All who are forgiven live in Community;
Who knows what Community is except the ones who are forgiven?

It Takes a Community

my Illusive Dream



ir Thomas More had his tongue in his cheek when he wrote about Utopia. He was kidding when he described his “perfect” island where everything was ideal. The very name, *utopia*, means “no place” — the nonexistent land of man’s dreams. But no one told us that utopia wasn’t real. Even if they had, we wouldn’t have believed



them because deep inside we all wanted that idealistic life to be real. Somewhere along the line we decided that utopia must be possible. So with all ardor and enthusiasm, we made our plans, dreamed our dreams, and set out to find a place for our own free society. We could not find an island like in More’s 16th century dream, but we settled for something a little bit less — Haight Ashbury!

My Elusive Dream

What magic these two words had in our minds! A society of free young spirits founded on love, peace, and freedom, where equality and fraternity could just be! From far and near we grabbed our backpacks and left home. We dropped out of school and hit the road.

By air, foot, bikes, or hitching, our 20th century exodus had begun. Our Moses was Timothy Leary. Our Promised Land was San Francisco across the Golden Gate.

When we arrived, we were accepted. No one asked any questions. No one made any demands. No one was watching. No one had to prove anything. We were just ourselves and everyone was happy. We were really living our dreams. We could come and go as we pleased. We could wear what we pleased. There were no deadlines, no grades, no projects, no points to score.

We did not care about money, no one was trying to impress, material things didn't matter. Only people mattered. Easy alliances were formed. Love was free. No demands. No commitment. Old taboos were ignored, barriers knocked down and spirits were high. No one was killing anybody, and people were beautiful.

It happened in Monterey, June 1967. The first Rock festival was born, giving birth to Woodstock, Isle of Wight, Altamont,

Atlanta, and an endless procession ever since! All day and night the music rocked and rolled on & on. We listened with remarkable fortitude for days. At the festivals we could sense what seemed to be the endless love we had always hoped for. In fact, a revolution of love was beginning. We could feel it everywhere. The world would never be the same. We were determined to make this hope, this life, this togetherness last forever.

Joan Baez called it togetherness, and she was right. Men and women throughout all generations have been looking for that bond of love that would make them one. The desire for an end to estrangement and hostility runs deep in the human soul. The toughest nut will crack under the right pressure and the hardest heart will yield to love, understanding, and



a little kindness. The most estranged and antagonistic person will respond to interest and concern, once his suspi-

cions have been allayed. This togetherness is what we wanted and what we thought we had found.

This was the life of the flower children, the beautiful people. If we needed anything, we would just ask someone. If they had it, they would share it. If they didn't, no one thought any less of them. We panhandled to meet pressing needs and sold our art to the curious. But, it was the curious from plastic mainstream America that began to undermine our utopia. Tourists arrived by the thousands. They looked at us "hippies" the way kids look at giant pandas in the zoo.

"Look, a real live hippie."

"He's got nice eyes."

"He stinks. Let's buy some beads."

These sensation-seeking middle-class American tourists with their pudgy stomachs swamped the serenity and devoured the distinctiveness of our youthful dream on Haight Street. As time went on, we flower children become more and more the center of attention and a phenomenon the media quickly exploited. Things started getting crazy as more and more people came to San Francisco and the good vibes produced by Orange Sunshine began to give way to paranoia and an increased fear of "The Man." The Buffalo Springfield captured this sense with these words from their famous song, *For What It's Worth*...

Paranoia strikes deep.

Into your life it will creep.

It starts when you're always afraid.

Step out of line the man comes and takes you away.

You better stop now. What's that sound?

Everybody look what's going down!

Old-fashioned greed began to show its ugly head among us, and we began to insist on our rights and our own individualities. It didn't take long for many of us to see what was coming. Heroin and speed dealers moved into the Haight, the riot squad invaded our district, beating anyone they could

find, and the utopian state sank in a pool of blood when the killing started. The peace we thought was ours began slipping away as an elusive dream. Like everywhere else and everyone else, we, the “love people” and “peace people,” were seeing in ourselves the same rotten seed we thought we’d left back home.

But where could we go and what could we do now? Go back home? No! We had made a few mistakes, but the dream was still attainable. It became clear that the peace we wanted couldn’t be found in the city. So we headed for the hills. Alternative people

USA! We would do it! There is hope! We will make it! There is true love and true peace! A guru will show us the way! Which one should we follow? Who offers the best vibrations? Everybody seemed to have their own answer, their own separate trip.

As we went down endless roads wherever our own trips led us, there was an increasing sadness growing in our hearts, a sadness brought about because most of our dreams and visions proved to be unattainable. The highs went away and our experiments with community failed.

Then, we began to ask the question, “What is the use of anything at all?” The reality of people living in peace and unity as God intended is what we were looking for. But we needed to know how to find it. Our generation is going mad because we can’t find it after thirty years of looking for it. We hated authority because the authority we observed growing up was filled with hypocrisy, prejudice, and glory seeking. We had our fill of the kind of

authority that says, “Don’t do as I do, but do as I say.” What was needed was good authority to make it happen! We needed leaders who could lead us by their example and who wouldn’t compromise.



We wanted to conquer the world with love and bring the healing balm of peace to this earth, but there was no foundation, no blueprint to bring our vision into a lasting demonstration. Our love failed.

Some people turned to Jesus in search of this foundation of love. The Jesus of the Jesus People seemed hip enough, but didn’t have the power to bring about the life either. We turned on the TV and heard Christian preachers talking about how we should live — something we knew that they knew nothing about. A life of love and unity is what they promised, but we knew we were not going to get it because those making the promises weren’t doing it either. Someone said, “A student will be like his teacher when he is

fully trained.” So all we could see was another form of Christianity.

So what’s the use getting our hopes up in one more empty sermon? Who wants to claim to see like the blind teachers leading us? “If the blind lead the blind, they will both end up in the ditch.” Can their Jesus save others when he can’t save them? And if they are just saved from hell but not saved from this wicked society, who wants that salvation anyway? We aren’t blind! A plastic Jesus who makes his plastic converts comfortable in a plastic society headed for destruction is what we detested and despised. The utter failure of this “salvation” was the very cause of our rebellion.

Their failure to produce the “utopia” they spoke of is what drove us to Haight Ashbury in the first place!

So now where are we to look and in what place can we find a hope that does not disappoint us? Where is the real love of God that can fill our hearts?¹ Preachers or teachers who promise us that we can know the Source of love and the Author of peace and the meaning of Truth, but are divided among themselves, cannot communicate love, peace, and unity to anyone’s conscience. Mere mental concepts are all they can offer since they have a life filled with the same old selfishness and greed that we took to Haight Ashbury.

So where do we go from here? I’m so tired of chasing after rainbows only to find a false light at the end of my journey. How can I ever find my elusive dream? 🌻

¹ Romans 5:5

Crisis of Authority

An Interview with Robert Houriet

The '60s peace movement and the '70s Jesus movement both faded away. The basic issues? Lack of true authority, inner divisions, weak spiritual foundations, and broken relationships. Looking back over the wreckage, Robert offers his insight as to why these counter-cultures never got off the ground.

When we interviewed Robert Houriet a few years ago he was a "for real" old hippie living on an organic farm in Hardwick, Vermont. Like thousands in the '60s, the Movement kindled a spark of hope in Robert and he gave his whole being to make it happen. His ideals and vision led him to quit his job as an "upwardly-mobile" city editor of a newspaper in Philadelphia to go to the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago. From there he traveled around the country visiting various communes which he described in his book, *Getting Back Together*. Later he settled in Vermont and helped establish Frog Run Farm, a commune in East Charleston. The following is a small segment of our interview in which he describes one of the principle reasons the '60s Movement (and the Jesus Movement, for that matter) never got off the ground.

Q: Could you say that [the Movement] was a counter-culture in the sense of being against the culture of America, but that it really had no true basis as a nation itself, as far as having a government, a body politic?

RH: We spoke in terms of the Woodstock Nation, but even though it existed in name, it wasn't a nation in the centralist sense of the word nation. It was a very loose-knit concept of very decentralized anarchist groups.

Q: Was the Woodstock Nation more like a vision of what was in people's hearts?

RH: Well, I think it was both in their heads and their hearts, and maybe the connection was lacking. I think there was a defect in the vision from the start, because it was a vision based on opposition. We were defining ourselves by what we were not. We were not a centralized government, therefore we were a de-centralized, loosely-organized government. It was a vision in the LSD sense of the word, in that you could have a vision of something and yet be unable to attain it in reality. The vision may have had, for many people, a spiritual reality, but they were unable to connect it with day-to-day life.

Somehow the distance between actuality and vision became wider and wider. The contradictions were so painful that it was impossible to maintain that tension without becoming schizophrenic.

Q: Why do you think the vision and the actual day-to-day practice never could come together? What was the flaw? Was it because there was no true spiritual authority?

RH: People found it difficult to submit themselves to the authority of a group or the consensus of a group because they were very much American individualists. And some of us were very cantankerous personalities! So the anarchists' philosophy of "everyone do their own thing" was unworkable in terms of what will actually work in community.

Q: So, when did the leadership start to break down?

RH: Around 1970, the leadership of the counter-culture was repudiated. It happened for two reasons: first, the men failed on their own account. I believe that more than what a lot of radicals believe, like Jerry Rubin, who says it was the women's movement that messed up the whole counter-culture. Men failed on their own account. They didn't need the women to help them.

Secondly, there were situations in which women, seeing the failure of men, took matters into their own hands. They had their own revolution and took the leadership upon themselves, or attempted to. The true spirit of that revolution opposed many things: opposed authority, opposed the capitalist system, opposed the war and after the war ended, opposed men. So then it became doubly difficult to have men become leaders, because if you failed, the women wouldn't let you forget it. This really led to the breakdown of a lot of the groups. But I won't say that the counter-culture broke down because of the women's movement. It wasn't a separate movement, it was related. It was all part of one thing. This issue has taken radical movements round and round

for a long time. "Why did they do this to us?" It is something that is very difficult for old radical men to figure out.

Q: It is really an interesting point because you said earlier how the whole thing came down to relationships — people couldn't get along — and this is really the essence of it: relationships between men and women.

RH: Men's relationship to each other, to the society; women seeing that failure, and seeing men's misuse of their power — these guys weren't any better than the fascists in some respects. (I am just quoting.)

Q: Once the men were deposed as leaders, was there any leadership after that point? Was there a head after that point?

RH: No.

Q: Why do you think that?

RH: Well, because that was the ideology of the women's movement. We are all leaders.

Q: There are no followers. For there ever to be any kind of restoration of ideals of the Movement, there's going to have to be a restoration of a right relationship between men and women.

RH: That's it.

Q: Since there has been no true authority to get the Movement off the ground, do you think that over time they have had to compromise with the system of their parents that they rejected, say thirty years ago? Has there been an element of compromise that has forced these people back in that direction, out of necessity or survival?

RH: Oh yes. There has been, both on an economic level and in the fact that they got older, had children, and had to compromise. When you become a parent, you tend to revert to patterns that you inherited. Then your parents die and you psychologically absorb their roles. That is part of the life process.

Q: So doesn't that bring you to the conclusion that there has got to be authority?

RH: You're right on! Authority and leadership. There was a time in the counter-culture when there were leaders. Not the best leaders, but there were leaders and they were respected and they were followed, but they abused their leadership and they were the worst kind of egotistic, arrogant, male, macho leaders that you could imagine. But they functioned as a leadership. That was demolished.

The anti-authoritarianism that turned against the war, turned against the leaders when the leaders failed. They abused their leadership; they abused their power. They misused their power. I can be more specific, but I don't need to be. A lot of it was sexual abuse and power. As a result, you had leaderless groups.

But then relationships are very difficult to work out. You just go around in circles. People today have just given up. There can't be leaders. As soon as someone tries to lead, they get shot down, or you have to use such indirect means to manipulate the

group or lead the group without them feeling like they're being led or swayed.

Q: You have to be self-accommodating?

RH: Or you finally say, "Okay, I'll be accommo-

dating and diplomatic. Then in ten years we'll have planted one more acre of carrots." So what! There is a distrust of leadership. I don't know what to do about that. Leaders themselves must do something about it. They must be firmly rooted in reality.

Q: So, it comes down to what has been missing all along — true, genuine authority. Good authority!

RH: Some greater reality is what they have to believe in. You can't be a father or a leader unless you had a father, or have a father you believe in. And we can't believe our own fathers because they are human.

Q: Is the idea or possibility of finding a true father just too impossible or too incredible to actually consider?

RH: It is a matter of faith.

Q: What if those in the counter-culture saw the reality of true fathers, true leaders? What if they actually saw a demonstration of it? Do you think that once again there could be an awakening in a whole generation of people?

RH: I don't know. It's hard for me to speak about how a whole generation of people would react to that kind of demonstration. I'm afraid at this point that they may not see it if it happened, or they would dismiss it as something else because they are so suspicious and cynical, not only about groups, but about all authority... I think that the masses of people aren't going to see the example and change overnight. I think they have to reach the bottom and come up. 🌿

"I believe that we probably have lost the culture war... I am very concerned, as I go around the country and speak and talk to [Christian] young people, when I find how much of the decadent culture they have absorbed without even understanding that they are a part of it. And while I'm not suggesting that we all become Amish or move to Idaho, I do think that we have to look at what we can do to separate ourselves from this hostile culture. What steps can we take to make sure that we and our children are not infected? **We need some sort of quarantine.**"

—Paul M. Weyrich
Letter on the Moral Minority in America,
February 16, 1999

"WE NEED SOME SORT OF QUARANTINE"



Coming from one of the foremost conservative minds behind the "Religious Right" in America for the past several decades, Paul Weyrich's admission of defeat in the war to stem the tide of moral degradation in America should have been alarming to his fellow Christians. He was actually calling for Christians to separate themselves from this "hostile

culture" lest they become infected. Who has heeded his call?

Four years later, Stephen Bates, in his shocking exposé, *The Jesus Market*,¹ documents the almost total accommodation of that "hostile culture" within American Christianity, under the banner of being "all things to all men." For example, the 4-billion-dollar-per-year

Christian merchandise market includes “Christian” punk rock, hip-hop, and heavy metal music, by skinhead musicians in spandex and Goth makeup, complete with body piercings, cross tongue studs, and tattoos. As a result, Christians today can fully enjoy almost anything the world has to offer without setting foot outside the camp of Christianity, in contempt of the Apostle John’s words:

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world.” (1 John 2:15-16)

Our hearts go out to the sincere ones in that camp who, like righteous Lot of old, are oppressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked. The souls of the righteous ones are tormented by all that they see and hear all around them, by those who indulge their flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.² But, you may object, that was speaking about his life in Sodom. *Exactly!* It is just as the Apostle Paul described the plight of Israel in his day:

“And as Isaiah said before: ‘Unless the LORD of hosts had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah.’” (Romans 9:29)

Paul knew that there would have been no hope for his countrymen if God had not given them a seed³ to re-establish the life of God on the earth. There would have been nothing left but the spiritual Sodom and Gomorrah old Israel had become:

“Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.” (Jeremiah 23:14)

But Paul did not know that his very words could be echoed over 1900 years later in exactly the same way, for the church has fallen just as old Israel fell, and has become just like Sodom and Gomorrah. So unless there is a seed of that same pure life of God that sprung up in the

first century to re-establish it on the earth today, then there is no hope for mankind.

What would that life look like in the midst of today’s decadent culture?

It would look exactly as it did in the first century, for the same pure seed would sprout into the same kind of tree, bearing the same kind of fruit. That seed would

produce communities of disciples just as described in the book of Acts,⁴ where the love of God that has been poured into their hearts⁵ compels them to lay down their lives for one another,⁶ where everyone is cared for, where there are no rich or poor, and where they are all devoted to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. This wholehearted devotion preserves their set-apart distinctness, guarding them from the love of the world and its defilement.⁷ They live together, work together, worship together, teach their children together, and maintain a separate, holy, and clean life,⁸ which is a light to all who live around them.⁹ They are truly in the world, but not of it.¹⁰

This is the life that we who write this paper are actually striving to live today, in communities all over the world, just as we have lived for the past thirty years. The pure seed of God’s love was planted in us and continues to grow and bear the fruit of love. There is no divorce here. Our children are growing up pure and secure. We all work together for the common good, submitting to one another out of reverence for Messiah. We smile at the future. But we don’t expect you to just take our word for it. We invite you to come and see for yourself. 🌿

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¹ *The Weekly Standard*, December 16, 2002 (Volume 8, Number 14, pp. 24-28), www.weeklystandard.com

² 2 Pet 2:7-10 ³ Jn 12:24 ⁴ Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35 ⁵ Rom 5:5 ⁶ Jn 13:34-35; 1 Jn 3:14,16,17

⁷ 1 Jn 2:15-16 ⁸ 2 Cor 6:14-18 ⁹ 1 Pet 2:12 ¹⁰ Jn 17:14-15

WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

IF YOU CANNOT EXPECT A PERSON TO DO ANY WORKS IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED SAVED, THEN WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM A PERSON WHO IS SUPPOSED TO BE A CHRISTIAN?



If you don't expect a person to do any "works" in order to be considered a "saved" person, then what kind of behavior can you expect of one who is supposed to be a Christian? **Soooo...**
A young man goes down at the Crusade and gets "saved." Then a counselor advises him to find a Bible-believing church to attend. Before he gets too far, the new convert **pops** the question...

Well, no. You don't have to, but it would be good for you to know God's word. And of course you need to pray every day.

PRAY? That sounds too mystical to me. I don't feel any need to pray at this point. I'm just not into it.

Well, now, I can only advise you what would be best for your new life in Christ. But no one can force you. Remember, your salvation is a free gift, not according to works, lest any man should boast.

OH WELL, AT LEAST THAT PART IS GOOD NEWS. Anyway, thanks for the free gift. I'm glad to be saved now. But I'm gonna be late for the movie if I don't get going...

Movie? Is it a Christian movie? You know, there are many bad movies that Christians should not go to.

Did you say she is already saved???

She's dressed rather, uh... immodestly for a Crusade, isn't she?

Nah, I think it's fine. She always dresses that way at school. So why should she look different at church? Why? Do you have something against it?

The Bible says women should be modest.

So are you saying she is not saved just because she dresses like all the other girls? Sounds a little divisive to me. She's not going to like you talking like that!

Hi Honey!! I JUST GOT SAVED!!

But this counselor here is questioning **your** salvation because of the way you're dressed!

Now, I did not say that.

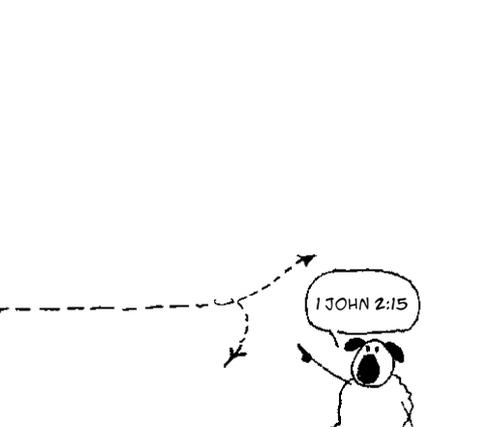
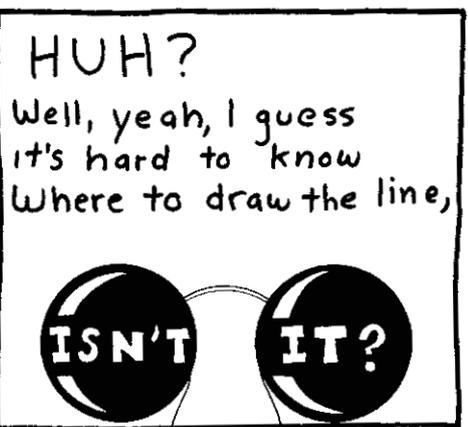
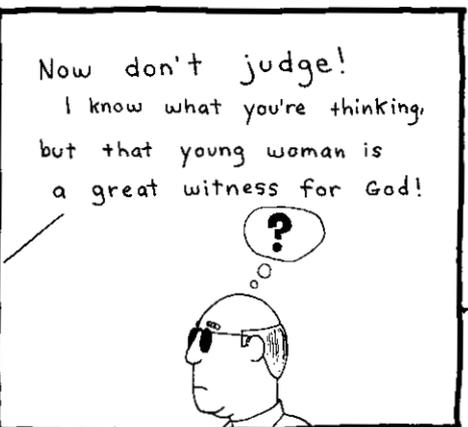
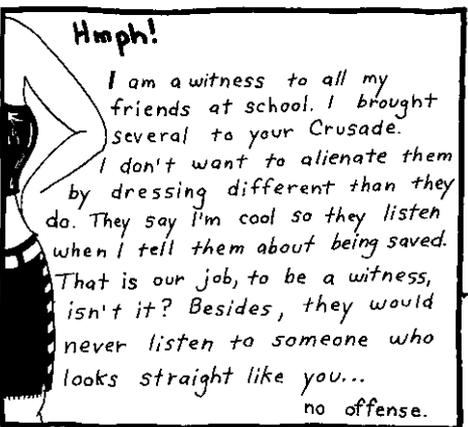
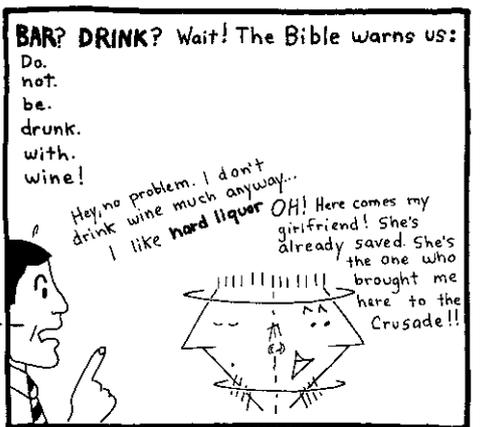
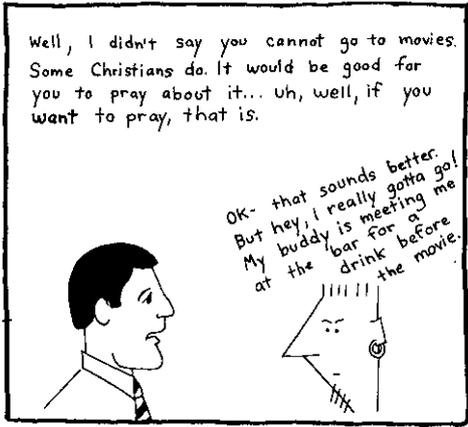
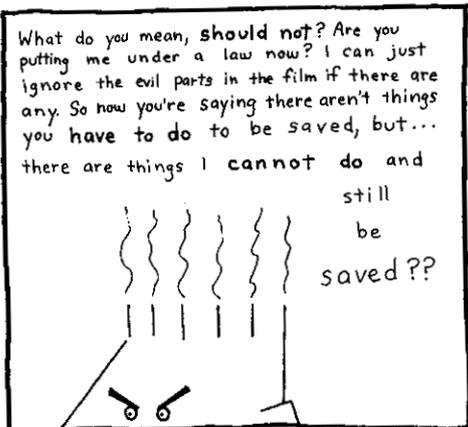
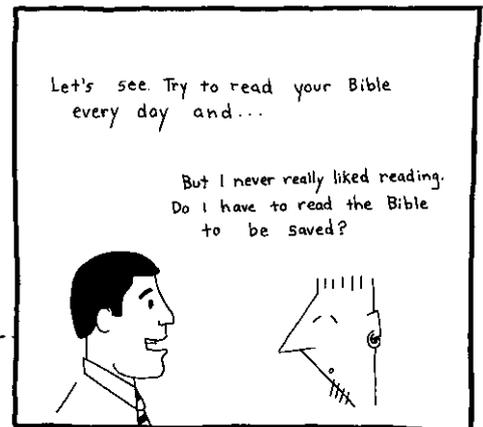
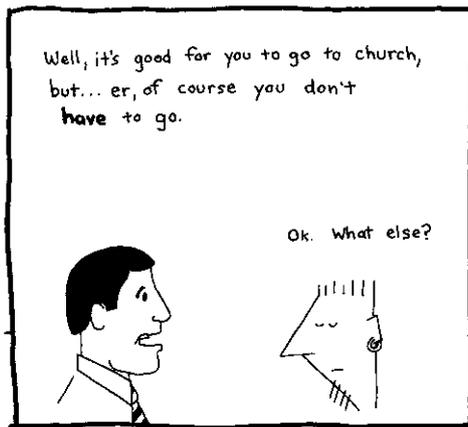
Smiling confidently, he watches the two walk off, thinking "Ah, just saved and already going off to be a witness. This has been such a good Crusade."

*** 1 MORE SOUL SAVED!! ***

The Scorekeeper approaches...

By the look on your face I guess we should add two more to our "saved-count" for the Crusade. They look like a happy couple.

No, just one. I got the young man. I pressed him for a decision just like I was taught in Evangelism class. It was right out of the textbook. Just like clockwork! So mark me down for him. But the girl? She's already saved...



Can a Clone Receive Life from Heaven?

What ever happened to the thousands of coffeehouses, cafes, communities, and ministries of the Jesus Movement? Why did they die?

The Raelians forced a moral issue into the political realm – the cloning of human beings. But they refused to offer the simple proof that would verify that a human clone had been born. So it now seems that, in spite of their many claims, a normal child had been conceived the “old fashioned” way. Yet many people still wonder, “What would a clone be like? Would it be, well... human? What, exactly, in the spiritual realm, would have occurred?”

The answers may be closer to home – much more within our experience – than we realize. The evidence of cloning, of course, is that the DNA is the same as that of the donor parent (*not* the normal mix of two parents), bearing the same age and characteristics as the donor’s cells. It is not something new from the Giver of life.

So, when something seems to be a “new thing” on the earth, such as the Jesus Movement, it may turn out to be nothing but a clone... not a fresh new beginning with life from above. The proof is plain to see. They tried producing true spiritual life on their own, but had only cloned more of what they’d once despised. They couldn’t produce new life for they only continued in a new generation *exactly* what came before. It was *reformation*, not *restoration*.

On a smaller scale they merely repeated the failed experiment of the Protestant Reformation, which produced national churches just as com-

promised with the State and just as riddled with corruption as the Church of Rome from which they had sprung.

No one went back to the beginning, to the obedience of the faith that produced the first communities, just as they were in Jerusalem.¹ To bring about such a restoration requires the Spirit from heaven meeting the willingness to do His will on the earth.²

The communities of the Jesus Movement flourished for a few years on the enthusiasm and zeal of the many young people who believed they were touching the very life of the first-century church. They opened their Bibles and loved what they saw. They wanted to be just like those brothers and sisters of long ago who had “turned the world upside down” and who “shared all things in common.”³ They wanted to be totally devoted and sold out. Community was the test and proof of the genuineness of their faith, even of the claims of the gospel itself:

“The idea of living together was to dedicate your entire life, every aspect, to following Jesus Christ. It was 100 percent commitment, a way that seemed designed to put Christianity’s truth-claims to the test of real life.”⁴

Yet somehow nearly all of the thousands of Jesus Movement communities, cafés, coffeehouses, and ministries fell apart. Their accelerating decline virtually wiped the American scene clean of their presence in just a few short years. Their moral corrup-

tion exceeded anything they had seen “swept under the rug” in their parents’ churches. Sexual sin, drug use, alcohol abuse, greed, vanity, lust for power — ultimately it was *self* that ended these attempts at selfless love and outreach. Self and community had a collision and community died.

So what did the hearts of all those zealous young people receive? Was it the pure spiritual seed from heaven giving birth to communities of love and care, according to the pattern of Acts 2 and 4? Or was it only the spiritual DNA of the church next door surrounded by its white picket fence, producing only clones that ultimately bore the same go-to-church-on-Sunday likeness of their donors?

“For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. (Luke 6:44) 🌿



¹ Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; Rom 1:5; 10:16-17; 1 Ths 2:14

² The life of the German and Swiss Protestants was no different than in their prior Catholicism before Luther burst onto the scene, bearing in a disguised form the same essence – the same genetic code – as the Roman Catholic Church. Their coming

reunification is proof of this. There is less and less to keep them apart, merely increasingly meaningless cultural differences in an increasingly multicultural Europe.

³ Acts 17:6, KJV and Acts 2:42

⁴ Dawn Herrin of Jesus People USA

Miracle One, Miracle Two

The baby in Mary's womb was completely human. And the Divine Spirit in Him, united with His human spirit, was completely divine. The unseen Creator finally was able to perfectly express Himself through a visible human being — the Son of God. This was miracle one...



"As Isaiah said before: 'Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah.'" (Romans 9:29)

The greatest miracle in human history was the incarnation. God came to earth and dwelt in human flesh. The second greatest, you could say, is that we today would believe in Him.

When Adam fell, something happened that we can barely understand. Something deep in human nature changed. Did Adam's sin somehow affect his genetic pattern, turning on or off a "switch," as scientists call it, in his DNA? Maybe so. All we know is that every person born of Adam's seed has inherited a tendency toward sin. No matter how much good a person chooses to do he will at some point fail. Out of his deep self-concern, he will do things against his conscience¹ and hurtful to others. And just as God warned Adam in the garden, death is the inevitable result.

CONTINUED

¹ The *conscience* is not, as some psychologists claim, standards imposed on the individual by society. It is not even the ideals that a person sets for himself. It is the *vice-regent* of God, the part of the human soul that rules human thought and behavior for the Creator. The conscience acts as the moral judge of our thoughts and actions, letting us know whether we are conforming to natural law — the instinctive knowledge of good and evil. ² Every cell in the human body has 46 chromosomes (23 pairs) which determine the makeup of that person's body. An unfertilized egg cell, or ovum, has only 23 single chromosomes. It needs the other 23, normally supplied by the male sperm cell, to begin growth of a new human being. The Holy Spirit supplied the 23 chromosomes of unfallen humanity, and the Savior of the world was conceived.

Miracle One, Miracle Two

Human beings were not created to be selfish, though. We were created in the image of God. Nothing in our original makeup was inclined toward sin. But once the first man sinned, that image of God in us was marred. For thousands of years people who wanted to do right said in their hearts, "Oh, if only Adam hadn't fallen!" For thousands of years, God longed to rescue such people.

He was waiting for just the right time. He had a plan. He had somehow preserved the essence of unfallen man — a seed. How did He do it? We don't know. But when the right time came, He found someone willing to do His will — an Israelite virgin named Miriam (or *Mary*, as she is often called). His Spirit came upon her, and His power overshadowed her, and the miracle happened. The genetic pattern, or seed, that God had preserved was placed in the ovum in Miriam's womb. The chromosomes were completed² and an unfallen human being was conceived. And at that very moment divine nature – the One that John's gospel calls the Word – came to dwell in human flesh.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

This new man was not some weird half-god, half-man like the perverted stories in Greek mythology. The baby in Miriam's womb was completely human. And the Divine Spirit in Him, united with His human spirit, was completely divine. The unseen Creator finally was able to perfectly express Himself through a visible human being — the Son of God. It was just as He said to Pontius Pilate at His trial:

For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. (John 18:37)

The man Yahshua of Nazareth (commonly called Jesus) was born: he began as a tiny embryo, developed in the womb, and was delivered one night in a stable. The Word of God, who had always existed,

came into the world. And the Word incarnate in the man Yahshua, as one united person, bore witness to the truth about what God was really like.³

For thirty years or so He lived quietly among other human beings in a small village. Strangely, they didn't see God in Him. Maybe they weren't looking for the right things. Maybe they wanted to see something great and powerful. Maybe they wanted to hear something awesome. But just as the prophet Isaiah foretold, He didn't have a stately or attractive appearance. He wasn't successful or influential. He was a man of pain and sorrow, familiar with weakness and grief. He hurt over the suffering and the injustice He saw everywhere. Compassion ran deep in Him.

He didn't express sadness and depression, though. He expressed love — a love so perfect that He gave His life as a ransom for us. He bore the penalty for sin that we deserved, just as Isaiah prophesied about Him. And Isaiah also said why He did it:

When you make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed. He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (Isaiah 53:10)

What the Savior of mankind was looking for when He bore our sins on the cross was His *seed*. Isaiah's prophecy was not talking about descendants from our Master's physical seed. It was, however, speaking of a "new humanity" — those who would be cleansed by His sacrifice so that the Holy Spirit could dwell in them. By the Spirit's work, they would be conformed to their Savior's image. They would resemble Him by doing what He did.

This is a very important point. He told the Jewish leaders who wanted to kill Him that if they were Abraham's seed, they would do the deeds of Abraham.⁴ In the same way the "seed" of the Savior would be found doing *His* deeds. "As I have loved you," He said in John 13:34-35, "so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

If there was no pure human seed on earth after the fall of man, why should there be a pure spiritual "seed" on the earth after the fall of the Church?

³ It is important to understand that Jesus "came in the flesh" (1 John 4:2; Hebrews 4:15; 5:7-9). Like any other nursing babe or young child, He was limited in His understanding of who He was. It was only as He grew in wisdom and stature that He gained revelation of His identity and His purpose. His understanding grew slowly and steadily until His baptism. Then, when He heard those words from on high, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" He was finally able to embark upon His mission of salvation with unshakable certainty (Matthew 3:16-17). This is the same certainty He promised to His disciples after He rose from the dead (Acts 1:8). ⁴ John 8:39

Those first disciples did love each other. The evidence is recorded in the book of Acts. They placed no priority higher than devotion to their Savior's commands and care for one another.⁵ God's purpose prospered in their hands as they spread that life of love from one town to another. But something happened to the early Church, something which can be summed up in two words and explained in a few more. They fell.

The story of the Church in Ephesus is typical of them all. In the book of Revelation, John described their condition. They had done many good deeds, had labored hard and endured much. They were not tolerating wicked people in their midst, and they had exposed false apostles. But they had forgotten the most important thing. It was the very thing Paul had emphasized in his letter to the Ephesians a generation before – to love the Savior with an undying, incorruptible love.⁶

I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. (Revelation 2:4-5)

They had fallen, but if they acted quickly, they could still repent. They could return to doing the deeds of love the disciples had done at first.⁷ Sad to say, they did not, as even a casual glance at Church history shows. They left love behind them and moved on to other things, like arguing over doctrine. When the deeds of love were gone, their light no longer shone before men. They were not the light of the world.⁸ Instead the consciences of most were dirty⁹ and The Holy Spirit was grieved within them.¹⁰ So the expressions of His love and oneness¹¹ died off in every place.¹² One by one, the lampstands were taken away. They were cut off and God no longer acknowledged them. Most didn't even notice. Life went on.

Since they were no longer devoted to love, those who joined them did so for other reasons. The spiri-

tual "seed" was not passed on. New "converts" did not receive the Divine Spirit of love. After a while, as the thousands of sincere ones who had been sealed with the Holy Spirit died off, there were hardly any left who actually had the Holy Spirit living inside them. When the last one died, the Holy Spirit had nowhere to live on the earth. He returned to where He came from.

And so we have had almost 2000 years of fallen religion. The spiritual "seed" being passed on from generation to generation was not the same pure, unfallen "seed" that brought about the first Church. It wasn't the same seed because they weren't doing the same deeds.¹³ Does that seem like a harsh and unfair statement? Does Church history actually show the abundant fruit of being led by the Spirit? And didn't the Son of God tell us that we would know a tree by its fruit?

Consider the doctrinal quarrels of the second and third centuries, the politically forced "unity" of the fourth century, and the resulting persecution of dissenters in all the centuries to follow? What about the unrestrained butchering, rape, and robbery of the Crusades and the inhuman tortures of the Inquisition? What about the gross immoralities and political intrigues of the popes and bishops prior to the Reformation era? What about the religious wars that resulted from the Reformation? What about the continued persecution of dissenters by both Catholicism and Protestantism, until modern secular states took away their power to do so? What about the multiplied quarrels and denominational splits that have happened in the last few centuries, once politically enforced "unity" was removed? Aren't these things just the deeds of the flesh described by Galatians 5:19-20? Can those who do such things inherit the kingdom of God?

Some admit that Christian leaders have fallen into sin down through the years. But on the whole, they say, the rank-and-file believers have always sincerely

*If God waited 4000
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the church?*

⁵ Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35 ⁶ Ephesians 6:24; Paul even warned the Corinthians that those who ceased to love their Savior would be cut off and under a curse (1 Corinthians 16:22; John 14:15; John 13:34-35). ⁷ Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35 ⁸ Matthew 5:14-16 ⁹ Which is what "stained garments" in Revelations 3:4 signifies. ¹⁰ Revelation 3:19-20 ¹¹ John 13:35 and 17:23 ¹² 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Corinthians 1:2; and Malachi 1:11 ¹³ John 8:39

Miracle One, Miracle Two

followed Jesus, just like today.¹⁴ There are two problems with this kind of thinking, though. One is that, according to the Son of God, a student is not above his teacher.¹⁵ Instead, everyone, when fully trained, will be just like his teacher. If the leaders and teachers were corrupt, you know that their congregations were corrupt as well. This is what the Word of God Himself said.

The second problem is assuming that Christians today are, on the whole, true disciples who are being a light to the world. But that's not the way it is, according to Barna Research, a Christian polling organization. Not only are "born-again" Christians *not* devoted to loving as our Master loved, they are not even morally superior to their non-Christian neighbors.¹⁶ One Barna Project Director admitted, "We have found that in a lot of ways Christians are not living different lives than non-Christians, when we look at their behavior."¹⁷ It's hard for Christians to understand because it seems contrary to what people think would happen."¹⁸ (See the article *We Need Some Sort of Quarantine* on page 28 of Part Two.)

So we face the apparent reality that the Holy Spirit, the pure spiritual "seed" of the early Church, has not been on the earth for nearly 2000 years. This is hard to understand. As the Barna Project Director said, it seems contrary to what people think would happen. But if there was no pure human seed on earth after the fall of man, why should there be a pure spiritual "seed" on the earth after the fall of the Church? And if God waited 4000 years for the right time to redeem humanity, why wouldn't He wait 2000 years for the right time to restore the Church?

When the right time came for redemption, He needed someone to work through. He found one person, Miriam, who was completely surrendered to His will. She said, "I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever He wants."¹⁹ For this reason, He was free to bring about the great miracle of the incarnation.

We live now in a very crucial time. Now, more than ever, there is a need for the Holy Spirit, the pure "seed" of the early Church, to dwell in human beings

who are set apart for His purpose. The world needs to see the same deeds of love that the first disciples were devoted to. The light of the world must be restored, because the world is getting darker.²⁰ Forces are at work to bring together all the governments of the world, just as it says in Revelation 17:12-13. Other forces are bringing together all the *fallen* religions, as in Revelation 18:2, 14:8, and 17:5. And government and religion are also being brought together, as in Revelation 17:1-2, 18 and 18:3,9.

We believe that the miracle of restoration is happening. At just the right time, our Father found a man who was ready and willing to surrender completely to Him and do His will — a man who said in his heart, "All I want to do is love." He entrusted that man with His Holy Spirit — the pure spiritual seed that had been preserved for just that time. That man went out and found others who were willing to do God's will. When he told them what was in his heart about following the Son of God and loving like He loved, they knew that what he was talking about was from God.²¹

When they received that message of love and entrusted themselves completely to the Savior, they received that same Spirit. Soon they found themselves living in a Community, just as the first disciples had in Acts, because His love had been poured out into their hearts.²² They didn't plan on living that way. All they wanted to do was just love one another. But when they started loving, they started sharing, and Community was the result. Community is always the result of loving as He loved.²³ It is the place of refuge for those who hate their life in this world and want to serve Jesus Christ where He is.²⁴

Thirty years later, loving as our Master loved is still all we want to do. We wish that everyone could share this life of love with us. Given all the division and confusion and corruption and compromise in Christian history, the life we are experiencing is a miracle. It still hardly seems possible that our Father would once again entrust us human beings with the pure life of His Holy Spirit. It must be the greatest miracle in history — or, at least, the second greatest. 🌿

¹⁴ Ephesians 6:24 ¹⁵ Luke 6:40 ¹⁶ Really, though, what else can lonely individuals do? They nearly always sink to the lowest common denominator of the evil society they live in. That is why at Pentecost, Peter called people out of the "wicked and perverse generation." He brought them into a place of fellowship: the "Community of the Redeemed." As Acts 2:40-46 describes, those who were saved lived an entirely new life. They were completely focused on what the apostles taught. They shared everything with one another, right down to every meal they ate. They became a new, set-apart nation, as Peter later called them in 1 Peter 2:9-10. *Together* they were the *city* on a hill and light to the world that the Master talked about in Matthew 5:14. Not one of them could have been that city on his own. As Isaiah 49:6 points out, they could only be that light together, as a holy, set-apart nation. Such a holy nation is the only place where the set-apart, Holy Spirit can dwell. ¹⁷ Otherwise known as *deeds* (John 8:39; 13:34-35). ¹⁸ "Born-Again Christians No More Immune to Divorce Than Others, Says Author," — CNSNews.com report, January 21, 2002. ¹⁹ Luke 1:38 (New Living Translation) ²⁰ Luke 1:79 ²¹ John 7:17 ²² Romans 5:5 ²³ John 13:34-35 ²⁴ John 12:25-26

OUR STORY

A New Hineskin

All Gene wanted was to surrender his life to God and do whatever he had been created for. He only wanted to love. This was the cry of his heart.

California, 1971. The Jesus Movement was in full swing. There was an excitement there such as Gene had never seen in all of his religious childhood. It was easy to get involved — praising the Lord, witnessing on the streets, and passing out Jesus tracts to the endless stream of hitchhikers traveling up and down the coast of California. He volunteered to work in a rescue mission and developed a special burden for this radical generation of youth. It wasn't long before he realized that most people in the movement did not have a deep conviction in their heart, but were just caught up in the impulsive enthusiasm of the times. He observed that even the sincere ones did not seem to have the power to overcome the sins of their former life. Despite the popular movement's outward zeal, which Gene so admired, he could see that their fire was only a fading ember. Already the seemingly radical changes in people's lives were beginning to wear off, and they began settling

back into the status quo of rote¹ religion.

In the midst of these circumstances, walking alone on the California beach, Gene came face to face with the truth of John 15:5: *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."* If his life was to mean anything, if he was going to actually do what he had been created for, it could only come about through obeying and utterly depending on his Savior — and teaching others to do the same. Eventually Gene left California and headed east to the Rocky Mountains. He had heard there were lots of "flower children" disillusioned with the "Woodstock Nation" and people who had dropped out of traditional lifestyles who were living in the mountains trying to find peace. Perhaps there he would find people who wanted to hear the good news of the salvation he had found in Jesus, the Savior of the world.

¹rote — routine or repetition carried out mechanically or unthinkingly.

A Radical Atheist

In a small, unspoiled mountain village in Wyoming lived a young woman named Marsha. Unlike Gene, she had been raised knowing nothing about the Bible and could count on one hand the times she had even been in a church building. Her college philosophy courses, combined with the religious hypocrisy she had seen all her life in southern California, had convinced her there couldn't be a God. She couldn't believe the Christians who said they had a "personal relationship with God" when their lives were full of the same ambitions, pleasures, pursuits, and mundane daily routines as her own. She knew in her heart that if there really were a God and someone actually knew Him, that person would be radically different!

The emptiness of college and the shallow relationships there had caused her to drop out and move to that small village, looking for love and peace and a life that was closer to nature. There she had found others who seemed to want the same thing — to really live and be real. But before long her friends traded in their ideals for a subtle conformity. Their passion for justice and love started gradually being replaced by the same old greed and selfishness they had all tried to leave behind.

When Gene showed up in the village, she admired his passion but was offended at his Bible. Yet when he read to her about the love of this man called Jesus and the high standard of justice His words called for, she was intrigued. If people actually did what this man said, it would result in a society

that was everything Marsha had always dreamed of. She barraged Gene with challenging questions: Why had she never seen these words lived out? Why did Christians do little more than dress up in fancy clothes and meet in elaborate buildings, even in countries racked with poverty? For these questions Gene had no

She knew in her heart that if there really were a God and someone actually knew Him, that person would be radically different!

answers. All he knew was that the Son of God had saved him, had filled his heart with a love for others, and would do the same for anyone who sincerely called out to Him. It wasn't the Savior's fault that people weren't obeying His words.

Marsha couldn't ignore the truth of what she was hearing. Amazingly, this confirmed atheist put her trust in the Son of God, for she had become convinced that He was mankind's only hope. Soon afterwards, she and Gene returned to California and were married — joined in a covenant that has withstood the test of time for over three decades.

The Last Place on Earth

Even though Gene had a new life and was married to a woman who shared his convictions, he knew that many things from his old life in Tennessee were unresolved. And he could not be devoted to the purpose God had called him to until his conscience was completely clear. Facing his past in Chattanooga was painful for Gene, and the south was the last place on earth that Marsha wanted to be, steeped as she was

in the stereotypical prejudices of her California upbringing. But their lives no longer belonged to themselves. They were living for their Savior now, so off they went to Gene's hometown.

They both got jobs there, and soon all the debts were paid and (as much as possible) all the wrongs were righted. During this time they attended services at several of the churches in the area where their zeal for the Lord attracted much attention. They also opened their home to anyone who wanted to come and learn about their Savior.

Many young people came to meetings in their living room just to sing and talk about Jesus. Because of the things they heard and the love they experienced there, many teenagers quit taking drugs. People hailed their ministry as "a great work." Every Sunday they would bring a truckload of young people to the different churches they attended. Their little group was popular, and everyone was happy.

The Light Brigade

The little brown house on Ringgold Road where Gene and Marsha lived became known as *The Light House*, and the little band of believers began sharing their faith through an "underground" paper called *The Light Brigade Freepaper*. They were excited about experiencing love, a clean conscience, and a new life. Whenever there was a concert or other public gathering, the Light Brigade would be there handing out papers.

The response was amazing. Teenagers showed up at all hours of the day and night. Some had

THE PEOPLE AT THE LIGHT BRIGADE WANT YOU TO KNOW...

nowhere else to go and needed a place to stay. But how would Gene and Marsha have time to care for these people if they continued working their regular jobs?

Unwilling to turn away anyone sincere, they were in need of a bigger house.

But how would they make ends meet? Asking for donations was out of the question. The Bible taught them to do honest work with their own hands to have something to share with those in need.² That's just what they wanted to do — work together and share everything they had with each other.

Thus was born *The Yellow Deli* restaurant. They did yard work to get a few dollars together and rented a small building. After a couple of months of renovation and a coat of bright yellow paint, the cozy little sandwich shop was ready to open. It was a place where they could work for a living and still be together, learning all about their Savior and His teachings. Anyone who came in to get a meal could

also get a glimpse of the new life they had found — the result of being forgiven and having the Holy Spirit living inside. On the menu they printed, “We serve the fruit of the Spirit. Why not ask?”

People loved to come in and talk and sit for hours in this restaurant. It was a peaceful place, not full

home *The Vine House*.

They still attended services at various churches, but problems were beginning to surface. There were murmurings in the congregations about the “hippies” and black people invading their respectable gatherings. The young disciples were starting to ask difficult questions, too. They wondered how the people they went to church with could be so wealthy when there were so many poor people around. And why did they act so cold and distant? Hadn't Gene told them that Christians were called to live a life of selfless love for their neighbor?

The Super Bowl

One Sunday it all came to a head.

The church they were attending cancelled their evening service because the Super Bowl was going to be on TV. Even though the preacher had many good things to say in his sermons, it didn't seem to make much difference in the lives of the people. Their priorities seemed to be like the ones Gene had given up when he was saved.

From that day on, the little band of disciples stopped attending services. Instead they just went to a nearby park on Sunday mornings to sing and worship. After all, the Bible never said there had to be a preacher in a pulpit and everyone else listening quietly in pews. On the contrary, the Bible taught that



of the usual tense atmosphere of a typical sandwich shop. The local papers did big full-color stories about them, giving glowing reports of their work and their menu.

For a reasonable price they were able to find a big house in need of much repair, which they fixed up and began living in. It just

happened to be on “Vine Street.”

The name reminded Gene of the Bible verse

he had come to know so well: “I am the vine, you are the branches... apart from Me you can do nothing,” so they called their new

The Yellow Deli

² Eph 4:28

The Vine Christian Community

From that time on opponents rose up from the ranks of the religious against our little band of disciples. No longer were we just a nice little ministry to young people that made up for how the churches were failing to reach the youth. Now we had become an independent entity, *The Vine Christian Community*. We weren't asking the churches for donations, teachings, seminary training, or approval. We were paying our own

way and raising up our own leaders. People who hadn't wanted us at their churches in the

we tried to explain that according to the Bible we were just doing what was normal for believers, it only made matters worse. "You're saying that you're the only ones!" was the most common response. Lies and slanderous rumors began to surface about us. Suddenly we weren't so popular anymore.

All this time, however, our numbers were growing. We had to buy another house to accommodate all the people who came to live and work with us. And when a disciple from a nearby town wanted a *Yellow Deli* back where he had come from, we moved people there, got a house, and found a building for the restaurant. Then came more houses and more delis. Within four or five years' time we were running seven delis and occupied a dozen large houses in Chattanooga and the surrounding area. And we still handled all of our assets as we had at first — voluntarily sharing all that we had.

And so it went. Often because of difficult circumstances, and always at great personal cost, disciples were sent out to establish communities. But that, after all, was the foundation we had been on from the beginning: meeting the pressing need, giving out of what sustained us, doing whatever love demanded. We hadn't sat down and planned out how to

spread our beliefs or our lifestyle. We hadn't anticipated becoming more than what we started in Tennessee. Nevertheless, by 1990,



The Vine House in 1975

everyone should bring something to say, or a song to sing.³

That choice was very significant. When we stopped "going to church" and started *being* the church something wonderful began to happen. We began discovering who we were, and what God wanted to have happen on the earth. Verses in the Bible that we hadn't really noticed before began to stand out. With excitement we discovered that the disciples in the first century lived just as we were living. Acts 2:44 said, "All who believed were together and had all things in common." And Acts 4:32 was even clearer: "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had."

When we stopped "going to church" and started being the church something wonderful began to happen.



Early gatherings in Warner Park

first place were now offended that we had stopped coming. We didn't really understand what was going on and tried to make peace, but found all our efforts futile. When

³ 1 Cor 14:26



The Peacemaker - "We know the way, we'll bring you home."

communities had been established in four other countries, several were going in the New England area, and one in the Midwest. By the year 2000, communities had begun in several other countries, as well as in many other parts of the United States.⁴

Dry Bones

Just as we had never intended to become a worldwide movement, we had also never imagined ourselves to be a part of the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. But over the years it gradually became clear that a restoration was taking place in our midst, and that we were living at a very significant time in history.

In the 1970s we knew from our heart and our experience that there was more to following the Savior than going to church. As we tried to pursue our desire to live a life pleasing to our Savior, we began to see things in the Bible that confirmed us. The accounts we read of the first-century church portrayed people who lived a radical life of self-sacrificing love for one another and were distinctly different from the

society around them. It was all too obvious that such a life was missing from the Christian Churches of the twentieth century.

The reason was fairly obvious, too.

There was no radical difference between churchgoers and non-churchgoers because there was no authoritative message being proclaimed to tell people what God wanted them

Gradually it dawned on us what the first century church had been — not just a religion, but a nation. That nation had been known as the "Commonwealth of Israel."

to do. Jesus' love for His Father caused Him to obey His Father's word. He, in turn called His disciples to the same love. He



Dancing is an important aspect of our culture

went before them and was their example. His message called them to abandon their fishing nets

and tax booths and to give away their personal possessions. He commanded them to sever their ties with any family members who opposed their devotion to the cause. The apostle Paul had even renounced his training as a Biblical scholar in order to know this Jesus whom his colleagues despised. But Christianity did not preach such "hard sayings." Instead, it has intellectually dissected the words of Messiah and rationalized away the need to obey them.

It wasn't hard for us to see why that authoritative message was missing in modern times. Someone would have to consistently live that life of self-sacrifice and care himself, because of his love for Jesus, before he would have the authority to call others to abandon everything to follow Him. Thus, a major focus for us in the 1970s was learning to be obedient to the message we had received.

During the 1980s we continued to seek in the Bible for the foundation of the early church to find our identity. Gradually it dawned on us what the first Church had been — not just a religion, but a nation.⁵ That nation had been known as the *Commonwealth of Israel*.⁶ It had been made up of priests (each one a representative of God on earth) and had possessed its own culture. Piece by piece, the puzzle began to take shape. There had been a radical separation between the Church and the world in the first century and there had been

⁴ See the back cover for addresses of some of our communities, or our web site for a complete list. ⁵ 1 Pet 2:9 ⁶ Eph 2:12

a very good reason for it. The nations of the world functioned on the basis of Natural Law — the things that all men knew in their consciences to be true and right⁷ — but the priesthood had a higher law and greater accountability.

As we studied the history and prophecies of the Old Testament, passages from the New Testament became much clearer. Living according to Natural Law was not bad, and God had an eternal reward for all who struggled to do right (see *What About the Heathen?* page 60), but good morals alone could not accomplish the purpose of God on the earth. There had to be a holy nation that proved their love for Messiah before He could return to the earth to establish His kingdom with them. There would have to be a people separate from the nations of the world who would live their lives obeying His commands. Matthew 24:14 and 21:43 were very clear on this point.

By the close of the 1980s, though, it became obvious that this holy nation would not even be able



At our Common Ground Cafés we continue to serve “the fruit of the Spirit”

to exist on the earth apart from the influence of righteous men in the governments of the nations — men who would uphold freedom

We felt a growing urgency to let people know about the good, clean life our Savior had given us.

of religion and other basic human rights.

As we entered the 1990s we began gathering every morning and evening to pray for the

rulers of the nations in which we dwelt.⁸ At the same time, our message became much more sharply focused. We gained more understanding about the ways in which society was violating the Natural Law — to the point of calling evil good and good evil. It was becoming obvious that the time-honored ideals of the hard-working man, the submissive wife, and respectful children were under attack in the world around us. Men were striving for positions where they could make the most money with the least sweat possible. Women were demanding at least a 50-50 partnership where there was no acknowledged head. Children were increasingly being left to themselves to choose their own course and form their own values. The concept of family was being re-defined to the point that homosexual partnerships were being given the same legal status as marriage in some places.

We felt a growing urgency to let people know about the good,

⁷ Rom 2:14-15 ⁸ 1 Tim 2:1-8



Our “Peacemaker Medical” first-aid team goes to many major events

clean life our Savior had given us. In addition to passing out literature at public events and backpacking in pairs across the countryside to share our message, we established a toll-free number and later a website where people with questions could find answers. We continued to print our freepapers, calling our main publication *The Twelve Tribes Freepaper*.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, various Biblical prophecies stood out to us. Isaiah 49:6 spoke of the *“raising up of the tribes of Jacob to be a light to the nations*



We see apprenticeship as a vital link between the generations

so that salvation could reach to the ends of the earth.” It was becoming clear that salvation reaching the ends of the earth (which Matthew 24:14 said must happen in order for Messiah to return and bring about the end of the age) depended on a nation composed of twelve tribes. These tribes, we came to understand, would not be the natural descendants of Jacob, but a spiritual Commonwealth of Israel⁹ — twelve self-governing tribes. Each tribe would be composed of the disciples

in a geographical area, living a common life together that would be a light to the people around them. It would be restored gradually, like the vision of dry bones in Ezekiel 37, member by member becoming united together and fleshed out

The challenge is to rely on the Spirit of Love, and not on our own natural abilities, so that we will not fall prey to the pride, selfish desires, and compromise that have caused every other movement of the last two millennia to fail.

into a host of communities — the resurrection of a spiritual nation whose hope had dried up at the end of the first century.

We realized that this was our future, if we proved worthy of it, but many movements have come and gone in the last nineteen centuries, and none have fully recaptured the fervor of the first-century disciples and spread it to the ends of the earth.

Always there have been selfish motives, factions, corruption, and compromise. Never has there been a people such as the prophetic dream Daniel¹⁰ describes — a “stone kingdom” made up of

people hewn from the mountain of the world “without human hands.” Attempts at restoration have always involved fleshly human effort in forms such as political alliances between church and state, the use of military force, and persuasive propaganda. But the Stone Kingdom of Daniel’s prophecy can only be established through love, bonding people together by a deep affection based on the sacrifices they have made for each other.

And so we have reached a critical point. There are communities being raised up in twelve geographical areas by responsible people who have been disciples for decades. Their children, for the most part, are building this nation with their parents. A rich culture is emerging in our midst. We have a clear vision for the future. But we face a supreme test. Will we continue to allow the new wine of the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts and change our lives? We will if we remain true to our Master’s words in John 15:5 — *“Apart from Me you can do nothing.”* The challenge is to rely on the Spirit of Love, and not on our own natural abilities, so that we will not fall prey to the pride, selfish desires, and compromise that have caused every other movement of the last two millennia to fail. Everything, quite literally everything, depends on this. And with this vision we press on, for the love of Messiah compels us.¹¹ 🌿



Our family keeps growing...

⁹ Eph 2:12 ¹⁰ Dan 2:31-45

¹¹ 2 Cor 5:14-15

Who We Are

We want to give you a glimpse of who the bride of Messiah is, according to the Scriptures, and of her great purpose, both in this age and for all eternity, for that is where we find our identity.

An Unlikely Beginning

One day Jesus went up on a mountainside in Galilee and looked with compassion at the multitudes of people who flocked to Him everywhere He went. They were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. When He found a suitable place and sat down, His disciples gathered around Him and He began to teach them.

They themselves were a rag-tag bunch — a few fishermen, a tax collector, a political activist... no one of great significance. Yet the Master looked them square in the eyes and told them:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

“Us? Is He talking about us? The light of the world? A city? Us?”

Yes, He was talking about *them*, and those who would receive them,¹ and the communities full of wholehearted disciples that would result from them forsaking their old lives for His sake and the Gospel’s sake. There would be many “cities” set on hills, shedding light for the world around them to see.

You see, the pronouns “you” and “your” in that passage are *plural*, not *singular*.² He

was speaking of them as a people, not as independent individuals. The light would emanate from the *city* and their common *works*. Even that word, *works*, is interesting. It means one’s *employment*, *an enterprise or undertaking*, not just some isolated good deeds. It is the effect of one’s life, or in this context, the *common enterprise* of the holy ones in their holy cities (communities). Their light would shine from its lampstand as long as it remained in its place.³

The Law and the Prophets

The Master did not say this to His disciples lightly or as mere poetry, but because this *enterprise* of theirs was to be the fulfillment of the prophetic word spoken of Him,⁴ and by extension, of *them* as His Body on earth. He would say many such things to them in the days ahead that would sometimes leave them bewildered. He wanted them to know who they were becoming, to be filled with vision about the great purpose for their lives, even if they didn’t understand it all at first. Later they would understand, and they would write from their understanding of His words and the words of the Prophets as He had taught them.⁵ For *everything* the Master said and did was to bring about the fulfillment of what was in His Father’s heart as expressed in the Law and the Prophets:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” (Matthew 5:17-18)

Heaven and earth have not yet passed away,⁶ so clearly *all* has not been accomplished. Contrary to the opinions of many, Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection did not fulfill *all* that is in the Law and the Prophets. It remains for His Body on earth — His bride,⁷ His suitable helper⁸ — to fulfill all things that remain to be fulfilled.⁹ He cannot return until she does.¹⁰

So we want to give you a glimpse of who

¹ Jn 13:20; Mt 10:40; Lk 10:16; Jn 17:20

² Just as in 1 Pet 2:12

³ Rev 2:5

⁴ Lk 2:32

⁵ Lk 24:27

⁶ Rev 21:1

⁷ Eph 5:23-32

⁸ Gen 2:18

⁹ Rom 8:4

¹⁰ Heb 10:13; Rev 19:7-8; 2 Pet 3:12

the bride of Messiah is, according to the Scriptures, and of her great purpose, both in this age and for all eternity, for that is where we find our identity. And no one can reasonably claim to be included in His bride (which is the true Body of Messiah) who is not becoming who she is and doing what she does. So with the same awe and wonder as those first disciples had as they learned who they were, not yet having fully attained to it, we write of who we are, according to the Scriptures...

His People Israel

"A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." (Luke 2:32)

We are the Israel of God,¹¹ the sons of God¹² who are being conformed to the image of the firstborn Son¹³ in this present age. As our Master is, so also are we in this world.¹⁴ We are the very embodiment of Him who is in heaven.¹⁵ We are, in His place, the Servant Israel who fulfills Isaiah's prophecy, becoming the light to the Gentiles,¹⁶ taking or literally being His salvation to the ends of the earth.

God is in the process of making for Himself an eternal dwelling place in us.¹⁷ This dwelling place is the twelve tribes of Israel, the bride and wife-to-be of the Lamb.¹⁸ God, who is Spirit, wants to make Himself visible in a body, a human body¹⁹ — not just one, but as many as can be sons of God. God needs to be seen in a human body — a many-membered Body²⁰ which is in complete unity²¹ and total coordination under the Head.²²

This is why Isaiah called us *sought out, wanted, necessary*.²³ Contrary to Calvinist doctrine, God actually needs redeemed human beings in order to accomplish His eternal purpose. We are essential and absolutely necessary to form His Body, His Holy Temple through whom He will rule the universe of men in the ages to come.

The Universe

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body,²⁴ the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. (Ephesians 4:10)

"All things" includes the entire universe. What does it mean to be the fullness of Him, the Godhead, who fills the universe in His many sons who are just like His first-born Son?²⁵

Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the

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dwelling place of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God." (Revelation 21:2-3)

This passage is speaking of the eternal age that follows the millennial reign of Messiah on the earth, and the Last Judgment.²⁶ The "men" with whom God dwells in the eternal age are those who have been raised from the first death at the Last Judgment and have been judged not worthy of the second death.²⁷ They will live a second and eternal life instead, and God will dwell with them. How can He dwell with them? *In His dwelling place*, which is the bride of Messiah, the wife

¹¹ Gal 6:16

¹² Gal 3:26; Rom 8:19; 1 Jn 3:2

¹³ Rom 8:29

¹⁴ 1 Jn 4:17; Jn 14:12

¹⁵ 1 Jn 4:15-17; Jn 14:20,23; Jn 17:23

¹⁶ Isa 49:3-6; Mt 5:17

¹⁷ Eph 2:21-22

¹⁸ Rev 21:2-3,9-12

¹⁹ Eph 1:22-23; 2:12,19-22

²⁰ Eph 5:30; 1 Cor 12:12,27

²¹ 1 Cor 1:10; Jn 17:23

²² Col 2:19

²³ Isa 62:12

²⁴ As in Eph 2:21-22;

Rev 21:3; Eph 3:21

²⁵ Eph 1:23; Rom 8:29; 1 Jn 3:2

²⁶ Rev 20:6-15

²⁷ For more on this subject, see the article *What About the Heathen* on page 60

²⁸ Rev 21:9,12

of the Lamb,²⁸ the very body of the God-head.²⁹

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. (Revelation 21:4)

Those who have been raised from the agonies of the first death and judged worthy of life will need healing, and their tears will

Those who have been raised from the agonies of the first death and judged worthy of life will need healing, and their tears will be wiped away by the Lamb's wife, in whom God dwells, who has the same compassion as Messiah.

be wiped away by the Lamb's wife in whom God dwells, who has the same compassion as Messiah.³⁰ *Reign* in Revelation 22:5 means exactly that. The nations will need to be taught how to live in the eternal age. They will be dependent on us, just as Adam was made to be dependent on God. God makes them dependent upon His sons³¹ in whom He dwells. The nations of the eternal age will walk by the light of those who were the light in this age.³² All nations will serve and obey them,³³ the corporate Body of God.

God's Eternal Dwelling Place

God is Spirit,³⁴ therefore humans are unable to see Him unless He dwells in humanity. Redeemed humanity will reign over restored humanity.³⁵ The One who humbled Himself will then, with His many brothers who are like Him,³⁶ ascend to the oversight of the universe.³⁷ He who is the body of God now has His many brothers who are the corporate body of God. This is the "perfect man" of Ephesians 4:11-16, which is now in the making.

The dwelling place of God³⁸ is now in the process of being fitted together. The chief cornerstone is the support for the whole building. It is the foundation or basic element in the whole building.³⁹ The chief cornerstone is our Master, and we are His servants,⁴⁰ the living stones of 1 Peter 2:5. By the grace of apostleship,⁴¹ the stones are being placed and adjusted until they fit each other perfectly, making an eternal dwelling place for the Godhead to dwell in bodily form, in order to bring peace and order to the whole human family in the far reaches of the universe.

The whole universe will be qualitatively changed,⁴² with eternal planets and stars for the immortal humans who will occupy them all — the men⁴³ of the nations who were worthy of a second life will now be God's people, and He will be their God through us, His temple or body, which houses His Spirit.⁴⁴

The Increase of His Government

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase⁴⁵ of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

There will be no end to the increase of His government, which is His bride, His wife in the eternal age.⁴⁶ She will be the nucleus through which the promise is fulfilled that Abraham's descendants will be like the sands of the oceans...⁴⁷ As Psalm 102 prophesies,

"Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.

²⁹ Rev 21:3

³⁰ Rev 21:4; 22:2; 1 Jn 3:2-3

³¹ Heb 2:10-12

³² Rev 21:23-26

³³ Dan 7:27, RSV, NEV, ESV, NJB

³⁴ Jn 4:24

³⁵ Rev 22:5; Dan 7:27, RSV, NEV, ESV

³⁶ Rom 8:29; 1 Jn 3:2-3; Mt 25:34-40

³⁷ Phil 2:9-11; Col 1:18

³⁸ Eph 2:22

³⁹ 1 Cor 3:10; Eph 2:20; Ps 118:22; Mt 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7

⁴⁰ Jn 12:26; Rev 22:3-5

⁴¹ Rom 1:5; Eph 4:11,12,16; 1 Cor 3:10

⁴² Heb 1:12; Ps 102:26

⁴³ The Greek word for *men* here includes both genders.

⁴⁴ Rev 21:2,3,9,12,24; 22:2,5

⁴⁵ *Increase* is from a Hebrew word that means to become many, to multiply; the "increase of His government" is not only qualitative, but also quantitative throughout eternity.

⁴⁶ Rev 21:9-12

⁴⁷ Gen 22:17; 32:12; Isa 48:19

The children of Your servants will continue, and their descendants will be established before You." (Psalm 102:25-28)

The countless descendants, perpetually propagated through the spiritual union of Messiah and His wife,⁴⁸ will rule over restored humanity who fill up the earth and then colonize the "changed" heavens made habitable for them. Is there any end to the universe? Thus, as Paul prophesied, the glory of Messiah will reach to all generations, forever and ever.⁴⁹ There can be no end to the increase of His rulers who will reign forever and ever,⁵⁰ since there will be no end to the propagation of the restored men of the nations who can now go on to fulfill Genesis 1:26-28.

How will this happen? As Paul said, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love Him."⁵¹ Yet we know where this glorious future begins: right here in this present age. First God must have a *people who love Him* enough to obey Him, who do His will on the earth and cause His name to be hallowed.⁵²

First things First

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him... If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:21,23)

He will reveal Himself to those who obey Him, and that revelation will cause them to obey Him all the more,⁵³ so that they become a witness to His character, a living demonstration of Messiah on the earth. Only this will bring about His return and the end of this age.⁵⁴ We must fulfill what was spoken prophetically of our Master:

"Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring⁵⁵ from on high has visited

us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:78-79)

The "Dayspring" provides light and truth and true forgiveness of sins and the way of peace for the people blinded by the darkness of their sins,⁵⁶ and groping for truth in the midst of confusion.⁵⁷ If we are not this "sprout" or "dayspring" from on high, then we are just one more religion amongst all the confusion.

The light of Luke 1:79 and 2:32 emanates from the life⁵⁸ of the restored twelve tribes of Isaiah's prophecy, who are the embodiment of Messiah:

Indeed He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6)

Paul understood that Isaiah was speaking prophetically of Messiah and His bride, and

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that it would take the light of the restored twelve tribes to bring salvation to the Gentiles⁵⁹ and ultimately to win his own countrymen.⁶⁰ We are here to carry on where Paul left off. To bring about this prophecy we labor night and day in one accord⁶¹ in order to be the light of the world,⁶² a city set on a hill, to enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,⁶³ to bring revelation to the Gentiles,⁶⁴ causing them to glorify God as He "visits" them through us.⁶⁵

We are in training now for what we will be

⁴⁸ Rev 21:9

⁴⁹ Eph 3:21

⁵⁰ Rev 22:5

⁵¹ 1 Cor 2:9

⁵² Mt 6:9-11; Mal 1:11

⁵³ Only when the church is continually receiving revelation from the Father as Peter was in Mt 16:16-17 is the promise of Mt 16:18 relevant.

⁵⁴ Mt 24:14

⁵⁵ The Greek word translated as

"Dayspring" is *orient* or *dawn*, raising a light to orient people to the truth in the midst of religious confusion. This same word is also used in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) in translating the Hebrew word for "branch" or "sprout" in Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12, which is prophetic of the coming of Messiah.

⁵⁶ Lk 1:78-79

⁵⁷ Which is what *Babylon* means,

Rev 17:3-6; 18:2.

⁵⁸ Jn 1:4

⁵⁹ Acts 13:47; 26:23

⁶⁰ See the article *Foolish Nation* on page 42 of Part One.

⁶¹ Acts 26:6-8,23; Jn 17:20-23

⁶² Mt 5:14-16

⁶³ Lk 1:79

⁶⁴ Lk 2:32

⁶⁵ 1 Pet 2:12

What We Believe

God, our Father

We believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Creator of all things.¹ He revealed Himself to Moses as Yahweh, “The Existing One”, a name that expresses His eternal nature.² He is loving and merciful, full of compassion.³ He is also righteous and just, and will judge all of mankind according to their deeds.⁴

Our Master Yahshua*

We believe that Yahshua (called *Jesus* in most English Bibles) was born of a Hebrew virgin named Miriam (Mary), who was betrothed to Yoceph (Joseph).⁵ He was conceived in Miriam’s womb through a miraculous working of the Holy Spirit,⁶ not from the fallen seed of man. For this reason He is called the Son of God. Although fully human,⁷ He embodied the very Word and Spirit of God.⁸ He chose to maintain intimate communion with His Father, never once falling into sin.⁹ Because of the fear and jealousy of the religious leaders of His day, He was crucified. Like a spotless lamb, His sinless life became an offering for the sins of all mankind.¹⁰ After paying for our sins for three days and three nights¹¹ in the agonies of death,¹² His spirit and soul returned to His body and He rose from the dead. Forty days later He ascended into heaven to take

His place at His Father’s side.¹³ He sent His Spirit to fill His disciples on earth, so that they could complete the work that He began, in order to bring an end to the Evil One’s reign on the earth.¹⁴ He will come back when He has a people made perfectly ready,¹⁵ having become just like Him.¹⁶

The Gospel

Although all of mankind is under a death sentence because of their sin,¹⁷ the good news is that our Master Yahshua has paid for our sins with His own blood¹⁸ so that we can be released from that death sentence¹⁹ and spend the rest of our lives bringing about His will on the earth.²⁰ If a person is truly willing to do the Father’s will, he will receive faith when he hears about our Master Yahshua from a true disciple.²¹ Then he will utterly forsake his old life and all his possessions,²² dying in the waters of baptism,²³ crying out to our Master Yahshua to save him from his sins and give him a new life.²⁴ He will be filled with the Holy Spirit²⁵ and from that time on he will no longer live for himself, but for the One who died for Him.²⁶ The practical reality of this is that he will share a common life of love and unity with those disciples who shared the Good News with him.²⁷

The Church

The term “church” in the New Testament describes a people who share a common life together based on the teachings and prophetic vision of Yahshua, the Messiah.²⁸ Collectively they form the “Body of Messiah”,²⁹ which is carrying out the work that the Master began when He was on the earth, by the power of that same Holy Spirit that empowered Him.³⁰ They are also known as the Commonwealth of Israel³¹ — a holy nation and royal priesthood³² consisting of twelve self-governing tribes³³ in twelve distinct geographical regions around the world.³⁴ Each tribe consists of many self-governing clans or communities.³⁵ Each community consists of one or more households in which all of the disciples in that locality maintain their unity as they live, work, pray, worship, and celebrate together.³⁶ Through the trials and sufferings of their life together,³⁷ which is like a refining fire,³⁸ they are being made progressively more like their Master Yahshua.³⁹ They await His return for them,⁴⁰ as a King coming for His bride when she is fully prepared for Him.⁴¹

The Last Days and the Coming Millennial Age

We believe that the world is on a course towards one world government and one world religion, which will ultimately join together in an oppressive tyranny, bringing the world to the brink of destruction. This will fulfill the prophetic dream

*Yahshua is our Savior’s original Hebrew name (Acts 26:14-15), which means “Yahweh’s Salvation.” His name incorporates His Father’s name (Jn 17:11-12, NIV, NASB, RSV, NRSV; Jn 5:43).

¹ Gen 12:1-3; 14:19-20; Ex 3:6

² Ex 3:14

³ Ex 34:6-7; Mt 9:12-13

⁴ Ecc 12:14; Ps 9:8

⁵ Lk 1:27

⁶ Lk 1:35

⁷ 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 4:15

⁸ Jn 1:1,14

⁹ Jn 5:19; 8:29; Heb 4:15

¹⁰ Isa 53:1-12; Heb 9:14

¹¹ Mt 12:40

¹² Acts 2:24

¹³ Acts 1:1-9

¹⁴ Acts 1:8; 5:32; Jn 14:12; 1 Jn 3:8

¹⁵ Lk 1:17

¹⁶ Heb 10:13; Rev 19:7; 1 Jn 3:2-3

¹⁷ Heb 9:27; Rom 6:23

¹⁸ Heb 9:14

¹⁹ Jn 5:24

²⁰ Mt 6:10

²¹ Jn 7:17

²² Lk 14:33; Mk 10:21,28-30

²³ Rom 6:3-8

²⁴ Rom 10:13; 2 Cor 5:17

²⁵ Acts 2:38

²⁶ 2 Cor 5:15

²⁷ Acts 2:42-46; 4:32-35; 1 Jn 3:14-18

²⁸ Acts 2:42-46

²⁹ 1 Cor 12:27; Col 1:24

³⁰ Jn 14:12

³¹ Eph 2:12

³² 1 Pet 2:9-10

³³ Acts 26:7; Rev 21:9-14

³⁴ Mal 1:5,11

³⁵ Tit 1:5; Jer 30:20 – 31:1

³⁶ 1 Cor 1:10; Eph 4:3; 1 Tim 2:8

³⁷ Acts 14:22

³⁸ 1 Pet 1:6-9; 4:12-13

³⁹ Rom 8:29; Phil 3:10-12; 1 Jn 3:2

⁴⁰ 1 Ths 4:16-17; Mt 24:30-31

⁴¹ Eph 5:26-27; Rev 19:7-8

of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, recorded in the book of the prophet Daniel,⁴² as well as the prophecies of the last days recorded in the New Testament.

As the boundaries are broken down between nations, and their ancient cultures give way to the emerging global, multicultural society, so will the absolute moral standards embodied in these cultures give way to the law of political correctness. Most people will become more and more like the Evil One, giving themselves to every selfish desire, regardless of the consequences, increasing the ranks of the Unjust and Filthy.⁴³ Few will withstand the pressure to compromise their conscience.⁴⁴

At the same time, the true followers of Yahshua, the Messiah, will become more and more like their Master, increasing in their love and care for one another, and their unity as a twelve-tribed spiritual nation.⁴⁵ Just as the needy and the humble were drawn to our Master Yahshua when He walked the earth, and the proud were repelled and infuriated by Him, so it will be with His people.⁴⁶ Their light will attract those who hate their lives in this fallen world, and it will repel and irritate those who are exposed and threatened by the disciples' life.⁴⁷

Ultimately they will be driven out of society by a world government dominated by the Man of Lawlessness.⁴⁸ They will flee to the wilderness where they will endure the last few years of this age.⁴⁹ During this time their purification will be completed,⁵⁰ while in the world from which they fled, the degradation of man will reach its limit.⁵¹ This will be the moment when Yahshua, the Son of God, descends from heaven

and gathers His followers to fight the war that brings this age to an end.⁵² The armies of the Man of Lawlessness will gather in the Plain of Megiddo to try to destroy the Messiah, Yahshua, and His holy ones.⁵³ But He will be victorious and will cleanse the earth of all evil. The Evil One himself will be bound,⁵⁴ and Yahshua will take His throne in Jerusalem to rule the earth with His holy ones for 1000 years of peace and restoration.⁵⁵

He sent His Spirit to fill His disciples on earth, so that they could complete the work that He began, in order to bring an end to the Evil One's reign on the earth. He will come back when He has a people made perfectly ready, having become just like Him.

At the end of that millennium, the Evil One will be released for a short time to test the hearts of men, and he will lead many astray. His rebellious army will be consumed, and the Evil One himself cast into the Lake of Fire, the second death. Finally, all who have died on the earth in all the ages will be resurrected for the final judgment.

The Judgment and Man's Eternal Destiny

We believe that human beings are eternal creatures, having an immortal soul and spirit that will exist forever.⁵⁶ Each person's eternal destiny depends

on how he lives his life on this earth.⁵⁷ There are three eternal destinies, one for each of the three distinct categories of men: 1) the Unjust and Filthy; 2) the Righteous; and 3) the Holy.⁵⁸

Because of man's sin, going back to the original sin of Adam and Eve, he is under the sentence of death,⁵⁹ but this death is not eternal.⁶⁰ There is a day appointed when all who have died will be raised and will face their Creator to be judged according to their deeds.⁶¹

Those who rejected the true gospel after hearing it from a true disciple, and those who lived in such a way as to ruin other people's lives to satisfy their own cravings, will be judged worthy of a second and eternal death in what the Bible calls the Lake of Fire.⁶² These are the Unjust and Filthy.⁶³

Others, who never had the opportunity to hear the *true gospel* and yet consistently lived according to the dictates of their conscience will not be found worthy of a second death.⁶⁴ These, the Righteous, will have paid for their sins by their first death,⁶⁵ and will enjoy a second life in an eternal kingdom under the rulership of Messiah and His faithful followers, who are the Holy.⁶⁶

There are others who may well have committed deeds worthy of the second death, but were convicted of their sinful condition and received faith when they heard the Good News of Yahshua, the Son of God.⁶⁷ These are the Holy.⁶⁸ They obeyed this gospel (see above), with the result that their sins were paid for by Messiah's death on their behalf.⁶⁹ Thus they no longer lived for themselves, but for Him,⁷⁰ and as His bondservants, they share His eternal destiny — to rule and reign over the Righteous in the nations of the eternal age.⁷¹ 🌿

⁴² Dan 2:31-44

⁴³ 2 Tim 3:1-5; Rom 1:18-32

⁴⁴ Rom 2:7; Rev 13:16-17

⁴⁵ Jn 17:20-23; 1 John 3:2-3;
Eph 5:26-27; Rev 19:7

⁴⁶ Jn 15:18-21

⁴⁷ 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 4:3

⁴⁸ 2 Ths 2:9-12; Rev 13:3,8

⁴⁹ Rev 12:6

⁵⁰ Rev 19:7

⁵¹ Isa 66:17

⁵² 1 Ths 4:16-17; Mt 24:30-31;

Rev 19:11-14

⁵³ Rev 16:14,16; 19:19

⁵⁴ Rev 20:2-3

⁵⁵ Rev 20:4,6

⁵⁶ Ecc 3:11

⁵⁷ Rom 2:5-11; Rev 20:12; Jn 5:28-29

⁵⁸ Rev 22:11

⁵⁹ Gen 2:17; Rom 6:23

⁶⁰ Heb 9:27

⁶¹ Rev 20:12-14; Jn 5:28-29

⁶² Rev 21:8; 22:15; Mt 25:41,46;

Rom 1:22-32

⁶³ Rev 22:11

⁶⁴ Rom 2:6,7,10; Jn 5:28-29

⁶⁵ Rom 6:23; Heb 9:27

⁶⁶ Mt 25:34-40

⁶⁷ 1 Cor 6:11

⁶⁸ Rev 22:11

⁶⁹ 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 2:13; Heb 9:14

⁷⁰ 2 Cor 5:14-15

⁷¹ Rev 2:26-27; 5:10

Epistle of Straw?

Since we know that the Bible is an inspired book, every word being God-breathed and full of meaning, then what would motivate a preacher to come against a whole book of the Bible and say it was not from God?

If a leader in one of the denominations today came out with the statement that he did not believe that one part of the New Testament was *God-breathed* but was *in error*, that man would immediately be branded a heretic or a cult leader for coming against the authority of the word of God. But the man who started the Protestant Reformation, the famous Martin Luther, said just that. So how does he get away with it?

It is a well-documented fact that Martin Luther is quoted as having said that the book of the New Testament called *James* was an “epistle of straw.”¹ This can only mean it is going to burn like a pile of straw in the Day of Judgment.² Why did he say that? Obviously it is because he did not like the things written in that portion of Scripture. But why? What bothered him so much about the words of James?

He did not like what James said about *faith and works*. It did not go along with his newfound doctrine,

“saved by faith alone.” Martin Luther’s revelation of “saved by faith” is the foundation for his split from his former church, the Roman Catholic Church. He thought that the heavy burdens of *good deeds* that his church was ex-torting from her members were unnecessary. He had been tormented by a deep sense of guilt about his own behavior and inability to measure up to the good deeds necessary for his church to grant him freedom from purgatory and entrance to heaven. So, his revelation of “faith only” was the answer. According to his revelation, Martin Luther taught that salvation is by faith alone, thus anything else that might be expected from a believer

would be heresy, or *works salvation*. Yet, the book of James explains just the opposite concerning salvation. So, of course, rather than doubt the authenticity of his own personal revelation about faith, he doubted the Bible.³



Martin Luther

Faith that Doesn't Work

The point of the book of James is that any faith that is real faith will be obvious by the kind of deeds (works) it produces. If the faith does no works, then it is a faith that literally doesn't work. In other words, that faith will not gain for you the eternal life you hope for.

The book of James is so clear that it even says that

“your religion is worthless” if it does not include the proper works. In this case the “works” James was speaking of was merely “controlling your

¹ Martin Luther writes: “In a word, St. John’s Gospel and his first Epistle, St. Paul’s Epistles, especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and St. Peter’s first Epistle are the books that show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and good for you to know, even though you were never to see or hear any other book or doctrine. Therefore St. James’ Epistle is really *an epistle of straw*, compared to them; for it has nothing of the nature of the Gospel about it.” (In “Luther’s Preface to the New Testament,” published in 1522, revised in 1545, in the *Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1932, copyrighted by the United Lutheran Church in America, vol. 6. pp. 443-444., translated by C.M. Jacobs)

² 1 Cor 3:12-15

³ His own personal revelation caused him to reject as well the inspiration of the Book of Revelations: “I miss more than one thing in this book, and this makes me hold it to be neither apostolic nor prophetic... I think of it almost as I do of the Fourth Book of Esdras, and can no how detect that the Holy Spirit produced it... Finally, let everyone think of it as his own spirit gives him to think. My spirit cannot fit itself into this book. There is one sufficient reason for me not to think highly of it, -- Christ is not taught or known in it.” From Luther’s “Preface to Revelation” published in 1522, *ibid*, p. 488-489. He held similar views of Hebrews and Jude.

tongue.”⁴ Martin Luther was one who was famous for his “fiery invective” and coarse language. So, of course, he would not like that part in the Bible where it condemns men who, “With the tongue praise our Lord and Father, and with the same tongue curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness” (James 3:9).⁵

Today people still become angry and upset at the suggestion that a person who does not show proper *works*, as the book of James says, does not have real faith.⁶ They cry “Works Salvation” and defend their worldly, improper behavior with the words, “I am saved by faith.” But in the Bible, in James, it says that “faith without works is dead.” That means such faith cannot save you. James then goes on to explain what he means by *works*, using the simple everyday example of helping a needy brother who lacks proper clothes or food. It says that if you do not give him clothes and food, but just say, “God bless you,” your faith is useless. He is not talking about such *works* as supporting local charity groups or sending money to feed the hungry in Africa. He is talking about the way we lead our everyday life, right here at home.

Although the leader of their Reformation had this view of “faith alone,” Protestant Christians today do not say that they hate the book of James. How is it then that they can still say they follow the doctrines of Martin Luther? Understanding their reasoning will give you a key to what is going on in much of the *religious fluff* you see today across the denominational landscape. Believers have been handed a “gospel” that teaches a way to read the book of James and other equally pointed truths and yet mentally

disconnect when thinking through (or taking) those truths to their proper conclusions. This is what James meant by “deceives his own heart.”⁷

It is like saying, “Two plus two is four.” Everyone knows that is right, unless you have come under a delusion. Under a delusion you can see “two plus two” and somehow know it equals four, but still go ahead and say with confidence that it equals five. You have no apologies. You can quote, “Faith without works is dead,” and at the same time say, “You do not need to do anything.” You can justify every contradiction to the commands of the Scriptures by saying to those who would want to obey, “That is legalism; salvation is a free gift.” (See the article about *doublethink* called *Tools of Control* in Part One, page 58.)

Useless Religion

So, we see a religion full of gluttony, drunkenness, and even murder in the name of God, by people (including Martin Luther himself) who will justify their actions with the thought that they are “saved by faith alone.” But James boldly says, “*Can that faith save him?*”

James goes on to make the guidelines even tighter in writing to the believers, “*If anyone one among you thinks he is religious, but does not bridle his tongue and deceives himself, this one’s religion is useless.*”⁸

So what is the “useless religion” James is talking about? He is talking to *believers* here, isn’t he? They think they have “saving faith” because they *think* they are “religious” — but by simply “not bridling his tongue” such a one is exposed by his behavior as having useless religion.

So, what you do matters... if you have the faith that works.

“*He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*” (1 John 2:4)

Is obeying His commandments “works”? Is keeping the commandments just useless works which have nothing to do with being “saved by faith”? What then are we saved for, except the good works that are prepared for us to spend our lives doing?⁹

If you are the seed of Abraham, you will do the *works* he did, the Son Of God said in John 8:39. James understood works, but he was obviously writing his letter to an element that had risen up in the early church that was denying the need to do anything, thus making the first church into a *useless religion* — one with no works to show their faith.

The church must be built upon the foundation of *hearing from God* — which is revelation. That is what our Master said to Peter when something other than *flesh and blood* spoke deeply to his heart one day, testifying that his Master was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.¹⁰ This promise of deep revelation to a man’s heart would be the *keys to the kingdom* for the church, and hell could not prevail against this rock of revelation. But obviously by the time of the book of James, the church had come into a place where they were hearing from *flesh and blood* men who were deceiving them into believing something false. James labors to show them that the so-called “faith” these men preached is useless unless it leads them to do good works. They were not “saved” by that so-called “faith” that did not lead them to do good works. That kind of faith does not save anyone. ❀

⁴ James 1:26

⁵ We cannot, with a good conscience, include any quotes of Luther’s foul tongue, which was worse than a sailor’s, but we can quote a common enough thought in his writings: “For I am unable to pray without at the same time cursing. If I am prompted to say, “Hallowed be Thy name,” I must add, “Cursed, damned, outraged be the name of papists.” Indeed, I pray thus orally every day and in my heart, without intermission.”

And concerning Catholic clergy he wrote, “The Rhine is

scarcely big enough to drown the whole accursed gang of Roman extortioners... cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and abbots.” (Quoted in W. Durant, *The Reformation*, p. 418)

⁶ James 2:14

⁷ James 1:26

⁸ James 1:26

⁹ Eph 2:8-10

¹⁰ Mt 16:16-19

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"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and

the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is

to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (Acts 2:36-40, NKJV)

The First Message of Salvation

When the mighty rushing wind of the Holy Spirit filled the place where the one hundred twenty disciples were gathered on the Day of Pentecost, they knew exactly what to do.¹ Their proclamation of the Gospel that day in Jerusalem was the beginning of the fulfillment of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. Their

Lord and Savior had commanded them to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and *"teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you."* He promised that if they did teach them these things, patiently explaining and instilling them into the disciples they made, He would be with them until the end of the age.

Peter preached both the *essential gospel* and the *many other words* to the multitudes at Pentecost. Both are indispensable for salvation. First he told the people who Messiah was, what He had done for them, and why they needed His forgiveness. His message was believed, which is why the people cried out, *"What shall we do?"* Then he told them in the *many other words* how they would validate and authenticate their belief. If they did not obey these words from their hearts, then one day they would discover that they had believed in vain.²

Peter's words that day were detailed, profound, compelling, and clear. He spoke at length, perhaps for hours, *spelling out* what it took for them to *"be saved from this wicked and perverted generation."* Peter was so careful and complete in everything he spoke that day because he did not want them to be disappointed. And he did not want them to be surprised by the demands of the gospel as they faced them in their life together after baptism. So when they cried out, *"What shall we do?"*³ he told them the whole truth.

Whoever received faith that caused them to obey Peter's words would be given eternal life at baptism. Their

Peter preached both the essential gospel *and* the many other words to the multitudes at Pentecost. Both are indispensable for salvation.



¹ Acts 2:1-4 ² 1 Cor 15:1-2 ³ Acts 2:37

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obedience would confirm that their belief was real. Those with authentic belief, true faith, could come in through the gate of the Shepherd. They would enter the life of abundant grace of the community in Jerusalem.⁴ The gospel authenticates true belief and invalidates vain belief by means of the *many other words*. [See box on page 54, *Light to the World?*]

To disobey these words or to walk away, as so many did, was to be guilty of the willful disbelief addressed in John 3:36. Upon them John said, *"the wrath of God abides."* When Jesus returns He will deal out retribution *"to those who do not obey the gospel."*⁵ Paul equates disobedience to the gospel with disbelief in Romans 10:16. This earns one a place among the *"cowardly and unbelieving"* of Revelation 21:8 — the chief and worst of sins listed there.

To those who heard and believed his message that day, Peter's plea contained the message of salvation in full. Yet of the many who were drawn to this amazing outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who miraculously heard the good news in their own tongues from these rough-hewn Galileans,⁶ only three thousand gladly received his words and were baptized.⁷ The rest went away sad, like the rich young ruler who knelt before the "Good Teacher" Himself and asked, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"⁸

Like him, they would not trust Jesus with all the things they found their security in: possessions, family, and status. Like him, they would not go outside the camp of Judaism, where Jesus was,⁹ even if staying inside meant losing the promise of eternal life. And like him, they would not confess Jesus as Lord if it *actually* meant doing what He commanded. The apostles must have made it very clear that day that calling Him "Lord, Lord," but not doing what He said, was to be a very "foolish man" indeed. It would result in one day hearing the terrible words, "I never knew

you."¹⁰ This will be so surprising (eternally surprising) to those who up until that moment *thought* He knew them. There is no greater treasure than knowing Him and being known by Him.

Peter's words were the many commands and precepts of Jesus Christ that would establish His Kingdom on earth as a community of love. His words bore witness to the truth of the gospel.

Of course the *many other words* included what the stiff-necked now call the "hard sayings" about giving up everything (such as Luke 14:26-33), which should be *undeniably* plain from the marvelous communal life of sharing and caring that flowered *immediately* in the city of Jerusalem:

"Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

(Acts 2:44-47)

The Community in Jerusalem was a visible testimony of the *character* of the Living God. It was real, tangible, observable. From that day forward, the gospel could not be presented in any other way than according to Matthew 24:14, *"as a*

Peter's words were the many commands and precepts of Jesus Christ that would establish His Kingdom on earth as a community of love.



⁴ Jn 10:7-10 and Acts 4:32-34 ⁵ 2 Ths 1:8 ⁶ Acts 2:6-11 ⁷ Acts 2:41 ⁸ Mk 10:17-31 ⁹ Heb 13:13

¹⁰ Mt 7:21-27

witness to the nations.” For the Church can be no other way than it was at first, according to the pattern received from heaven, demonstrated in Jerusalem, and imitated elsewhere.¹¹ This takes now what it took then: communities living together in unity, which demystifies the Body of Christ — which is one and undivided.¹² Otherwise, all the world is left with is a “mysti-

dismissed it. And certainly it was not an option for believers, for *“all the believers were together, and had all things in common,”* and all who did not believe were *not* together.¹³

No, their love for one another in the church, the community of believers, was *essential* to accomplishing the will of the Father.¹⁴ Their life of love together was the way they would fulfill the new commandment He gave them, *“to love one another as I have loved you.”* And it was the way *“all will know that you are My disciples.”*¹⁵ Such love was the source of the unity He prayed for the night before He died, which was the *only thing* that would communicate to the whole world — according to the Son of God — how much the Father loved them *and* that He had sent His Son.¹⁶ The whole world must know these two things through the witness of the Kingdom.

“Belief” is Not Enough

Just as the apostles had *“left everything to follow Him,”*¹⁷ the offer of eternal life they extended on the Day of Pentecost was to all who would repent in the same way, be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The *many other words* Peter spoke made plain both what they were to repent from and what it meant to *trust*. The modern concept of belief is mental (or emotional) assent to the likely truth of something and has nothing to do with “saving faith” or actually trusting Jesus (the very thing the rich young ruler would not do).

The *“free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus”* was given that day to all who *“gladly received his words”* and they were saved in baptism because they trusted (which is to say *believed*) in Him. They were baptized into one Body, drinking from one Spirit, and became sons of one Father.¹⁸ Salvation *requires* that a person place his *whole* trust in the Son of God. God knows who will and who will not obey His Son’s many words in the Gospels. To those who will, He gives His Holy Spirit:

“And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

The Light to the World?

- 30% of “born-again” Christians say living together, gay sex, sexual fantasies, and viewing pornography are morally appropriate behaviors.

- 30 % of Christians have been divorced since becoming Christians (“born-again” Christians and non-Christians have essentially the same probability of divorce).¹

- 37% of pastors say online pornography is a current struggle for them.²

Have you ever wondered why study after study has consistently shown that the moral behavior of millions of “born-again” Christians today is no better, and perhaps worse, than the secular world around them? They aren’t saved from the wicked and perverse generation they live in because they have neither heard nor heeded the many other words. They remain a part of this perverse generation, sinking ever deeper in the mire.

¹ The first two statistics are from: Barna Research, “Year’s Most Intriguing Findings”, 2001

² Christianity Today, “Leadership Survey”, 2001

cal body” that can only bear witness to a mystical, far-away God who simply doesn’t care and “lives away up there.”

Even so, community was not an end in itself. Nor was it a lifestyle choice or a mistake of the First Church, as many have

¹¹ 1 Ths 2:14 ¹² 1 Cor 1:10; Jn 17:21-23 ¹³ Acts 2:44 ¹⁴ Mt 7:21 ¹⁵ Jn 13:34-35 ¹⁶ Jn 17:23 ¹⁷ Mk 10:28

¹⁸ 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:4-6; Rom 6:2-5; Gal 3:27

What Belief Is

From their own personal testimony, from what they had done and seen the Master do, the apostles knew the answer to the question, *"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"* They knew that all who believed in Him would leave *"house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands"* for the sake of Jesus and His gospel, and would receive *"a hundredfold now in this time — houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions — and in the age to come, eternal life."*¹⁹

The Community in Jerusalem was the beginning of the fulfillment of the hundredfold promise for *"all who believed"* and *"were together"* and *"had all things in common."*²⁰ Jesus' promise in Mark 10 was given to *sustain* community, so that there would not be one person among them *"who lacked."* This would fulfill the promise of Deuteronomy 15:4, *"there will be no needy among you."* Anything that is not the fulfillment of the words of the prophets is not the true church of God.

When Peter stood before the thousands in Jerusalem, the gospel message he preached was not mere doctrine. It was his *testimony* of the words and saving power of the Son of God, based on his personal knowledge and his love of his Savior's words and commands. *"Forsaking all and following Him"* had been *his* response to the love and mercy of the Savior.²¹ He knew, from the depths of his soul that such was the only worthy response to the sacrifice of Jesus for his sins and theirs. Obedience to the *many other words* of the gospels (which are, after all, *the very words of the Savior*), determines, reveals, and exposes, both to the hearer and to the world, *who believes* in Jesus and *who has rejected* the good news.

Peter taught the crowd of people what it meant to follow Jesus and to serve Him. They had to do the most difficult and threatening thing for people to do: *"hate their life in this world"* in order to *"to keep it to life eternal."* So, they had to leave the world behind and *"serve Him where He is."*²²

That is where He dwells in His people, who live in community. Living together is the thing that even makes it possible to be one as Jesus and the Father are one.²³ How can you truly be one with the person in the pew in front of you, the back of whose head you see once a week?

The apostles had seen many who had *believed* in Him, but did not trust Him with their life. Therefore He could not *entrust* Himself to them.²⁴ Their mere *belief* did not cause Him to *believe in them*. And this is exactly what is necessary for salvation by grace through faith to be given to a man. It is not by the *"will of man, but of God"* that a man is saved.²⁵ It is not by the mere words, *"Jesus, come into my heart,"* that one's name is written in the Lamb's book of life. Salvation, as Acts 2:41 says, is given to *"as many as received him,"*²⁶ which includes, from the day of Pentecost forward, *receiving the many other words* of Acts 2:40.²⁷

Belief = Trust

The apostles had seen many *walk away* from their Lord and Master, even *driven away* by His hard words.²⁸ And they knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus did not *entrust* Himself to anyone who did not *trust* in Him:

"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man." (John 2:23-25)

Jesus knew the hearts of the men at that Passover. He knew that they, like the rich young ruler of Mark 10, *"believed"* in Him — but not unto eternal life. Remember, to *believe* unto eternal life and to *entrust* oneself to Him is one and the same thing. How

It is not by the mere words, "Jesus, come into my heart," that one's name is written in the Lamb's book of life.



¹⁹ Mk 10:29-30 ²⁰ Acts 2:44 ²¹ Luke 5:1-11 ²² Jn 12:25-26 ²³ Jn 17:21 ²⁴ Jn 2:23-25 ²⁵ Jn 1:13

²⁶ Jn 1:12 ²⁷ Jn 13:20 ²⁸ Jn 6:58-66; 8:30-39

could the Master entrust Himself to anyone who would not entrust himself to Him? He knows who trusts Him. They obey Him.

Belief is not enough. Belief in the mind does not save. Belief that reaches the

heart results in *obedience* to the One believed in. And that heart of obedience is what the Father continues to respond to in the disciples' lives, giving them revelation of Himself and His purpose.²⁹ The gates of hell will never prevail against such a community of believers, for they live by what His

"Father who is in heaven" reveals to them,³⁰ not by the "flesh and blood" traditions of the established religion of the day.

Willing to do His Will

The rich young ruler wanted eternal life, but he was not willing to do the Master's will. To do His will is to obey Him. This willingness to do His will was the basis on which God chose Abraham:

"For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him." (Genesis 18:19)

And it is *still* the basis on which He chooses to give the gift of eternal life. The Father grants such ones the needed illumination to believe in order to be saved:

"If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." (John 7:17).

Their willingness to do His will continues, as they receive grace from Him, until the end of their lives. They willingly walk in the works prepared for them from before the foundation of the world.³¹ These works carry out the will of the Father³² and bring about that which He told His disciples to pray for – His Kingdom – on earth as it is in heaven.³³

This *willingness*, which the Father knows whether we have or do not have, is far beyond the common English usage of the word. The Greek word for *willing* in John 7:17 means not only to be willing, but to be resolved or determined, to take delight in, to have pleasure in doing. It is the condition of heart that pushes beyond mere mental willingness to endeavor to do what is set before it to do. It is taking action. It is the very willingness the rich young ruler did not have and why he went away sad. Those who love the will of God to the extent that God knows they will do it are the ones who will receive the Holy Spirit.³⁴

Saving faith means having this willingness (*thelo*) to do what Jesus commanded, which proves itself by actually doing it. To have faith in Jesus means one thing above all: TRUST. Those who will not trust Him with their possessions, their families, careers, homes, farms, etc., will not be ENTRUSTED with the Holy Spirit, which is eternal life. Such unwillingness is the root of the willful disbelief or disobedience addressed in John 3:36.³⁵ The rich young ruler wanted eternal life the way all Christians think they have it – without actually trusting, but "just believing." But what *do* they believe, and what Jesus do they believe in?

(There is more than *one*, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:4.) 

The heart of obedience
is what the Father
continues to respond
to in the disciples' lives,
giving them revelation
of Himself
and His purpose.



²⁹ Jn 14:21 ³⁰ Mt 16:15-18 ³¹ Eph 2:10 ³² Mt 7:21 ³³ Mt 6:10 ³⁴ Acts 5:32

³⁵ In the New King James, John 3:36 says "does not believe"; in the NASB, NIV, NLT, NRSV, and RSV versions it is translated as "does not obey." The word in question is the Greek word *apeitheo*, #544 in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, meaning not to allow one's self to be persuaded; to refuse or withhold belief; to refuse belief and obedience; not to comply with.

Bearing His Reproach Outside the Camp



"Excuse me sir. Where's the camp exit?" . . . "Can't get there from here."

*"For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach."
(Heb 13:11-13)*

If the early disciples had to go outside the gates of Judaism in order to be with the One who bore their sins, what about the gates of modern Christianity? What reproach is there to bear in a religion favored by the state, one integrated and accepted into its secular culture?

Today, more than ever, a moderate Christian has the best chance of being elected to any office at any level of government, whether he is politically conservative or liberal. With Christians in high office from the White House on down, and the phenomenal success of Christian books, music and movies, Evangelicals are in the mainstream of American culture more than ever before.¹ Does being in the mainstream

qualify as outside the camp?

To be "outside the camp" was something disgraceful to Jews because it meant to be separated from the national religion, the *status quo*.² The Jews in Jesus' day had no concept that they were *not* the children of Abraham. They thought that just because they were born in Israel, grew up in Jewish families, and were *bar mitzvah* at age 13, then this meant they were Abraham's children. But Jesus told them that if they were Abraham's children, they would *do* the deeds of Abraham. In other words, their *life* would produce the same fruit as did Abraham, a man who was called out of his land to live in tents until he found "*the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*"³

Many Christians think that because they were born in a Christian society, raised in Christian families, and baptized in Christian churches, this makes them Christ's disciples. But are they really concerned with discipleship, or just with what is socially acceptable? Jesus is the same now as He was then; therefore His disciples will do the deeds of love He did, following Him and obeying Him. Would Jesus find *this* fruit in Christianity, or would He have to go outside the camp of Christianity to re-establish His life today? If so, His servants would follow Him there.⁴

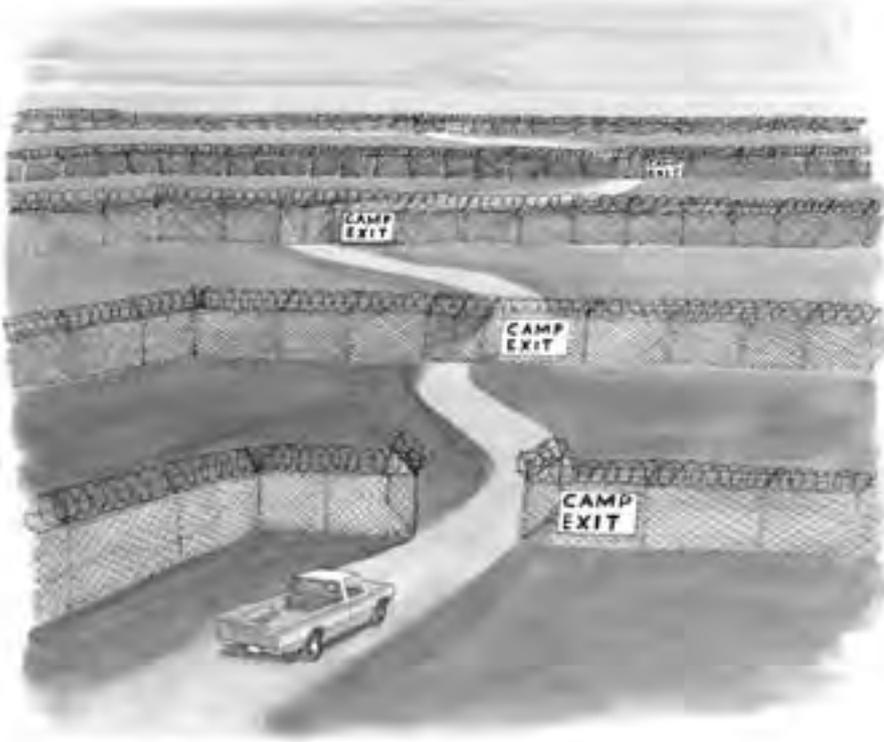
The call to go outside the camp and bear His reproach is a call to Christians to do what Abraham and Moses did:⁵

"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God

¹ U.S. News and World Report, December 23, 2002, p. 41. ² Jn 8:37-47 ³ Heb 11:8-10

⁴ Jn 12:26 ⁵ Heb 11:8-10,24-27

Bearing His Reproach



Anything outside the camp of Christianity today is considered to be a cult. But Revelation 18:4 still stands: “Come out of her, My people” — come outside the camp and bear His reproach. The true restoration will bear Christ’s reproach, the earthly disgrace He received.

than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” (Heb 10:24-27)

Just as Moses chose to bear the reproach of being identified with God’s

people rather than enjoy the comfort and privilege of his life in Egypt,⁶ so must Christ’s disciples bear the same reproach that He bore.

Anything outside the camp is considered strange religion. Those in the religious establishment would say, “How could anyone worship Jesus outside the gate of *the City*?” But on the day of Pentecost Peter cried out saying, “Save yourselves from this perverse and wicked generation!” (i.e., the religion of Judaism⁷). When Christ abandoned Judaism, the religious establishment demanded that the state execute Him. And Mark 10:30 promises persecution also to all who follow Christ. Moreover, John 16:1-3 shows that it will be the religious people who do the persecuting (or have the state do it for them).

Anything outside the camp of Christianity today is considered to be a cult. But Revelation 18:4 still stands: “Come out of her, My people” — come outside the camp and bear His reproach.⁸ The true restoration will bear Christ’s reproach, the earthly disgrace He received.

When Jesus spoke of the restoration of all things in Mark 9:12, He was talking about the witness of the Kingdom in Matthew 24:14. This demonstration of God’s love in the last days will not fail. As

Reprobate

Reprobate means unable to be established as genuine or original. A probate court examines documents to determine their authenticity to see if they are originals. A reprobate person, document, or institution is one that cannot be authenticated in the light of original evidence or primary sources. It is one that has departed from the original pattern and cannot be brought back to the authentic origin. A reprobate person is unprincipled: he does not

or cannot retain the form or pattern of his original humanity. The term *reprobate* would be applied to a person or institution that does not retain the Spirit and the love he or it had at first (Rev 2:4-5). Through such ones the retaining wall of the Early Church was broken down and what Paul said in Rom 9:29 came to pass — Christendom has become like Sodom and Gomorrah. But a seed was preserved, with the promise of a restoration. 🌱

⁶ Heb 11:26 ⁷ Acts 2:36,40; Heb 13:11-13; 11:24-31 ⁸ Acts 2:36,40

Outside the Camp

the prophet Daniel said, it will not be left to another people.⁹ The time is drawing near when the good news of the Kingdom will be preached to the world as a witness and testimony of the truth. That time will come, and that witness must come from outside the camp of the organized religion (all the established denominational churches, including Greek and Roman). That witness will come from a holy nation¹⁰ that will ignite a movement fueled by the new wine. It will take to the ends of the earth this good news of the coming Kingdom.¹¹ In order to set the evidence before all the world, every truth which has been corrupted, tainted, falsified, or hidden must be exposed. As Luke 1:79 says, this pure knowledge will enlighten the hearts¹² of those who sit in the darkness that covers the earth. Wisdom will be proven right by her children who accomplish this.

The restored Twelve Tribes of Jacob

spoken about in Isaiah 49:6 will be raised up from the dust *outside the camp* of both Judaism and Christianity.¹³ This nation will ignite a flame of love that will sweep across every nation, fulfilling Matthew 21:43 and being the witness of Matthew 24:14. The life demonstrated by this witness will lift up a banner for the nations to bring their sons and daughters to.¹⁴ This objective banner or standard will issue the criterion and be the basis to distinguish those who serve God from those who don't.¹⁵ Those who serve Him *where He is*¹⁶ will be in plain view so that people from the nations can come to that life that is the light of men. There they will learn to obey all that Jesus commanded His apostles.¹⁷ This gospel will bring about the holy nation of 1 Peter 2:9-10 that fulfills John 13:34-35 and John 17:23. It is His standard and that standard will be a light to the nations in this age, bringing Salvation to the ends of the earth.✿

*The restored
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⁹ Mt 24:14; Isa 26:1; 51:4; 42:6; 49:8; Dan 2:44 ¹⁰ Ex 19:5-6; 1 P t 2:9 ¹¹ Daniel 7:27, RSV ¹² Isa 62:2-3
¹³ Heb 13:13 ¹⁴ Isa 49:22; 59:19-21; 62:10-12 ¹⁵ Mal 3:18 ¹⁶ Jn 12:26 ¹⁷ Mt 28:18-20



Thoughtful people have long struggled in the face of the Christian doctrine of Heaven and Hell, causing them to consider the destiny of the countless millions of people who have never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus.



What about the Heathen?

Are all men doomed to eternal death who have never heard the gospel?

This question looms in the minds of many Christians, and the classic answer, at least from the Calvinist camp, makes God out to be a vindictive¹ monster: *all men are born totally depraved, worthy of eternal damnation regardless of how they live their lives or whether they have ever heard of Jesus Christ.*

We utterly reject this misrepresentation of God's justice and would like to set the record straight from the Holy Scriptures. While it is *not* possible for a man to work his way to heaven, it is also *not* true that he is doomed to eternal death regardless of how he lives his life. What is the truth about man's eternal destiny?

First of all, it is true that when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command in the Garden of Eden and ate the forbidden fruit, they incurred the sentence of death:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17)

Their physical death was not immediate, but their spiritual death was, and their fallen condition was passed on to their offspring, as the record shows, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”² Therefore, since “the wages of sin is death,”³ then “it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”⁴

This much is clear to most Christians, but what happens after the judgment? This is the part that is widely misunderstood. But remember, the Bible says “it is appointed for men to die once...” It doesn’t say *twice*. Yet there is a *second* death:

But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

This verse identifies a certain character of people whose destiny will be a second and unending death in the lake of fire. But what about those who are not of that character? That is why there must be a judgment:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

Let’s be clear: this is *not* the judgment of *believers* in Christ, for their eternal destiny does not depend on their works.⁵ This is the judgment of all those who died *without Christ*. They are raised from the *first* death to be judged as to whether they are worthy of the *second* death, based on how they lived their lives.

Now some will say this judgment is merely a formality — not a judgment at all, but a sentencing. They will say that no one’s name was found written in the Book of Life because they didn’t believe in Jesus,⁶ so all were cast into the lake of fire. They fail to distinguish between this “Book of Life” for the nations and the “Lamb’s Book of Life” for the holy nation. They suppose that God raises men from the first death to stand before Him so that He can gloat at them while He pretends to look up their name in the Book of Life, knowing it will not be there. Then He callously casts them into the lake of fire. But this is not God’s character.

Abraham, the father of our faith, when he appealed to God to spare the few righteous in Sodom, knew some-

¹ *vindictive* — disposed to seek revenge; showing malicious ill will and a desire to hurt; motivated by spite.

² Rom 3:23

³ Rom 6:23

⁴ Heb 9:27

⁵ There is a judgment of believers that Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, but its purpose is to determine who is worthy to rule with Christ during the Millennial Age. This judgment takes place at Christ’s return, 1000 years before the so-called “Great White Throne” judgment. But the eternal destiny of true believers is sealed according to Ephesians 1:13-14.

⁶ The “cowardly and unbelieving” in Revelation 21:8 are those who *rejected* the gospel as John 3:18,36 describes, not those who *never heard* the gospel. But some Christians will say there is no excuse, because if anyone were really sincere, God would send a missionary to him, even in the remotest corner of China. Rightly did our Master say of such self-righteous judges: “Woe to you, for you travel over land and sea to win one convert, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves!” (Mt 23:15)

What about the millions of people who never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ? Are they going to eternal destruction?



What About the Heathen?

thing about the character of God that escapes many Christians today:

"Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25)

Of course Abraham was especially thinking of his nephew Lot, and God heard his plea and rescued Lot and his daughters. Although he was not included in the covenant with Abraham, Lot is described as being *righteous*.⁷ And while this passage does not speak of Lot's eternal destiny, but merely his temporal deliverance from the destruction of Sodom, yet it speaks of God's character as understood by Abraham, the *friend of God*.⁸

We stand with Abraham, knowing that God will righteously judge all people according to their works, and not just throw them all willy-nilly into the lake of fire. Those who are not *worthy* of the second death will be granted a second life, and it is over them that Messiah and His Bride (those who have truly believed in Him) will rule throughout eternity.⁹

Now let's take a closer look at the basis of this judgment:

"Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil...'" (Genesis 3:22)

After Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would have to live by that knowledge, choosing to do the good and not to do the evil. Even though fallen man could not do this perfectly, God still held him

accountable to exercise his will to overcome the temptation to do evil, just as He told Cain:

"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." (Genesis 4:7)

Of course, Cain did not master it, but all are not like Cain. All do not murder. All are not immoral. Many strive to do the good they know in their conscience, and are grieved when they fail, and do everything possible to make restitution when they do wrong. These have

his fellow man to the point of committing murder. But beyond that, God commissioned Noah and his sons after the flood to be fruitful and multiply abundantly on the earth. If man was now worthless and totally depraved, why would a loving Creator want to fill the earth with such creatures?

So fallen man still bears the image of his Creator and retains intrinsic¹¹ worth to the degree that he lives by the knowledge of good and evil, inherent¹² in his conscience. Even though he has an inborn inclination to sin, he is able and accountable to do the good that

Far be it from you to slay the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and wicked alike.

Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right? (GENESIS 18:25)

a natural righteousness of their own, a natural faith or persuasion that God is good and that He will judge all men justly. They value the dignity of life. They recognize the image of the Creator in His creation. They work hard and are faithful in their marriages.¹⁰ They labor to put their values into their children. They bear suffering without growing bitter. They try to keep a good conscience. And God does not despise their efforts.

True, all men sin and fall short of the glory of God, but not all fall *utterly* short. Glory means weight or value. Adam, before he fell, had great value, having been made in God's image. When he fell, God's image in him was marred, but not obliterated. This is very clear from what God said *after* Adam's fall, and in fact even after the Flood:

"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man. And you, be fruitful and multiply; abound on the earth and multiply in it." (Genesis 9:6-7)

Man still bears God's image and has great value in God's eyes, as He requires capital punishment for any who would fail to respect His image in

he knows in his conscience and to keep himself from the kinds of sins that would make him worthy of the second death.¹³

Yet regardless of how careful a man is to live by his conscience, he will not do so perfectly, for he is a fallen creature. He will sin, and his sin must be paid for, as it is an inviolable law that the wages of sin is death. A man's good deeds cannot save him from the consequences of his sin — the first death. His natural righteousness cannot restore him to fellowship with God, nor make him worthy of ruling and reigning with Christ. All of his good deeds are of no more value than filthy rags¹⁴ for obtaining the righteousness of God, which can only be imputed to a man on the basis of faith, which comes from hearing the word of Christ from someone sent to preach the Good News.¹⁵

So whoever dies without Christ must go to the first death to pay the wages of his own sin, since he does not have a sacrifice for his sins. How then does he pay these wages? It is according to how much worth remains in him, how much integrity and courage he has to face the truth about himself. For

⁷ 2 Peter 2:7-8

⁸ 2 Chr 20:7; Isa 41:8; James 2:23

⁹ Rev 22:3-5

¹⁰ Gen 3:16-19

¹¹ *intrinsic* — belonging to a thing by its very nature.

¹² *inherent* — existing as an essential constituent or characteristic; in the nature of something.

¹³ Rev 21:8; 22:15; Rom 1:28-32

¹⁴ Isa 64:6

¹⁵ Rom 10:13-17

in death he is finally alone with his conscience, forced to face his sin, with nowhere to hide and nothing to distract his mind from the awareness of his own guilt. Every evil deed, every base thought, every selfish motive comes out of hiding to torture him. Like a worm burrowing into the recesses of his memory, eating away at his every excuse, so is the path of his thoughts as his conscience fully awakens. The unquenchable fire of his self-inquisition leaves him either weeping in remorse or gnashing his teeth as he resists the truth about himself.¹⁶

Those who resist the truth, reasoning away their guilt even in death, prove themselves unable to pay sin's wages. They are the same in death as they were in life — set in their ways, their hearts fully hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. A second death awaits them, where they will gnash their teeth eternally. There is a mystery here. King David wrote,

"From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from His dwelling place He watches all who live on earth — He who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do."

(Psalm 33:13-15)

The Creator of man forms, fashions, or molds each man's heart according to what he does or gives himself to. Eventually the heart, like clay, becomes "set" in its way, and so that person's character will remain eternally¹⁷ — some bent towards evil, and some towards good.

The latter, in death, will weep in remorse, accepting the full responsibility for their sins rather than blaming them

The righteous are not perfect and do sin. Still, they work hard and are faithful in their marriages, abiding by the truth they know in their conscience.



on others. They are the ones who are able to pay sin's wages. When they are resurrected to stand judgment, they will have fully received the discipline of death and will find mercy and not condemnation. This mercy and comfort will come at the hands of the bride of Messiah, who, according to the Apostle Paul,¹⁸ will be judging the nations on God's behalf. They will wipe away the tears of those who were judged not worthy of the second death:

"Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.'" (Revelation 21:2-4)

The "tabernacle" or "dwelling place" of God is the bride or wife of Messiah,¹⁹ who will dwell with men — the resurrected righteous people of the nations. That is how God Himself will be with them — through the wife of Messiah.²⁰ Redeemed Man will rule with Messiah over Restored Man,²¹ and the original commission given to Adam will be re-

stored to him, once sin and death and the evil one himself are no more.²²

"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

Amazingly, in Psalm 8, King David prophesied that man (both the redeemed and restored man) would rule over all the works of God's hands, including all the galaxies of planets. Surely without death, restored man will quickly fill up the earth and go on to colonize the universe with restored humanity, under the ever-increasing government of God²³ — the redeemed corporate²⁴ man, which is the wife²⁵ of Messiah.

So we hope that you can see that there is a lot more in God's heart towards His highest creation, mankind, than to throw countless millions into the lake of fire for the crime of not having been born in the right place and time to hear the true gospel. If you are interested in reading more about man's eternal destiny, please visit our web site, www.commonwealthofisrael.org, and look for the section about *The Three Eternal Destinies of Man*. Or better yet, just come and visit one of our communities and we will be more than happy to talk with you. 🌿

¹⁶ Rom 2:14-16; Mt 18:34; Acts 2:24;
¹⁷ 1 Cor 15:55-56
¹⁸ Rev 22:11
¹⁹ 1 Cor 6:2
²⁰ Rev 21:9
²¹ Rev 21:9,12
²² Rev 22:5
²³ Rev 20:10,14
²⁴ Rev 21:24, NKJV; Isa 9:6-7
²⁵ Corporate — composed of individuals acting together as one entity.
²⁵ Rev 21:9,12

EDAH — *The word for community in Hebrew is **edah**, which also means beehive. This word portrays the way a group of people or hive of bees live and work together with a common identity. Bees live a selfless life of devotion to the bee kingdom. They have no concern for themselves but only for the hive and the constant production of honey. So it is with those who are in the communities of God.*

Like a Swarm

Have you ever watched a beehive? It is fascinating seeing thousands of little bees working together to produce honey. As you come near the hive, you can hear an exciting buzz as they go about the many tasks necessary to keep the hive alive. The workers are responsible to collect nectar and guard the hive. The young bees keep the hive in good condition, feed the larvae, and support in other household chores. There is never a dull moment in the busy life of a little bee.

This is much like the life that we have. No matter what we do, we love to do it together. Daily we gather to thank our Master for His salvation, and to hear Him speak to us through one another. This gathering keeps alive a genuine love and care for each other. As we work, we take advantage of the daily situations, guarding ourselves from the selfishness and pride that would come in to separate us and take away our love. Our children are a vital part of our life. We not only educate them, but we work with them to accomplish the simple tasks necessary to maintain a family life. Our life is not a dull routine of chores, but is full of the warmth that comes from the sweet fellowship of friends speaking their hearts to one another, celebrating the Sabbath every week, and participating in weddings and festivals.

But there are a few things that differ in our life than that of a beehive. One is that we are not driven by instinct or controlled by something separate from our own will. Each of us is here because we chose to leave behind our own separate lives to increase the life of this hive. Our life is not enclosed like the hive of a bee, nor do we have a stinger to harm any uninvited guests. We welcome anyone to experience our life with us. Please come and see what it is like to be part of a beehive of people expressing the warmth and love of our Creator. 🌿

A Few of Our Homes & Farms

AND SOME OF OUR PEOPLE IN SOME OF OUR COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD.



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www.commonwealthofisrael.org

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