

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

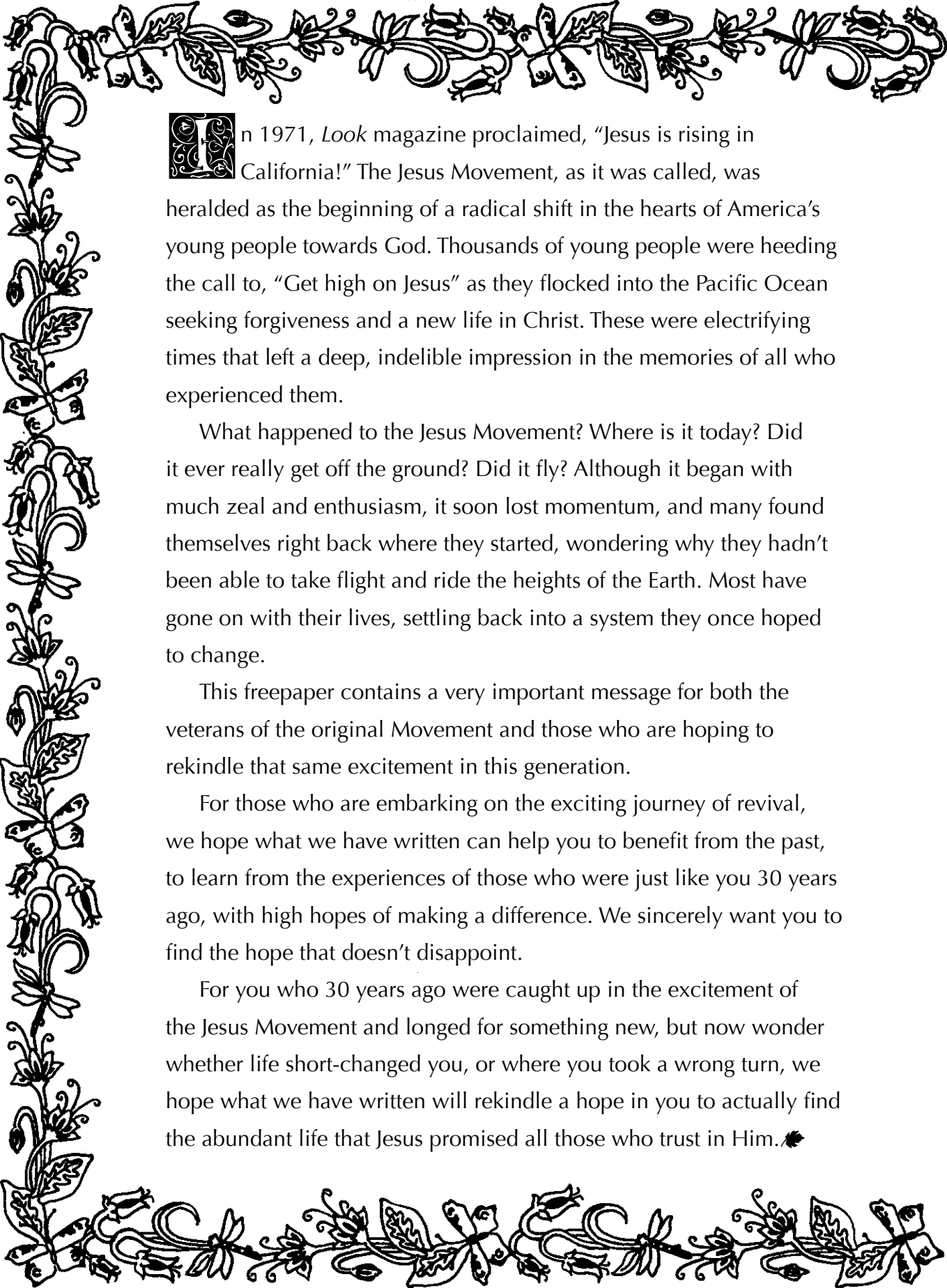
FREE

WINTER 2003

Why She Didn't Fly



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

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 various petal shapes and leaf designs.

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 30 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 One —

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Ocean baptism — Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Photograph by Jack Cheetham. Used with permission.

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Summer 1977, New Orleans, Trinity Christian Community

Heart pounding, full of desire to follow this amazing, radical Jesus that I read about in the Gospels, I stood in the water singing with all of my heart. I was confident that at the end of that last “No turning back...” the young pastor whose arm was around me would plunge me under that water, and I would never be the same again. I fingered the silver and turquoise ring on my right hand. I had bought it in the Fall of 1972 at the Ann Arbor Hash Festival where I had pushed past my nagging conscience and grabbed onto the tail of the ‘60s movement in my desperate desire to be part of something exciting. Now somehow that ring symbolized for me all the selfishness and futility of those past five years. “The world behind me, the cross before me...”

With silent determination, I slipped the ring off my finger and let it sink to the bottom. No one saw me do it. No turning back, no turning back... I emerged from the water jumping for joy, full of zeal to follow Jesus, one of countless young people touched by the Jesus Movement of the 1970s.

*I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
No turning back, no turning back.
Though none go with me, still I will follow,
Though none go with me, still I will follow,
Though none go with me, still I will follow,
No turning back, no turning back.
The world behind me, the cross before me,
The world behind me, the cross before me,
The world behind me, the cross before me,
No turning back, no turning back!*

Snapshots: One Man's Journey

**Fall 1979, South Hamilton, Massachusetts,
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary**

The strong, deep chorus of male voices resonating in the chapel of the old convent sent chills down my spine. I pinched myself as I left the glorious chapel service and walked across the majestic hilltop to the library to study. Was it real? Was I really in seminary, sitting at the feet of the great Bible scholars, being trained for a lifetime of ministry? The library atmosphere enveloped me. Its inexhaustible supply of books was intoxicating — systematic theologies, commentaries, biographies, church histories, Calvin's Institutes...

It was hard to concentrate on my church history assignment, not only because of the sea of books surrounding me, but because of the escalating voices of two students having an intense argument behind me. It was the typical Calvinist/Arminian debate — election versus free will — and they were going at it “hammer & tongs.” Somehow that moment vividly represented to me the whole bloody history of the church. That very morning I had been troubled to hear of John Calvin having Michael Servetus burned at the stake for refusing to believe in the Trinity. The professor only lamented the fact that Christians no longer had that same passion to be “Defenders of the Faith” like John Calvin.

Over the course of that year my thoughts increasingly troubled me, and my doubts grew that the lofty realm of seminary had anything to do with the simple but profound love of the Carpenter from Galilee and His rough-hewn disciples who turned their world upside down. I left seminary, longing for the life of those first disciples.

*A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
Our helper he, amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe
doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.
~ Martin Luther*

**Fall 1982, Dorchester, Massachusetts,
Prince of Peace Fellowship**

Unable to hold back my tears, I took down the sign I had carved by hand less than two years before: *Prince of Peace Fellowship, Assembly of God*. Our inner-city house church had suffered a fatal heart attack. Once shining lights of the Assemblies of God Home Missions outreach, my wife and I had burned out, unable to kindle a fire in the hearts of our little congregation. We had thought we could start from scratch and do things right, not weighed down with all the traditional church trappings. We had thought that we all had the same heart, to live together in community and share all we had in common. We were sadly mistaken.

I put the sign in the basement of our tired old house, unable to throw it away. For the next eight years I would cry every time I looked at that sign, because of the great hopes we had for our little church. Failure was a bitter pill to swallow.

*My flesh is tired of seeking God,
but on my knees I'll stay
I want to be a pleasing child,
until that final day
My mind is full of many thoughts
that clutter and confuse
But standing firm, I will prevail,
in faith that I'll be used
~ Keith Green*

**Spring 1984, Framingham, Massachusetts,
Vineyard Christian Fellowship**

Comfort settled over me like an old flannel quilt.

The Jesus Movement had mellowed with age, and its soothing melodies were like an anesthetic on my ecclesiastical wounds. Kenn Gulliksen's soft eyes and warm smile surveyed his devoted followers, tilling their hearts for the seeds of introspection he would sow. Newcomers on the scene, my wife and I waited in eager expectation of heavenly words from this legendary teacher.

The first portion was rather strange fare. We heard that all of our wrong ways, our deep insecurities, and our emotional wounds were inflicted upon us by our parents, siblings, and other close relations. We're all victims of neglect, abuse, and injustice, and need deep inner healing. Jesus wants to journey back with us to revisit each painful memory, visualize it, and let him heal it, helping us to forgive each one who hurt us. Ahhh... how soothing! So that was my problem. I'm just a helpless victim. It's really not my fault. Let's see... where can I place the blame?

From week to week the menu never changed and the seductive savor of that sentimental sauté gave way to its bitter aftertaste. Introspection is a suicide journey and we were in the dining car, watching our past go by, increasingly sensing that we didn't want to go where this train was taking us. We got off at the next stop, disoriented, disillusioned, waiting for the next train in some other direction.

*God of all comfort
God of all grace
We have come to seek You
We have come to seek Your face.
~ John Wimber*

Snapshots

Summer 1987, Dorchester, Massachusetts, A Local Baptist Church

It was only a few blocks away from our house, so why not give it a try? An old traditional Baptist church, most of the congregation over 70, most of the pews empty... they'd probably appreciate a nice young family like ours.

They did. The old folks loved us. The young pastor loved us. We could do no wrong... almost. We had been there almost a year when it came time for the annual church business meeting. But who was that strange man at the head table? He's the church treasurer? He's on the Board of Trustees? Why have we never seen him in church? Oh, it's not his thing. He only comes on Easter. Then what's he doing on the church board? He's a stock broker; he's good with finances. We got the message. Serve, sing, encourage, pay tithes. Don't rock the boat.

It was hard for John, the young, zealous, Calvinist pastor. His intensity in the pulpit worked against his approval rating. In fact, hearing his sermon one Sunday morning I came to a startling realization. I'd heard that argument before somewhere... in that very same voice... *He was the Calvinist student having that bitter argument in the Gordon-Conwell library!* It made the hair tingle on the back of my neck.

It took less than three years for the "old guard" to give poor John his walking papers. He begged us to walk with him and they begged us to stay. We had given our hearts to both and the bitter schism ripped us apart. It was time to say good-bye again.

*O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.
~ Robert Robinson*

Winter 1990, Boston, Massachusetts, Park Street Church

We dropped off our children for Sunday School and walked down the street to pass the hour having coffee and croissants at Café Tremont before taking our customary pew in the balcony. Ten years of bitter disappointments had drained all the urban missionary zeal out of us, to be replaced by the comforts and travels of my thriving consulting business. Nature abhors a vacuum.

An arousing Bach organ prelude reverberated through the grand old building as it filled with a thousand or more in their finery. Ken Olsen, deacon in the church and billionaire founder of Digital Equipment Corporation, took his customary pew not far from me. What on earth were we doing here?

Seeking a quiet refuge from the battles of small church politics and the pressure to be and do everything, we thought we could just disappear into the homogenous laity of this bastion of Evangelicalism. We sat back in the pew and went along for the ride. It was quite comfortable... until we got a whiff of the seamy underbelly of the church. Lurking beneath its veneer of virtue and respectability was a whole world of sexual intrigue. We slipped quietly out the back door. Hardly anyone noticed.

*They teach a vain and false deceit,
Which is to God and all his truth opposed;
And what the willful mind conceiveth,
O sorrow which the church so sorely vexeth
That must usurp the Bible's place.
The one now chooseth this, the other that,
And reason's foolishness is their full scope.
They are just like the tombs of dead men,
Which, though they may be outward fair,
Mere stench and mould contain within them
And all uncleanness show when opened.
~ Johann Sebastian Bach*

One Man's Journey

June 1990, Lausanne, Switzerland, A Lonely House Overlooking Lake Geneva

The children's toys greeted me as I returned to the empty house to embrace a month of solitude. A death in the family had called my wife and children back to the States, and the death at work in my own soul called me to the brink of despair.

How I dreaded coming home to that empty house! But why? I was no stranger to lonely hotel rooms. But somehow this was different. The smells and effects of my wife and children haunted me. They were there, but not there. Loneliness gripped me like a bandit. Every evening after work found me lingering at my favorite café... another glass of wine... a cup of coffee... a chocolate... a slow walk by the lake... until darkness drove me home to fight off the cruel comfort of the television.

Oh, God, are you there? Where are you? Why are you so far from me?
The Bible brought me no comfort. Everything my eye fell upon condemned me.
But I was saved, wasn't I? Wasn't I? Was I?
If I was, where was my Helper?
But I was... helpless.
Oh, God, please help me!

*My eyes are dry, my faith is old,
My heart is hard, my prayers are cold,
And I know how I ought to be,
Alive to you, and dead to me.
Oh what can be done,
for an old heart like mine,
Soften it up, with oil and wine.
The oil is You, Your Spirit of love,
Please wash me anew,
in the wine of Your blood.
~ Keith Green*

August 1990, Dorchester, Massachusetts, Our Old House

Eleven years worth of possessions took some time to pack. "Imagine no possessions..." John Lennon had said. We would have to settle for hiding them in the basement. The house was for rent, and we were going back to Switzerland to stay. Trouble was, whom could we trust as tenants with all of our possessions in the basement?

The umpteenth prospect shook his head sadly, "Too much house for me." Pausing briefly before driving off, he added, "If you're really in a pinch, you might want to check out that community over on Melville Avenue. They're really nice, and they always seem to need more space. They believe the Bible, too. Good luck!"

The next morning found me knocking on their door. "What? You want us to live in your house while you're gone? How kind of you! But don't you want to know what we're about? Here, read this freepaper. We'll send someone over to see you tomorrow!"

A week later we were flying back to Switzerland, having left our house in the care of this peculiar people we hardly knew but completely trusted. "Please visit our brothers and sisters in France!" they urged us. We were determined to do just that at the first opportunity.

*There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole.
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin-sick soul.
~ an old Negro spiritual*

Snapshots

October 1990, Sus, France, Tabitha's Place

My weary eyes opened to the breathtaking sight of an ancient walled city rising above the mist as we rumbled across the countryside of southern France. One by one, my wife and children awoke, full of anticipation for what lay ahead. Waiting for us at the station was a warm-hearted, full-bearded German man who kept smiling at us and saying, "Wonderful!" as he loaded our bags into an old Peugeot van.

As we turned into the gates of the old chateau we were greeted by 150 men, women, and children of all ages and nationalities jumping up and down and cheering as they swarmed around us, ushered us into the entrance hall, and served us a delicious meal. Thus began the week that forever changed our lives. Had we stepped back 1950 years in time to the first community of disciples described in the Bible?¹ Or even more wonderful — could it be that the very same life and spirit had been restored in our day?

In the light of this life, the darkness of my soul had nowhere to hide. It stared me in the face and reduced me to a quivering lump on the bed. All those years had not given me life. I had only walked according to the course of this world,² still a slave to my flesh.

But, oh, Joy! Life was here! Love was here! I had found the Treasure hidden in the field! I would go and sell all that I had and buy that field!

*This is how I came to my land,
I remember our God,
And His words that went
deep into my heart.*

*Our children, our wives,
packages held in our hands,
Some came on mules and
some on their own two feet.*

*I know this is the way,
I know that it was shown to me.
Abba please, light up the way,
Help me for I'm coming back,
Comin' back to my land.
~ An old Israeli song*

November 1990, Lausanne, Switzerland, A No-Longer-Lonely House

Determined to disentangle myself as gracefully and quickly as possible from my consulting contracts, we returned to Switzerland with the hope of a new life just ahead.

"Are you crazy? You're going to lose everything you've worked so hard to gain!"

"You hardly know these people! They're probably a dangerous cult!"

"At least keep some money in a Swiss bank in case you change your mind..."

It was unrelenting. How could we withstand it? Please, come and help us!

Relief came in an old *Land Rover* — six radiant faces beaming at us as we flew down the walkway to greet them. Oh, you're here at last! Thank you for coming!

Eagerly we called all our friends, "Come and meet the ones who are living out the Scriptures! Then you'll understand!" But they didn't understand. They all left the house, shaking their heads, leaving us alone with our new friends.

Evening fell with a blanket of snow. One of our friends opened his Bible and with simple grace explained our Creator's purpose and plan for His people. I wanted with all my heart to be one of them. Faith had finally worked its way to the core of my heart and up to my lips. Down to the lake we all went with great joy, where I and my faithful wife surrendered our lives in the frigid waters, crying out to the only One who can save. The warm hands of our new family received us from that icy womb and took us home.

*He's given me hope, hope that does not disappoint,
He's given me hope, for me to go beyond this point,
And now I'm grateful, grateful to be a part of this life of love.
He's given me friends, friends that can understand,
He's given me friends, friends that gave me a hand,
And now I'm grateful, grateful to be a part of this life of love.
He's given His love, when I really saw my need,
He's given His love, brought me in His family,
And now I'm grateful, grateful to be a part of this life of love!
And now I'm grateful, grateful to be a part of this life of love!
And now I'm grateful, grateful to be a part of this life of love!*

¹ Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-35 ² Ephesians 2:2

One Man's Journey

November 2002, Groton, Massachusetts, An Old House on Main Street

As we warmed ourselves in the glow of the crackling fire on the hearth, my faithful wife, six wonderful daughters, and a few close friends recalled the amazing way we had come to live in this cozy old house. It had been given into our care by a sensitive woman who was touched by the love and warmth of our people. Somehow she knew that she could trust us to care for this pleasant house that circumstances prevented her from living in. She had no idea, as she handed me the keys, that I had done the very same thing twelve years before. We hope someday to win her heart as well.

Such is the way our life grows... organically... hearts touching hearts, passing on the faith that grafts each needy soul into the fruitful vine of our common life.

Ours is not an easy life, but it is deeply satisfying. Love is our home, forgiveness the healing balm that makes our life sustainable. And as I watch my daughters grow into pure young women, full of passion for the kingdom we are building together, my heart overflows with thankfulness for the lovingkindness of our God. He has proven Himself true to me for heeding these words:

"He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor." (John 12:25-26)

I hope my story will encourage you to come and serve the Master where He is. 🍁

*Love is our home,
a place to receive healing.
Brokenness of heart opens the way,
And forgiveness washes all.
Love is our home.*

*It's filled with brothers and sisters,
Sharing what we have on our hearts,
Causing us to grow in love.
No more separation, or fear of rejection,
For we have entered into
a simple love affair of the heart.*

David



Tabitha's Place -- Sus, France





As I grew up, I never could understand why my parents were never satisfied with the churches we attended.

Child of the '70s

I am a child of the '70s. I write that not just because I was born in 1975, but because I am a *product* of the 1970s. I am the result of all that was in my father's heart during that time. The spark that was in him, the seed of hope that he had, all that he longed for he passed on to me. The burning desire he had in the '70s went deep into me as a child and stayed with me as I grew up.

My father was a radical Christian hippie of the '70s. He was one of the zealous, eager 20-something-year-olds of that time that helped to bring about the Jesus Movement. A young Christian, he set out on a course to truly devote his life to God and sought for a place to pour out his appreciation for the message proclaimed to him. He wanted more than to just settle into the status-quo Christian experience of

attending a Bible-believing church and holding a 9-5 job.

He came to the place where many others with similar hopes and desires came: the West Coast of America. Many other young people were flocking to the West Coast at that time, seeking to be a part of something real. So many communities and ministries came into being at that time; so many had hope to re-establish a simple devotion to Jesus just like the early believers in the Book of Acts. They longed for a vibrant life, distanced from the hypocrisy and lifelessness, the stale traditions that they perceived in mainstream Christianity. They longed for something true and genuine that wasn't fake and wouldn't disappoint them. They wanted something real.

My father and mother met and married in one of the Shiloh House

communities in Oregon. There they shared a communal life planting trees, picking strawberries, and evangelizing wherever and whenever they could. But even that simple, promising life proved to be disappointing, as soon the Shiloh organization dissolved over tax issues and questions about the authority of the leadership. The community members all went their separate ways. Burned out and disappointed, eventually my parents and some other couples moved to the Midwest where they tried to start their own house church and ministry for young Christian couples.

As I grew up in the Midwest, my family visited literally dozens of churches ranging the gamut of doctrine and denominational affiliation. I could not understand why my parents were never satisfied with any of the churches we

visited. Certainly a few of them were good enough for me, since I had young friends there and the atmosphere was exciting enough to satisfy my young heart. But looking back with more life experience and a deeper understanding of spiritual matters, I can see that with every step my parents were disappointed. They weren't finding anything that was satisfying or fulfilling. Never again could they find that early spark, that promise of a life of togetherness and love. They had tasted something early on along the West Coast in the Jesus Movement and so desperately wanted it to be enduring and lasting.

Over time, my parents stopped looking. They stopped searching and eventually drifted not only from their spiritual pursuit, but also from one another. Soon afterward they divorced. The years have ticked by. Now on his third marriage, my father has settled for a Bible-believing church and the middle-class American dream of owning his own business. He has settled for that which he probably told himself he would never settle.

In the meantime, I went out on my own as a young adult and wanted nothing to do with organized religion due to the many overwhelming disappointments my family had suffered within the ranks of the Christian churches. Deep down inside I still believed in Jesus, but I could not bring myself to go to church or participate in what I knew had never satisfied my parents and wouldn't satisfy me. I drifted during high school and college, numb and detached from anything relating to the "Christian experience."

But something stirred in my heart after graduating from college. Somehow the hope that my father longed for in the '70s had been passed on to me. I wanted to realize what he had never truly found. I wanted the life described in the Bible. Whatever the truth was, I wanted it. I knew that a successful

middle-class life wasn't satisfying and wasn't what I wanted; I knew there was more to life than that. So I began seeking, searching, groping to find the truth.

I knew that the truth wasn't in the mainstream Christian experience because it had never satisfied my father and had never produced anything lasting in my life. So I began searching outside of the mainstream of Christianity — looking at the Messianic movement, Seventh Day Adventism, house churches, and many other groups and movements that were positioning

I had an innate sense that Jesus wasn't a part of the mainstream and that He never compelled others to join the mainstream. I knew that I would find Him and His true followers outside of the camp.

themselves outside of the mainstream. Somehow I had an innate sense that Jesus wasn't a part of the mainstream and that He never compelled others to join the mainstream. I knew that He couldn't be found in the mainstream — I would find Him and His true followers outside of the camp.

After searching far and wide and receiving many disappointments, I finally found what I was looking for — not only what my father had searched for, but also what so many in the '70s sought for in the Jesus Movement. Someone told me of a web site — www.commonwealthofisrael.org — that was written by a community of believers who followed the Messiah. With great interest and excitement I devoured what was written there. The life described on that site seemed almost fantastic or unbelievable: a life of togetherness where people daily lay down their lives for one another and also receive salvation with the hope

of being purified to meet their coming King. What intrigued me the most wasn't the doctrine I read about or even the lifestyle that was portrayed; rather, it was the promise that there actually was a place where people loved one another. It seemed like the fulfillment of a dream or long-sought desire.

I had to go and see for myself whether what was written on that web site was true, or just another disappointment. Going there, I saw that what they had written was true. It wasn't an exaggeration or something

false: *I found the life that so many longed for in the Jesus Movement!* I found what my father had looked so long for, but had never come to realize. So I have joined them and have come home to a community of people who love one another with a simple love from the heart, a people who have connected with the Spirit that produces a life of true love and unity, based on the foundation of the true Gospel.

This life is sustaining and enduring and will not fade away. The spark of hope *will not disappoint* and will not pass away. It is being kindled into a white-hot flame of love that will endure not only for the remainder of this age, but also for all eternity. Because it is truly founded on the Rock, it is a hope you can put all of your trust in and not be disappointed. 🌿

Cal

WHITE BIRD

*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*

*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.

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?

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 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. ❀



ROOTS

Yes, the hippie exterior eventually wore off, exposing the roots that were still there.

The energy, vision, and passion of the children of the '60s will never be forgotten. But there is one very big question that has been debated but perhaps unanswered... "Why did the Movement never get off the ground?" For most of us who were there it was like being on an airplane, sitting on the runway, with everyone in the plane getting high while waiting for the plane to take off. We were high on the summer of love, the hope of a better world, an awakening of our consciousness that expanded our horizons with vision for our planet. When we looked out the windows all we could see was mist from the smoke that ascended from our water pipes. So we couldn't really tell whether we were off the ground yet. We seemed to be moving down the runway, and everyone kept assuring us that the plane would lift off the ground at any moment. But that moment never came. When the smoke cleared and we looked out the window, we realized that we were still on the ground.

The majority of the children of the '60s came from middle-class American families, with middle-class American roots and middle-class American values ingrained in them since childhood. So everybody was frantically throwing off their parents' values in an attempt to be free. Surely all the LSD trips, all the intellectual enlightenment, all the swelling emotions charged by the meaningful songs of our prophets were enough for us to create a newer and better world.

We all wanted to "come together,

right now!" We looked for a voice to unite us. We thought we had heard that voice, but our coming together was only temporary. By the time we reached thirty we had lost our fire. As we young hippies got older our need for middle-class comforts began to outweigh all the enlightenment we had received. "Don't trust anyone over thirty" was a forewarning of what we'd be like when we reached thirty. It proved to be true. Our voice was silenced after we got what our parents wanted for us all along — security, success, becoming a valuable asset to the prized heritage of middle-class America. We became a part of the American Dream we had protested against in our youth. Ever since that time our generation has tried to justify yuppie success or the compromise of getting our own thirty-acre kingdoms. We're still scattered, confused travelers stumbling through this life.

Yes, the hippie exterior eventually wore off, exposing the roots that were still there. The power to break free from the rotten, selfish seed inside our souls, passed on to us from our middle-class fathers, was missing. It was like wearing a mask that you think is really you, but when you pull it off, you see that underneath the mask you're a business man just like your daddy. After all is said and done the love of money has proven to be the failure of the Movement. No student is greater than his teacher but when he is fully trained he will be just like his teacher. You are what you are. You can't escape the seed passed on from

one generation to the next. It's a law. It never fails.

In the '60s did you ever walk down the street stoned out of your mind, thinking you were free from the Establishment around you? Did you ever ridicule the guy in the three-piece suit and laugh to yourself thinking you were free? In the midst of a scene like this, did it ever dawn on you that you are just like him? To realize that what's in you is no different from what is in your parents is the first step to the open door of freedom. The same corrupt seed has produced the same selfish root in all of us. It doesn't matter whether we are comfortable business men or alternative hippies seeking a new and better way. That old root has to be cut off and die and a new and incorruptible seed must be planted in the human heart. This is the only hope for mankind.

We need a new seed that will grow into a radically new life. Jesus was the first man who possessed that new seed. He was the beginning of the new creation that will come together into a real unity. He has the power to break the old root and give us a new beginning. If anyone truly has Jesus' life and spirit breathed into him, he will be a new creation. He'll be gathered together with others who are already gathered in a never-ending demonstration of love. The life in the first church in Jerusalem proved they had this new seed in them. It is well documented in Acts 2 and 4. Finding this life today is the only hope that will not disappoint. 🌱

SHATTERED



DREAMS

Between 1967 and 1972 the Vietnam War caused a deep unrest in the youth of America to come to the surface. Along with the three assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy in a five-year period (1963-1968), growing anti-war sentiment catapulted that restlessness into a movement that could not be contained. It broke out on the Berkeley campus through the Free Speech movement. Almost overnight, opposition to the war became the catalyst for speaking out against the infrastructure of Nixon America and the American culture.

At first it was not so clear that there was an underlying spiritual hunger in the youth of America. Their collective cry reverberated feelings that “We are not our parents,” “We are not university trustees,” “We are not American capitalists,” and “We do not want to die in a senseless war.” They had given up on the values of past generations and were willing to strike a new course, even though they did not know where it would lead. They saw established Christianity as having nothing and doing nothing about the problems they were concerned about. The last thing they wanted to do was to sit on a pew and hear another sermon that fueled the status quo of mainstream American life.

There was also a very strong reaction against the misuse of America’s great wealth. The ‘60s was the height of the empire, a time when the government and the people had access to the most money ever available. But in the eyes of this generation, America’s wealth was being squandered building a war machine and fattening the pockets of giant corporations while many lived beneath the poverty line in a near welfare state. Neither the politicians nor the preachers were doing anything to end the economic injustice this generation saw all around them. This environment was the hotbed of rebellion for that whole generation.

Love was the answer! LSD was the way! A revolution had begun! “Make love, not war” was the philosophy that caused the youth at Berkeley and all across the land to shed their parents’ values, their religion, and their American dream. They cast off restraint and followed their own dreams. In their search for a place to belong they par-

ticipated in “acid tests”, went to Merry Pranksters events, “Human Be-Ins” in Golden Gate Park, Whole Earth Festivals, Grateful Dead shows, and experiments with communal living.

But it didn’t take long for the dreams to shatter. The leadership of the Movement was a disaster, old-fashioned greed began to raise its ugly head, and the LSD didn’t work. Drugs only eased



The last thing they wanted to do was to sit on a pew and hear another sermon that fueled the status quo of mainstream American life.

the pain but didn’t change the reality. John Lennon’s song *Imagine* was only good ideas with no way to attain to them. Free love didn’t last, so neither did relationships. A lot of young people were deeply damaged by this. They still wanted love. They wanted something radical. They wanted something real, not just a utopian ideal.

Even before the hippie movement crashed, the preachers were ready to cash in on it. They, too, showed up for

the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley and took advantage of the opportunity to speak out on campus. They latched onto the same themes of the ‘60s and pointed the disillusioned hippies to Jesus. These preachers had long hair, wore beads and blue jeans. Through their dark shades and hip talk, they promised these searching young people that Jesus would give them

love, he would solve their problems and he would heal the damage from the failed Movement of the radical hippies.

These brand new “Jesus Freaks” heeded the call, thinking they were being led out of the camp of dead religion that had no answers and no life and into the camp of Jesus where they would find the love they were looking for. This was the real revolution... the Jesus Revolution! They had finally found a life of love – Jesus’ love! It looked so real and it felt so real to them. After all, these preachers were part of them, or so it seemed. Gone was the rigid structure of organized religion they had known growing up. They were not meeting in church buildings but on

beaches and in parks. They weren’t singing stuffy old hymns, but *their own* music, with beautiful melodies played on acoustic guitars. Love, peace, and harmony were

possible and they believed it couldn’t fail. They were getting high on Jesus and didn’t need anything else. There was a free-flowing stream of good feelings, good vibes, and praise to the Jesus that made it happen. Yes! This was real, and this was going to last forever.

The Jesus People thought they had truly escaped the mainstream camp of dead religion that Jesus said you had to leave in order to follow Him.¹ However, as time went on, the beach ministries

moved into buildings and things began to shift back toward what the Jesus Freaks thought they had left behind. Some old skeletons began to raise their ugly heads. More than a few fell into sexual immorality, and the age-old plague handed down for generations in Christendom – division.

History is a great teacher, if we will pay attention. Time and time again, the voice that has led disillusioned believers out of their dead churches has not had the authority to restore the church to the dynamic life of love it once had in the beginning. It has not had the power or the authority to call people outside the camp and into the place where Jesus is, because those making the call are entrenched inside the

divided camp themselves.² The Jesus Movement was no exception. This is the history and legacy of Christianity.

But the spirit of Christianity is a pow-

erful drug. Now that the Jesus Movement has proven to be just a more streamlined, contemporary expression of the divided and corrupt religious camp

most thought they were leaving behind, it would be fair to ask old Jesus Freaks if they got hoodwinked into smoking the spiritual opium that sedates the masses.

Getting high on Jesus has, 30 years later, led the throngs of people “saved” in the

Jesus Movement back into the status quo. In fact, the Jesus Movement has become the status quo for thousands in mainstream America. The spirit that

“The more spiritual a person becomes, 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 in the Body.

“We’re all one.” Chuck Smith – Calvary Chapel

erful drug. Even though it doesn’t have the authority to call anyone out of the camp, it does seduce those in its ranks into accepting the old established norms of society and




used to burn people at the stake for disagreeing with the favored denomination now numbs its followers to the point that they don't even notice when others divide. Chuck Smith, the founder of Calvary Chapel, deals this drug regularly to his followers. He even says it right on his website: "The more spiritual a person becomes, 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 in the Body. We're all one." Now that spirit isn't allowed to kill people who disagree, so it must be content to sedate them into staying inside the camp, becoming ever more comfortably conformed

to the traditions and ways of the world around them. These drugged followers accept Billy Graham's kissing the ring of the Pope. They accept their pastors committing adultery without stepping

be a witness of love demonstrated in hundreds of communities that are in true unity, at least not until Jesus comes back. If this is true, it means that the Holy Spirit is not great enough to bring about John 17:23, so another spirit leads Christians to just overlook their differences.

But Jesus prophesied that a visible witness of the kingdom will be raised up in the last days to be a light to the na-

tions that puts the evidence of God's love before all the nations – and then and only then will the end come. When this happens, it will be a Jesus movement that never ends, that will not be given to another people.³ When God raises up true messengers on the earth that are actually sent by Him, they will have the authority to call His sheep out of the divided camp of lifeless religion, just as Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus Himself did. This is the voice of the true Shepherd that has authority to save people from their sins and from this wicked and perverse society.⁴

This voice is the one that will give hope to old Jesus Freaks if they still have a nagging conscience about what the Jesus Movement has become. True sheep have nagging dissent in their heart – not rebellion, but dissent — because they really want to do God's will. True sheep hear His voice and they never quite get high on the spirit that tells them division in the church doesn't matter. They know they are lonely and that they really don't have the radical life Jesus called His disciples to spend their lives establishing.⁵ 

True sheep hear His voice and they never quite get high on the spirit that tells them division in the church doesn't matter.

down. They barely muster the strength to discipline priests who sexually abuse children. This is the ecumenical spirit that is taking over the world.

True sheep know they are trapped by this spirit in Christianity but they don't see a way out. Always, always, always the tendency is to believe it can't happen, that there can't



¹ Mt 21:43; Heb 13:13

² Jn 12:26

³ Dan 2:44

⁴ Acts 2:37-42

⁵ Mt 24:13-14

WHY THE JESUS MOVEMENT NEVER GOT OFF THE GROUND

The Jesus Movement of the late '60s and early '70s was a spiritual phenomenon, the culmination of social, spiritual, and political unrest for Americans and indeed for most western cultures of the world. . .

Its vibrancy and vision held the promise for spiritual renewal and lighted the way for many disillusioned young people who felt trapped within the religious ranks of established Christianity. The fire and passion of the Jesus Movement could hardly be ignored as hundreds of thousands flocked together to form communities, coffee houses, and street ministries throughout North America and abroad. It offered hope for an answer to the declining moral and spiritual climate in society at large.

The Jesus Movement shot off with a “bang”, but like an airplane revving its faulty engines, readying for take-off, it was doomed before it could even lift off the ground. Although it seemed to take off, when the smoke cleared they were still right where they started — just going to church on Sunday.

Now, some thirty years later, many feel their souls devastated, wondering about the gospel they put their trust in. It had promised life, but in reality it proved to be an empty promise. Much like the *Hippie-crits*,¹ they have settled into a life of compromise and the false comfort of materialism — the very things they once hated with a passion. Their spiritual lives are permeated with the same old complacency as that of their fathers, having accepted a religion steeped in man-made tradition

and formality, but devoid of life. The Jesus Movement did not take them back to the original way. It tried to revive the life of Acts 2 and 4 without restoring the foundation it was built upon.

How the Way was Lost Long Ago

There was a process, a transition between the way of the original church and the way of Christianity today, but the critical change occurred long ago.

The first-century church was founded on love and thrived on prophecy — the strengthening, encouragement, and comfort² that came from the words they spoke to one another. The revelation they received kept the church alive with vision and understanding. Prophecy was instruction for the church to hold fast their confidence and boast in Christ, as expressed through their outspokenness and freedom to speak publicly in the assembly (unhesitating, with frankness, candidness, and without reservation) thus proving themselves to be God’s House.³ In so doing they would speak the very utterances of God,⁴ and the church would continue to progress on the foundation that was laid by the apostles and prophets.⁵ If all prophesied, when an unbeliever came into their gatherings he would be convicted by all he heard.⁶

However, their love for each other

and their devotion to the apostles’ teaching began to diminish. In all of their communities everywhere, people became silent towards each other with their many offenses and divisions. They failed to stimulate one another daily to love and good deeds to bring grace and encouragement to each other.⁷ They went on in pretense and form in their gatherings, and the Holy Spirit was quenched.⁸

When the first-century church lost their outspokenness, they not only lost their freedom to speak, but their lampstand as well.⁹ No longer was this church the Body of Messiah, but it *became*¹⁰ an organized, religious institution. Between the years AD 100 and 500 the original pattern of the church is documented as having “changed almost beyond recognition.”¹¹ In the midst of this institutional atmosphere the Nicolaitans¹² (the main spokesmen) among them found opportunity to gain an advantage. As apathy and indifference drifted in, these self-appointed leaders usurped Christ in the heart of each member. What developed out of the Nicolaitan influence was the clergy-laity system called Christianity.

The Clergy-Laity System

The clergy-laity system is in direct contradiction to how the Body of Christ was supposed to function.¹³ God

foundation laid by the early apostles was destroyed by these “deceitful workers” (2 Cor 11:13) and replaced with an entirely new foundation and presentation of the gospel.

¹¹ *The Lion Book of Christian Thought*, by Tony Lane, p. 8

¹² Rev 2:6,15

¹³ 1 Cor 14:24-26; Rev 2:6,15

¹ *Hippie-crit* — a former hippie from the Hippie Movement who has returned to the basic values and lifestyle of the “establishment” he once despised.

² 1 Cor 14:3

³ Heb 3:6; 1 Cor 14:26; Ps 116; Heb 2:12; Eph 3:12

⁴ 1 Pet 4:11

⁵ Eph 2:20-22

⁶ 1 Cor 14:24-25

⁷ Heb 3:13; 10:23-25; 12:14-15

⁸ Eph 4:29-32

⁹ Rev 2:1,4,5

¹⁰ *Became* in Rev 18:2 implies transition.

Transition took place when the first communities died out, but false apostles continued preaching a distorted gospel, but within the new context of an organized, Nicolaitan system of clergy-laity. The original pattern and

cannot and will not dwell wherever this system exists – even if it is proclaimed in His Name. He does not recognize or acknowledge it.¹⁴ Just as the religious leaders of Judaism refused to accept Christ's judgment¹⁵ that their religion was a dead system built on legalities and man-made traditions, so it has been with Christendom down through the centuries.¹⁶ Despite their self-confidence, there is no record that the vibrant life of the first-century church, as described in the book of Acts,¹⁷ lasted into the second century. The early church fell and was cut off from grace,¹⁸ losing their lampstand¹⁹ of illumination.²⁰ Since they did not remain on the rock Peter was on, being obedient to the Master and receiving revelation from Him,²¹ Jesus' promise no longer applied to them: they ceased to be the church which the gates of hell would not prevail against.²² The voice and spirit of its members had been *silenced*.²³

Deceitful Workers

Nicolaitan literally means, "Conquer the people," and so it was with the original church. By the end of the first

century apostate²⁴ leaders within the church had conquered the people. They did so by taking the message of truth, the gospel of salvation, out of the hands of true apostles and distorting it by craft and cunning, disguising themselves as *ministers of righteousness*.²⁵ Seeking their own glory, they desired to create a following and a name for themselves.²⁶ They spread a false Jesus and a false gospel which eventually destroyed the simple devotion and purity to Christ and to the apostles.²⁷ This is how the First Church was deceived, even as the first Eve fell.

Towards the latter end of the first century, the Nicolaitan leaders brought the church as a whole into apostasy. An apostate is a person who is no longer devoted to the apostles and their teaching. He does not stand in agreement with them, but is disloyal, wanting to bring another anointing contrary to that of the apostles.²⁸

Diotrephes, the man John writes about in his third letter, is an example of an apostate or Nicolaitan type. He was turning people against John, and would put people out of the church

¹⁴ Mt 7:21-23

¹⁵ Mt 16:6-12; 23:1-36; Lk 11:39-44,52,53,54

¹⁶ But read for yourself what God has said in Rev 2:6,15 about the clergy-laity system and His judgment of an adulterous church, Rev 18:9-10.

¹⁷ Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-35

¹⁸ Rom 11:22

¹⁹ Rev 2:5

²⁰ *Lampstand* means the light of the Holy Spirit's presence and the revelation He gave in that church locality. When the lampstand was removed, the presence of the Holy Spirit and the revelation He gave to their hearts and minds was taken out of that location for the church.

²¹ Mt 16:16-17; Jn 14:21; Mk 10:28

²² Mt 16:18

²³ 3 Jn 1:9-10; Rev 2:6,15

²⁴ An *apostate* is one who is no longer devoted to the apostles and their teaching.

²⁵ 2 Cor 11:13-15

²⁶ Acts 20:28-30; Gal 1:6-9; 2 Pet 2:1-3; 2 Cor 11:13; Phil 1:15,17

²⁷ 2 Cor 11:2-3

²⁸ 1 Jn 2:24-27

The Jesus Movement shot off with a "bang", but like an airplane revving its faulty engines, readying for take-off, it was doomed before it could even lift off the ground.



who were loyal to the apostles. He loved to be first among the brothers and would not accept what John had to say. He did not submit himself to or acknowledge apostolic authority. He unjustly accused the apostles with wicked words and would not receive those sent to the church by the apostles, and he forbade all who desired to do so. It seems that John had written a letter of instruction to the church, but Diotrephes refused to read it.

Such was the power struggle that went on among the false leaders in the early church. That is why Peter wrote a universal letter to be read to the churches about the quality of leadership and who was approved and who wasn't.²⁹ Diotrephes and men like him were obviously not those who proved themselves examples to the flock, but rather those who sought for sordid gain, and were disapproved by our Father.³⁰

These men produced the religious system that is rooted in division and deception, holding to a form of godliness, but denying the power of the Holy Spirit to create unity.³¹ The nature of organized religion is revealed through its denominational schisms. The church system spawned by Diotrephes and the like is controlled by an authority structure that hobnobs with the governments of this world.³² There are no longer prophets or apostles, let alone a simple devotion to the Lord.

Repairing the Breach of 1900 Years — Going Back to the Blueprints

The only way back to God is to return to His original purpose and plan. The vast and complex infrastructures of Christianity (which could be likened

to a city or megalopolis) stand in stark contrast to the original blueprint of how the living church community was to be established according to what Christ and the apostles themselves commanded.³³ Community, as established by the apostles as a result of love being poured out in the hearts of the disciples,³⁴ is what made the distinction between those who served Him and those who did not.³⁵ Those who believed their message were completely devoted to Christ and the apostles.³⁶ They contributed all their wealth, time, energies, and possessions as an expression of their love for their Savior to build up the Body of Christ.³⁷ This was their "new life" in Christ. They were consumed with a zeal for His House, and as a result it turned the world upside down.³⁸

Outside the Camp

Just as Jesus had to go outside the camp of Judaism to provide the means of salvation and the forgiveness of sins, *in the same way* one must go outside the camp of Christianity to find the vibrant community life Jesus gives to those who follow Him. Although Christ's life is so central to the teachings of Christianity, His life cannot be incarnated³⁹ or embodied⁴⁰ within that "camp."⁴¹

In Christianity the presentation of Christ is targeted for the individual, and the Scriptures are interpreted for the effect they have upon the individual. However, when the gospel was first preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost, the outcome of obeying it was community. The life of Jesus Christ could not be found apart from the expression of a *corporeal body*.⁴² There, within community established by ap-

ostolic grace, each individual found his place so as to function within the one body,⁴³ each part giving what it had for the *common good* of the whole body.⁴⁴ Community is what de-mystifies the Body of Christ. It is the visible, tangible result of Ephesians 4:11-16 — the Body being perfected in love for all the world to see.

Fruit of the Kingdom, a Nation of Twelve Tribes

John the Baptist saw the state of the religion of Judaism and publicly excommunicated all Israel, calling them to repentance and baptism (normally a practice for Gentiles converting to Judaism). John did this in readiness for the coming Messiah and His Kingdom.⁴⁵ He told the Pharisees, "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees [referring to Old Israel and the religious system of Judaism], therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." The religion of Judaism did not bear the fruit of a good tree,⁴⁶ and was destined for the fire.⁴⁷

Jesus knew that in order to bear that fruit,⁴⁸ there would have to be a restoration of a spiritual nation of twelve tribes.⁴⁹ This was clearly burning in His heart when He called twelve men to be His disciples and to serve by His side as foundational stones on which a whole new nation could be established that would accomplish God's intent.

Jesus always had the vision of Israel's original intended purpose.⁵⁰ He was willing to count the cost and make the personal sacrifice to see it happen. In His baptism by John, Jesus separated Himself from the apostate system of Judaism.⁵¹ He knew that it could not achieve the purpose of being the wit-

²⁹ 1 Pet 5:1-5; 1 Cor 11:19

³⁰ 2 Cor 11:13-15

³¹ 2 Tim 3:5,13; 2 Cor 11:2-4,13-15

³² Rev 18:3

³³ Mt 28:18-20; Acts 2 & 4, etc.

³⁴ Romans 5:5

³⁵ Mal 3:16-18; Jn 12:25-26

³⁶ Jn 17:20

³⁷ Acts 2:40-47

³⁸ Acts 17:6

³⁹ *Incarnate* – make concrete and real, represent in bodily form, invested with

bodily and especially human nature and form, made physically manifest by spirit or comprehensible.

⁴⁰ *Embodied* – to give a body to a spirit or to make concrete and perceptible; to represent or express something abstract in tangible form.

⁴¹ Mt 21:43; Heb 13:13

⁴² *Corporeal* – having material or physical form or substance; consisting of or relating to a physical, material body.

⁴³ Eph 4:4-7

⁴⁴ 1 Cor 12:4-14

⁴⁵ Mal 3:1; Lk 1:17

⁴⁶ Mal 1:8-10; 4:6

⁴⁷ Lk 3:7-10; Mt 3:10

⁴⁸ Mal 3:3-4; Gen 18:19

⁴⁹ Mk 9:12-13; Mt 17:11; 21:43; 24:14; For more information about the necessity of the church being twelve tribes, see the article, *The Foolish Nation*, page 42

⁵⁰ Lk 4:43; Ex 19:5-6; Isa 49:6; Isa 53:10-11

⁵¹ Mt 3:13-15

ness of the Kingdom of God before the nations of the world.⁵²

Later, when Jesus confronted the Jews concerning how they treated the prophets sent to Israel,⁵³ He concluded by telling them that the Kingdom was going to be taken away from them and given to a *nation* producing the fruit of it.⁵⁴ The Jews had failed to accomplish their intended purpose in being a *holy nation*.⁵⁵ Rather, it had developed into something that actually opposed God's purpose. They had turned their religion into a powerful man-made hierarchy that was favored by Rome.

Even though God's commands and laws were central to Judaism, the life and Spirit of God was simply not there. The proof is that they killed Jesus and thought they were doing God a service.⁵⁶ Under the guise of piety, the same spirit of those religious leaders of Judaism is present inside the camp of Christianity today. If anyone disagrees with or makes a claim to having any authority or credibility outside her ranks, they are quickly branded as a "cult" and must either conform to the "norm" or are considered anathema (accursed). Jesus knew He had to go outside this camp if He were to ever establish the Kingdom of God.⁵⁷

What the Jesus Movement Lacked: the Grace and Authority of Apostleship

In Christianity today the gospel is presented by those who pay lip service to Christ and His commands while subtly endorsing conformity to the world. They do not call anyone outside the gates,⁵⁸ but encourage their followers

to remain inside the camp of organized religion. But true faith in Christ is demonstrated through obedience to the apostles' demands of discipleship and all that Christ commanded.⁵⁹

It takes apostolic grace and authority to bring about a visible demonstration of Christ's life through community.⁶⁰ The proof that the apostles are true representatives of Christ is in those who receive their message and bear the fruit of love and unity.⁶¹ There is a bond of affection and loyalty created between the one who hears faith and the one who speaks it. The good news is not just receiving the message, but also receiving the messenger as Christ Himself.⁶² That is why it says in Acts 2:42 that those who received the gospel were devoted *to the apostles* and their teaching, to fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Some translations mention that they were devoted to the apostles' teaching and *their* fellowship. How indebted would a person be to the one who brought them the message of life and the forgiveness of sins?⁶³ How grateful would a person be, having escaped his sin and the pollution of the world to come into Messiah's life in community? What freedom it would be to no longer live for yourself, but for Him who died and rose on your behalf!⁶⁴

Apostles are the living examples of the community churches they establish. Their lives express the essence of love, poured out daily in their devotion to all the saints. They are wise master builders and lay a solid foundation of Christ's life in a people set apart and

devoted to Him.⁶⁵ The work of apostles brings into existence the *evidence* of Jesus' victory over death and Satan.

The Body of Messiah is the material, visible oneness that will convict the world. It is not mystical. In community there are countless opportunities daily to carry out all that Jesus commanded⁶⁶ and through this the world can see the witness of the Kingdom.⁶⁷ It is the outcome of His life lived out in love and obedience that proves to the world that God has indeed sent His Son. Those who receive the apostles' words will be the ones who carry out the will and pleasure of Christ.⁶⁸ Apostles are set apart, chosen to carry out the administration of our Father's will on earth.⁶⁹ They establish His House⁷⁰ and maintain its development into the nation Christ spoke of in Matthew 21:43.

Apostles have the God-given grace and authority to bring others into obedience to the faith of Christ.⁷¹ This obedience is what produces community. The authentic documentation of this is recorded in Acts 2:37-47 and 4:32-42. Through their words, apostles minister grace to cause one to believe and to give him the faith to obey.⁷² Faith comes by hearing. However, unless someone is sent with the authority to proclaim the gospel, no one can hear it.⁷³ Being sent out as one who represents Christ involves being under the authority of the one who sends. This means no one can just send himself, but he must be discipled and prepared for this ministry by those who have the authority to send. Apostles are *sent ones*. They are sent out as messengers

⁵² Mt 24:14

⁵³ Mt 21:33-46

⁵⁴ Mt 21:43; In the same way, the Kingdom of Israel (as a type of Mt 21:43) was taken from their first King, Saul. It was given to another man better than he – one who would do all his will. David was a man after God's own heart. David fought to bring peace to Israel from all its enemies, and then God gave Him the "blueprint" to build the temple.

⁵⁵ Ex 19:5-6; Isa 49:6

⁵⁶ Jn 16:2-3

⁵⁷ Other examples of scriptural types of

the gospel's demands include Abraham leaving Ur (the world) and the gods of Babylon to initiate the establishment of the set-apart nation of Israel. Moses as well, leaving the riches of Egypt, choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the nation of Israel than to enjoy the passing pleasures of Pharaoh's court. He considered the reproach of obeying God, greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt for he was looking to a greater reward (Heb 11:24-27)

⁵⁸ Heb 13:13; Rom 12:2

⁵⁹ Mt 10:34-39; Lk 14:26-33;

Mk 10:29-30

⁶⁰ Rom 1:5

⁶¹ 1 Jn 3:14,16; Jn 14:21; 13:34-35; Jn 17:23; 1 Cor 9:1-2; 2 Cor 3:2-6

⁶² Jn 13:20

⁶³ 2 Cor 5:18-21

⁶⁴ 2 Cor 5:15

⁶⁵ 1 Cor 3:10-17; 1 Cor 12:12,28

⁶⁶ Mt 28:20

⁶⁷ Mt 12:25-29; Mt 24:14

⁶⁸ Isa 53:10-11

⁶⁹ Eph 3:8-9

⁷⁰ Eph 2:19-22; 1 Tim 3:15; 1 Cor 3:10

⁷¹ Rom 1:5

⁷² Jn 17:20; Eph 2:8

⁷³ Rom 10:14-17

to present the full gospel of Christ and to establish His life in a people.

No one can confidently say he has been saved by grace through faith when no messenger has yet been sent to command him to believe in and obey the gospel. In the first century, the church grew in number by receiving the messenger *and* his message. You have to receive a real, live human being as the representative of Christ.⁷⁴ The great commission was given to the apostles, giving them all authority to make disciples of all the nations.⁷⁵ The gift of apostleship extends to the end of this age, and it will be at the end of this age that complete restoration of the church will come.⁷⁶ Paul told the Romans that he had received *“grace and apostleship to bring about obedience to the faith for the sake of His name among all the nations.”*⁷⁷

Commissioned

The Great Commission was specifi-

cally given to the apostles, and they were the ones responsible for teaching the communities they established to obey all that Christ commanded.⁷⁸ The

Much like the Hippie-crits, they have settled into a life of compromise and the false comfort of materialism – the very things they once hated with a passion.

authority of apostleship was missing in the Jesus Movement. This is evident from the fact that the ranks of the Jesus Movement have ended up in the pews listening to the preacher once again. Those who are disgruntled Christians from the Jesus Movement know this better than anyone. Without apostleship, there is no way to go outside the camp of Christianity to where Christ is. He isn't inside her gates, but is outside this camp.⁷⁹ We have to go where He is, and that is only made possible through the authority and grace of apostleship. It is given to them to establish the embodiment of Christ on

earth, bringing all into the obedience of faith in Christ.⁸⁰

What is the fruit of the Jesus Movement now some thirty years later? You can't help but ask this question and ponder in your heart what it was all intended to bring about. Everything you have ever wanted in Jesus is to be found within the context of true apostolic community. It is where *He is* and it is where He can be served, and it is where He honors those who serve Him.⁸¹ 🌿

⁷⁴ Mt 10:40; Lk 10:16; Jn 13:20; Mk 9:37

⁷⁵ Mt 28:18-20

⁷⁶ Mt 28:20; Dan 2:44-45; Isa 49:6; Mt 24:14

⁷⁷ Rom 1:5

⁷⁸ Mt 28:20

⁷⁹ Heb 13:12-13

⁸⁰ 1 Cor 12:12

⁸¹ John 12:25,26

Although the Jesus Movement seemed to take off, when the smoke cleared they were still right where they started — just going to church on Sunday.



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!

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



The Original McDonalds

*What does a multi-national,
billion-dollar corporation
have in common with a little
drive-in sandwich shop that
used to be in downtown San
Bernardino, or today's
churches with the original one
the apostles began?*

World War II was over, and the little sandwich shop on the corner of 14th and E Streets was hopping. Not only were the carhops hopping to and fro amongst the many cars that packed the parking lot, there was also a continual stream of hot rods cruising slowly in one side, around behind, and then back out the front on the other side of the parking lot. It was Saturday night at the McDonald Brothers' drive-in restaurant in downtown San Bernardino, California. Postwar glee filled the air.

And as the busy days became even busier the McDonald brothers wanted to make a change. There had been 20 carhops and 25 items on the menu... and too many teenagers... and too much trouble.

In 1948 Richard McDonald looked at

the yearly sales records and saw that 80% of their sales had been hamburgers. So, he and his brother had an idea to make a new streamlined "speedy service system" selling 15-cent hamburgers and 10-cent fries using the principles of mass production.

They closed their carhop restaurant and reopened with great success at the end of the year, as just plain "McDonald's." They bragged right on the sign about how many burgers they were selling. They were so successful that within five years they had opened four more "McDonald's" in nearby towns.

They wanted to serve the many young postwar families with an inexpensive and quick meal (later to be termed "fast food"). People who knew the McDonald brothers said they were very good men,

who cared well for their employees. They put up their double golden arches at the end of 1953 as a trademark of happy success.

Then along came the “friendly” milkshake machine salesman from Des Plaines, Illinois, in the fall of 1954. His curiosity had been aroused when these brothers kept ordering more and more of his machines. He decided to go out to California and see for himself why they were making so many milkshakes. He was very business minded and immediately saw in these brothers the possibility of a very successful business opportunity. He convinced them to let him franchise “McDonald’s” for them. They reluctantly agreed and the milkshake machine salesman hurried back to Illinois to get to work. He opened “an exact copy” of the restaurant the McDonald brothers had on 14th and E, calling it “McDonald’s #1”... but by this time the brothers had themselves opened several other places near San Bernardino. It became evident that the milkshake machine salesman was taking off on his own, using the McDonald brothers’ business creation for his own goals.

Six years later it was obvious to him the gold mine that he had found. So the milkshake machine salesman offered the brothers a deal they could not turn down. In 1961 he offered them a little over a million dollars each to buy out the franchise. They agreed to the deal only on the stipulation that they would be allowed to keep running their first very prosperous location on 14th and E Streets for themselves and their faithful employees. The brothers wanted to give each employee a part of the business as a reward for their hard work. But to the McDonald brothers’ surprise, once the deal was signed a construction crew arrived at their restaurant and took down their “McDonald’s” sign, the golden arches, and any other McDonald’s insignia. They were informed that they would not be allowed to call their restaurant anything that resembled the name “McDonald’s”, which was now locked under legal trademark. Many of the other things within the restaurant that they created were now also barred from their own usage.

Thus began the bitter relationship between the milkshake machine salesman and the original McDonald brothers. It got to the point that for a while he even denied that the real McDonald brothers ever existed.

The little shop on 14th and E soon slipped into anonymity under the title “The Big M.” But to make matters worse, a new bright, shiny “golden arches” was erected just one block away, as the milkshake machine salesman opened a new location right in the face of the struggling McDonald brothers. The small band of employ-

The Bible says "All who believed were together and had all things in common. There were no needy among them." That was the authentic church – the first one.

ees remained faithful to the brothers until the day the doors closed seven years later. Old “Mac” McDonald died three years later in 1971 with few to acknowledge any great achievements. But thirteen years later, many mourned when the milkshake machine salesman died. It was headline news that the genius behind McDonald’s had passed away. And perhaps he was the “genius”, but not the heart.

It was not until 1992 that the McDonald’s Corporation was finally forced to acknowledge the existence and validity of the remaining McDonald brother and his claims. A representative from the McDonald’s Corporation came to 14th and E Streets admitting that this was in fact the site of the first restaurant and presented the remaining brother, Richard McDonald, a small plaque of honor to be placed there. The facts were indisputable, the witnesses were irrefutable, but there was no great fanfare that day at 14th and E Streets. The old ramshackle building that stands on the spot was converted to a dingy homegrown-style museum... that no one goes to... and old Mr. McDonald died a poor man with little consolation.

Yet in Des Plaines, Illinois, is a state-of-the-art museum on the spot where the milkshake machine salesman opened his “McDonald’s #1”. It is shiny and boasts of great accomplishments. Those who pass by there will from then on confidently say, “Hey,

today I saw the place where the first McDonald’s was.” If someone were by chance to contest, saying that one sweltering hot night just after World War II he personally drove through the crowded parking lot on 14th and E Streets and ordered a burger from the smiling McDonald brothers, and tasted a cool milkshake, his protest would go unheard. “I know, that I know, that I know.... I saw with my own eyes the place in Des Plaines, Illinois, where the first McDonald’s started!” would be the reply.

So, does history not matter any-

more?

Finding the original, the “first one”, is really important when you are trying to authenticate something. It is interesting to know the roots of the thousands of “golden arches” that dot this planet. But what about the millions of golden crosses that fill the skyline of every major city in the western world? Has there been an equally bitter cut between them and the authentic “first one”? The churches of today boast of starting with an authentic Savior two thousand years ago, with twelve authentic apostles who knew Him personally. But wouldn’t those twelve apostles, like the old McDonald brothers, tell a much different story of the “first one” when talking about the churches we see today on every street corner? Those twelve apostles started the “first one”, and there is a vivid description of what the “first one” looked like and how it was run. All the things those first twelve did were carefully recorded in the Bible in the book that was named after them, called “the Acts (what they did) of the Apostles.” It says, ALL those who believed were TOGETHER, and had ALL things in COMMON. There were no needy among them for they sold their possessions and gave to those who had need....¹ The twelve apostles started the church and that is how they lived. That was the authentic one — the “first one.” 🌿

¹ Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-35



The Unmodified Seed

Paul warned the church that false apostles would some day come with a different gospel. The change they brought was as subtle as the genetic manipulation of a seed's inner core.

These days there is an ever-increasing desire to make sure that what is called “organic” is really what the name implies. Organic growers who want to market their produce as “Certified Organic” use standard organic methods of cultivating their crops. They must grow the crop in soil that has been free from chemical fertilizers for at least three years, fertilized with organic compost or other organic fertilizers, and watered with pure water. If crops are grown free from contaminants, pesticides, and chemicals, their authenticity should be able to be guaranteed. But for years now, much of the produce labeled “Certified Organic” has been technologically tampered with.

Does it really make sense to apply the word organic to something whose very seed has been tampered with? No, it doesn't, no matter what it looks or tastes like. The plant would still be carrying within its genetic information the traits of hybridization or genetic modification, even if it went through the proper requirements prescribed for how it was to be grown. Maybe the outward appearance of the fruit would be outstanding and the organic stamp of approval would be on its skin, but inside would be a corrupt, modified seed.

Nothing can take away the genetic makeup that was passed on from the corrupt seed. Organic hybrids, like any other, if allowed to develop to their full maturity, flower, and make seed, will not yield the expected fruit. Plant a tanger-

ine seed and you may get an orange tree or a nectarine. Amazingly, the “tangerine” has disappeared from the next generation!

Genetically modified or GMO seeds can go a step further, which is why the multi-national conglomerates are investing millions of dollars into producing genetically modified food. When terminator gene technology comes in full-blown, commercial seeds will not be able to yield seeds capable of reproduction.

“The very seed of the first communities in Acts 2 and 4 was taken to other parts of the world. The fruit it bore was exactly like that of the disciples living together in Jerusalem.”

Everyone will have to buy their seed from these corporate giants. This seed will have on it a chemical that will preserve it, aid it in germination, and guarantee its development, but prohibit its reproduction. This would be a totally artificial seed that could produce an organic watermelon based on its cultivation practices but *not* on the authenticity of its seed.

All of this shows that man can often make something look good on the outside, and he can convince others of its purity, but in its core it has been tampered with. It is, in fact, a deliberate corruption of what is natural.

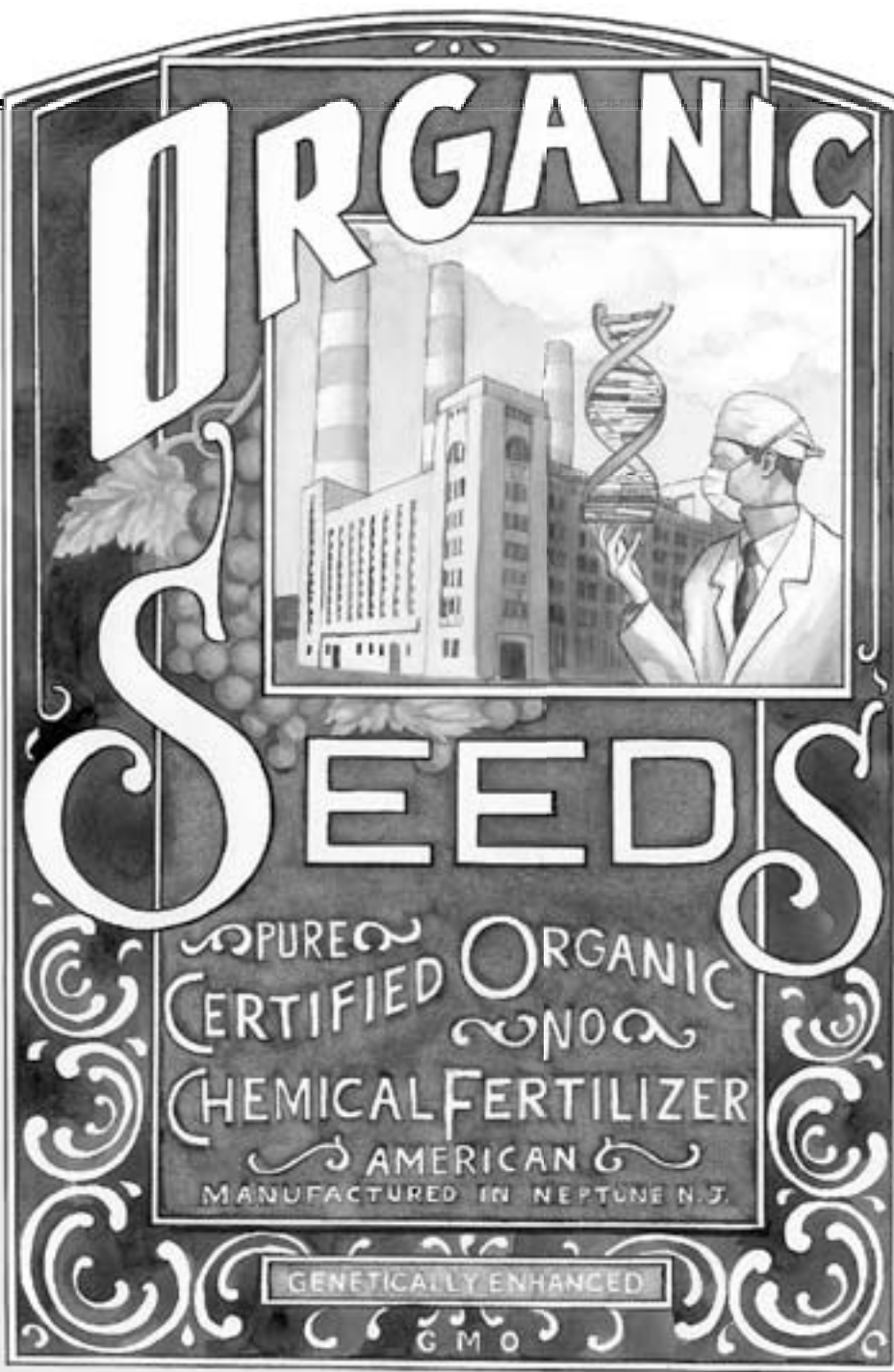
How fittingly this can be applied to what has happened in Christianity, since the true, genuine seed was planted on the Day of

Pentecost. At that moment a pure seed was introduced, unadulterated – not tampered with. Grounded firmly in the hearts of the believers, it produced the authentic and vibrant life of the first communities of Acts 2 and 4. That very seed which rooted and flowered in Jerusalem was taken to many other parts of the inhabited world.

What was the result? Not only was the fruit reproduced in other locations exactly like the pattern of the first, but its seed was exactly the same. You could take from the new planting and form many more communities of believers from the same seed. Such was the exactness of the duplication that the apostle Paul could actually commend the seed-bearing fruit that he saw in the distant region of Thessalonica. He knew that they had received from him the whole comprehensive gospel into their hearts as the true seed.¹ He could praise them for becoming imitators and holding to the same pattern, the same genetic code of the first true seed in Judea, even to the point of being examples in their faith and receiving the exact manner of persecution.²

However, it was not long before there began a tampering and a modification of the true seed. Other seeds began to be introduced as the real ones, being superbly received.³ The same apostle who had watched over the careful transmission of the true seed saw the beginnings of manipulations by men. He realized that other seeds would come and that a craftiness as deep as genetic manipulation would also be intro-





Read the package label very carefully. You may not know what you're actually buying. Although it may seem pure and genuine, has it actually been modified from the inside out?

duced so as to bring forth a diluted gospel and a seed that would look good on the outside but inside would be corrupt. It would not be capable of generating a fruit similar to the original stock.

The oneness of heart, faith, baptism, mind, and judgment common to all the communities of the true seed was replaced with divisions, denominations, and each church speaking its own brand of doctrine.

They all looked good in form, all were stamped with the approved label "The Church," but it was actually a prostitution of the true seed. To this day there is a propagation of this modified seed to the ends of the earth. Thousands of denominations broadcast their seed to the countries of the world, sprouting church buildings on street corners everywhere. A genetically modified gospel has produced a genetically

modified church.

Now is the time for the sprouting of a tender shoot from the original, uncorrupted seed, which will bear the fruit of authenticity to the whole world — a whole fruit both inside and out. 🌱

¹ 1 Ths 2:13-15 ² 1 Ths 1:5-8

³ 1 Cor 11:4-5

Truth & Yogurt

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.
(1 Corinthians 14:33)

Many times and places have brought about short bursts of truth. Men at various times have stumbled across obvious truths in the Scriptures and taken them on as emblems, waving them proudly like a flag. The Seventh Day Adventists came across many such truths, being men given to much study. They came to understand the history of the church and found the change of the Sabbath day to Sunday by the Pope. They were shocked and amended their ways and then began to tell everyone about keeping the Sabbath. Much of what they said was correct. Herein lies the problem: They, like so many movements in the past, did not have the medium to introduce this truth into... not the proper medium for it to bring about the desired effect.

In the following allegory, truth is compared to the "starter" that is used in the process of making yogurt. For those who know how to make yogurt, this will be a very clear allegory.

When making yogurt, a good culture is inserted into the proper medium and it will in a matter of several hours turn the entire medium into yogurt of exactly the same nature as the starter. But no matter how good the starter is, if the medium is defiled with bacteria or is not the proper temperature it will not turn into yogurt. On the contrary, it will turn into some sort of runny, sour milk, often not fit for human consumption.

We make up a large batch of warm milk and then introduce the good starter, mixing well. Then several hours



later, we go to the yogurt jars which are wrapped in blankets keeping them just the right temperature, and we open one to see if the process has gone as planned. It is immediately evident whether the yogurt "yoged" or not. If we see the smooth, rich texture of yogurt filling the jar, we say, "It *yoged*." Or we might say, "The yogurt didn't *yog*" if we saw a runny mess, and smelled the foul odor of defiled milk.

It is the same with the truth. There are many, many truths that men have run across throughout history, but history bears out the fact that when a truth is isolated and put into an unfit environment, it does not produce the "yogurt" that it should.

We see and hear elements of "truth" on many sides, within Christianity and all the other religions. Even in the society at large, the wisdom gained from

common sense is evident in many places. Yet, if not inserted into the proper medium of the functioning Body of Messiah, then it does not "yog." Thus, there have been groups like the Jesus Movement, the Shepherd-ing Movement, the Wilderness Preparation Movement, the Sabbatarian movement, and the Charismatic Movement... but in the end it becomes only a divided mess, and it does not "yog."

When you taste good yogurt, you know it.

The culture of yogurt is native to a certain part of the Middle East. There the special culture is active in the open air. If milk is left out in its natural state and is just the right temperature, it will become yogurt on its own. This is the natural way yogurt is made. We have captured that yogurt culture and imported it to all parts of the world. The culture desires to permeate the milk, but if all the factors are not right, it will not be free to fill the environment.

The Body of Messiah is the perfect environment for the commands and the "hard sayings" of Messiah to flourish. Though someone may grasp a certain aspect of the good news and try to put it into practice, if all the proper factors are not there, it will not "yog."

Within a heart of total surrender the love of God (the culture) could once again be introduced. He was always there desiring a place to pour His Spirit. Once the heart came into the correct temperature without the defilement of destructive bacteria, His love came in. Now that same culture has spread to all those who are in that same environment.

Within the ranks of organized religion, the culture is killed immediately. 🌿

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

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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 answers. All he knew

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

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.

The Yellow Deli

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 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 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

² Eph 4:28



The Vine House in 1975

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 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.*”

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

***When we stopped “going to church”
and started being the church something
wonderful began to happen.***



Early gatherings in Warner Park

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

³ 1 Cor 14:26



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

becoming more than what we started in Tennessee. Nevertheless, by 1990, 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

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."

was no authoritative message being proclaimed to tell people what God wanted them to do. Jesus' love for His Father caused Him to obey



Dancing is an important aspect of our culture

His Father's word. He, in turn called His disciples to the same love. He 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

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

the Church and the world in the first century and there had been 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,



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

though, it became obvious that this holy nation would not even be able to exist on the earth apart from the influence of righteous men in

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

the governments of the nations — men who would uphold freedom 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

⁷ Rom 2:14-15 ⁸ 1 Tim 2:1-8



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

people know about the good, 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*

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 🌿

⁹ Eph 2:12 ¹⁰ Dan 2:31-45

¹¹ 2 Cor 5:14-15



We see apprenticeship as a vital link between the generations

a light to the nations 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



Our family keeps growing...

The foolish NATION

GOD'S PLAN TO WIN BACK A REMNANT OF ABRAHAM'S WAYWARD DESCENDANTS AND TO GIVE THEM THE PROMISED LAND DEPENDS ON RAISING UP A SPIRITUAL ISRAEL OF TWELVE TRIBES FROM AMONG THE GENTILES.

If the Apostle Paul were alive on the earth today, he would surely be considered either a heretic, or a dangerous extremist or both.

If the Apostle Paul were alive on the earth today, he would surely be considered either a heretic, or a dangerous extremist, or both. You see, his understanding of the primary mission of the church, and the means of attaining it, and the consequences of failing, was vastly different from what most Christians believe today. You may be shocked to hear of it, although it has been right there on the pages of your Bible all along...

Let's start with this passionate cry of Paul's heart:

I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises... (Romans 9:1-4)

If Paul could have personally traded places with his cut-off countrymen, he would have done so, knowing that God Himself had made a self-cursing oath to fulfill His promise to Abraham and his offspring (see box on page 44). But Paul knew that they could not obtain the promise unless they had the faith of their father Abraham, which would cause them to do the deeds of Abraham.¹ Finding himself helpless to persuade them by force of argument,²

Paul latched upon a secret hidden in the words of the prophets that filled his soul with hope and determination. That secret lies in the connection between these two verses:

"They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation."
(Deuteronomy 32:21)

"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)

Did you grasp it? God's plan to win back a remnant of Abraham's wayward descendants, so as to be able to give them the Promised Land, was to raise up a spiritual Israel of twelve tribes from among the Gentiles — a "foolish nation" in the eyes of Abraham's natural descendants. They would be like a spiritual "Jacob" seizing the heritage for themselves.³ Their vibrant life of love and unity, which fulfills the righteous requirements of the Law⁴ in the liberty of the Spirit, would make the Jews jealous.

If you find it hard to accept that the "church" or the "Body of Christ" ought to be composed of twelve tribes, or that its mission has anything to do with God's promise to Abraham, consider

¹ Jn 8:39; Gen 17:1 ² Acts 13:46 ³ Mt 11:12; Isa 64:7 ⁴ Rom 8:4

Paul's position on the matter:

1) In Acts 13:47 Paul took his stand on Isaiah 49:6 (quoted above) to justify his ministry to the Gentiles; and

2) In Acts 26:6-7 Paul took his stand with that twelve-tribed "foolish nation" and its mission:

"And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God day and night. And it is for this hope, O King, that I am accused by the Jews!"

Surely Paul was not speaking of the twelve tribes of natural Israel, long ago fallen away and dispersed because of their unfaithfulness. Only a remnant had returned to the land after the Babylonian captivity, and Paul would not describe *them* as "earnestly serving God day and night" when they were the very ones persecuting him. No, it was the twelve tribes of the "foolish nation" he was laboring with the other apostles to establish,⁵ mostly composed of Gentiles beyond the borders of natural Israel, in fulfillment of the words of the prophet Malachi:

"Your eyes shall see, and you shall say, 'The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.' For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 1:5,11)

It was unthinkable to the Jews that God would accept offerings in any other place than the Temple in Jerusalem, and from Gentiles at that! But as Malachi describes,⁶ God was weary of natural Israel's defiled offerings, their stale ritual observances that did not come from their hearts in response to His love. Of course every one of them could quote from memory:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

But they did not bear the fruit of that love they professed.⁷ The fruit God was looking for was the same as what He expected and received from their father Abraham:

"For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has promised him." (Genesis 18:19)

Every parent of Israel was to train up their children in the Way of the LORD,⁸ thereby the whole nation would be

"AND NOW I STAND HERE ON TRIAL ON ACCOUNT OF MY HOPE IN THE PROMISE MADE BY GOD TO OUR FATHERS, A PROMISE THAT OUR TWELVE TRIBES HOPE TO ATTAIN, AS THEY EARNESTLY SERVE GOD DAY AND NIGHT. AND IT IS FOR THIS HOPE, O KING, THAT I AM ACCUSED BY THE JEWS" (ACTS 26:6-7)

secure to bear the fruit of the Kingdom. The failure of Israel to produce the fruit of the Kingdom was disobedience to their God. It was not because they did not hear the message or because they could not understand it. The last words of the last prophet sent to warn them were these:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a curse." (Malachi 4:5-6)

400 years later, there had been no national repentance. John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah⁹ and proclaimed them cut off,¹⁰ preparing the way for the Messiah, who told them,

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruit of it." (Matthew 21:43)¹¹

Did you catch that? He said, "given to a nation." He did not mean an earthly, political nation, but a spiritual nation — the "foolish nation" of which Moses

and Isaiah prophesied.¹² Consider also how the Apostle Peter described this "foolish nation":

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2:9-10)¹³

He was taking what God spoke to old Israel in Exodus 19:5-6 and applying it directly to the New Covenant

communities that he and all the apostles were establishing, based on the pattern of the first community¹⁴ described in Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-35.

Initially they just made the Jews angry by going "outside the camp"¹⁵ of traditional Judaism. Calling themselves God's people and living a radical tribal life of love and unity exposed the hypocrisy and hardness of heart of

⁵ Why do you suppose Jesus chose *twelve* apostles?

⁶ Mal 1:6-10

⁷ See also Dt 10:12-13; 11:13-21; 30:6; etc.

⁸ Dt 6:4-9

⁹ Lk 1:17

¹⁰ Mt 3:7-12

¹¹ But read the entire parable for the full context: Mt 21:33-45

¹² Dt 32:21, quoted at the beginning of this article; see also Isa 65:1

¹³ But begin with verse 4 to get the full context.

¹⁴ 1 Ths 2:14

¹⁵ Heb 13:13

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natural Israel. But as that “foolish nation” grew to full stature,¹⁶ bearing the fruit of being connected to the “Vine,”¹⁷ or in Paul’s words, of being grafted “contrary to nature” into the “holy root” so as to show the “fatness of the olive tree,”¹⁸ a remnant of natural Israel would be moved to jealousy¹⁹ and be grafted back into their own olive tree.²⁰

Their jealousy would come from seeing this “foolish nation” do for them, or in their place, as it were, what they would not do for themselves.²¹ By the power of love, with the Holy Spirit within them and upon them, this “foolish nation” would restore all things that natural Israel had cast aside or failed

THE CHANGE OF HEART AMONG THE JEWS IN THE LAST DAYS WILL NOT JUST HAPPEN OUT OF THE BLUE. THEY WILL HAVE OBSERVED THE CONDUCT OF THE FOOLISH NATION OF TWELVE TRIBES FOR MANY YEARS WITH INCREASING RESPECT.

to fulfill in the Law and the Prophets, summed up in the expectation God had of Abraham:

“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has promised him.” (Genesis 18:19)

Of course, the spiritual “seed of Abraham” will do the deeds of Abraham,²² for they, like him, have the Law of God written in their hearts. They will bear the fruit of the Kingdom, and that fruit will *remain*²³ — it will increase and not decrease over succeeding generations, because they will diligently teach their children all that is in their hearts.²⁴ This is the restoration Jesus spoke of in

¹⁶ Eph 2:19-22 ¹⁷ Jn 15:1-8 ¹⁸ Rom 11:17 ¹⁹ Rom 11:11-14 ²⁰ Rom 11:23-24 ²¹ Rom 11:7 ²² Jn 8:39 ²³ Jn 15:16 ²⁴ Dt 6:4-7

God’s Self-Cursing Oath

Most people have heard of the “Promised Land” but few are aware of either the boundaries of that land or the conditions of the promise, or even what difference it makes some 4000 years later. Yet this particular portion of the Earth is continually in the spotlight, demanding the attention of the watching world. Why is it so important? Let’s look carefully at where it all started:

The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”

But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!”

And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.” Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars

if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

And he believed the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Then He said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.”

And he said, “Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?”

So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”

Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses,



Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him... And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. That day the LORD made a covenant

Mark 9:12 that must happen before His return: "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things."²⁵ But to restore all things, the "foolish nation" will have to overcome²⁶ all things that oppose it — all of the spiritual enemies that natural Israel failed to overcome.

And that is exactly what Jesus is waiting for, and what will release Him from heaven to take His throne in Jerusalem and restore the Promised Land to Abraham's physical descendants in the next age:²⁷

"But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, and since then has been waiting until His enemies

would be made a footstool for his feet." (Hebrews 10:12-13)

"[Jesus]...whom heaven must hold until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time." (Acts 3:21)

For when He returns, the prophecy of Zechariah 12:10 will be fulfilled:

"And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that, when they look on the One whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over Him, as one weeps over a firstborn."

This change of heart will not just happen "out of the blue" in the last hour, but because they will have been observing the "foolish nation" for many years with increasing respect, until the very last years, when they hear her pure sons proclaim the imminent return of the Messiah to establish His rule upon the Earth. Then when He splits the sky, the sensitive ones, the preserved remnant,²⁸ will be pierced to the heart.

So let's go back to what the Apostle Paul understood, which he called a mystery:²⁹

"What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not attained, but those who were

²⁵ "At the appointed time, it is written, you [Elijah] are destined to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and to restore the tribes of Jacob." (Ecc'cus 48:10) ²⁶ Rev 2:11,17,26; 3:5,12,21 ²⁷ Mt 19:28 ²⁸ Zec 13:8-9 ²⁹ Rom 11:25

with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates." (Genesis 15:1-18)

What was the significance of this peculiar animal sacrifice? How did it answer Abram's question, "How shall I know that I will inherit it?" The shocking solution to this puzzle is found in a passage far away in the prophecy of Jeremiah:

"And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between the parts of it — the princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf — I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. Their dead bodies shall be for meat for the birds of the heaven and the beasts of the earth." (Jeremiah 34:18-20)

This passage shows the terms of a very serious kind of covenant, something that was understood by the ancient Hebrews. The initiator of this kind of covenant would pass between the halves of an animal split in two, saying by that action, "May it happen to me just as to this animal if I do not keep

my promise." Division equals death.

In other words, God answered Abram's question by saying, "If I do not give your descendants this land, may the fate of these animals come upon Me." God Himself would be torn asunder! It is no exaggeration to say that the fate of the universe is at stake in what happens to this land.

So considering what is at stake, why hasn't God already fulfilled His promise? Some might say, "What's the big deal? The Jews are already back on their land!" Well, for one thing, take a closer look at the boundaries. The Jews are occupying only a portion of that promised land, and it seems rather unlikely that they are going to gain Lebanon and parts of Syria and Jordan any time soon. But even if they or their allies conquered the entire Arab world and seized their land, still it would not be the blessing of God, for God, who does not change, has made it very clear what is required of Abraham and his descendants:

"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)

The Bible records very clearly that Abraham's descendants after Jacob

did not do this. Because of their disobedience, God could never deliver the entire land into their hands, and even had to drive them out of the portion they once possessed, swearing that He would not bring them back to the land until...¹

"... you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul..." (Deuteronomy 30:2)

No one who knows anything about how the Jews got back to Palestine, and what their moral and spiritual life is like there, can be under any illusion as to what force is sustaining them. It is certainly not God's blessing on account of their national righteousness!

What then? Is there any hope of winning back the hearts of "God's Chosen People" so that God can righteously give them the enemy-free land He promised them? It can only happen if there is a people who will embrace Paul's "heresy" and become the "foolish nation" that will move Abraham's descendants to jealousy. Otherwise God Himself will be split in two. 🌿

¹ Please see all of Deuteronomy chapters 28 through 30 for the full context.

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chosen attained it, and the rest were hardened... Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means

never divide, for He will give them the grace to love one another just as He loved them, and together they will bear the fruit of the Kingdom, bringing Him back for the harvest and the restoration of the Kingdom to Abraham's descendants.

THOSE WHO ARE UTTERLY SURRENDERED TO HIM AND DEPENDENT UPON HIM WILL CLING TOGETHER AND NEVER DIVIDE, FOR HE WILL GIVE THEM THE GRACE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER JUST AS HE LOVED THEM

riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" (Romans 11:7-15)

Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead was not enough in itself to reach the cold heart of natural Israel and raise them from the dead — for dead they were in God's eyes. If it had been enough, then Jesus would not have answered His disciples' question as He did just before He ascended:

Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8)

He knew it was going to take the demonstration of His love in a people — a "foolish nation" — to show, as Paul said, that "His power is made perfect in weakness." Those who are utterly surrendered to Him and dependent upon Him will cling together and

Perhaps now you can grasp more of what was in Paul's heart when he testified:

"And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God day and night. And it is for this hope, O King, that I am accused by the Jews! Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:6-8)

He believed with all his heart that the demonstration of the power of the resurrection in a people would raise natural Israel from the dead. He hoped this would happen in his lifetime,³⁰ but it did not. Instead, what Paul warned the "foolish nation" about came upon them:

"You will say then, 'Those branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.' Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either. Therefore consider the kindness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, kindness, if you continue in His kindness. Otherwise you also will be cut off." (Romans 11:19-22)

Probably it will be hard for you to believe that they were cut off — not just the Roman church, but all of the churches of the first century, the entire "foolish nation." What does it mean

that the church in Ephesus was about to lose its lampstand before the first century had ended,³¹ with the other churches also in decline? Do you think these warnings were just idle threats? If they did not bear the fruit of the Kingdom, would they not also be cut off?³²

Or, let's look at it from another angle. Where is the evidence that what passes for the church today is still connected to that same holy root?³³ What is there about Christianity today, worldly and divided as it is, that could tug at the heart of any sincere Jew longing for the true heritage of Abraham? Where are the twelve tribes of Isaiah's prophecy that are the light to the nations? Where is the rich tribal life of love and care that was the abundant fruit of that first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, fulfilling the words of the prophets?³⁴ Where are the children taking on the hearts of their fathers, building together with the same vision and passion, showing that the spirit of Elijah is upon them?³⁵

*"Elijah has come... Elijah is coming..."*³⁶ As he came to prepare the way of the Messiah's first coming, that same Spirit must come again to prepare the way of His second coming. The "foolish nation" must be reborn and run the race all the way to the end, bearing the fruit of the Kingdom until He comes to restore the Kingdom to Israel.³⁷ 🌿

³⁰ 1 Ths 4:15

³¹ Rev 2:5

³² Mt 21:43

³³ Rom 11:17

³⁴ Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-35; Jer 32:39;

Dt 15:4,8

³⁵ Mal 4:5-6; Lk 1:17

³⁶ Mk 9:11-13

³⁷ Mt 19:28

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



Outside the Camp or, “Can’t get there from here...”

Saul of Tarsus was a rabid persecutor of the early disciples. When he repented and received the Holy Spirit, he never persecuted another soul but devoted his life to loving people. He went outside the camp into a radically new life.

The early disciples in Jerusalem were respected by their neighbors, but socially they were shunned. The book of Acts says, “...they were all with one accord in Solomon’s portico [a public meeting place in the Jewish Temple]. But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.”¹

To the average Jew of the time, this group was strictly off-limits, no matter how moral its members were or how much good they did for others. After all, their leader, supposed to be the Messiah, had been condemned by the Priests and Rabbis and teachers of the Torah as a blasphemer – one who curses God. He had been turned over to the Gentile authorities with a demand that He be executed, and the Romans had taken Him outside the city and crucified Him along with common robbers. Since then, a number of the group’s leaders had been jailed. There was no telling what might happen to them next, and being linked to the group might suddenly become as dangerous as it was scandalous. **Continued** ➡



¹ Acts 5:12-13



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

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

The disciples, however, expected such treatment. The Master Himself had said, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you”² and, “If they have called the head of the house *Beelzebul* [the prince of demons], how much more the members of his household?”³ They were reminded that their Master’s crucifixion resembled the way carcasses of sacrificial animals were disposed of:

The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we

are looking for the city that is to come. (Hebrews 13:11-14)

“Outside the camp” was where the disciples ought to be, because that’s where their Master was. But what was “the camp”? According to their Master’s teaching, it was a religion full of hypocrisy (pretending), marked by well-advertised charitable donations, long public prayers, and showy religious acts.⁴ People in “the camp” honored God with their lips while their hearts were far away.⁵ Their religion

² Jn 15:18

³ Mt 10:25

⁴ Mt 6:2-6, 16-18

⁵ Mt 15:7-9

⁶ Mk 7:6-9

The best efforts of the best people in the best positions to do the most good on earth have only managed to slow down the pace of the destruction.

was based on the traditions of men rather than the commands of God.⁶ They were careful in their rituals but neglectful of the people around them.⁷ They looked good to other people, but inside, where only God could see, they were full of self-indulgence, dishonesty, and lawlessness.⁸

The most striking picture of “the camp” was one the Master Himself gave:

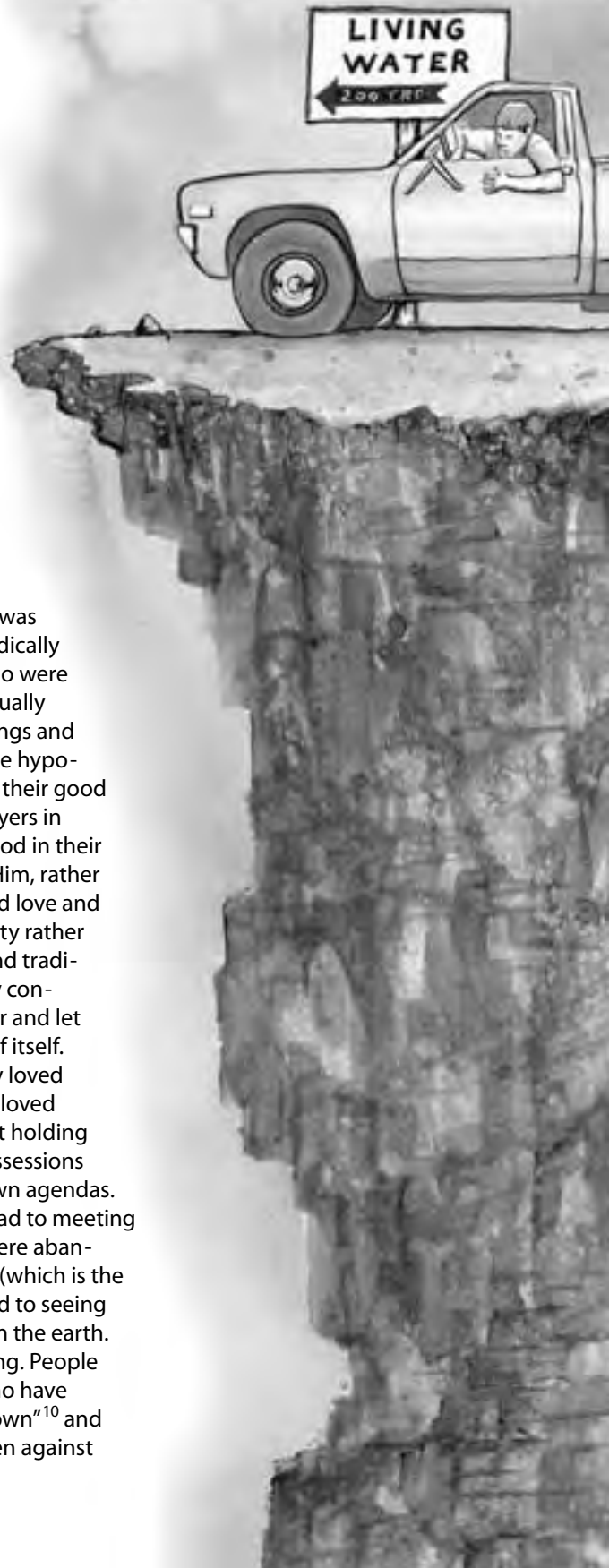
“Hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!” (Matthew 23:29-32)

That was the ultimate hypocrisy – they traced an unbroken religious heritage back through history while pretending not to have inherited the sins of their fathers. As most Bible readers should realize, it doesn’t work that way, because God “visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me.”⁹ And, as just about everybody knows, the people He was addressing went on to kill both Him and many of His

followers, proving His point.

But what really proved His point, His ultimate point, was the life that His disciples lived “outside the camp.” It wasn’t just that they got reviled and persecuted and killed for the sake of His Name. It was that they actually lived a radically different life from those who were inside “the camp.” They actually obeyed the Master’s teachings and did the opposite of what the hypocrites were doing. They did their good deeds and prayed their prayers in secret. They drew near to God in their hearts and lived to please Him, rather than men. They emphasized love and justice and mercy and loyalty rather than tithes and offerings and traditions and ceremonies. They concentrated on their character and let their reputation take care of itself. And most importantly, they loved each other the way He had loved them – without reserve, not holding on to their time or their possessions or their opinions or their own agendas. They contributed all they had to meeting each other’s needs. They were abandoned to the Spirit of Love (which is the Spirit of God) and dedicated to seeing His Kingdom established on the earth.

The effect was galvanizing. People called them “these men who have turned the world upside down”¹⁰ and “this sect [cult] that is spoken against



⁷ Mt 23:14,23

⁸ Mt 23:25-28

⁹ Ex 20:5; Dt 5:9

¹⁰ Acts 17:6

¹¹ Acts 28:22

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everywhere.”¹¹ Yes, they were being spoken against, just like the head of their house had been called the prince of demons. And who, mainly, was speaking against them? Why, those “inside the camp,” of course – the ones whose false religious game was being shown up for the empty shell that it was. The disciples were hounded from town to town by religious pretenders – slandered, and beaten, and killed. But everywhere they went, people were being saved, becoming disciples, and learning to love others just as their Master had loved them.

Now we come to a difficult point in the story. It is a turning point, one marked by many passages in the New Testament, but especially by the book of James and the first three chapters of the book of Revelation. All along, the disciples had found insincere people in their midst. The Master Himself had picked Judas Iscariot to be an apostle, but the man had chosen to be a traitor. Ananias and Sapphira had been

hypocrites, pretending to give all, while holding back a portion for themselves. Even some of Paul’s co-workers had deserted him when difficult times came. But, sooner or later, the light of the “life outside the camp” had exposed the insincere.

When we come to James and Revelation, however, we get the picture of a faithful few, surrounded by many who had subtly compromised and lost their love and stopped caring for widows and orphans and had become stained by the world. In some places, the whole group of “believers” had stopped loving and had become self-satisfied and complacent and unaware of their spiritual bankruptcy. Rich guests were preferred over poor ones, and there were apparently even rich “disciples” and poor “disciples.”¹²

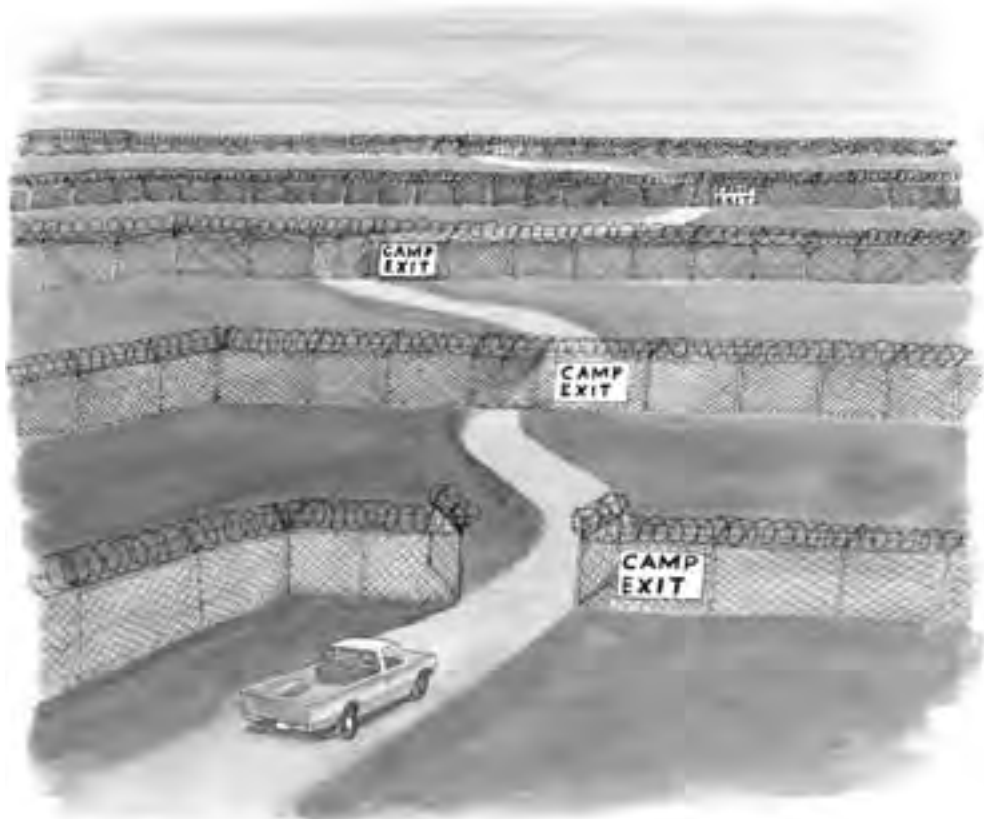
Some people might read these things and say, “What’s the big deal about that? All down through Christian history there have been rich and poor in the Church, and the rich and

important have had places of honor.” Well, the “big deal” is this: that’s what life “inside the camp” had been like. The rich religious men had made long public prayers to show how much they loved God while “devouring the houses of widows” who were made in God’s image. And the Son of God had cried out in warning about the judgment that was going to fall on such pretenders. Those who heard the call had gone out to Him, outside the camp, where there were no rich and poor.¹³

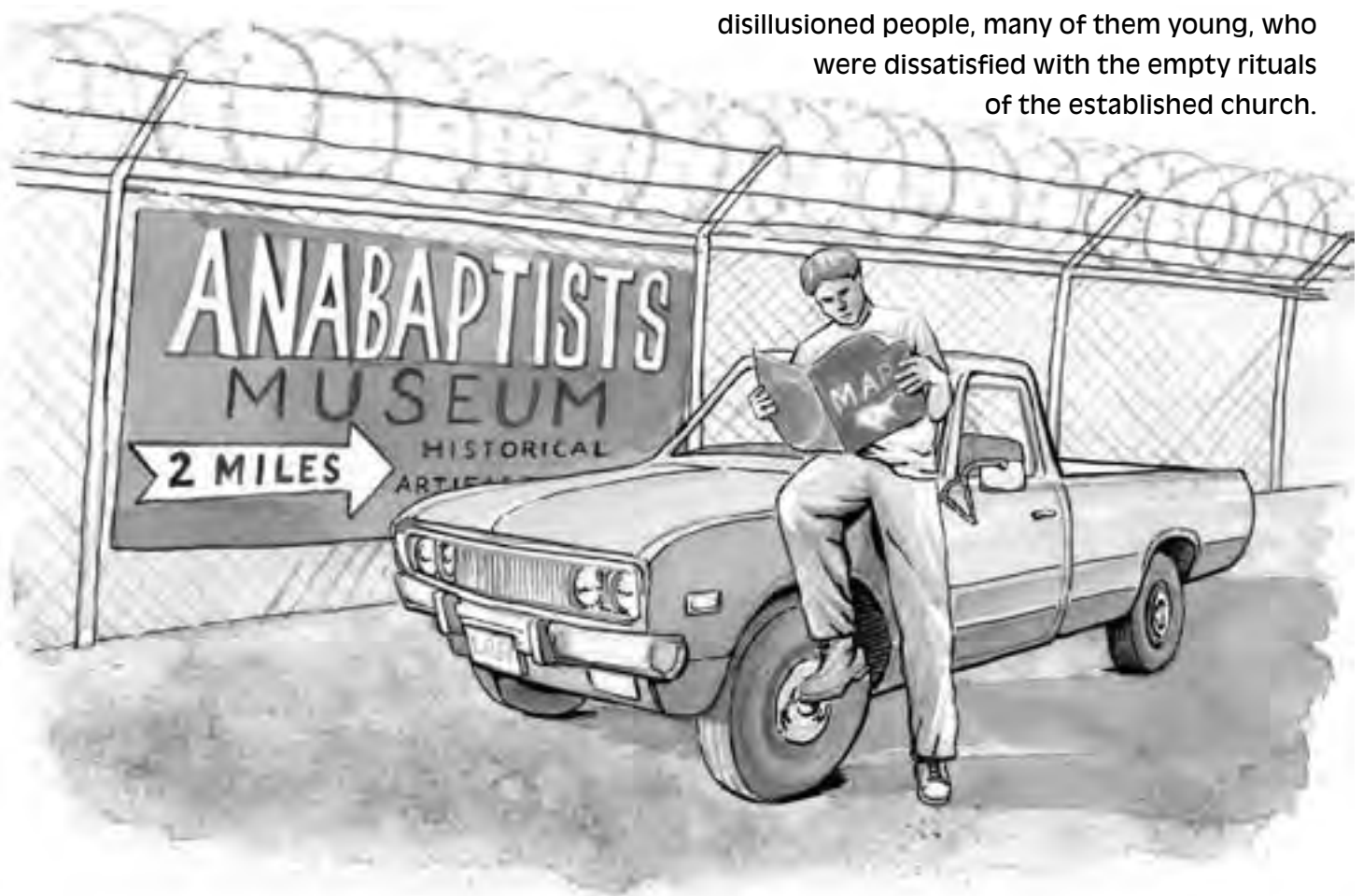
By the time the book of James was written, life “outside the camp” had all but vanished, and it had been replaced by “the camp” – only it was called by another name. It was the “Christian camp” instead of the “Jewish camp.” The “new religion” had become focused on various “teachings and traditions of men” that were different from the “old religion,” but they had stopped paying attention to “the commands of God.”¹⁴ What followed was nearly 2000 years of “camp life.”

¹² Rv 2:4-5; 3:1-4, 14-19; Jms 1:26-2:9; 4:1-4; 5:1-6 ¹³ Acts 4:34-35 ¹⁴ Mt 15:7-9; Mk 6:7-9

By the time the book of James was written, life “outside the camp” had all but vanished, and it had been replaced by “the camp”.



The Anabaptist movement arose among disillusioned people, many of them young, who were dissatisfied with the empty rituals of the established church.



Now, this is where just about everybody gets overwhelmed. Trudging through 20 centuries of Church History can be pretty overwhelming, and we are not going to do it here. But even just a casual acquaintance with the famous people of Christian History causes people to protest, “What? 2000 years of nothing but empty religion? What about the great theologians like Augustine, or the great reformers like Luther and Calvin, or radical groups like the Anabaptists of the 16th Century? And what about Billy Graham or Mother Teresa or the Jesus Movement, for goodness sake?”

Well, the “what” about all of them is that none of them brought back the “life outside the camp” that the Son of God established in the beginning. Augustine wrote many persuasive arguments about the nature of God and sin and so on, but his writings don’t produce disciples with fervent love for one another. On the contrary, they por-

tray an unknowable God who predetermines some to eternal life and others to eternal damnation based, not on their choices, but on His own cosmic whims. Augustine was preoccupied, not with loving people in the same way that our Master loved, but with refuting “heretics” and working out neat theological arguments to justify the use of physical force to change people’s religious opinions.

Luther and Calvin were both Augustinian monks before they became reformers, and they brought Augustine’s horrible doctrine of “just persecution” into the churches they established. Calvin was the driving force behind having Michael Servetus burned at the stake for the “sins” of questioning the doctrine of the Trinity and rejecting infant baptism. Luther wrote several pamphlets vehemently calling for the death of Anabaptists and the persecution of Jews. They were very concerned about moral principles and the stability

of the societies they lived in, but not about the teachings of the Son of God, like turning the other cheek, walking the extra mile, loving one’s enemies, etc.

Probably someone will say, “Well, those men were just products of their age. Don’t be too quick to judge them because religious persecution was common back then. Roman Catholics had been persecuting people for centuries.” But that’s exactly the point. That’s all Luther and Calvin were – mere products of their age, and nothing more. By contrast, Saul of Tarsus, 1500 years earlier, was a rabid persecutor of the early disciples, but when he repented and received the Holy Spirit, he never persecuted another soul but devoted his life to loving people. He was a product of something greater than the age he lived in. He went “outside the camp” into a radically new life and then spent the rest of his days spreading that life everywhere

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he went. Calvin and Luther merely re-formed the Roman Catholic church, establishing another form of the same “camp life” they had been raised in.

Contemporary with the heretic-hunting Catholics and Reformers was a different movement, the Anabaptists. This movement arose among disillusioned people, many of them young, who were dissatisfied with the empty rituals of the established church. These non-conformists burned with zeal for liberty of conscience and freedom to determine their own forms of worship. They were a loose and spontaneous movement whose bold rejection of infant baptism quickly drew persecution down on them from every side. But they were convicted that they should obey the commands of Jesus in the Bible. So, rather than fight for their rights, they let their Protestant and Catholic enemies torture and kill them by the thousands. Their defenseless slaughter by the Christian authorities caused many of their neighbors to reject Protestantism and Catholicism and join the Anabaptists. The fire and zeal of the movement flourished in spite of persecution (and, perhaps, because of it) from around 1525 to around 1560. Meeting in secret, fleeing from place to place, they took care of each other, shared all they had with each other, and refused under the most inhuman torture to betray one another. For a while it seemed that the same self-sacrificing life of love that the early disciples had lived was being restored. At the very least, they were outside the camp, and they were definitely bearing reproach.

But less than 35 years after the movement had begun, they started disintegrating. One leader disagreed with another, and instead of resolving their differences, they wound up dividing from one another. Their followers divided from each other as well, and each group refused to have anything to do with the other. Before long, each of those factions split too, and soon all that was left of the Anabaptists were little splinter groups with strange names and rigid customs – the count-

less Mennonite, Amish, and Hutterian sects.

As for the world-famous Christian icons, Billy Graham and Mother Teresa, much could be said (and is regularly) about all they have done. Dr. Graham has preached a message acceptable to nearly every Christian denomination for half a century. He has perhaps done more to bring Christianity together on common ground than any single human being since the fourth century, when the Emperor Constantine required the quarreling Christian bishops to hold ecumenical councils and subscribe to a standard set of beliefs. And Mother Teresa, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for her charity work, has done much to make the Catholic Church acceptable to Evangelicals, who half a century ago viewed the Roman Church with suspicion.

These two Christian figureheads have a vast reputation for integrity, but have they obeyed the command of the Son of God to do their good deeds in secret and to “beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them”?¹⁵ Are they “outside the camp” bearing the disgrace the Master bore? Or do all men speak well of them?¹⁶

The Jesus Movement of the 1970s was a little like the Anabaptist movement in that it was loose, spontaneous, and made up mostly of young people who were dissatisfied with mainstream

religion. They also wanted to do what Jesus had said in the Bible. Many of them started living together and sharing their possessions. But there the resemblance to the Anabaptists ended. They experimented with different forms of worship and alternative lifestyles, but they didn’t separate from the mainstream, and they weren’t persecuted. Within a few years almost all the Christian communes had disbanded and the people involved had either given up on Christianity altogether or settled into some congregation somewhere, quietly listening to the preacher or teacher. They didn’t go out to the Master, outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore.

Of course, that’s not the whole story. There have been many Christian movements in the last 2000 years that broke away from the status quo, and many stirrings within Christian congregations, but they all wound up having one thing in common: they didn’t recapture the vibrant, self-sacrificing life of love and oneness that was present in the first disciples. It’s almost like the story of the traveler who got hopelessly lost in the back roads of New England and finally pulled up to an old farmhouse to ask directions. The aged farmer listened silently to the man’s story for awhile, and when the traveler finally named the destination he was trying to reach, the old man began to thoughtfully stroke his chin.

¹⁵ Mt 6:1

¹⁶ Lk 6:26

¹⁷ A Different World? The ecumenical movement is a powerful force on the earth today. Even though Christian groups continue to divide, at the same time, splintered factions are being drawn back together. This is not a return to the perfect unity that the Son of God prayed for in John 17:22-23 — being one just as He and His Father are one. It is more like the cooperation between quarreling bishops that Constantine secured in the 4th

century. Vastly diverse groups are encouraged to ignore their differences and work together as a positive force in society. The goal is to get everyone together under one immense religious umbrella. To put it another way, one big camp is being established where all the smaller camps can camp together — including Judaism — a clear picture that there is essentially no difference between the Christian Church and the camp that crucified the Master outside its gates.

¹⁸ Mt 24:14; Acts 2:42-45; 4:32-35

Finally he replied, "Can't get there from here." Many people have reached this conclusion, that there is no way to get to that place "outside the camp" where the first disciples bore the disgrace of their crucified Master, the one to whom they belonged, heart and soul, body and possessions. It was just for that time back then, they say. The world is different now.¹⁷

But that's not the whole story, either. 2 Chronicles 16:9 says, "The eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." We who write this paper think that this means that all down through history God has been stirring things up on the earth to see if He could find people who would turn themselves over to Him completely, ready to do nothing but His will. We think that when there is a "stirring," He tests people to see

We invite all men everywhere to join us in being devoted to the life of love that our Master gave His blood to establish on the earth – outside the camp.

what is in them. And He is still stirring, still looking, still ready to strengthen, because His will has not been accomplished yet. Satan's tyranny over mankind has not been brought to an end. War, terrorism, crime, poverty, immorality, hypocrisy, greed, broken families, etc., all point to the grip that the evil one has on the earth.

The best efforts of the best people in the best positions to do the most good on earth have only managed to slow down the pace of the destruction. Only the triumphant return of God's Messiah is going to bring the end. And the end will only come when the Good

News that He preached (not some watered-down version) is proclaimed everywhere. And it will only come if that message produces the same witness of the coming Kingdom that was seen in the love and unity of the first disciples in Jerusalem.¹⁸

We have felt the stirring, we have heard the call, we have been through a little of the testing, and we know there's a lot more to come. But we invite all men everywhere to join us in being devoted to the life of love that our Master gave His blood to establish on the earth, outside the camp. 🌿



It All Began With Love

In the primitive church of the first century there was a pervading ethic that held all of its members together.¹ The Book of Acts records that “all who believed were together” and it is safe to say that all who did *not* believe were *not* together. The ethic that caused them to be together and stay together was love for their Master and Savior. Jesus Christ was the one who had loved them first with the greatest self-sacrificing love ever recorded in history. Theirs was a simple love affair of the heart, a passionate response to the One who loved them first. It was the love that abandoned all for the sake of the One who abandoned all for them.

Certainly, it was not a complicated theology of the mind that motivated them. It was simple obedience to the gospel that called them to lay down their lives for their brothers. For the Messiah had laid down His life for them, and the only fitting response was to love their brothers the same way He had loved them.² So they ut-

terly abandoned themselves and their own independent lives and possessions to love Him back. They did this by loving all those He died for. This was their first love. It was their simple devotion to the One they loved. This became the foundation of the Body of Messiah.

On the day of Pentecost, when three thousand people were baptized, they abandoned everything in obedience to the *many other words* of the gospel spoken by Peter. (See the article, *Saving Faith* on page 52 of Part Two) Laying their possessions at the apostles’ feet, they walked away from the established camp of Judaism and formed a brand new culture. It was the new wine poured out into a brand new wineskin, just as Jesus had said must happen.³ He promised that as long as they stayed solidly on that foundation of love and obedience, He would continue to reveal Himself to them. And so the gates of Hades would never prevail against them *if* they continued in obedience to the Savior’s words.⁴

They were to be “a light to the world, a city set on a hill.”⁵ The world could not observe anything mystical. They have to see spiritual unity in a physical, observable body.⁶ This unity is only possible if it is set securely upon the firm foundation of love. This visible unity was evident in the early church. They were all of one heart and mind,⁷ under one anointing.⁸ They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching⁹ and they all spoke with confidence in their assemblies.¹⁰ There were no needy among them for they shared all their possessions in common as any had need.¹¹ They were certainly set apart and clearly distinct as the new spiritual nation observable by the lost.

What Happened to that Life of Love?

What happened from then till now? Does the church today still bear the same distinctive characteristics of its original foundation? Is it controlled or governed by the same ethic of love? Could one honestly say that the church

The first century church was a community where the love of God was daily expressed through their love for one another.



today bears any resemblance to its early roots?

And when did it change? Long ago — longer ago and closer to the time of the vibrant life of the first-century church than you may have ever thought possible. They were led astray from their first love.¹² They allowed the trap of self-life to creep in through the craftiness of the Evil One. When self-life reared its ugly head, love began to be smothered.

There is no way for these two rivals to co-exist. As love was the beginning and the basis of this new culture, it was also the first thing to disappear. Since self-sacrificing love is the only thing that could unite the disciples, when it died, division came in and their unity went out the door.

The apostles could see these things happening and wrote many letters to the churches pleading with them in tears to repent and come back to their first love. They could see the splintering denominations on the horizon. They shuddered to see the spirit of the old camp creeping into this new culture.¹³ They saw the craftiness of the Evil One taking its toll on the once pure virgin, betrothed to Messiah, with no other loves.¹⁴ They remembered the dead religion they had come out of and urged the churches to hold fast to what they had already attained.¹⁵

The last thing Paul said in his letter to the church in Ephesus was:

“Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible (or undying) love.” (Ephesians 6:24; then see Rev 2:4-5)

He would not have said this if it were not possible that their love could be corrupted. He said essentially the same thing to the Corinthian church:

“If anyone does not love the Lord let him be accursed. Maranatha!”

(1 Corinthians 16:22)

The expression *“Maranatha!”* in this context meant *“Come, O Lord, and cut them off!”* — those in the church who don’t love you. When they left their first love, they were cut off from grace, which meant that everything they said and did was in their natural strength, for their own glory. That was all they had to seek for, having rejected the glory of the Father, which would have made them one.¹⁶ Without grace there is no way to meet the demands of love and there is certainly no way to live together.¹⁷


One by one, their lampstands were removed, just as the Master had warned them.¹⁸ There is no record in history that the vibrant life of love that characterized the first communities survived beyond the first century. It was replaced with a mere form of religion of an entirely different nature. Their love was replaced with dead rituals and traditions that put people’s souls in bondage.

The complacent laity filled the pews, while the self-satisfied preachers filled the pulpits. The people found their way to church once per week in order to secure their spot on a cloud with a harp. That’s all they had to look forward to. The clergy basked in their own self-glory as their sermons tickled the ears of the naive. Again religion became, *“the blind leading the blind.”*

We who write this paper have a hope that the prophecy of Isaiah 49:6 will be fulfilled in our day. It will be the restoration of the same twelve-tribed spiritual nation that began in the first century.¹⁹ We have a hope that a great light of love will emerge upon the earth that will shine brighter than all the words that have ever been spoken. This light will be the witness and demonstration of the kingdom of heaven on earth that all people can see. We hope that you can hear the call in your heart to seek and not give up until you find the place where it all began again with love.

If it began with love and ended by the lack of it, it must be restored with the same love that it had at the beginning. 🌸

¹ In this sense, *ethic* means 1) the principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group, and 2) a system of principles governing morality and acceptable conduct. The guiding principle, or ethic, of the Body of Messiah is, of course, love. ² Jn 13:34; 1 Jn 3:16,23 ³ Luke 5:36-39 ⁴ Mt 16:16-18; Jn 14:21 ⁵ Mt 5:14-16 ⁶ Jn 17:20-23 ⁷ Acts 4:32 ⁸ 1 John 2:20,27 ⁹ Acts 2:42 ¹⁰ 1 Cor 14:26; 1 Pet 4:11; Heb 3:6 ¹¹ Acts 4:34-35 ¹² Rev 2:4 ¹³ 1 Cor 1:10-13 ¹⁴ 2 Cor 11:3-4 ¹⁵ Rom 11:21-22 ¹⁶ John 17:20-23 ¹⁷ Jn 5:24; 1 Jn 3:14,16,23 ¹⁸ Rev 2:5 ¹⁹ Acts 26:7; Jms 1:1; Gal 6:16



They allowed the trap of self-life to creep in through the craftiness of the Evil One. When self-life reared its ugly head, love began to die.



To know that the Church is divided and to say it is not, to know that Paul condemned divisions and to say he did not, to believe that God is one and His people are not, and to teach others these things, is classic doublethink.

Language, as the late Dr. Walter Martin pointed out in his book *Kingdom of the Cults*, is very significant. For good or ill, it consists of thoughts, ideas, and the changing meanings of words by which, "entire churches, thrones, and governments have been erected, sustained, or overthrown."¹

He goes on to say that language is one of the chief ways cultists misuse the Bible, by cleverly redefining terms to create a seeming harmony with Biblical truth. For them, redefinitions of words and ideas have become *tools of control* of those under their sway.

Redefining words controls thought

and behavior by placing boundaries on what is possible. It is *ideas* that determine the actions of people. Men and women can only do what they can put into words. Even their ideas are determined by the meanings of the words as they understand them. To redefine words, then, is an attempt to control what enters into a person's mind to do, or even to dream. As Dr. Martin said,

"Language is, to be sure, a complex subject; all are agreed on this. But one thing is beyond dispute, and that is that in context words mean just what they say. Either we admit this or we must be prepared to... return to writing on cave

walls with charcoal sticks in the tradition of our alleged stone-age ancestors.”

If words do not mean what they say, then communication becomes either impossible or meaningless. However, if a cult member can be called back to the original meanings of the terms his leaders have redefined for him, then he can be set free from the very real bondage he is in. Using the ominous “Big Brother” state of George Orwell’s novel, *1984*, Martin compares what can happen in politics to what *does* happen in cults. “The redefinition of common political terms can lead to slavery when it is allowed to pass unchallenged by a lethargic populace.”

When words and ideas are successfully redefined, and the new definitions are accepted by most of the people, then a new “reality” has come about. Anything outside of that reality takes on an air of unreality — if not insanity. So we return to Martin’s insistence on words meaning *just what they say*.

In light of this, let’s look up some very important words in a dictionary. They have to do with how we think about God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Church, which is the Body of Christ on earth. Considering the meaning of these words and how they are used by great Christian leaders of today will help us judge what “reality” we live in.

• *Unity* — a) an unbroken or unbroken completeness or totality; b) the state of being one; oneness, a thing undivided.

• *Division* — a) the act or process of dividing; b) discord that splits a group.

• *Denomination* — a) the act of naming; b) a group of religious congregations having its own organization and a distinctive faith.

Armed with these quotes and definitions, let’s consider the words of some famous religious leaders and see how they pass the test of “words meaning just what they say.”

“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

pamphlet, “Growing as a Christian”

[I have] a concern to “major on majors” and so not isolate ourselves from fellow Christians with whom we may not entirely agree... In practice, this commitment to “preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) means that we refuse to divide over such important, but nevertheless secondary issues as church polity, baptism, style of worship, eschatology, the gifts of the Spirit, Calvinism, the ordination of women, etc.” [Pastor Gordon Hugenberger, Park Street Church, Boston, MA]²

Unity has been redefined to include, if not equal, division. This definition blatantly contradicts its plain meaning.

“Paul points out that some say, “I’m of Paul,” while others say, “I’m of Apollos.” He asked, “Isn’t that carnal?” But what’s the difference between saying that or saying, “I’m a Baptist,” “I’m a Presbyterian,” “I’m a Methodist,” “I’m a Catholic”? I have found that the more spiritual a person becomes, 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 in the Body. We’re all one.” [Pastor Chuck Smith, Calvary Chapel]³

It may be difficult to realize that these men have *redefined* unity to include, if not equal, division. The ways they use the words “unity, division, and denomination” blatantly contradicts their plain meanings. They give every appearance of not wanting the people they teach to think that unity means oneness, a thing undivided, unbroken completeness. Yet this actual unity is what Jesus prayed for before He died: **“that they may be one, Father, as you and I are one.”** (John 17:21)

How then should this oneness be

defined? Wouldn’t Dr. Martin, the respected anti-cultist, insist we use the plain meaning of unity? Or should we use the redefinitions of today’s Christian leaders? Billy Graham sees a “mysterious unity,” meaning hard to understand, even hidden from sight. Pastor Hugenberger tells us that God’s unity, the “unity of the Spirit,” is only about a few essentials. Pastor Chuck Smith implies that the Father and the Son, like the Church, only have “virtual divisions” not *real* ones.

Do they not realize that their mystical concepts are blatantly untrue?

When religious leaders so radically redefine terms like unity and division, are Christians not justified in suspecting them of having a hidden agenda and seeking to control how their followers think? At Dr. Martin’s urging, let’s turn to *1984* for another definition.

• *Doublethink* — “To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them...”⁴

To know that the Church is divided and to say it is not, to know that Paul condemned divisions and to say he did not, to believe that God is one and His people are not, and to teach others these things, is classic *doublethink*. It may well be “historic Christian doctrine” but it is *not* the truth. It is *doublethink*.

So, are you in a cult? Or do you believe that God’s words can be accepted to mean *just what they say*? 🌿

¹ Martin’s quotes are from his website: <http://www.waltermartin.org/cults.html#semant>

² From his “Personal Statement of Faith” at <http://www.parkstreet.org/pulpit/ghfaith.shtml>

³ “Answers for Today” at: <http://calvarychapel.com/library/smith-chuck/books/aft.htm#20>

⁴ Available online at: <http://www.online-literature.com/orwell/1984>



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?



THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

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 restitu-

requires capital punishment for any who would fail to respect His image in 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

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)

tion when they do wrong. These have 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

an inborn inclination to sin, he is able and accountable to do the good that 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

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

much worth remains in him, how much integrity and courage he has to face the truth about himself. For 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 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.



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

1 Cor 15:55-56

¹⁷ Rev 22:11

¹⁸ 1 Cor 6:2

¹⁹ Rev 21:9

²⁰ Rev 21:9,12

²¹ Rev 22:5

²² Rev 20:10,14

²³ Rev 21:24, NKJV; Isa 9:6-7

²⁴ 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. 🌿

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