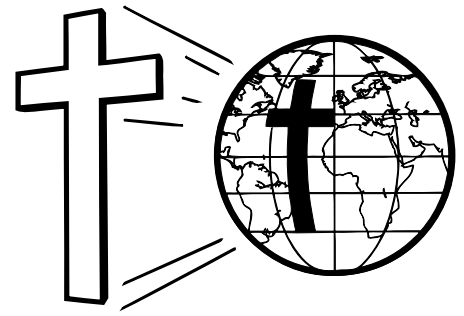


Foundation of Faith



What is a
BLESSED WORSHIP SERVICE?

THE SANCTIFIED CHURCH

THE FIRST PLACE

MAINTAINING UNITY

The
FAMILY IS IN DANGER

The PLACE *where*
GOD'S GLORY *dwells.*

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THE PLACE WHERE GOD'S GLORY DWELLS

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FOUNDATION OF FAITH

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

How precious is David's testimony, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells" (Psalm 26:8).

Since the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the mighty King, the heavenly host proclaims, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing! (Revelation 5:12).

Therefore, we are called upon to bring honor to the Lord, to sing praises to His Name, and to bring glory to Him in all we do.

Yet what occurs here on earth?

"How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood?" (Psalm 4:2).

"Says the Lord, 'And My name is blasphemed continually every day'" (Isaiah 52:5).

"The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you" (Romans 2:24).

Where is the place where God's glory is to dwell? First, each one of us should give the Lord room in our heart and life. And if only two or three are gathered together in His name, that is where praise in His honor should resound, where His wonderful grace is given praise, and above all where everything is done to His glory.

King David professes, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells" (Psalm 26:8). The house of the Lord is the church, the gathering place of all believers. That is the place where the bride (church) assembles in order to await her Bridegroom. Therefore God's glory must live in the church of God, since it says, "to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:21).

H.D. Nimz

What is a Blessed Worship Service?

A few friends were standing together. One of them asked the question: "What does it mean when we say 'it was a blessed service'?" One often hears the comment: "That was a nice sermon," or, "I received a real blessing in the service today." When the congregation receives a blessing from the service, what does that mean?

One of the friends said: "When I am sitting in a worship service and am filled with joy and encouraged, I've received a blessing." Another commented: "When a biblical doctrine is clearly presented in a sermon, then I am blessed." The third friend said: "When I am newly encouraged to make good resolutions and decisions during a sermon, I can surely say that this service has been a blessing for me." The fourth friend stated: "When I am going through a difficult time and am comforted and uplifted by the worship service, then I have indeed been blessed."

Finally, the fifth friend spoke up and said: "I would like to tell you what recently happened to me. Then you can judge whether or not I received a special blessing in this service:

"You all know that I have attended these services for many years, but I never took my Christian walk very seriously. A few weeks ago I heard a sermon that by God's grace made a huge impact on me. I am a grocer and in the past I did not accurately weigh and measure items. After that sermon, I went home and threw out all my inaccurate weights and measures. Now I only use accurate ones.

"Also, for years there was animosity between my neighbor and myself. After the sermon, I immediately went to him and asked for forgiveness. Now he and I are at peace with one another again.

"In the past, I unfortunately wronged a poor widow. She had come to me in great distress and anguish to ask for help. I closed my heart and hands to her. She left my home in tears. I can still remember her face. But I remained cold and hard. After that sermon, this incident appeared before me and cut my soul like a double-edged sword. I set out the next day to visit this widow and right the wrong I had done. I sincerely asked her for forgiveness and gave her a greater gift to relieve my conscience. At first, she did not want to accept it. Then she said that they were in great distress again and had asked God for help. She was willing to accept the money as a gift from God. This time tears of joy and thanksgiving rolled down her cheeks. I cannot begin to tell you how relieved and happy I was as I left her home. It was as if the angels in heaven were rejoicing.

"My next step was to visit our pastor. I used to be very stingy and hung on to material things. When God spoke to me through that sermon, I felt like Zacchaeus, who after inviting the Lord into his home became concerned about the many who were poor. I took of my earthly goods and gave it to the pastor for the poor and the kingdom of God.

"This is what that worship service did for me. I not only gave my heart to God and received forgiveness for my sins through the blood of Jesus, but my whole life was transformed by the grace of God. Now tell me, is this not the greatest blessing one can receive in a worship service?"

All of his friends agreed that this was what defined a truly blessed worship service, where hearts and lives were transformed, just as their friend had experienced it.

The Family of God

Family is a wonderful institution. It is made of a father, mother, and children. It should be an intimate community, where love reigns, and members help each other to the best of their ability.

Yet, there is one family that is more important than any other family: the family of God, or the church. This family makes her first appearance at the Pentecost celebration in Jerusalem when Jesus' disciples gathered together and received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Ever since this occasion, the family of God has become visible to the world.

Revelation 21:3 states, "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." God Himself is the father of this heavenly people. He founded this family when he purchased her through the blood of His Son. And because he paid such a high price for her, the church is of great value to Him. Therefore, the church is not some human organization or establishment. On the contrary, she belongs to Him, our God.

He is the head, and all glory is due Him. God alone governs His church, and His children must receive guidance only from Him and worship Him alone. Because the church is the family of the Most High, she must have the divine nature. That is, she must be holy, without spot or blame. Only then is the Lord pleased with her.

If God is our Father, then who is our Mother? God's Word says in Galatians 4:26 that she is the heavenly Jerusalem: "The Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all." It is the church or the family that is recognized by God. She is not a human institution. Unfortunately, many people do not recognize her today. Jesus purchased her with His blood, and the Holy Spirit leads and directs her.

The family of God has many children. In Revelation 7:9, John saw "a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands." Most assuredly, God has children all over the world.

The church of God also bears His name, a fact of which she can be proud. In Christianity today, many

people hold firmly to human names. They claim that the name is not important. Yes, a name alone cannot carry anyone into heaven; however, if you are a child of God, you should attach importance to the name. And you should live in such a way that you bring honor to the name. May God help us!

The church of God is also a caring Mother that takes care of her children. With her help, you can grow and mature. She offers truth as food to her children. This world is filled with error, and that is why there are so many sick Christians, Christians who do not grow the way they should. Dear child of God, be cautious about where your nourishment comes from. Not everything that is offered to you is good.

The Lord does not like His children to join other families. He would like to raise them Himself through His Word and Spirit. He teaches them how to pray, and through obedience, they should become righteous as they carry out all His divine orders. Has He not often told you that you cannot flourish just anywhere where you can get food? Maybe you agree with this statement, and yet, you avoid fellowship with the children of the true family of God. God help you so that you may recognize your mistake!

Who are the children of God? The family of God is only made of those who have been born again. True salvation is the only way into the family of God. God's children are obedient and concerned about doing God's will. Their hearts are filled with the desire to live and work for their Savior, and this desire motivates them to honor Him through all their actions. They are happy children who have been freed from the bondage of sin. There is harmony in the family of God because God is a God of order. All creation gives testimony to this.

The first command in the family of God is love, love for God and for all the brothers and sisters in the Lord. It is a wonderful fellowship where brothers and sisters support each other in love, for the fullness of God's love has been poured out into the hearts of His children.

Dear reader, there is only one family of God! Do you belong to this family? Do you love and cherish her?

Adapted from K. P.

The First Place

Everything in our life has a specific place of priority and importance. Many things force their way into the forefront, while other things are pushed further and further back until they virtually disappear from our life. What place does Christ really have in your life?

We often sing—and gladly, I believe—the song in our services: “Lord, take the first place in my life . . .” Certainly we mean to be honest with this wish. But what does it look like practically? Does Jesus really always take the first place in all things? When we sing this song, it seems so easy to dedicate the first place to Jesus. But in everyday life, this often looks different. Life places assorted and legitimate demands on us so that we don’t even notice how often Jesus gets crowded out of first place.

We don’t even question natural advancement in our lives. We don’t even think about time and money. You simply must have whatever you need in order to live.

Older people receive their pension every month so that they can live till the next. Men and women go to work daily in order to provide income for their family or their own needs. Homemakers are stressed to the utmost to fulfill their duties. Children go to school every day, of course. This daily routine is so greatly a part of our flesh and blood that we cannot even imagine something else. In this, no fault can be found.

But what about our soul? Will and must our soul not also live? Do we also provide so matter-of-factly for the nourishment of our soul? According to the Holy Scriptures, we should think more about the wellbeing of our soul than our physical needs (Matthew 6:25-34).

What does our soul need? First of all, of course, is constant contact with our heavenly Father. Daily nutrition for

our soul should come from the Word of God and prayer. But in order to grow, we also need the special meals our Lord prepares for us through sermons in worship services. And not least is fellowship with our brothers and sisters.

What do we offer our soul? Does it get the attention it deserves? Or is its hunger suppressed by natural needs?

Even if we were to be as diligent to provide for the needs of our soul as we are for our daily physical needs, Jesus might still not be in first place. Only when the kingdom of God has priority in both every opportune and inopportune moment, and in everything that we do and think about, then we will fulfill the command: “Seek first the kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:33).

The Lord gives us daily opportunities to demonstrate this. What does this look like in our lives? Are we willing to let ourselves be solemnly examined?

I know an elderly sister. She can barely run the most essential errands, makes only few visits, and can rarely travel. But she is never missing at a church service or Bible study. Jesus truly takes the first place in this grandmother’s life.

I also know a number of brothers and sisters who are many years younger than this sister. They are also slightly weakened by age but are not directly sick. They can travel long distances if they need something for their homes, and are not affected by wind and weather when respond-



ing to the invitations of relatives and acquaintances, but on Sunday in the worship service, their seat is empty. They definitely can't make it to Bible study. They give excuses about their older age and ailments. Does Jesus then still take first place?

Some sisters forsake assembling together for the sake of their husbands or families. With such a view, we will never be able to draw our family members toward Jesus. Only when we ourselves faithfully follow through and testify that we need the strengthening of the Word of God, will the Lord reveal Himself. Likewise, there are also brothers who are so tired after work that they cannot attend worship services. They return to work with their bodies strengthened but their souls hungry, and then wonder why they lack spiritual strength.

I know from experience that when you work day in and day out with worldly people, you will experience a great longing for Christian fellowship and the Word of God, and you will take advantage of these opportunities.

What happens when visitors arrive just when we are planning to attend a worship service? What a wonderful opportunity to invite them to join us and experience God's presence with us! We all want to lead our family members, relatives, and acquaintances to the Lord, and want to take advantage of every opportunity God gives us to make them familiar with Jesus. They will also witness firsthand that Jesus truly has the first place in our lives.

One day we will stand before Jesus, and He will show us how He had consistently prepared wonderful nourishment for us, to give our hungry souls the best food. Did we take advantage of these opportunities, or did we excuse ourselves because of insignificant things? Did we accept His invitation, or ignore it because other things took the first place in our hearts? Jesus has so much patience. He gives and gives of His fullness. But who knows how long this time of grace will last?

No one can claim he doesn't need God's Word and fellowship with His children if he has Jesus in his heart. Colossians 2:19 would be applicable to him: "and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God."—We all need one another and we need Jesus in the first place!

I.L.

God's House— A House of Prayer



Week after week we gather at our places of worship. These places are dedicated to the service and worship of God and go by the name “Church of God.” This name already indicates that the church is God’s possession, but I’ve often wondered if we are always certain of what God expects of us when we gather in His house. It says in Isaiah 56:7, “My house shall be called a house of prayer.” Let us be completely honest for a moment and ask ourselves, “Is there as much prayer happening in our places of worship as God expects? Is enough prayer happening there so that people truly can call our congregation a place of prayer? Is earnest and fervent prayer cultivated there? Have we acknowledged that prayer is of utmost importance if we expect God to work and sinners to be saved?” These thoughts really concerned me, and I felt the need to make it my earnest prayer that all our places of worship might be and remain true houses of prayer.

For months, the desire and yearning of my heart was for more spiritual victories, for a deeper inner walk with God, and evidence of deeper spiritual lives among the people of God. I myself went through numerous difficult struggles, and it often seemed that defeat was closer than victory. But after I submitted completely to God and the commands of His words, I learned to use the weapon of prayer against all enemies of the soul and God’s Kingdom. I persevered in prayer until complete victory was achieved. We started to cultivate prayer more in our congregation, and every evening, righteous souls gathered to spend an hour in earnest prayer, and the results were soon noticeable. We have already celebrated many glorious victories. Spiritual life has deepened, and all who persevered in prayer could testify that they had been

blessed more than any others that might have been blessed through them.

Many children of God have not prayed enough to receive much spiritual benefit from it. A man admitted to only praying a little, and actually only enough to ease his conscience, and often not even that much. And many others had to admit that they no longer viewed prayer as a wonderful privilege or cultivated it with joy, rather confessed to praying a little here and there as one would add salt to a meal: here a little and there a little until the taste is acceptable. Others admitted to only praying out loud as little as absolutely necessary. That they went to congregational meetings empty, and home the same way. And many were also guilty of trying to feed the souls of others before first filling their own bread basket in the pantry of prayer.

I fear that this is a true and faithful picture of the situation in many places, if we look at things the way God sees them. I also believe that nothing is more important in our local congregations than properly cultivating prayer and correctly acknowledging its worth.

Many people have confessed to me that although they lead a pure life, they did not know how to pray correctly. One man came forward at an altar call and said he felt that he needed something, perhaps the experience of sanctification. I asked how his prayer life was, if he knew of the joy of persevering prayer, of prayer until victory. He answered that he had no idea what that meant. He certainly prayed, but found no special joy in it. It was more of a habit or a duty to fulfill. I believe this man expressed what many other good people are lacking. They want to serve God, but the hard crust of their heart has not yet been broken by persevering prayer so that the rays of divine sunshine can fall into their hearts while they spend time with God. Only when this is the case can we truly enjoy prayer, and that is when spending time before God’s face becomes so sweet and glorious.

O children of God, fall to your knees! Away with all formalities, and let us step before God with longing and righteous hearts. Let your heart and lips speak the same language. Do not tell God how fervently you love Him if that is not the case. Remember that God knows your heart very well and knows what is inside. Do not tell God what a great burden you have for other souls when you have

a spiritual heart defect that, spiritually speaking, almost kills you. Do not tell God how much you love His people when you have many complaints about them. God does not want any “pious liars,” but He takes joy in those who come near to Him with righteous and open hearts. Let us pray in fervency and truth!

E. M. Powell

Are you a Christian?

*“Are you a Christian?” is my heartfelt question.
Are you one truly, based on how you live?
Consider this, it’s not just a suggestion;
In times like these, what answer will you give?
The time will come when you must make confession;
If yes, or no, there will be no concession.
So let me ask you now, give me your word:
Is Christ your Lord?*

*“Are you a Christian?” is an earnest question.
Consider now in context what this means:
To be like Christ. That’s why the early Christians,
Who followed Him were first called by His name.
Their lives, their talk, embodied Christ’s own teaching,
The walk they walked embraced His love and preaching;
In joy and pain, do you cling to His Word?
Is Christ your Lord?*

*“Are you a Christian?” Then live for God’s own glory
And honor Him in all you say and do.
To do what’s right is quite another story
Than just to go to church each week anew.
How can you act unrighteously while praying,
Live like the world, denying what you’re saying?
Such inconsistencies just cannot be ignored
If Christ is Lord!*

*“Are you a Christian?” Let me ask this question:
Do you love God, and love His children too?
If someone errs do you then lose your affection?
Can you be kind to those offending you?
The world has scorn for Christ and hates God’s people;
Be on your guard, so you won’t be its equal.
If you have hate, I don’t believe the word
That Christ’s your Lord!*

*“Are you a Christian?” Then you love His teaching
And have a heart for missions and the lost;
And often in your prayers you’ll be beseeching
That others may be saved, though great the cost.
You will deny the world and sinful pleasures.
If you still love the world and all her treasures,
Then I have fear, despite your many words,
Christ’s not your Lord!*

*“Are you a Christian?” answer one last question:
Do you love Jesus more than everything?
Will you be true to Him and your confession,
In life and death, what e’er the future brings?
Then you are worthy to be called a Christian!
God grant you victory in each decision;
Fear not, you have the promise of His Word,
For Christ is Lord.*

The Sanctified Church

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . . Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. . . .” (Acts 2:41-47)

What a marvelous description this passage gives us of the local church of God in Jerusalem! We see a gathering of joyful Christians who received the Word with pleasure, followed the Lord in baptism, and were filled with the Spirit, with thanksgiving, and praise. We see a church filled with the Holy Spirit, united with the bond of brotherly love—a church to which the Lord added daily those who were saved.

Many other noble and worthwhile character qualities of the church could be named. One of these is consecration or sanctification. The brothers and sisters sold their possessions and gave the proceeds to the church. It appears that they did so without anyone compelling them. No one required this of them (see Acts 5:4). They simply saw a need and an opportunity to do

good. They were burdened by the knowledge that there were needy in their midst. Their “heartfelt compassion” applied to the poor, and they practiced this act of love because their hearts were filled with the Spirit of sanctification.

What is meant by sanctification and what is involved?

To be consecrated or sanctified means to be fully and wholeheartedly yielded to a cause. Solomon was given the responsibility of building the temple in Jerusalem after his father had received the plan from God. David was very concerned about whether the entire nation would be in support of this project. In order to build the temple, people, material, time, and money were necessary. The people were willing to give, the temple was erected, and the entire nation

of Israel was filled with pride and joy.

In our age, a different temple is to be constructed. It will not be built in Jerusalem, but rather in the entire world. Not a temple of stone or the cedars of Lebanon, rather of men and women from all nations and languages, by people who are born again. This temple is the church of the living God, the pillars and foundations of truth. Building this grand, glorious, spiritual temple requires the sacrifice, support, and full commitment of every child of God.

True sanctification includes segregation from the world. In this way the children of God have always been a people set apart. “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they

shall be My people.' Therefore, 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you'" (2 Corinthians 6:16-17). It is clear that God does not accept our service, and cannot use us, unless we let go of the world and have surrendered ourselves fully to Him.

Sanctification includes a transfer of affections and a certain dedication. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service," says Paul in Romans 12:1. After we have been freed from sin and have become servants of the Lord, we must lay our lives down on the altar of sacrifice. This surrender means that God has first place in our hearts.

A young man who attended the university had a saying on the wall of his room that said, "I am willing to be in third place." When asked what this meant, he replied, "My good mother gave me this motto before I came here and said that, if I want to be successful in life and in the service of my fellow man, then I must be willing to leave room for God as number one in my life, the people as number two, and me as number three." He promised his mother that he would do this. And in order to be reminded of this, he hung the motto on his wall.

During a Christian celebration in Africa some years ago, a group of born-again believers brought their

offering from their meager income as a symbol of their gratitude and devotion. One girl, who had become saved, brought her silver coin, worth about 85 cents. In those days, this was a lot of money. The missionary was very surprised by this offering. When he asked where she had obtained the money, she replied, "That is all that I have, and I give it all to the Lord." She had gone to a rich man and had sold herself as a life-long slave to him. This is a beautiful example of sacrifice. This obviously does not mean that we are to sell ourselves to someone, but it is wonderful to dedicate ourselves and our possessions to the Lord.

God's Right to our Possessions

God created us, body and soul, and His goodness and kindness are with us every day of our lives. When we found ourselves in sin and darkness, without God and without hope in the world, He came and saved us. Not because we were good, not because of the works of righteousness we had performed, but rather, because of His great compassion. He gave us His spirit that leads, comforts, instructs, and teaches us. He gave us grace, strength, and victory. With David, we should call out, "Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:8). Should we not completely and fully dedicate ourselves to the Lord because of these divine blessings?

The Success and Victory of a Church Consecrated to God

A congregation comprised of members dedicated to the Lord will always be ready to give praise to God. When God's people were to build the ark of the covenant, and were called upon to contribute to the project, they gave so willingly and abundantly that Moses had to ask them to stop giving. This willingness to sacrifice is still needed today.

When God wanted Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, he was immediately ready to obey. What was it that made Abraham so cooperative? It was his total commitment and surrender to God. When Isaiah heard the call of God, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" (Isaiah 6:8), he was so willing that he immediately said, "Here am I! Send me." Additionally, when Paul heard the calling, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9), he immediately went.

Dedication signifies victory. It will help the church to triumph over all difficulties, even to the point that responsibilities will seem lighter and more doable. Dedication will enrich our souls. Every member of a church that claims to believe should sacrifice himself fully and completely on God's altar, and should consecrate himself entirely to the Lord. This will conquer hell, overcome sin, and cause the enemy to flee.

Marcel R. Desgalier

THE PLACE WHERE GOD'S GLORY DWELLS

How Does One Become a Member of the Church of God?

God's Word teaches us that the church is the body of Christ. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus that God "put all things under [Christ's] feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23). And in 1 Corinthians 12:27, Paul writes: "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

The word "church" means called out, and all those who are members have been called out of Satan's service. They have been called out of the kingdom of darkness and have been transplanted into the Lord's service in the kingdom of light.


The New Testament church is made up of people who are connected to each other by their love for their Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." The New Testament church includes all the redeemed. Jesus gives all who accept Him the right to become children of God. There is no way outside of repentance, faith, and rebirth to become a part of the church of the living God.

When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he said: "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those

who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Corinthians 1:2). Paul did not view all the people of Corinth as members of the church. On the contrary, he drew a sharp and distinct line. He addressed his letter to the redeemed, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, to the saints. At the time, a number of Corinthians had repented and received forgiveness for their sins. They had been born again and had been added to the church of God.

According to these passages, membership in the New Testament church involves more than a formal reception into a congregation. The Lord Himself, and not a person, adds people to His church. All whom the Lord has added have received a new heart. They have become a new creation in Christ because they have been born again. It is still the same today. In the words of Paul: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Acts 2:47 clearly states that the Lord Himself adds to the church. And this fact alone should be enough to convince anyone that God does not recognize any other way to become a part of His church.



Church membership in the New Testament Church meant more than just a formal entrance into a congregation. The Lord Himself, not the people, added souls to the Church.

Christ is not only the head of the church, but He is also the door. He says, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9). He is also the keeper of the keys. When He opens a door, no one can shut it; and when he closes a door, no one can open it (Revelation 3:7-8).

In Hebrews, the church is represented as Mount Zion: “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:22-23).

Mount Zion and the church of the firstborn is the church that Jesus founded and built, and new birth is required to join the church. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

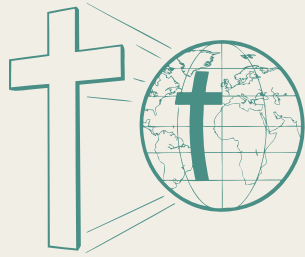
Have you been born again, my dear reader? Or have you attached yourself to some formal church organization and so believe that you belong to the church of God? Do you have the Holy Spirit’s testimony that you are a child of God?

When the people were convicted of their sin and realized their lost condition through the preaching of the apostle Peter, they cried out: “What shall we do?” Peter knew that they needed new hearts, and so he answered: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). If we continue to follow the story, we find encouraging results: “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. . . . And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:41, 47b).

Peter did not add people to the church. He preached the gospel and allowed the Holy Spirit to do the rest. He showed the people what God required, and all those who received the gospel repented, were set free from their sins, and were born again. The Lord Himself added them to His church.

Dear reader, be satisfied with nothing less than the real experience of salvation, and then the Lord will add you to His church!

Adapted from H.C. Gardner



Radio Broadcast The Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, Ontario

The Bridegroom and His Bride

*“The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: ‘Praise the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good.’”
(Jeremiah 33:11)*

The Old Testament prophets clearly recognized that the bridegroom and the bride, which represent Christ and His Church, would be explicitly revealed in the New Testament era. They knew and believed that God would fulfill His plan of salvation the way He had revealed it to them.

Paul wrote in Galatians 4:4: “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son.” The Gospel of Mark begins with these words: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God. As it is written in the Prophets” (Mark 1:1-2). In verse 15, Mark writes: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” A new time period had begun. Jesus brought the message of saving grace and salvation.

The prophets referred to this new era. And therefore, Jesus said to His disciples: “For assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Matthew 13:17).

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus. Through his message, God revealed Himself in a mighty way. Great revival took place. Luke wrote: “Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not” (Luke 3:15). John denied this saying: “You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’” He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of

the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice” (John 3:28-29). The prophet Jeremiah also proclaimed this when he said: “the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride” (Jeremiah 7:34b). This moment had now arrived with Christ.

The promised Savior was here. John humbly confessed: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). He needed to be declared, because He is the “King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!” He is the head of His people. He is the founder, the foundation and the cornerstone of His holy temple, His Church! God’s Word repeatedly introduces the Church as His bride and only through Christ, the Bridegroom, could she be established.

In Revelation 21:2, John writes: “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” This husband was Christ, the Son of God. He came into this world for His bride. He gave His blood and life to win her. What a huge cost! What love and self-sacrifice ransomed us! He won her, and, “he who has the bride is the bridegroom” (John 3:29). This fact cannot be refuted. Similarly, whoever has the bridegroom is the bride. They are connected to one another in perfect unity. They live for one another, serve each other, defend each other, work together, and speak the same language.

The church, or the bride, was the reward of the Bridegroom's tireless work. She is the reward of His suffering and death on the cross. The church is comprised of all nations and languages. Luke wrote: "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 3:47).

Just like Christ, the church goes through many battles and sufferings in this world. The bride must share the burden with her Bridegroom. She was chosen for a high calling and must accept the obligations and sacrifices associated with it. Jesus said: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit . . . If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:16, 18). Even though her path may lead through misunderstanding and disgrace, she still remains in the grace and favor of God. He loves and cares for her. He has clothed her with the garment of salvation and the robe of righteousness. He gives her truth and power, and leads her into the fullness of heavenly blessings. He surrounds her with protection and holds His hand over her. He cares for and comforts her with His constant help and nearness. He leads her to the glorious, eternal goal.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explicitly said: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). John also testified: "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Revelation 7:10). John was asked: "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" (Revelation 7:13). And he was told: "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God" (Revelation 7:14-15).

This is the image of the eternal union between the faithful bride and her beloved Bridegroom. Whoever wants to belong to this group must heed this inescapable word: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts!" (Hebrews 3:15).

Friedrich Krebs



When Do We Fight and When Do We Flee?

The most dangerous bombs in a war are those disguised as kid's toys. The danger, not just in war but also in our spiritual battle, is the greatest when it inconspicuously piques our curiosity and interest.

When we were children, our parents taught us not to fight. We were encouraged to give in, withdraw, or leave. Against this background, it almost seems to be a contradiction that God's Word compares the Christian life to the battlefield of soldiers! We even say: "Christians are called to enlist in God's army." We cannot live a God-pleasing life if we don't fight! But it must be fascinatingly noted that there are times and situations in which God's Word instructs us to escape, in order to get away unscathed.

The apostle Paul writes: "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:11-12).

In this passage, both methods to apply when we are attacked and challenged by the enemy are presented. On the one hand "fleeing," and on the other "fighting!"

This raises the question: When do we flee, and when do we fight?

Flee, if the enemy is friendly!

There may be exceptions, but in general we should flee if the approach of the enemy is friendly, inviting, and tempting! In the verses preceding 1 Timothy 6:11, the Apostle Paul speaks of the charm and lure of riches of this world. He urges us to escape from the "friendly" and deceptive enemy that disguises himself in the love of money. In his second letter to Timothy he again speaks of another friendly enemy from which we should flee: "Flee

also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). Joseph's behavior serves as a very good example of how we should run away from an enemy that is inviting and tempting to the flesh. If we want to live victoriously, we must learn to avoid situations or to run away from activities and people who want to dissuade us from our obedience to God. An English proverb says this: "Who would not fall, shun the slippery places." The invitation of the enemy can take many different forms: peer pressure from classmates, websites to which we have access, amusements which we observe, or deceptive financial opportunities available to us. Flee if the enemy is friendly! Pursue "righteousness, faith, love, peace," and flee all whose appeal would dissuade us from following Jesus Christ.

Fight, when the enemy is dangerous!

There are situations where running is not an option! In Ephesians chapter 6, the apostle Paul speaks of being prepared for battle and ready to confront the enemy! "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). Standing and not running away! "Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14). Here the emphasis is clearly on standing! If the enemy seems dangerous, we should not give in and not retreat! If the enemy attacks us with doubt, allegations, discouragement, fear, and intimidation, we should not run away!

We must be steadfast! We should not counter with our own strength, determination, and willpower. We can be steadfast in the power of His strength and through faith in Jesus Christ. We have the shield of faith to protect against the lies of the enemy, and can use the Word of God as a sword to edge away the enemy and “fight the good fight of faith!”

In what form does the enemy come to you today? Ask God for help to escape when you have to flee, and to fight when you have to fight. His plan for you is a life of joy, which is possible only through a victorious life.

John Reimer
Barrhead, AB

Let Us Be Watchful

Our present time is more dangerous to the spiritual life than times of persecution many centuries ago. Precisely because of the tribulations and persecutions of that time, the faith and earnestness of Christians was multiplied, as they turned their backs on everything, and clung with all their heart to the Lord, remaining faithful until death. But the present times of indifference and mere formality are quite suitable to allowing zeal and love to grow cold.

Oh, dear ones, watch and pray, for we are not unaware of what the enemy of the soul has in mind! He wants to lull us with carelessness and plunge our soul into eternal perdition. Let us therefore give attention to the exhortation of the Lord Jesus: “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”

In Five Minutes

At a ceremony, guest speakers were each given five minutes to speak. D. J. Prime opened his speech with the following words: “No more than five minutes—not much can be said, but a lot can be achieved:

“In five minutes, you can set a city on fire, drill a hole in the wall of a ship and cause the vessel to sink. Five minutes can ruin a soul. The misconduct of a moment can poison a life forever.

“When temptation nears, never forget how you can dishonor your name within a short five minutes, burdening your whole life that lies before you with the most terrible remorse. And then the grief you cause your loved

ones! Yes, within five minutes, incalculable misery can be wrought.

“But you can also create a great blessing reaching into eternity in five minutes. In five minutes you can make the solid resolve henceforth to walk a new path.

“Again: Be frugal with your five minutes and at the same time also remember your neighbor’s five minutes, which you are not allowed to steal. Lost money can be found, ill health can be recovered—but not five lost minutes. These are more precious than diamonds, and used properly, they bring prosperity into our lives and wisdom to our decisions. Yes, they serve us in preparation for the great eternity.”



Meditate On These Things

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Philippians 4:4-9 (NKJV)

THE BOAT RACE

The students at Oxford University hold boat races every year. A truly thrilling sight!

Every team has eight men sitting one behind the other in a narrow boat. They row at exactly the same pace and so the boat glides as fast as the wind across the water's surface. Sitting on a slightly raised platform in front of the rowers is the coxswain or pilot. He sets the pace, he keeps an eye on the finish line and motivates the team. The eight do not see the finish line. They are rowing backwards and keep their eyes on the coxswain.

The coxswain in my boat of life also wants me to pay attention to Him and listen to Him. He knows the destination, the right course and the dangers. He gives no wrong commands. I can trust Him without fail.

Hans needs to shop in a self-service store. There are so many nice things! He feels like slipping one of the little chocolates into his pocket. That would be stealing, right? Suddenly he remembers the song:

"The old ship Zion is my boat,

My Pilot is Jesus; in every storm she'll safely float . . . !"

"Lord Jesus," prays Hans, "I want to follow you! You do not want me to steal. Help me!"

Hans runs to the checkout, pays and happily leaves the store. His life boat has stayed on the right course because he paid attention to the pilot. Have you already invited Jesus to be your pilot?

Yvonne Frischknecht



The Family is in Danger

“Then God said to Jacob, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there’” (Genesis 35:1).

In most families, there are moments of crisis, moments in which the father must make many decisions in order to bring everything into the right balance again. It is said that occasionally a restless spirit will begin to disrupt the household and must be banished. There are times when the evil in the hearts of the children and the nature of the parents is especially evident, and if a wrong decision is made, terrible harm results. Yet, if grace is able to work in the heart of one or all family members, then a strong and godly hand is able to steer the boat bravely through the breakwaters, and bring it safely out of danger so that it can continue its trip much more successfully.

Such a crisis had occurred in Jacob’s family. Something had to be done. Everything seemed to have fallen to pieces and it could not continue like this. Even the Gentiles surrounding them began to perceive the shattered family as obnoxious. There were only two choices: either change or be destroyed.

The head of the family had to take a firm stand. There had to be a change in the home and the connection to God had to be renewed. It is easy to see that Jacob found himself on the wrong path. He should have tarried in Canaan as a pilgrim, a stranger who lived in tents. He was after all, not one of the people. Instead, he was to testify that “he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). He had the promise of inheriting the land. But for now, he was to be without a permanent dwelling place, like his fathers

Abraham and Isaac had been. Yet we read in Genesis 33:17 that “Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock.”

Even though it is not our business to judge the purchase of Land in Shechem, it did not conform to God’s thought. Jacob tried to find a resting place where Abraham and Isaac had none. It appears that he wished to find a home for himself where he could rest and at the same time live on cordial terms with the country’s inhabitants.

The Lord did not want it to be this way. According to divine resolution, the chosen family was to live alone and lead a separated life, something that perhaps seemed peculiar to outsiders. Abraham’s descendants were ordered to be separate from all other peoples. However, the inclination to be like their neighbors was very evident in Jacob’s family.

Children of God cannot unite with the world. Just as fire and water cannot mix, children of God and children of the world do not fit with one another. In Genesis 6, we read that when “the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose,” the Lord was “was grieved in His heart,” and decided to send the flood to destroy humanity (Genesis 6:2,6). Much evil results when man joins together with that which God has separated.

After the defilement of Dinah, Jacob’s daughter, her brothers Simeon and Levi avenged the evil deed. Now Jacob’s entire house was full of fear. Jacob told his sons: “You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land” (Genesis 34:30).



What were they to do now? God said to Jacob: You must move away from Shechem and its fertile plains. You have been near the Shechemites long enough. Evil has come from you nurturing such amity with the world. You need to completely sever the bonds between you and the Canaanites and move to Bethel and dwell there awhile.

Dear brothers and sisters, there may come a time when we have to say to our families: “We must separate ourselves from the world. We must be set apart. We must sever the deceptive bonds. We are growing accustomed to things that will never have God’s approval. We do some things in order to secure the favor of one and do others in order to evade the disdain of another. We need to move to “Bethel,” the place where we first encountered God. We want to relinquish all worldliness and once again draw near to God.”

Have you ever had a time when you have been overly involved in your work, so that your heart felt sick and you finally cried: “Enough! I need to get out of here! I need to withdraw into holy solitude and have quiet fellowship with God!”? In relation to your family, have you ever sensed: “Everything seems to be going downhill! We are

not serving the Lord correctly! We need to change course or we cannot rely on God’s blessing!”?

Jacob received the order: “Arise, go up to Bethel . . . and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother” (Genesis 35:1). It is also beneficial for us to remember when we first came to the Lord. At that time it did not matter to us if everyone misjudged us, as long as we could be near to the Lord. It is also good to remember when we first “built our family altar” and knelt before God with our loved ones.

Return to these hours of fellowship with God. If you have neglected your personal prayer time, if you have stopped studying God’s Word, if you have drifted away from a close walk with Jesus and strangers hardly know whether or not you are a Christian, then go back to “Bethel” and ask God for your former faith to be reawakened. May God bring you to the point where you cry: “How could I drift so far away from the living God? How could I be so foolish to prowl around everywhere? Had I only remained near Him!”

Many a family is in danger today! They may have once started out strong with the Lord, but what is it like today?

EP

If You Would Believe

Part 8

Compiled by Hartmut Sonnenberg

O Canada

Father's desire was to get as far away from the communists as possible. He prayed that God would open a door for us to immigrate to Canada, if that were His will. He turned to the Canadian Mission Board of the German Church of God, asking if they might be willing to sponsor us as well as other refugees in our circle of acquaintances, who were equally in need. The board responded favorably to sponsoring our family, and suggested that once we were in Canada we could initiate immigration efforts on behalf of other refugees. When father shared the Mission Board letter with us, he finished enthusiastically, "We are immigrating to Canada!"

In July 1949, in heavy seas, we stood gripping the railing of the tossing *Beaverbrae* as the coast of Germany receded in the distance and finally sank below the horizon. Each one of us was lost in thought. Turning toward us, father broke the silence. "Yes!" he enthused. "We have emigrated! What is your dream for Canada?"

"I would like to eat a whole meal of just sausage!" volunteered the youngest without hesitation. Father agreed – that surely would be a dream! Continuing the theme of food, mother responded. "Just once, if I could eat my fill of a pot of steaming-hot boiled potatoes - that would be my dream."

Following a stormy crossing of the Atlantic, we finally merged into the shelter of the St. Lawrence river. As far as the eye could see, forested mountains slipped silently by. In Quebec City, we left the ship and continued our journey by train. Days on end we witnessed an endless wilderness panorama of pristine forests and lakes. Abruptly, the scenery changed as we entered the prairie. Laser-straight,

the rail line ahead took aim at our destination. Following a short visit with Pastor Stumkat in Winnipeg, Manitoba, we received a heartfelt reception from Karl Krause, pastor of the church in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

Brilliant sunshine greeted us day after day in Medicine Hat. One day, the youngest, Hartmut, grabbed mother by the sleeve and pulled her to the window. "Look mommy! Look!" pointing to the sky.

"What, my son?"

"The sun!"

One blistering hot Saturday in August, Hartmut labored in the onion harvest of a farmer of the congregation from morning till evening. At day's end, he was rewarded with 25 cents. Never before had he had money of his own, and now he had precisely the amount required for a brick of ice cream (approximately one liter), except that the stores were already closed till Monday, and so for now, he had to content himself with the dream of the upcoming ice cream feast on Monday.

In church on Sunday, mother described in vivid detail the misery faced by many of the refugees in war-torn Germany. Following a heart-rending report, a collection was taken up to assist needy refugees in Germany, but before the offering plates were passed through the pews, she addressed her youngest son, who with his 25 cents had yesterday become a rich man.

"Hartmut," she pleaded, "Yesterday you labored the entire day in the hot sun, earning 25 cents – your first-earned money. Would you be willing to donate your hard-earned wages to help needy refugees in Germany?"

Without hesitation the boy bounced up from his seat



agreeing - mind you, perhaps more out of an obedience-reflex than an undeniable act of charity. Furthermore, the thought of publicly disgracing his mother would never have entered his mind. And so, Monday's brick of ice cream had just melted. He comforted himself with the thought that in this good country there would be renewed opportunity to earn a brick of ice cream. By the time the collection plate reached him it was brimming with the generosity of those good people. Modestly he added his 25 cents.

A hand laid itself on his shoulder as he slowly pressed toward the exit, following the service. "Here, my boy," whispered a generous farmer as he thrust some coins into the boy's coat pocket. "This is for you." - Similarly a second farmer,

and then a third, and yet another. Hardy could scarcely wait until he got home to count the money in his pocket. Beaming, he added up the proceeds from his offering for mother. His 25 cent donation had earned him \$1.65! It doesn't take the qualifications of a chief financial officer to appreciate such a return on investment - that was as clear to a ten year old as the cloudless sky above Medicine Hat, Alberta.

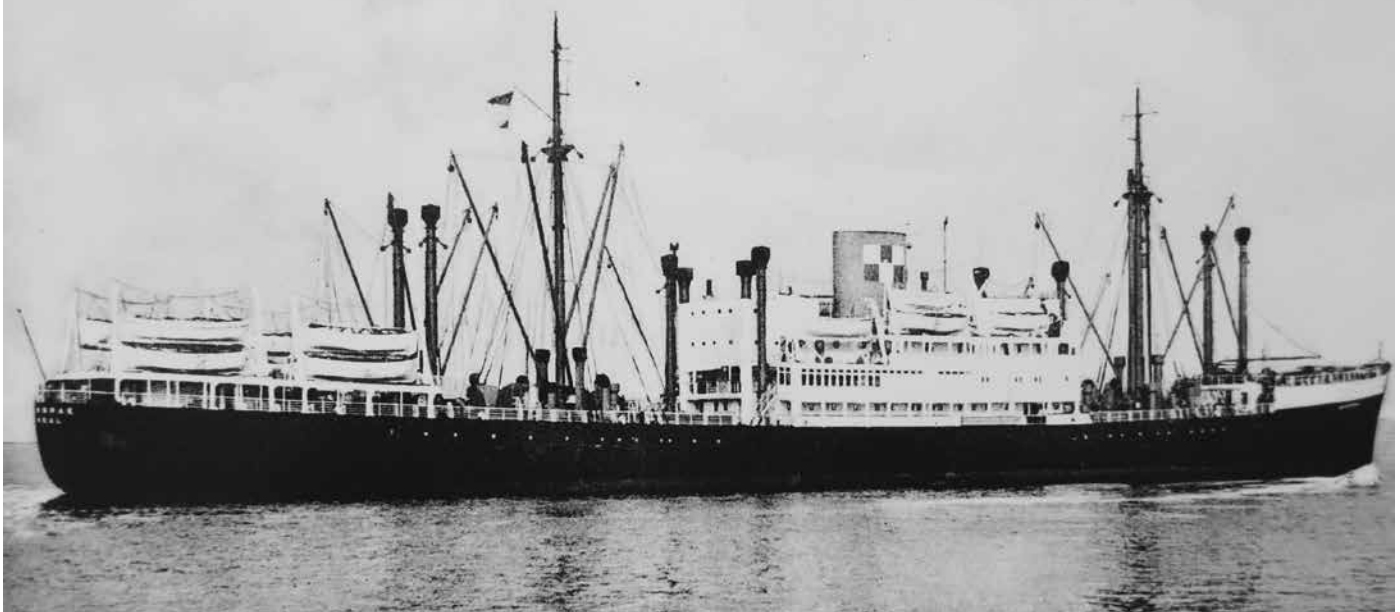
"Give, and it will be given to you.

A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.

For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

(Luke 6:38 NIV)

SHIP BEAVERBRAE



Maintaining Unity

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:2-3)

The word “endeavoring” refers to making an effort, a serious unwavering pursuit. It is not overly difficult to achieve this goal of unity when the Spirit, Who is the source of unity, has been received. But it is much harder to maintain it over the long haul.

If we want to receive the Holy Spirit, we must give ourselves over to Him, surrender all, and submit completely. But maintaining unity requires a persistent, relentless fight. For this reason I would like to encourage all of God’s children to fight this battle correctly and to persevere in all circumstances.


The previously mentioned passage from the letter to the Ephesians is affirmed when we say: All those who have received the Holy Spirit also have a heart condition that longs for unity. If we would just put enough emphasis on maintaining this blessed heart condition, then every disunion and divisive spirit would be held in bondage. Scripture says “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another” (1 John 1:7). If people want to be saved and sanctified they must come into the light and walk in the light. If they would continue to walk in the light and view all things from a godly point of view, then they would also have continual fellowship with one another. Unfortunately many do not remain in the light and for this reason darkness comes upon their souls. God’s Spirit departs from a divisive spirit, and brotherly love and holy fellowship are destroyed.

Unity will only be developed through the Holy Spirit! For this reason, if we want to hold onto unity, we must also hold onto the source of all unity. That is God’s Spirit. If we neglect this, then unity will soon be lost.

Genuine unity is dependent on true brotherhood; all must have God as their Father. For this reason the new birth from God, the Father, is paramount. All must be born again so that they are part of one family, with one father and one mother. God is our Father and “the Jerusalem above . . . is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26). The Father is concerned with the salvation of our souls from sin and the unity of His children who form the great family of God. Nothing holds people together more closely than family ties that can only be broken through death. God uses the image of the family to show His relation to His people and to represent the relationship of God’s children to each other. This kinship can only be knit together through the Holy Spirit. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him” (1 John 5:1). Therefore, our relationship to one another is dependent on our mutual bond with God and His Spirit. If we are all of one Spirit and of the same mind, having the same Leader and having all been placed under the same influence, is it then really so impossible to go the same direction and to be one in our goals, intentions, and wishes?

Just as the spirit of a person in the natural body establishes perfect order among the individual parts, so the Holy Spirit in the spiritual body of Christ, the Church, establishes unity among the believers. If our natural



*The lack of true unity
among all of God's children
is precisely the reason why
so many souls are lost.*

body loses life when we die, then our body is subject to decay. Immediately after life has departed from the body, decomposition begins. The members of the body that were once together in beautiful harmony begin to separate from one another and unity is destroyed. This is a fitting picture for the spiritual life. Just as we are concerned with preserving our natural life, we should likewise strive to keep our soul alive. If all children of God earnestly strive to remain filled with the Holy Spirit who gives them life, then He will be able maintain unity and harmony among them. This is the only sure way to preserve unity within the Church.

We may adorn a dead body with beautiful garments and may even seek to preserve its bodily form. For a time it may have the outward form of a man, but the time will come when it will fall apart and decay. We can preach, teach, and instruct a local congregation, and do our utmost to maintain an outward form of doctrine, but if the Holy Spirit is missing in the individual members, then decay is inevitable. Unity will not be possible.

Some have the impression that once unity exists, it can survive on its own. But that is a great fallacy. Unity can disappear if not all children of God continually strive for it and fight for it. Our battle for the truth is just as serious and important as our constant pursuit to stay right with God. As God's children, we still have a human nature. Our knowledge, perception, education, and abilities are all different. Our various challenges and temptations naturally develop out of these things. Especially in these areas it is necessary for us to stand guard and to fight. We are called to be one body and

one fellowship. To further the common good is the great duty of all God's children. Personal interests that harm the common good must be recognized as ungodly and treated as such. The unity of the Church is more important than the personal interests of individuals. Our goal for which we must fight is unity through the Holy Spirit. Only when we continually offer up our own perceptions and opinions for the sake of the common good will the victory remain ours. This continual offering of ourselves requires a constant battle. Let us realize that as soon as we stop fighting, as soon as we lose sight of the goal for which we are struggling—unity—dissension, and soon combat among members, will arise.

The Devil is greatly interested in dispersing God's children. He is the enemy of unity in the Spirit and he knows that if unity in a congregation or among all of God's people is destroyed, then he can have a great harvest. The lack of true unity among all of God's children is precisely the reason why so many souls are lost. Jesus prayed: "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17:22-23).

Brothers and sisters, we are not permitted to give up the battle, effort, and pursuit of unity. The responsibility is great. Many will be more likely to believe in the saving and healing power of God. God's might and healing power from sicknesses through united prayer will be revealed more often if we have true unity through the Holy Spirit. Let us fight to maintain this unity!

We Need Revival

There have already been many revivals among the people of God. Already in Moses' days the children of Israel were spiritually revitalized numerous times on their way through the wilderness. A revival, in the literal sense of the word, means to achieve new power and freshness out of a complacent and depressed situation. The children of Israel experienced this on their journey to Canaan and also under the guidance of Joshua after they had reached the Promised Land.

There have been many spiritual revivals in the New Testament era as well. They always started in the church itself. The church of Jerusalem prayed first for their own needs, resulting in them receiving the Holy Spirit, and a revival took place where 3,000 souls came to the Lord. The revival therefore first happened within the church, and then came the harvest of souls, followed by great signs and wonders. A church that has no revival will soon die. It is an error to assume that a church can always remain on a spiritual high without revival meetings. There has to be revitalization; there must be times of awakening from the Lord.

Revivals have become outdated in many of today's Christian circles. It is difficult to find true spiritual life in them anymore, and God is not in their midst. Where there are no revivals, God pulls back. We should be very cautious to not undervalue the importance of revival meetings.

I believe that times of spiritual refreshment are very important today. If the Lord's kingdom is to be spread here and abroad, then we need revival. Without revival, all our efforts for the Lord are fruitless. Without revival, church services become dead and formal. Without revival, the power of the Holy Spirit will not be

found. A burden for lost souls should be noticeable every time God's people meet. The psalmist David said, "Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in You?" (Psalm 85:6). True joy comes when souls are saved.

We do not only need revivals in our churches, but also in our own souls. We have to have revival if we want to be useful in our service to God. We need more spiritual life and strength, more prayer power, and a greater burden for souls. If we have personally received this, then there will also be more outward revival.

The main duty of the church is to save souls. Unfortunately, among those that call themselves children of God are some that have gone into spiritual retirement. They visit prayer meetings and participate in all church activities, they cling to the outward form, but in their souls they have no time for revival before the Lord. They find no true joy in God's service.

"Oh Lord, invigorate us once more that we may rejoice in you!" As a healthy physical body hungers and thirsts for food and drink, so the healthy soul spiritually hungers and thirsts to receive more of God and the spiritual and eternal things. If a church has a true burden for souls, difficult times will not hinder revival.

Brothers and sisters, let us endure all of life's hardships as true soldiers of Jesus Christ. Let us have living faith in God and be fully submitted to Him. Nothing pleases the devil more than when he is successful in stopping revival. Let us do our best for God. Let us bring the glorious truths to those who have not yet heard them. Let us conquer new land for God. Let us pray for more revival and say, "Lord, begin with me!"

EP



Special Services 2016 in Canada and Germany

Bible Course in Aylmer, Ontario

AUGUST 15-26, 2016

Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany

AUGUST 20-27, 2016

Dedication Services in Chilliwack, British Columbia

SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2016

Fest Services in Swartz Creek, Michigan

SEPTEMBER 3-4, 2016

Nevertheless

Are dark days and shadows mine?
Is the sun hidden from sight?
Nevertheless the sun still shines;
Through the clouds we see the light.

Nevertheless I trust in God,
Nevertheless He's in control;
Come what may upon this sod,
He will bless and keep my soul.

Is it illness, is it pain
That confronts my life with grief?
Is my labor all in vain?
Do I languish for relief?

Nevertheless I trust in God,
Nevertheless He's in control;
Come what may upon this sod,
He will bless and keep my soul.

Things don't go the way I've planned,
Death and sorrow wounds impart.
Often I don't understand
When a loved one grieves my heart.

Nevertheless I trust in God,
Nevertheless He's in control;
Come what may upon this sod,
He will bless and keep my soul.

Nevertheless is my resolve;
Nevertheless, my word of faith.
What else on earth it may involve,
I will be true, true unto death.