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Editor's Note

Carol Isaacs



This year we have had many wonderful fellowship meetings with larger than usual attendance. However, the most powerful meeting, no matter how large the attendance, is of no use unless it initiates changes in our lives.

Good music and good preaching will add nothing to us spiritually. We must imbibe what we have received and endeavour to walk accordingly. Truth is reality, and as such, we must come to terms with the reality of our individual state and make the necessary adjustments to continue the process of sanctification that God has started in our lives.

The outward appearance of holiness and following a routine of church attendance are insufficient, and will yield no eternal rewards. Personal deception will result in the absence of genuine conviction and change.

Brother Singh has admonished us as an assembly to measure our lives daily against the word of God. We must be honest about our shortcomings and diligently pursue a path for change.

It is apparent that we have drifted from the foundation that God has set us on and no longer trust in the Lord but ourselves. It is our will and not His that we hold in priority.

It is true that God will save His elect but only if they obey His words. *"And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."* (Matt. 21:44).

FAITH OR FANTASY?



Desmond R. Singh
PASTOR

The recent passing of Pope John Paul II followed by his spectacular funeral service, and then the appointment of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as the new Pope, has generated unprecedented attention on the Roman Catholic Church.

In the eyes of the majority of Christians, the late John Paul was one of the greatest and most respectable Popes that ever occupied the papal office. Not only was he recognized for his political involvement on an international scale, but he sincerely dedicated himself up to the last bit of his strength in support of world peace and moral values for the Church as well as society.

His audacious position on sensitive issues, such as abortion and same-sex marriage, was commendable yet an affront to those of us who labelled him as the 'apostate father', but were ourselves too timid to take a public stand for what we believe as moral and right.

Pope John Paul's successor, Cardinal Ratzinger, now known by his new title Pope Benedict XVI, is not only following in his footsteps but has already expressed an adamant desire to **fortify the international position of the Catholic Church and re-unite the entire Christian community under Rome.**

It is obvious that Rome will only make minor adjustments to encourage an amalgamation with other Christian denominations that she deems as backslidden from the 'only true church.' But the basic claims and doctrines of Roman Catholicism will remain constant and may never change to accommodate the return of her so-called 'wandering daughters.'

I am convinced that erroneous concepts, such as Papal Infallibility, the Immaculate Conception, Mary Mediatorship, the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, Purgatory and other similar beliefs will always remain the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic Church. The truth is, I am interested but not really bothered by this reality.

As a fellowship, we have long concluded that all of the aforementioned doctrinal positions are erroneous and not supported by scripture. The truth is, **the faith of anyone, including ourselves, that rests on a foundation of heresy, pagan practices and useless traditions is not an expression of Biblical faith at all.** From my perspective, believing in fantasies will do nothing to develop genuine faith for scripture declares, *"without faith it is impossible to please God..."* (Heb. 11:6).

It is therefore obvious that in a world that rarely views things from God's perspective, but is rather overwhelmed by fiction and fantasy, Catholicism and other similar organizations will encounter minimum opposition in pursuing a path for expansion and prominence.

Now, in lieu of these recent changes in Rome, many students of Bible prophecy will

declare, without hesitation, that the "whore" of Revelation 17 is indeed regaining her strength as she endeavours to regather her harlot daughters. Nevertheless, the majority of Christendom will succumb, with little resistance, to her pomp as portrayed by the media.

Isn't it amazing how quickly the guilt and condemnation of a movement that was responsible for the slaughter of over 50 million Protestants during the dark ages can fade and diminish so rapidly in light of its present so-called glory? From my point of view, Rome will still be Rome as long as God permits her to be that way.

But is this massive institution, with over one billion followers, the only movement that holds tenaciously to her doctrines? The answer is, no! She is by no means alone when it comes to dogmatically holding on to religious persuasions.

As we examine other Christian movements, it is evident that almost every prominent denomination and non-Christian religion claims **exclusivity**, and to a great extent, **infallibility**. It is really no surprise that the majority of us who condemn the concept of Papal Infallibility are ourselves guilty of the same spurious assertion.

Of course, there are those who are more liberal and would forego the importance of doctrines and godliness in order to include other denominations into their concept of what the Body of Christ should be. The bottom line is, **Rome is not the only movement that is blind to the possibility of its own spiritual demise.** There are countless other sincere organizations that have also drifted into this spiritual illusion unknowingly.

As we further examine this subject, may God help us to be honest enough to recognize and admit to our own shortcomings and realistically consider **our own attitude to exclusivity and infallibility.**

Can we, as a body, slip into apostasy?

Are we impervious to spiritual decline?

Is it possible that although our fathers of the faith had genuine experiences with the Lord, that we, the recipients of their teachings, can drift into a spiritual rut?

Can the true work of God today collapse into a state of apostasy tomorrow?

Is it also possible that for us to move ahead in God we may have to abandon some of the religious concepts and traditional practices handed down to us? Or, are we essentially no different from Rome, so deeply rooted in our traditional concepts and customs that our minds are blinded to any possibility for change?

I think it is necessary for us to understand that God has always moved His work forward in spite of religious movements that chose to remain stagnant. The sincere commitment and dedication to the past can cripple one's desire to move ahead into the future. As someone said, "The past is good for contemplation and offers a good foundation, but it is a terrible place to dwell in." **Fear of change and the unknown will immobilize all possibility for progress.**

Consider for a moment the biblical account of Moses and Joshua. Was Joshua acting contrary to the will of God when he led the children of Israel into territories unknown to

them? Scripture records many actions of Joshua that were quite different from those of his past leader, Moses. Yet, it is recorded that, "*Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua...*" (Josh. 24:31). It should be noted that while Moses was alive, Joshua was his faithful servant. But, there came a time after the death of Moses that Joshua had to stop living in the past. He had to stop trying to fill Moses' shoes and accept the reality that it was now his responsibility to lead the people into the future. It was necessary that Joshua start hearing from God for himself rather than seeking residence in a spiritual fantasy land.

Similarly, we should not dwell in the past or simply mimic those who have gone on before us. Rather, we should seek God and be able to recognize our own calling and ministry, without deviating from the vision and foundation of our past leaders.

Reflection on God's commandments to Joshua after the death of Moses can assist us in drawing a sober conclusion to all of this. God said, "*Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.*" (Josh. 1:7).

To ignore the past in order to move ahead is as unproductive as holding on to the past and ignoring the present and the future.

Therefore, let us stand on the foundation of the past as we endeavour to build for the future. We are to perform that which God has commissioned

us to do.

Having our own identity and being able to receive direction from God for ourselves is not rebellion. As a matter of fact, failing to obey the voice of God in leading His people on is rebellion.

Change has always been difficult to accept, both in the natural as well as spiritual world. But as technology progresses so does truth, and if truth is reality then one's failure to advance with truth will obviously leave one in the past — living a fantasy.

If ever there was a time for us to accept the reality of our present spiritual standing it is now. To create an outward manifestation of excellence and ignore the awfulness of our relationship with God is misleading to others and deceptive to ourselves.

The point I'm trying to make is that if we are not exactly what we claim to be, but have drifted off course from that which was envisioned by our founders, **it may very well be that our faith is also standing on fantasies.** Just as with any other apostate movement our confidence and pride **in the past will not justify our present standing** in error.

In his epistle to the Church at Rome, the Apostle Paul suggested that much could be gained from the examples and information contained in the scriptures. He wrote, "*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*" (Rom. 15:4). With this in mind, let us resort to the nation of Israel, God's chosen people, as a good example for comparison.

Consider the Exodus with

the spectacular miracles used in their deliverance from Egypt, and Israel's amazing forty-year journey through the wilderness, overshadowed by the preserving hand of God. In addition, they had Abraham as their father with a covenant for blessings and proliferation. Also, we are not to forget their amazing conquests of the many ungodly nations in the land of Canaan.

These wonderful acts of God were sufficient reasons to generate a sense of religious pride and spiritual ego in the hearts of God's people. And sadly, this was exactly what happened.

Paul challenged Israel's feeling of religious superiority in Romans 2:17-20 by first of all identifying the reasons for their religious arrogance. He wrote, "*Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.*"

The Apostle continued by questioning the reality of their commitment, pointing out the fact that **their claims did not correspond with their commitments.** They were not only responsible for the justifiable criticism from the Gentiles, but were also hypocrites. (Rom. 2:24). He wrote, "*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter...*" (Rom. 2:28).

The question to ask ourselves

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FAITH OR FANTASY?

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is: Are we in a similar rut?

Are our religious claims justified by our spiritual relationship with God?

Will our outward manifestations of holiness in dress and order suffice for our lack of spiritual commitment?

Similar to the nation of Israel, we too can be so overwhelmed by the credibility of our heritage and outward manifestations of 'holiness' standards that we fail to see the awfulness of our own shortcomings. But God is good, and by His guidance we may be granted sufficient grace to recognize the reality of our backslidings. Personal examination may honestly reveal the great lack of unity and commitment among us.

Well, do we believe alike as a fellowship?

Do we preach the same things and possess the same vision?

What makes us different from other organizations in regards to unity and spirituality?

Let us consider, for comparison, other movements such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the Mormon Church, the Assemblies of God, the New Testament Church of God, the Baptists, the Presbyterians, the Church of the Nazarene... the list goes on and on endlessly.

Is it not a fact that almost every one of these groups takes pride in their own history and ideologies? Is it not a fact that most of them are confident of their authenticity and correctness even though they have drifted tremendously from the vision of their founders?

Yet, there is such a vast difference in their order and doctrinal standings that **it is absurd to say that the Church universal is united.** Let us not fool ourselves into believing that a dozen groups preaching a dozen different doctrines are all correct.

Christian fellowship will not justify doctrinal differences. Though unity of the spirit is a necessity, unity of the faith must not be disregarded.

Of course, the question pops up again: Are we any different?

Does it matter what we believe?

Is doctrine important enough to be placed as a priority for fellowship?

Can unity be achieved if truth is ignored?

If the doctrine of the Trinity is correct, then the Oneness movement is in error. If baptism by immersion is correct, then the practice of sprinkling must be incorrect. Similar contradictions exist with the diverse concepts of the doctrine of Hell, Water Baptism, the Resurrection, Mortality of the Soul and many other basic teachings. Of course, this is not even dealing with the endless interpretations of prophecies.

The big question to ask again is, **which church is right and which are the false ones?** Would God send a dozen preachers into the same city with a variety of doctrines and standards for His people? Among the hundreds of religious groups in our present society, can we identify which movement is in the faith and which is not?

As a fellowship, we are positively convinced that we are right and our fellowship stands tall in comparison to

other religious bodies. Are we quite sure about this? **Or are we, like everyone else, trying to retain heritage rather than pursuing present truth?** I do hope that our religious claims are not merely based on the past experiences of our forefathers.

The scripture tells us that *"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing cometh by the word of God."* (Rom. 10:17). It should be carefully noted that the word 'hearing' does not only refer to the simple listening of the word preached, but rather to its implementation.

Is it possible that, like the nation of Israel, we too can manifest all the trappings of good religion as is described in chapter 1 of Isaiah, yet lack genuine conviction and conversion? Isaiah highlighted the nation's commitment to sacrifices, church attendance and many other aspects of external excellence. Yet, there was little inward working of God in their lives. **The mechanical aspects of religion were adequately performed, and in their own eyes and that of the public, they did well.** But sadly, in the eyes of God there was little spiritual growth. Genuine charity was missing. The prophet described the reality of their spiritual standing by saying, *"How is the faithful city become a harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers."* (Isa. 1:21).

Again in Isaiah 58:1-8, the nation was called to repent, but the people did not recognize their transgression. As far as they were concerned, their commitment to God was impeccable. Scripture states, *"Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God...they take de-*

light in approaching to God."

As far as prayer and fasting was concerned, they had much credibility, but their prayers were not heard. It seemed that God was not listening.

Is this similar to the way we are — an outwardly committed and dedicated people making a lot of sacrifices? Yet, upon examination, the majority of those in our prayer lines return to their homes undelivered. We have great conventions with many in attendance, good music, vibrant and extensive worship, and powerful preaching, yet is it not a fact that by the next meeting our congregations seem to have drifted further into the world? Is it not true that **the volume of God that we claim to experience in a meeting does not equate with the conversions and answers received?** It would be even more sad if, like Israel, we are blind to this reality.

It is my desire that the Lord help us to honestly recognize our present state and understand that to merely adopt and perform rituals and traditional customs is insufficient for spiritual growth. We are to receive new directions that will relate to our present needs. To understand what our present situation is and then grasp what should be done to correct this awful reality is described in the scriptures as 'present truth'. The Apostle Peter wrote *"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things... and be established in the present truth."* (2 Pet 1: 12).

So, are we for real or are we merely engaged in religious rituals? True faith cannot be developed by believing and living a lie. Let us examine ourselves and make a choice between developing genuine faith or living out a fantasy.

Des Moines Convention



In every age there have been gatherings designed by God which created an atmosphere in which much was accomplished for His people. The instructions given in these meetings were of great benefit to those whose hearts were open and responsive to receive them.

The recent Des Moines Convention was such a meeting. It was not just a traditional event, but a focal point many will look back to as a time when something special was done in their hearts. It was the largest gathering since the passing of

Brother Goodwin, with ministers and saints from Haiti, India, Sri Lanka, Continental Africa, England, Canada and the USA in attendance. There were also many present from other arms of the Body .

In each service there was a sobriety in the worship, and a solemn presence overshadowed the sanctuary. Every message and testimony reflected balance and unity.

Brother Glenn Goodwin's opening message, "It is time to build the house of the Lord" (Haggai 1:5), set the general tone for the weekend. We were exhorted to discard unprofitable ways and, rather, implement what God is telling us to do so that His work can effectively advance in our day.

Brother Singh followed with some solid words in support of the message. He asked the question, "How does one see the world? Through the eyes of the world, through our traditional view, through our own personal view, or through the eyes of God?" He also showed the necessity of having men sent from God. The example of Joshua was used showing that throughout his entire reign as judge in Israel the people served God.

Brother Waters gave a sober talk with some very relevant points for Christian living. We were exhorted to be followers of God as dear children and not walk after that which is evil.



Brother Brown from Texas also spoke, focusing on the question, "Where is your brother?" He emphasized that we must make an effort to reach out to our brethren, because it might be that single encounter that is needed to bridge the gap between us.

Brother Rutivi from Nairobi, Kenya recapped much of the thoughts from the men that spoke before him, and stirred the hearts of the congregation. He encouraged us to work for God, live for Him and obey His word while we look for the blessed hope of the Lord's return.

There was a common thought-pattern among all the ministers who spoke in the meeting.

Overall, I feel that this was a great meeting.

To God be the glory!

John Mowatt



"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

Psalm 133:1

DELIVERED FROM EGYPT, ENSLAVED TO CANAAN

Out of Egypt

The children of Israel were miraculously brought out of Egyptian bondage in a day. The concentration of miracles they experienced was astounding – numerous plagues, the Passover, the parting of the Red Sea, the drowning of their captors... On top of that, their leader Moses, had several direct encounters with God. The Israelites were fed in the wilderness with manna and quails, the ground parted when iniquity threatened from within their ranks, and their clothing did not wear out for forty years despite the harshest conditions. These series of events were so staggering that they became the pivotal landmark for all future generations of Israel, even up until now. In fact, Christians also partake of the glory of these former days and, like the day of Pentecost, view it as a dawning of a new age – and it was indeed.

As human beings, we have a tendency to reflect on miraculous, outstanding, and extraordinary events, almost forgetting that the process and response resulting *after* the events are equally important, if not more so. Most religious people want to live in the past, forever rejoicing in the experiences of others in days gone by, forgetting that it is by our actions today that we will be judged. In one day the children of Israel were led out of Egypt, but the spirit of Egypt plagued them every step of the way during their wilder-

ness journey. When the generation that originally left Egypt was virtually wiped out, only then were they allowed to cross over into the Promised Land.

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! The battle had finally been won! Now that rebellion had been eliminated, the lusts of Egypt put out of mind, and the torch had been passed on to a new generation, the land of milk and honey was now theirs for the taking. Joshua was such a powerful, exemplary and influential leader that the author of his book commented: *“And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.”* (Jos. 24:31). They were a people on fire for God, who knew of Whom they were called and what their purpose was.

They were ready to work for the Lord and to vanquish the enemies of the land. Things were going very well. So well, in fact, that the biggest rebellion Joshua seemed to face was when a single man, by the name of Achan, decided to pocket a *“goodly Babylonish garment”* and a few other items that happened to catch his eye. (Jud. 7:21). Relatively speaking, this is ‘kids’ stuff compared to the number of destructive things each of us have happily brought into our homes. Overall, you could not have asked for a more

dedicated people.

But unfortunately this was not to last.

The Plateau

Like Israel, many of us today who were once delivered with a mighty hand from the clutches of the world and brought into the Body of Christ, have only gone so far and no further despite so many things still left to overcome. You may still remember the feeling of coming to know the Lord in the early days of your journey. As you were exposed to the word of God, you asked yourself in amazement, *“Where was this my whole life?”* You were overcome and ready to tell the world of the Lord Jesus with what little knowledge you had. **But somewhere along the line have you levelled off, perhaps coming to a plateau or relative standstill? Have you been freed only to become enslaved by something else?** Maybe nothing as obvious as your previous bondage, but take an honest, hard look to where you place God in line with your other priorities and you may be shocked by what comes to light.

For most of us today, the great danger is not that we will renounce our faith. It is that we will become so distracted, full, rushed and preoccupied that we will settle for a mediocre, diluted version of it. On a whole, this is the state of our 21st century church world – the Body of

Christ included.

Spiritual Death

Serving God is not an over-complicated matter, even with all the obstacles we face. The Lord graciously gives us time, and over time, we are to develop sincerity, commitment, dedication and the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23, 1 Cor. 13). Rather than becoming robots running on a program, God has commissioned us to become stewards who are challenged to use our own judgment with what we have been given. We will err in judgment, fall often, but also enjoy the victories God helps us to win.

In the end, the main purpose of the Church is to preach and reflect a message of sanctification in lifestyle from an ungodly society. Also necessary is the development of a deep, sincere humility and love for the Lord, one another in the church and compassion for those outside. Love and compassion are things, like faith, that only become real when they inspire action. Otherwise they are dead – plain and simple. (Jas. 2:26).

And we too, unless we constantly nurture and carefully consider our faith, can gradually separate ourselves from God – attempting to seek Him and at the same time escape Him.

Do you think the church at Sardis actually knew it was regarded as dead? (Rev. 3:1). After all, it had a great reputation. We can also be deceived into thinking that we are more than

we really are and make ourselves happy in the process – our own little world. But what we ought to do is judge ourselves according to our properly motivated response to God’s word, the depth of our conversion and how we relate to the needs of those around us. We don’t just want to build churches, but churches that are approved by God.

When the Lord looked down on Asia Minor towards the end of the first century, did he feel obligated to send a letter to every structure with a steeple and a preacher? No. History claims there were dozens of churches in existence at this time. The Apostle John was specifically told by the Lord Jesus to distribute the message, now known as the Book of Revelation, to *“the seven churches which are in Asia...”* (Rev. 1:11). When God looked down He did not see the masses, but the few.

It seems these were the cream of the crop. And out of the seven, four were near death unless they decided to recover themselves right away – poor Sardis was described as *“dead”* already.

How can it happen that something which started off on such a good foot can so quickly fall away into stagnancy or even death? Pentecost had just happened a few decades earlier and yet most of these churches now appeared to be on life-support.

To each of the churches, Christ said pretty much the same thing: *“I know your*

works, and your labour...”

The Lord Jesus was drawing attention to their commitment by measuring their response against the word delivered unto each of the churches. When we honestly measure our *“works”* in response to the vast amount of knowledge dispensed in our churches, what do we find? Though we were not saved because we were doing good works, we are *“created in Christ Jesus unto good works...”* (Eph. 2:10).

The Lord does expect a response to His word – not merely a mechanical response or one bound only by duty. He expects a response based on correct motives and understanding. It’s not complicated. The word of God is preached to encourage us, give us hope, transform our lives, ground us, inspire and motivate us to respond in accordance with the message.

We can have everything at our fingertips and still be far from God. On a worldwide scale, more information has been published in the last 30 years than in the previous 5,000 years. That’s as strong a contrast as any. And yet, despite this staggering fact, it would seem that we – society and church included – have largely traded wisdom for information.

Confusion in Canaan

“After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring

you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances... I am the Lord your God.” (Lev. 18:3-4).

When the nation of Israel crossed over into Canaan, the Promised Land, God mysteriously left a large number of other nations in the land as well. You would think that after 40 long years of wandering and suffering, the land of *“milk and honey”* would be waiting for the Israelites on a silver platter— but no. Just as in our own lives, even after we have been saved and converted, we are still left with temptations, roots of bitterness, weaknesses and character flaws.

Israel was commanded to overcome these nations by either destroying them or avoid becoming influenced by their customs and way of life. Under the command of Joshua and the elders after him they did just that.

But there were still nations in existence when Joshua and his elders passed off the scene. **Israel was confronted with a choice: keep fighting or assimilate. We are also confronted with a similar decision.**

“And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?” (Jud. 2:2).

The children of Israel had forgotten the golden calf, the leeks and the cu-

cumbers. After all, hadn’t they been delivered from Egypt? They were saved – praise the Lord! But with such a light conversion of their own, they soon, *“followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them...”* False gods like Baalim and Ash-taroath were now competing with *“the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt...”* (Jud. 2:12). How could they possibly be so blind?

We are in the same boat as Israel during those early days in Canaan. And just like them, many of us fail to realize that the *“nations”* were left on purpose, not to be befriended but overcome. We intermingle and dabble with the things of this world not fully recognizing that *“many strong men have been slain by her.”* (Prov. 7:26).

Rather than overcoming, we befriend the gods of Hollywood, technology, the music industry, sports and entertainment, the commercial world and employment... As the world runs, so we run. Ignorant of our captivity, we love our oppressors, tuning in each week to make sure we don’t miss a thing. There are scarcely any role models with admirable character, only idols of fame, beauty and vanity. In Judges 3:1-2, it states that the nations (or obstacles) were left intentionally to *“prove Israel by them”* and *“to teach them to war”*. Likewise, we are to mature and take on more of Christ’s Spirit as we are

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DELIVERED FROM EGYPT, ENSLAVED TO CANAAN

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confronted with our trials and temptations from within and without. (Eph. 6:13-18, 2 Cor. 10:4-5).

Did you know that you could sit in on a conversation – in person or on MSN Messenger – about the latest music or the opposite sex with young people *in the church* and walk away without a single clue about what was discussed because of all the code words and slang? As Nehemiah lamented, “*their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of the people.*” (Neh. 13:24). Today, it would seem that many parents are so enamoured and impressed with their children’s intelligence when it comes to worldly matters that their spiritual state becomes secondary.

When we wilfully and excitedly take on the spirit of society, how can we wonder at our present state? Really and truly, is the Lord and His principles still the focus of our lives? If the answer is “yes”, then we’re on the right track, and if it’s “no”, we need to recover ourselves. The battle within is hard enough without us constantly gorging ourselves on things that bring instant gratification but ultimately only frustration, destruction and lost time. As scripture dictates from beginning to end, when we embrace the evils, vanities and past times of

the world we will be judged as the world. (Rev. 18:4).

The tragedy of the book of Judges is that the bondage Israel suffered under the hands of their many captors in this new land seemed to be almost as bad as the hard bondage of Egypt – if not worse for the fact that they should have known better. Just look at the bondage-repentance roller coaster documented in Judges:

3:8 – 8 years
3:14 – 18 years
4:3 – 20 years
6:1 – 7 years

Thank God that a strong leader named Gideon came on the scene in chapter 6:11. But not long after, the nation of Israel was involved in doing “*evil again in the sight of the Lord.*” By the time chapter 13 rolls around, they were sent into bondage for 40 years! In prison lingo, that’s what you call ‘hard time.’ And it didn’t stop there, but by now you get the picture.

Freed Again

God is a good God, full of mercy, long suffering and kindness. He sent His Son who, Himself, became acquainted with mankind and all of our shortcomings, and still He died for us. On a personal level, He reached into your life and mine to deliver us from sin, death, torment and a life without purpose. As the Apostle Peter re-

joiced, “*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness...*” (2 Pet. 1:3). God is for us!

As was stated earlier, the outcome of this war is determined by our day-to-day response to God’s word as opposed to the envisioned ‘gun to your head.’ This Christian walk is really quite practical. We hear the word of God, and we are to live it, letting it become a part of us first before we proclaim it, not another piece of education to simply enlighten us or give us something to debate about. It takes time, a lot of wrestling and prayer before it sinks down deep, but God is there to help us. That’s why He’s given us a lifetime.

Most of us are in captivity again at this very moment. It may not be the garlicks and cucumbers of our former life that we look fondly upon, but something new and captivating. Let us not just quote it, but may we come to that place where we put off the things of this world that enslave us, allowing us to honestly say that we are not ignorant of Satan’s devices. (2 Cor. 2:11).

Taken from a message preached by Brother Singh (April 2005).

Paul Carrington



The Call

A call echoes out among God’s people,
“Open your mind”
Receive and abide by the word of God.

Whether it be the written word, or the words of a heart led by the Spirit.

A Watchman, who is awake, and alert to the events and dangers of this present age.

A man who stands alone in an inhabited city.

For what spiritual support, except that of the Lord has he received?

A call echoes out among God’s people... “Open your mind.”

A call for conversion, not reformation. A transformation, a renewing of the mind.

Is yours the traditional mind, the theological or the logical mind?

To whose call do you heed?

For the word of God is true. A truth that is never stagnant, but always progressive.

Great men occupy many positions in society, but he who fulfills and expounds the calling of God — his is the greatest commission of all.

A call echoes out among God’s people...

“Open your mind.”

Juliet Purnell

Our Weekend in London



Recently, my sister and I were honoured to travel with our Uncle and Aunt, Brother and Sister Singh, to London, England. In every phase of the trip it was wonderful to see the hand of the Lord guiding us in all that we had planned.

The most important aspect of this trip was to be with Brother and Sister Williams and the London Assembly for the weekend. Saturday evening was our first meeting with the Church and, as always, the Devil made an effort to hinder the service, but by the Lord's help we had the victory.

Brother Singh boldly declared the word of God, and by the responses and the comments made by the saints, we are anticipating much change in our lives. Brother Singh spoke to us about the importance of daily self-examination and measuring our lives according to the word of God.

Very importantly, I was impressed with the way he portrayed Moses' adamant will to give up the wealth and title of Egypt to be among God's people. Moses had the opportunity to become a powerful Egyptian leader, but he chose rather to suffer affliction with his own people.

Another subject Brother Singh

talked about was manna falling from heaven. Manna was not ready-made bread, but rather grains that had to go through a certain process to become the final product that was needed. It reminded me that we, as children of God, have to go through a similar process in our spiritual life before God can use us.

Of course, a whole lot more was said throughout the weekend that really blessed us. I do pray that Brother Singh's words will bring about a change in the lives of God's people.

Karina Singh



**Brother & Sister Williams
London, England**



Voice in the Wilderness

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” (Js. 1:21).

There is much similarity between Israel making the journey from Egypt to Canaan and us, the Church, making our journey from an ungodly world to the Kingdom. While Israel’s journey was literal, ours is spiritual. Their enemies were physical, ours are spiritual. Though they left Egypt physically, the Egyptian mentality never departed from their hearts. Even so, we came out of Babylon, yet the spirit of Babylon is still destroying our lives and affecting our churches. As God gave them instructions and commanded them not to follow the doings of the land of Egypt, it is imperative that we, the Church, sanctify ourselves from the spirit of Babylon. **Coming out of Babylon is one thing, but being cleansed from her spirit is something entirely different.**

These were the words of Brother Singh when he visited the Gospel Assembly Church in London, England, in late March 2005. He compared the Church of Moses and the Church of Christ, which seem to have a lot in common: trials, murmurings, backsliding, rebellion, iniquity, hypocrisy and unthankfulness.

After spending over four hundred years in Egypt, Israel had developed the Egyptian way of thinking. They rebelled against their deliverer Moses, and their minds were so darkened that the miracles performed by Moses meant nothing to them. Even those closest to Moses rose against him. (Num. 16:1). Young leaders such as Korah, Dathan and

Abiram who held influence among the people, openly withstood the man of God.

Brother Singh reminded the church, that with this kind of spirit, we will not make it into the Kingdom. We will not survive the wrath of God but will be judged as Israel was judged. Israel’s journey through the wilderness is a type of the Church. Our spiritual wilderness is intended to eliminate the contaminating influences of an ungodly society from our lives.

Examine Yourself

Brother Singh went on to say that we should not try to figure God out, but rather believe Him to the point where His word takes root in our lives, cleanses and sanctifies our spirits. The Jews claimed that Abraham was their father, but their deeds demonstrated otherwise. We claim that we are the Body of Christ, and of course we are. But unless we are vigilant and watchful, the spirit of Babylon will creep into the Church and slowly cause us to lose our identity. We were told that we are no exception. If the Jews, God’s chosen people, missed it, so can we! The process of discipleship and sanctification is truly dying.

Forty years in the wilderness did not change Israel, and as a result, they all died short of the promise. They never seriously considered Moses as one sent from God. This can also happen to us. Let’s be watchful and examine ourselves lest we fall into a similar snare.

Come out of Her My People

We were seriously admon-

ished that, though we came out physically from Babylon, we must also come out spiritually. The voice from heaven in Revelation 18:4 that said, *“Come out of her, my people”*, is actually directed to us in the Church rather than those in the apostate world. Coming out of a denomination is one step, but eliminating the spirit of Babylon out of our lives is quite another extensive work of sanctification.

We were further enlightened with the reality that we, in the Body of Christ, are already suffering the same judgment as the ungodly. This may very well be the result of us incorporating their spirit and practicing their sins. Remember that if we be ‘partakers of her sins we shall receive of her plagues.’

‘Present truth’ was highlighted as a necessity to the Church’s sanctification. We need to understand and be cleansed from evil as it exists today and set ourselves free from the spirit and methodologies of apostate religion.

Brother Singh was not in London to impress anyone but rather, to challenge the church to change. It was time to, *“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”* (2 Jn. 8).

Let us remember that the foundation that was laid by our forefathers should never be forsaken or removed but should remain as guidelines. God commanded Joshua that he should not turn either to the left or to the right but to build on the foundation laid by Moses. *“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to*

do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.” (Jos. 1:7).

Joshua was a remarkable example. He kept the words that were given to him by Moses, and the scripture says that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua. (Jos. 24:31).

It was stated that the promises of God to His people were always conditional. Israel was told not to make acquaintance with the inhabitants of the land, but the people did not obey God. (Jud. 2:1-2). They refused to carry on the work of the Lord that Joshua and the elders had already established. As a result, the nation was led into captivity. We were shown in the Book of Judges how Israel’s continuous rebellion against God was always rewarded with bondage and captivity. It was amazing how God’s own people were prone to rebellion and backsliding. Are we immune to this spirit? Have we gone into captivity and are unaware of it? May God help us in the Body of Christ today that we examine ourselves continuously lest we fall into a similar state. Perhaps, we have already fallen into this rut.

The London Assembly hopes that Brother Singh will come back and continue to minister this most needed message of sanctification.

**Bro Williams
Gospel Assembly Church
London, England**

As We Forgive...

The word of God teaches that the whole human race is sinful and deserving of the wrath of God, and all are without strength and enemies of God. The Apostle Paul sums it up in his letter to the church of Rome stating, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...”* (Rom 3:23).

On the contrary, there is no defect in the nature of God who in essence is holy, righteous, just and merciful.

However, though we deserve to die for our sins, our Lord Jesus condescended to lay down His life as a sacrifice and free us from the condemnation of the law of God. This is the foundation on which the doctrine of forgiveness is established. To be forgiven of God and be freed from the guilt of sin is the greatest miracle a sinner can experience. This act of God is described in scripture as ‘grace’ and is defined as the unmerited favour of God.

It is sad that we who have obtained mercy and forgiveness of our sins from God, are often unwilling to forgive those who have done us wrong. **Can we seek God’s mercy and yet fail to be merciful to our fellow man?** Jesus said, *“with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you...”* (Mark 4:24). In other words, it is a principle of scripture that we who are seeking God’s forgiveness for our sins must first be willing to forgive our fellow brothers and sisters. We must become willing to extend to our fellow man the same grace that God has bestowed on us.

In laymen’s terms, God

will not forgive us of our transgressions if we harbour an unforgiving attitude to those who have transgressed against us. A merciful attitude to others will determine God’s mercy to us. James wrote *“For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”* (Js. 2:13-13).

This remarkable truth is plainly taught in the scriptures, showing that forgiving those that have sinned against us is a condition by which we will obtain forgiveness from God. Our Lord clearly established this reality in His pattern prayer stating, *“forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”* (Matt. 6:12). Again in verse 14 Jesus said, *“for if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

“And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25).

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matt 5:7). It is also stated in 2 Samuel 22:26, *“With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful...”*

In response to Peter’s question as to how many times one must forgive his brother of his offences, Jesus indicated that there was no limit. Because of our fallen nature, we are always in debt to God and our fellow man. Though the hurt we sometimes inflict on others may be justifiable, as children of God we are expected to

show mercy. The merciful attitude that Joseph showed to his brothers is a good example. What they intended as evil was viewed by Joseph as good in the end.

Scripture informs us that God has reserved vengeance to Himself and has not delegated this to any human being. It is not our place to avenge any injustice done to us. The Apostle Paul wrote, *“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”* (Rom 12:19).

If God is to demand from us all that we owe Him, none of us would ever be able to repay such a debt. The Psalmist David said, *“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.”* (Ps. 103:10-11).

Every one of us does enough evil on a daily basis to provoke the displeasure of God, yet our flawed nature cries out for sympathy, understanding and forgiveness from Him. Therefore, it is necessary for us to show the same degree of sympathy for our fellow man. It is inconsistent for us to seek the favour of God in our sinful state, yet fail to extend the same favour to our fallen brothers and sisters.

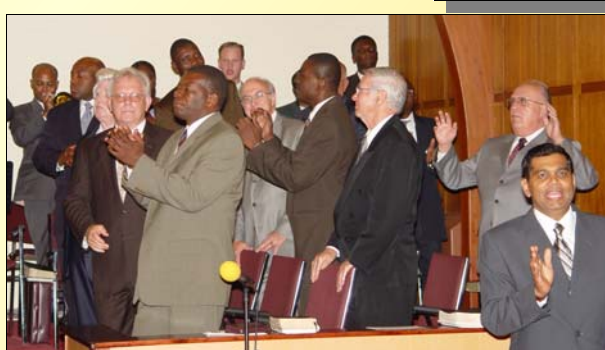
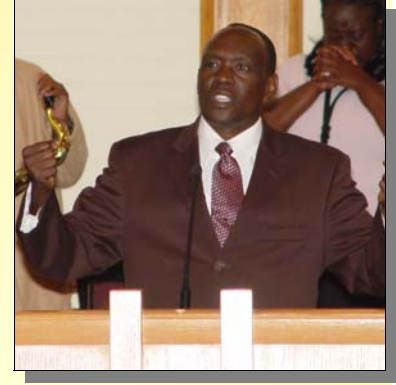
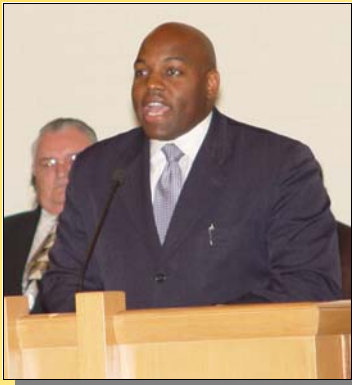
The scriptural requirement for us to receive the mercy of God for our own sins, is our willingness to forgive those who have done us wrong. To come to God seeking His forgiveness while we show no mercy to our fellowman is the height of arrogance and

presumption. Then God may demand full payment for the wrong we have committed against Him, a debt we are likely unable to pay. A man with an unforgiving spirit cannot claim that he has the love of God in his heart. *“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”* (1 Jn 4:20). If God can love us as vile and abominable as we are, certainly we can extend the same attitude to our fellow man — especially those in the church.

As children of God, let us imbibe the spirit Christ exhibited as He prayed to the Father while hanging on the cross, saying *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”* (Lk. 23:34). This was the ultimate injustice, yet Jesus still chose to forgive. Likewise, we should forgive those who have done us wrong. We are commanded not to owe any man anything but to love one another. Can we approach the throne of grace and receive from God an attitude of mercy that we were unwilling to manifest to others? God will extend the same courtesy to every child of God with an unforgiving spirit. In the parable of the unforgiving servant, the wicked servant was commanded to pay all that he owed because of his lack of compassion. If we weigh the enormity of our sins and the magnitude of God’s mercy to us, being merciful to our brethren is an easy alternative to the full judgment we deserve.

Narain Richard
New York
Gospel Assembly

Mississauga Convention 2005



The 2005 Convention in Canada was not just another Fellowship meeting, but a unique blessing. The services began and continued on with no spectacular pomp or so-called powerful preaching. Brother Singh opened the meeting by asking a simple question: “What is it that makes us conclude that a convention is successful?” He pointed out that it is not because there was a large attendance, well selected songs or a lot of excitement generated. Rather, success of a meeting depends on whether lives will be changed as a result of the messages delivered.

There must be more of the nature of Christ seen in us when the meeting is over to determine whether or not we were helped by what was preached. Many times, what we might consider a win, might actually be a loss in the eyes of God and what we believe to be a loss, could really be a win.

The Convention continued in the same trend, and every minister that stood up encouraged the saints to relinquish those things that might hinder them from going on with God. Much was said that addressed current issues affecting our young people.

The sacrifices of discipleship were also dealt with, and true discipleship was described as a daily process of dying. The cross is not an instrument of joy but of death.

Many times we view the problems a child of God faces as judgment from God, while on the other hand, we see materialism as evidence of God’s favour. In some cases that may be true, but more often than not we are wrong. Children of God are to suffer for the Lord as they learn to take up their cross daily and follow Him. We were taught in this meeting that we are to suffer for the Lord as the scripture says, “*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*” (Rom. 8:17-18). No suffering, no glory, and as a result, no ruling with Christ.

Cloudy skies in our lives do not always mean judgment from God. Likewise, sunshine is not always God’s approval. We have to suffer to rule with Him. In fact, only suffering is able to produce a Christ-like spirit in an individual that qualifies him for kingdom leadership.

We also learned that persecution will come to everyone that follows the Lord with a sincere heart. Jesus said, “*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*” (Matt. 5:11).

Ministers were also encouraged to preach the truth without fear that they might offend the saints or other ministers. It is a scriptural fact that those who love and preach the truth will face persecution. Someone said that if you want persecution, just stand up and preach the truth.

To sum it up, the success of the Mississauga meeting will be manifested in the lives of those that were touched during the services.

Langton T. Mboneka



Eating & Drinking Christ

Over this past Easter Weekend (March 2005), Brother Singh shared with us a stirring message on what he thought the Apostle Paul meant when he referred to the Lord's Supper in his first epistle to the Corinthians.

Though preachers often use 1 Corinthians 11 as their primary text to commemorate the death of Christ, we were shown that the Apostle was not only referring to the *methods* of how Communion should be conducted. Rather, it seems he was referring to the importance of God's people eating and drinking of the spirit of Christ on a daily basis. **The emblems we use to commemorate communion are not as important as what they signify:** our partaking of that one bread, which is Christ.

The Most Unpopular Message

In the gospel of John 6:28-66, the Apostle highlighted a sermon preached by Jesus that almost decimated His entire flock. Jesus' ministry had just begun, and already the numerical results were excellent. However, this positive mood ended abruptly that day when the Lord revealed to them His demands for discipleship.

With a seemingly sincere tone, the crowd had asked Him, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus told them that He was the bread that came down from heaven to give light to the whole world, but because of the blindness of their hearts they continued pleading with Him saying, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." In knowing their true desire of only wanting the physical loaves, the Lord made a call for disci-

pliship and highlighted the required sacrifices. Lip service was not sufficient. Rather, it was necessary to imbibe and be partakers of the same lifestyle He lived and taught. He said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (Jn. 6:53).

Sadly, John documented that after the congregation heard this message, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." It was easy to follow for fish and bread and enjoy the benefits of a miracle ministry, but to conform to a change of life — absolutely not! It is apparent that the major challenge was to accept Jesus' leadership and example, which they were not prepared to do.

This episode clearly outlines a phenomenon that has existed from the beginning of time until now. While apostate religion has always been popular, discipleship (Christ-like character development) and faith, based on the foundation of God's word, have often been ignored. In general, religion gives people a reason for living and helps them cope with the stress of the world, but **only discipleship changes the spirit and results in the development of a Christ-like nature.** It is the strait gate. (Matt. 7:13).

Unless you and I begin to actually incorporate the lifestyle and commandments of Christ, we have no life in us.

The Apostle Paul, in explaining his reason for sacrificing all of his prior accomplishments, said something

that only a few of us can honestly say. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... That I may know him, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." (Phil. 3:8,10). Paul was not talking about penances or self-affliction which only justifies men's religious motivations, but rather, a willingness to give up his own ways, thought-pattern and ambitions in hope that he may develop a more intimate relationship with Christ.

Christians today find it easy to declare their desire to follow Christ, as long as they do not have to sacrifice any of their personal accomplishments, habits or dreams. Spiritually speaking, prosperity, comfort and complacency, have slain more people than poverty ever will. It is evident that in order to successfully build a large church in our day one must avoid everything that even closely resembles true discipleship.

Corinth's Challenge

In Paul's first corrective letter to the church in Corinth he addressed a number of negative issues, but his main focus was on unity and the demands for true discipleship. **No section of this epistle should be isolated,** but rather kept intact with the rest of the letter in order to understand its overall context. By doing this, it becomes easier to see the ultimate purpose of each illustration used, whether it was saints suing each other at the law, the object lesson of the Lord's supper, or the illustration of the many-membered body of Christ.

How are the concepts of unity and discipleship linked? This is quite obvious in the Lord's prayer for unity in John 17, along with the message delivered by all of the Early Church Apostles who laboured to communicate its necessity to the various churches under their ministry.

Biblical unity is the result of believers partaking of one Spirit and one bread — Jesus Christ. True discipleship cannot be pursued without endeavouring for unity. The elements of humility, kindness, honouring one another, and putting God and the Church in proper perspective are all manifestations of true discipleship. Unity and discipleship are inextricably intertwined.

Corinth was divided because the spirit of the world had crept into this church. Having been sent to Tarsus for years, the Apostle Paul had learned from experience that a novice should not occupy the ministry. Nevertheless, Corinth was opening its doors to any talented orator with some new concept or order. (1 Cor. 4:15-16). They were becoming more religious and less Christ-like, relying on the "excellency of speech" and "enticing words of man's wisdom", rather than the "demonstration of the Spirit." It was necessary that their faith "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2:1, 4-5). Instead of becoming disciples, they were turning into fans. In highlighting this attitude of division, Paul wrote, "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." (1 Cor. 1:12).

Scripture makes it apparent that the Apostle Paul was not as flashy, compromising or charismatic as some of his contemporaries. But he was not a

hireling, and his sincere desire was that the church in Corinth unite in Christ. The entire first epistle to the Corinthians was addressing the problem of disunity.

The Bigger Picture

In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul recounted what took place on the night the Lord was betrayed. His intention was not to sanctimoniously stir up the readers of the epistle or to set a ceremonial precedent for communion services. Rather, he was telling them that the bread and wine are just emblems. **To partake unworthily of the mere bread and wine was in no way as evil as partaking unworthily of Christ on a daily basis.** The Lord Jesus, of which we must partake, is the 'bread of life' that came down from heaven. This was the major focus of this lesson. Selfish interests, the root of most sins, were crippling the church in Corinth just as it cripples our churches today.

Spiritual progress cannot be made when we partake of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils at the same time. As it is, none of us are free from drinking of the cup of devils, but God is merciful and continues His work of sanctification in our lives. We must recognize that our battle is spiritual and though we may fall time and time again, we must not give up but pull ourselves together and continue fighting. It would be profitable to spend more time examining ourselves rather than others. Pride, lust, selfishness, perverted ambition and ill-will toward others must all be eliminated as we mature.

No one is going to simply waltz into the Kingdom, let alone the Bride of Christ. It takes much effort and prayer. As the Apostle Peter said,

“And if the righteous [barely make it into the kingdom], where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?” (1 Pet. 4:18). Thanks be to God that His mercy far outweighs His judgment and wrath.

And so, during a communion service the bread and wine are simply emblems. Our participation is a public declaration of our desire to become one body, united in the Lord with our brothers and sisters. We cannot take the Lord's death for granted or make a mockery of the Church by living as 'spiritual schizophrenics', but we must recognize and respect the Lord's body. A contamination within our spirits will pollute the rest of the Body. (1 Cor. 11:29). This is the reason why we should not just be holy for the communion service, only to live in blatant sin and rebellion afterwards. **A right attitude to God and our fellowman must be maintained beyond the communion service.**

The Headless Church?

Is Christ really our Head? Does He direct our lives? Reality shows that, in most cases, we're quite content to be independent, making decisions without praying or waiting for an answer from God. We spend most of our time selfishly pursuing our own ends, becoming indistinguishable from the ungodly surroundings in which we live.

Here's a good question: if your physical body operated like the church body, how effective would you be? What would happen if all our body parts had brains of their own? In our information age, the quest for knowledge has replaced wisdom, discipleship and illumination as the objective of the word of God – both

for congregation and ministers alike. The Apostle Paul referred to this as a state of ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the faith. (2 Tim. 3:7). Religious? Yes! Disciples? No!

If we think church services are only about religious ceremonies followed by loose living at home, we are deceived. We are to be responsible individuals in the community and a blessing to those around us. It is our duty to develop a right attitude in regards to things such as time, money, and the grace of God. (1 Pet. 4:10).

Let us endeavour to accommodate, and even go out of our way for one another. If the opportunity arises to do something good for someone, do it wholeheartedly. In doing this, we are not only enhancing discipleship, but also developing a spirit of unity. As in our physical body, even more so in the Body of Christ, every member has a function, even though some may be more predominant than others.

Division often results when 'lesser' members aspire to fill higher offices or those in elevated offices disrespect those in lower positions. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, *“Let nothing be done through strife or [for personal glory]; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”* (Phil. 2:3). It would do us well to recall the long forgotten example of Christ washing His own disciples' feet.

Moving Ahead

To move ahead in God we need to drop off the weights and besetting sins. (Heb. 12:2). The fact is that most of us, while longing for a closer

walk with God, war against the concept of true discipleship that requires a putting aside of our own desires, ambitions and dreams. Jesus said, *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* (Matt. 16:24).

The bottom line is that unity and discipleship go hand-in-hand. We cannot have unity without determining in our hearts to be disciples. We may never experience unity in totality since we are all at different stages of Christian growth. But the natural result of discipleship which includes the putting aside of pride, arrogance and selfishness, will result in unity. As such, we must not seek for position or look down on others. Let us bear in mind that the race is not for the swift, but the persistent, and God sees things from a different perspective than we do. Similar to the slow and gradual process of maturity, unity is not accomplished overnight. As Christ is gradually incorporated in our lives, the evidences of unity will be manifested.

Let us endeavour to eliminate every element from among us that will bring division. We must start by putting away personal preferences and submit to the demands of discipleship.

As we partake of Christ on a daily basis, we will gradually relinquish all the contaminating influences of the world, whether it be fashions, entertainment, or lifestyle.

May God help us to eat of this bread and drink of the cup of the Lord worthily.

P.C

CONTEMPLATING BABYLON

Understanding Scripture

Having one's own copy of the Bible is a wonderful privilege. But, like a gun, this amazing book can either be a source of life or an effective tool for damnation. The Apostle Peter stated that some "wrest" the scriptures unto their own destruction. (2 Pet. 3:16). In Paul's letter to Timothy, he mentions the negative effects of scriptural misinterpretation, showing that false preaching (vain babblings) undermines one's faith and hinders spiritual growth. (2 Tim. 2:16-19). The Lord Jesus also emphatically declared that false doctrines void one's worship and service to God. He said, "*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*" (Matt. 15:9).

Seeing that correct interpretation of scripture is of such great importance, one can conclude that a billion copies of the Bible are of no value if there is no one capable of proper interpretation. Scripture informs us that, "*prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" (2 Pet. 1:21). It is necessary to understand that since the Holy Ghost inspired men to formulate scripture, the Holy Ghost must assist men to decipher that which was written.

Also, the problems arising from translation should not be ignored. We must bear in mind that our Lord's original words were not English, and scholars translating scripture will slant their translation to justify their doctrinal persuasions.

I am often appalled at the presumption of preachers who capitalize on a knowledge of Greek in order to impress their congregations. Isn't it strange that the learned men in the

days of Christ heard original words in its most original form uttered by the Lord, and yet failed to comprehend them because of the blindness of their hearts? With this in mind, why would we so adamantly pursue interpretation of scripture only from a scholarly approach? I think all interpretation of scripture should be pursued cautiously and with absolute dependence on the Holy Ghost as it guides us into truth. False doctrines, disunity and ungodliness are results of satanic influences on man's carnal mind.

God's purpose for scripture is not for mere education but to inspire godly lifestyle. Biblical history and scriptural precepts are given to us as a challenge to godliness. However, if holiness would be attained in our day, more is required than that which is contained in the written word. As in the past, we, the Church of the 21st Century, need fresh manna from the Holy Ghost. God must inspire men today, as He did in the past, to recognize the evils of this present world and then offer to His people a way of escape. He does not expect us to live in the past but rather relate to the crisis at hand.

Scripture (the written word) provides a good foundation to stand on and great guidelines for protection, but again, I must emphasize the need for fresh Holy Ghost inspiration to enhance godly living in our day.

When a prophet of the Old Testament or an apostle of the New Testament turned up in a city, it was not to run Bible programs or analyze sermons. They were sent of God and had current messages for the people. Such messages were described as the word of God

and were always fresh, addressing the issues at hand. The author of Hebrews wrote, "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" (Heb. 4:12).

Having considered all of the aforementioned thoughts, I wish to draw attention to the fact that whenever we read scripture or listen to the preached word, it would be in our best spiritual interest to examine our lives against what is presented and then make appropriate changes. This principle of self-examination must be applied to the majority of biblical subjects in order to enhance spiritual growth. It is amazing how we in the Body of Christ can quickly evade personal guilt by mentally redirecting godly admonitions to those outside our religious borders. It would be sad if our process of sanctification and cleansing is impeded by a simple misconception of scripture.

With all of these thoughts in mind, I will briefly examine the concept of Babylon and endeavour to speculate on how much it involves us — God's people, the Body of Christ.

Points to Ponder

"*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*" (Rev. 18:4). This particular scripture emphasizes a call from God out of Heaven asking *His people* to come out of Babylon. They were to refrain from partaking of her sins so as to avoid re-

ceiving of her plagues.

The questions to ask are:

1. Who makes the call: God or the Church?
2. Who are God's people according to the entire volume of scripture?
3. Is Babylon a building, a movement or a spirit, and is there any difference between Babylon and the world?
4. Are we already partaking of her sins and, if not, why are we receiving of her plagues?
5. Is coming out of Babylon an instant action or a continuous process?

I will endeavour to contemplate on these questions with a clear mind and an open heart, hoping that God will give us light to effect a righteous sanctification among us.

A Voice From Heaven?

For years I felt it was my responsibility to influence everyone outside of our fellowship to come out of Babylon and come on into the Body of Christ. This mindset psychologically made me think that I was completely out of Babylon. As a result, no personal examination was pursued on my part. I was convinced that physically separating myself from apostate Christianity was all that was necessary to put me in the Body of Christ, separate from Babylon.

However, the scriptural type showed otherwise. Israel's journey out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and then into the Promised Land is a type of the Church. The 40-year wilderness experience was intended to effect a cleansing process of God's people. Though they exited Egypt in a single day, it took forty years to get the spirit of Egypt out of their hearts. Physically they were out, but spiritually they

Missionary Trip



Paul & Melinda Carrington with daughters
Hannah & Naomi

In the months of August and September 1996, we were blessed to have Brother Paul Carrington and his wife Sister Melinda visit our assembly here in Mississauga. At that time they were not married.

During the past nine years, we have witnessed the hand of God working in their lives, by first joining them together in matrimony, then adding them to the inner core of the assembly.

Brother Paul and Sister Melinda became a vital part of the working element in the local church and manifested a spirit of commitment and loyalty.

Unlike most young people, they were not carried away with the non-essential luxuries of this present age, but did their best to walk according to the inner convictions of their hearts.

When the Lord blessed them with two wonderful daughters, Hannah and Naomi, their commitment and love for the work of God in no way dwindled. As a matter of fact, they were further challenged to homeschool their children in order to avoid the contamination found in the Canadian public school system.

After much prayer, Brother Paul and Sister Melinda are convinced that the Lord is leading them to move to Africa as a family to fulfill a vision of their hearts. They will be leaving Canada prior to the winter and relocating to Boga, a small village in the Rift Valley in Kenya.

We will miss this wonderful family and do covet your prayers that the Lord will overshadow their lives and prosper their missionary efforts.

were enslaved to the Egyptian thought pattern.

Similarly, we in the Body of Christ should understand that, though we have left Babylon physically, there is still much of Babylon's thought pattern left in us. This will bring the judgment of God on us.

As I read Revelation 18:4, I am very much convinced that the "voice from heaven" mentioned in this verse is a plea or admonition from God telling His people to come out from under the influence of apostate religion as well as commercial and political bondage. The call is made some time in the future, just prior to the collapse of commerce and is not given to the Church to preach but rather for personal examination. God admonishes His people to come out from under the influence of Babylon.

God's People?

The entire volume of scripture refers to the core or heart-beat of the work of God as 'God's people'.

2 Chronicles 7:14, a popular verse among Christians, states, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven..." It should be noted that every passage of scripture, such as Exodus 3:10, Isaiah 1:3, Jeremiah 2:13, Jeremiah 5:31, Jeremiah 7:12, that the term "my people" is mentioned always refers to the work of God.

Babylon & the World?

Though Babylon and the spirit associated with it have their origin in the Old Testament, in our day there is little difference between Babylon and the world. The spirit of the age is the spirit of Babylon, rep-

resented by an amalgamation of commerce, religion and everything that encircles civil government. God desires His people not only to be freed from the entanglements of false religion, but also from the clutches of political and commercial Babylon.

Sins & Plagues of Babylon?

An ungodly society constantly comes under the judgment of God, for sin brings sickness, plagues and death. Scripture is clear about the fact that partakers of Babylon's sins will be inheritors of the plagues associated with God's judgment against her. The question is: Are we the children of God spared from the diseases inflicted on society by the justice of God? Or do we sit under the same affliction of the ungodly? It may very well be that we are partaking of her sins, and as a result, receive of her plagues. The reality of our afflictions is evidence of our true spiritual standing and bears greater testimony than any verbal claims of sanctification.

Coming Out?

Accepting Christ at an altar and leaving the past behind may be done instantly, but being cleansed from the deep inward workings of sin and the world takes time. Scripture describes this process as sanctification, and for every child of God it takes a lifetime to complete this work. The purpose of the ministry is to present to Christ a pure and glorious church. This takes a continuous process of separation and cleansing. It would be sad if we fail to comprehend God's call to us to come out of Babylon simply because we are too busy redirecting His call to others, being convinced that we are already out.

D.S

Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats?

By C.H. Spurgeon

An evil resides in the professed camp of the Lord so gross in its impudence that the most short-sighted can hardly fail to notice it. During the past few years it has developed at an abnormal rate, evil for evil. It has worked like leaven until the whole lump ferments. The Devil has seldom done a more clever thing than hinting to the Church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them. From speaking out as the Puritans did, the Church has gradually toned down her testimony, then winked at and excused the frivolities of the day. Then she tolerated them in her borders. Now she has adopted them under the plea of reaching the masses.

My first contention is that providing amusement for the people is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a function of the Church. If it is a Christian work why did not Christ speak of it? "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature..." That is clear enough. So it would have been if He had added, "And provided amusement for those who do not relish the gospel." No such words, however, are to be found. It did not seem to occur to Him. Then again, "He gave some apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers, for the work of the ministry..." Where do entertainers come in? The Holy Spirit is silent concerning them. Were the prophets persecuted because they amused the people or because they refused? The concert has no martyr roll. Again, providing amusement is in direct antagonism to the teaching and life of Christ and all His apostles. What was the attitude of the

Church to the world? "Ye are the salt," not sugar candy – something the world will spit out, not swallow. Short and sharp was the utterance, "Let the dead bury their dead." He was in awful earnestness!

Had Christ introduced more of the bright and pleasant elements into His mission, He would have been more popular. But many of his disciples left him, because of the searching nature of His teaching. I do not hear Him say, "Run after these people, Peter, and tell them we will have a different style of service tomorrow, something short and attractive with little preaching. We will have a pleasant evening for the people. Tell them they will be sure to enjoy it. Be quick, Peter, we must get the people somehow!" Jesus pitied sinners, sighed and wept over them, but never sought to amuse them. In vain will the Epistles be searched to find any trace of gospel amusement. Their message is, "Come out, keep out, keep clean out!" Anything approaching fooling is conspicuous by its absence. They had boundless confidence in the gospel and employed no other weapon. After Peter and John were locked up for preaching, the Church has a prayer meeting, but they did not pray, "Lord grant thy servants that by a wise and discriminating use of innocent recreation we may show these people how happy we are." If they ceased not from preaching Christ, they had not time for

arranging entertainments. Scattered by persecution, they went everywhere preaching the gospel. They "turned the world upside down." That is the difference!



Lord, clear the Church of all the rot and rubbish the Devil

has imposed on her and bring us back to apostolic methods.

Lastly, the mission of amusement fails to affect the end desired. It works havoc among your converts. Let the careless and scoffers, who thank God because the Church met them halfway, speak and testify. Let the heavy-laden who found peace through the concert not keep silent! Let the drunkard to whom the dramatic entertainment has been God's link in the chain of their conversion, stand up!

There are none to answer. The mission of amusement produces no converts. The need of the hour for today's ministry is believing scholarship, joined with earnest spirituality, the one springing from the other as fruit from the root. The need is biblical doctrine, so understood and felt, that it sets men on fire.

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2005 FELLOWSHIP MEETING SCHEDULE

**Mississauga, Ontario, CANADA
THANKSGIVING SERVICES**

October 8th-9th

**Tampa, Florida
Ministers' Meeting
December 3rd-4th**



get one. I really love God, and want to know the word of God.

I am not interested in reading the Bible because I don't understand it very well.

Yours in Christ,

O.M.

I had the opportunity to read the article on "Christian Suffering" and thought it to be a blessing to me. Indeed many people believe that Christianity is a stress-free religion and we must only prosper and be blessed every day.

I just wanted you to give me a better understanding of the scripture in Proverbs 10:22 that says, "The blessings of the Lord, it maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it." Many Christians believe that they should have no sorrow, just blessings from the Lord. Someone had asked me that question. They believe that God will not inflict sorrow on a child of God. How can I answer this question concerning that scripture?

Taken from themidnightcry.com Comments/Questions

I have read one of your magazines, though I didn't have enough time to read it all. I would like to know how I can

Dear Pastor Singh,

Greetings and blessings from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Saviour!

...I am 23 years old. I thank the Lord today for giving me this opportunity to write you, because that's always been in my heart to do since I have read a volume of "The Midnight Cry" magazine. I talk of you often with Pastor Patrick P. and he told me that you are going to have fellowship by the end of this week. I pray strongly for God's blessing during these days and I am sure He has already blessed your work.

May God bless your ministry, your wife and assembly...

**R.B.
Haiti.**

THANK YOU!

We would like to express our thanks for all comments made regarding this publication. Although this magazine is available at no charge, we appreciate all the monetary contributions we have received.

Thank you, and may the Lord richly bless you!

Midnight Cry Staff.

Statement of Faith

We believe that the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, was given by the inspiration of God, and is the basis of our faith, doctrine and practice.

We believe that all men and women are born in sin, thus creating the need for repentance.

We believe in the incarnation, virgin birth and Deity of Jesus Christ, His vicarious and substitutional death as the atonement for all mankind, and His resurrection from the dead.

We believe in God the Father as a Supreme Being, and Jesus Christ, His Son as the lesser of the two entities in the Godhead.

We believe that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of both the Father and Son, given to mankind as the promised Comforter.

We believe in the baptism of water by immersion, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues.

We believe that the soul, which comprises of the intellect, the sensibility, and the will, is mortal and therefore capable of dying, but it will be resurrected at the Judgment.

We believe that the Bible portrays life or death as the ultimate destiny of mankind.

We believe that the Body of Christ, the Church, is not mystical, but rather tangible, identifiable and sanctified from apostate Christianity.

We believe in the literal return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the establishment of God's theocratic kingdom on this earth.

We believe that this statement of faith is reasonable basis for Christian fellowship.

TRUTH IS ABSOLUTE, YET DUE TO APOSTATE INTRUSIONS, TRUTH IS OCCASSIONALLY UNDERMINED AND LOST. IN THE PROCESS OF RESTORATION TRUTH BECOMES PROGRESSIVE.

WITH THIS IN MIND, WE MUST NOT HOLD THE AFOREMENTIONED STATEMENT OF FAITH AS ABSOLUTE .

PURPOSE: The purpose of this magazine is to represent the "cry" made at midnight as recorded in Matthew 25:6, that awakes a sleeping church to the reality of present darkness and offers hope and deliverance to God's people.

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*“Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching
those things which concern our Lord Jesus
Christ.” Acts 28:31*

SERVICES:
WEDNESDAY 7:30 P.M.
SATURDAY 6:30 P.M.
SUNDAY 1:00 P.M.



**Brother & Sister Singh
Pastor & Wife**

Please continue to keep them in your prayers...