



The
CROSS
and the **Dove**

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THE CROSS AND THE DOVE

Chapter One- The Current Crisis of Christianity in America

A Powerless Church with a Powerless Gospel

The Church in the USA is in a crisis. It is not a crisis of money, or prestige, or even of popularity. The crisis is not about educational resources, or the ability to put trained people in the field. It is a crisis of *power and the ability to back up the simple claims of the Gospel*. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the *power of God* unto salvation (Romans 1:16,17). The core of the Gospel message is the claim that Jesus has the power to change darkness into light, change death into life. This power is the ability of the Holy Spirit to change the life of a sinner, bringing the person into an experience called conversion. In conversion, repentance as deep sorrow for sin takes the form of crying out to God for forgiveness. Through repentance and faith in Jesus, the guilty sinner is made guiltless, or justified before God. Such a person becomes a child of God, and should be a living representation of the power of the living God. The release of this power of God comes by trusting God for a life of holiness by His power, wherein the Christian is living in the presence of God continually.

This issue of crisis I am raising is more than a subjective impression, the product of casual observation. The statistical facts of hard data show that the American church is not effectively living the Gospel itself, let alone effectively presenting it. George Barna says this:

Most Christians--not those who merely call themselves Christians but those who have confessed their sinfulness and have asked Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior--have fallen prey to the same disease as their worldly counterparts. We think and behave no differently from anyone else.¹

Barna has the research and statistics to back up this statement.

At the heart of the Gospel is the claim that Jesus has the power to break off the bondage of sin as well as to forgive the sinner and release the person from guilt. This crisis event is based on repentance and is called *conversion*. The result of conversion is a changed life. A relationship has been started with Jesus. Relationships are built on trust. The sinner trusts Jesus for salvation, which is *deliverance from sin*, and Jesus trusts that the converted sinner will walk in the purity of the

¹ George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998) 7.

righteousness, which he has provided. Having a relationship with Jesus means doing what pleases Him. He has made this clear in the Scriptures. He wants us to be holy as He is holy. Holiness is not an impossible monastic ideal. It is the lived reality of the power of God to defeat sin.

This message is foreign to many churches and ministries that claim to be advancing the work of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. One reason for this is that the Church has preached against external sins in unbelievers while entertaining internal sins within itself. The world is sick and tired of hearing about external sin from a Church which practices, even endorses, internal sin. It is hypocritical of church people to blast the sins of homosexuals and abortionists while they are planning their next meeting to oust their pastor because they are in rebellion against his leadership. Churches in the USA are filled with people who have mastered the external sins like adultery, murder, robbery, but who are filled with hatred, pride and greed. As proof of this complicity with sin in the church, we need look no farther than Barna's statistics. He compares the actual behaviors of Christians with that of non-Christians. Some of the results are as follows: When asked if they had watched MTV in the past week, 24% of non-Christians said yes, while 19% of born-again Christians admitted they had watched. When asked if they had watched a PG-13 or R-rated movie in the past three months, 87% of non-Christians said yes, while 76% of born-again Christians admitted they had. When asked if they had watched an X-rated movie in the past three months, 16% of non-Christians said yes, while 9% of born-again Christians admitted they had.²

Another shocking statistic is this:

- In a typical month, one out of three adults (36%) read their horoscope.
- Horoscope reading is equally common among Christians and non-Christians, Protestant and Catholic.³

These activities are not the playthings many Christians think they are. These are real sins committed by Christians in a really sinful world. How is a church filled with "Christians" such as those described above going to be salt and light in a sin-darkened culture like ours? And how is such a church going to be the bride of Christ, without spot or wrinkle? Do you really believe that the bride of Christ is going to rise to meet Him on that glorious day with pornography stuffed in her back pocket? Is her horoscope going to

²Ibid., 6.

³ George Barna, *Barna Research Online* "Evangelical Christians" August 1, 2000 <<http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PageCategory.asp?CategoryID=26>>

tell her how much Jesus, the heavenly bridegroom, loves her? How can the church expect the world to listen to its message about sin when the church is still enmeshed in sin?

Furthermore, the Church in the USA is not growing. Each week in the USA 72 churches are closed, while 24 new churches are being started.⁴ That results in a net loss of 48 churches per week. In the last 10 years, the combined membership of Protestant denominations has declined by 9.5 percent at the same time the population of the USA increased by 11 percent.⁵ Furthermore, not one county in the USA has a larger percentage of churched people than it did 10 years ago.⁶ Also, half of all churches did not add one new member through conversion growth in 1998.⁷ When we look at these reliable statistics, we are forced to the conclusion that the church in the USA is in desperate need in this hour.

When faced by these realities, many Christians are tempted (successfully) to raise more and louder messages about the sins of unbelievers. Some Christians have decided to "tough it out," and keep preaching the guilt and condemnation of unbelievers while the Church remains the same. Very little of the power of God, however, is brought to bear on the real sin issues in real lives of people.

Other Christians have decided to represent Christianity in a way that is not offensive to the average unbeliever. Christian terms and phrases are eliminated, church services are shortened, and in general, the unbeliever, perceived as a "consumer" of the Gospel is given what he/she wants. The flaw in this methodology is that the power of Christianity often does not get arrayed against its main opponent, sin. And the person who is attracted to church by a powerless, no-commitment gospel is a "Christian" who will live a powerless, no-commitment "Christian life."

Furthermore, when people enter the Church without a confrontation with the issues of sin, they bring their sin with them into the church. This has happened on such a wide scale that the phrase "born-again" no longer carries any of its needed meaning. Many who say they are born-again have repeated a prayer with someone for God to forgive them and to give them a nice life. But in many cases, there was no sorrow over sin, no repentance, and certainly, no self-denial. When such persons attend churches,

⁴ *American Horizon*, "A Christian Nation?" (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, July-August, 1999) 12.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

they place an inordinate demand on pastors and pastoral staffs to disciple them, when what they need is *conversion from sin*. Discipleship by itself cannot convert anyone, that must take place in Christ-centered evangelism. Once truly evangelized, the person can be taught doctrine and practical Christian living. This is the proper role of discipleship.

The two approaches outlined above are not succeeding in reaching the lost people of the USA with the Gospel. Many of those who have been “reached” in the past 10 years are part of the statistical nightmare described above. We must move to a higher level than “reaching” unbelievers. We must move to the level we find in the book of Acts, the level of “piercing” their hearts, an act of the power of the Cross. The problem lies in the assumptions of the everyday life of the church. A deeper remedy must be applied before the church will be walking in the moral and spiritual power that is so desperately needed. A reformation of the understanding of what it is to be a Christian must take place before the church will be able to speak with authority to the unbelievers of our time.

Revival is not an Option

God’s answer to the malaise which I described above is the same as it has always been- He wants to give revival! But we are at a point now where in many churches revival is not even one of the entrees in the smorgasbord of church/religious activity. We are at a point where we must say that it is revival or ruin! George Barna says it like this:

Our goal cannot simply be a timid, powerless survival; it must be the role that Christ called the Church to play, that of a loving, authoritative, healing and compelling influence upon the world. What we need is *true spiritual renewal--a transformation that goes well beyond mere evangelistic outreach*. We desperately need a holistic revolution of mind, heart, and spirit. Lacking such a turnabout, we may rightfully anticipate the virtual disappearance of the Christian Church in this nation.⁸

Our mode of operation over the past two decades has given us the fruitlessness that we now have come to recognize. Doing more of the same will bring more of the same results in the years ahead, and as Barna asserts, the results may be far worse, threatening the very existence of the Church!

There is no shortage of desire on God’s part; the shortage is all with us. He is looking for people with hearts of desire for His Presence. Dr. Michael Brown of the Brownsville revival in Pensacola, FL says:

⁸ Barna, *Second Coming of the Church*, 8 (emphasis mine).

Almighty God wants to send a flood. The Lord of heaven and earth wants to bring a visitation. He wants to display His glory. He wants to magnify His Son! He wants to get for Himself a humble, radical, revived, overcoming, obedient people. We've hardly seen anything yet, and yet we have no guarantee we'll see anything more--unless we remove the stumbling blocks and clear the paths. The carnal show must stop. We need a pure move from heaven.⁹

This is indeed the crying need of our times, a pure move of God. Not hype, not manipulation, but the pure flow of the Spirit of God to lift up Jesus. We have confused our orders from our Leader. He said that if He were lifted up, He would draw all people unto himself (John 12:32). When we take on the task of drawing people to Jesus, we are engaging in a work we cannot successfully accomplish. We can draw them to church, to a program, to a doctrine, but it is Jesus who has the power to break the power of sin, and it is a work of the Spirit of God that draws people to this essential work. The Church will be revived when it realizes that it cannot do the work of the Spirit (drawing people to Jesus) and that it must do the work of lifting up Jesus.

The revival that is so desperately needed by the Church today is nothing more or less than the sustained Presence of the living God among us. His Presence will come and abide at the point where the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove converge. The Dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, as described in Matthew 3:16. These two powers are the essence of Christianity, and they must work in their proper relationship to each other. The power of the Cross is the whole of redemption from sin through the shed blood of Jesus, and it is the lifestyle of self-denial that Jesus so clearly taught. This power brings brokenness and humility and prepares us for the fire. The power of the Dove is the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit, by which God's people prophesy, do the mighty works of God, and destroy the works of the devil, just like Jesus did. When these two powers converge, the mighty Presence of God breaks forth to bring conversion, healing, and deliverance from demonic oppression. This brings new life to the Church, which is why we call it revival, and it brings life to those who are walking in darkness, because Jesus is being lifted up and is drawing all people unto Himself.

The Cross and the Dove in Matthew 16

In the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 16, and verses 13 to 25, we have a passage of Scripture that provides the insight for the message of this book. Here we have the famous interaction between Jesus

⁹ Michael Brown, *From Holy Laughter to Holy Fire* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1996) 13.

and the disciples concerning his identity. The central issue about Jesus in the Gospels is taken up here by the question “Who is this?” or more specifically, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (v. 13). After some popular opinions are reported, Jesus presses his question and receives a stunningly appropriate response from Peter, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v.16). Jesus responds to Peter by using his full formal name, “Blessed are you, *Simon Bar-Jonah...*,” which is somewhat unusual. According to John 1:42, Jesus has already changed Peter’s name to “Cephas” “...You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated A Stone)” (NKJV). Since Jesus changed Peter’s name, we would naturally expect that he would use the new name for Peter, especially since Jesus Himself chose it. This causes us to suspect that there is something more here in the story in Matthew 16. The Greek expression here actually translates the Aramaic proper name of the man we know as Peter in the New Testament. In the original Aramaic/Hebrew, his name, as presented in Matthew 16:17, could be rendered “Simon, son of the Dove.”¹⁰ The Hebrew/Aramaic word may be translated “dove” or “Jonah.” Thus, it appears that Jesus’ unusual address to Peter, Simon Bar-Jonah, means he was *son of the Dove*. The Dove as symbolic of the Holy Spirit is one of the important features of the New Testament, since the account occurs in all four Gospels.¹¹ In the Semitic mindset of Jesus’ day to be called the son of someone meant to follow in the instruction or procedure of that person as when people are called sons of the prophets in the OT. So, in the very name of Peter (Simon Bar-Jonah) is imbedded this important meaning that he is a person who is following the Dove (Holy Spirit). The full text of verse 17 is:

Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven (NKJV).

Jesus here strongly affirmed Peter’s reception of the revelation from heaven that He was the Christ (Messiah). Jesus’ statement means that this knowledge is not available from a human source; it must come by revelation. It is important to link this truth with the one mentioned above, whereby Jesus draws all people unto himself, when he is lifted up. The founding revelation of the Church was not given by

¹⁰ Francis Brown, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979) 401, 402.

¹¹ See Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; and John 1:32.

"flesh and blood," meaning that there is no human source for this knowledge. It must be given to you as a revelation; you must be drawn to Jesus. Bear in mind this denial of the validity of human sources by Jesus, for it will become very important in the following discussion.

In our passage, Jesus continues speaking to Peter. He uses the rock language to speak of the foundation of the church. He also gives Peter the keys in verse 19. But in verse 21, Jesus begins to speak of his coming suffering and death, the way of the Cross. Peter (whose name means "son of the Dove") takes Jesus aside and begins to rebuke him, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to you!" (NKJV) In verse 23 Jesus turns and says to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an offense to me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but of the things of men." (NKJV) Jesus taught Peter a very important lesson here, one that came to serve him well in years to come. The lesson is this: the revelation of the Holy Spirit never contradicts or speaks against the death (cross) of Jesus. *To do so is to speak for and as Satan!!* What a startling assertion! What a wake-up call for Peter, and the other disciples! What a warning for the Church today! And even more drastic is Jesus' brief explanation: "for you are not mindful of the things of God, but of the things of *men*." (NKJV) What we expect Jesus to say is that Peter is mindful of the things of *Satan*, in agreement with the rebuke. But Peter (son of the Dove) is rebuked as Satan because he is mindful of the things of *men*.¹² It is the action of letting the "things of men" or "human things" get in the way of the Cross that aligns us with the purpose of Satan. Jesus makes his call to discipleship clear in verses 24 and 25:

If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. (NKJV)

Jesus makes it clear that being able to receive revelation from God by the power of the Holy Spirit is not enough. The way of the cross is absolutely necessary. In fact, as Jesus goes on to personally demonstrate, the way of the Cross must be put in place before the fullness of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit can come. There are two different manifestations of God's power in this passage, and the message is clear that the way of the cross has its own form of power. The way of the Dove has its own form of power, too. The person who walks in revelation from God (a son of the Dove) must constantly be under

¹² Gr. anthropoi, meaning "human beings," Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature 5th ed.* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979) 68.

the Cross, following Jesus. By His life and teaching throughout the Gospels, Jesus clearly intends the conjoining of these two powers. Think of the tremendous potential for harm if these two ever got separated! Especially after what we have seen in this passage.

This is the life which Jesus calls human beings to live when He is lifted up. It is a life of revelation by the Holy Spirit, but always under the self-denial of the Cross-life. Aren't you glad you do not have to draw people to Jesus? How could you? Who would come, if they really understood what it meant? And if they did come under some deception about this cross stuff, how could they be Christians? But if you will lift up Jesus, He will draw all people unto Himself. As a son (or daughter) of the Dove, you can expect to flow in revelation from heaven, but you must deny *yourself*, take up *your cross*, and follow Jesus *yourself*. And as a son of the Dove, you must be keenly aware of the temptation to be mindful of the things of men.

The revival we need right now in America will come when the Church lives and walks at the convergence of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove. For this revival to come, we will have to plainly identify *the things of men* that ally us with the purposes of the Evil One, and put them away from us. It is a hard thing to live and move in these two powers at the same time, as the history of the Church makes clear. But when these two come together, wonderful advances for the Kingdom of God break forth.

Chapter Two- The Cross and the Dove Must Converge

Convergence in the Book of Acts

In chapter one we set forth the necessity of the Cross and the Dove being together, with the Cross leading the way. In this chapter we will describe the implementation of this truth in the life of the earliest Church. In the latter parts of the chapter, we will investigate how the Church lost this convergence of the Cross and the Dove and thereby lost the dynamic expression of the power of God.

Jesus Himself brought the convergence of the Cross and the Dove in the book of Acts. In chapter 1 He stands in the power of His resurrection, having completed and perfected the way of the cross and the power of the cross. He tells the disciples to wait for the promise of the Father, which is the baptism in the Holy Spirit (vv. 4,5). Then in verse 8 He speaks of the power of the Dove (Holy Spirit):

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (NKJV).

There are two words in the original Greek that deserve our attention in this verse. The first is dynamis, which is translated “power” above. It also can be rendered “might, strength, or force; or as “ability, capability.”¹³ This Greek word is the source of our English words dynamite, dynamo, and dynamic, so the connotation of explosive power has also been suggested. In any case, the power that is promised by Jesus carries the meaning of ability with might and strength to accomplish the task of witnessing in the entire world. The second word that needs our attention is martyres, which is translated “witnesses” above. The word means “bear witness, be a witness,” and also “be a witness (unto death), be martyred.”¹⁴ Here is a case where a single Greek word must carry meaning for which we have at least two different words in English- witness and martyr. It is exactly this dilemma in meaning for the word that shows us that Jesus wishes a convergence between the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove. Jesus Himself had just been the Faithful Martyr (Revelation 1:5) on the Cross, and now right after He gave the promise of the power of the Dove, He states that His people will be martyrs (witnesses) for Him. It is a potent combination of meanings in these words, and the apostles fulfilled it literally, dying under persecution in their witness to Jesus. Such is Jesus’ preparation of the disciples for the Day of

¹³ Bauer, *Lexicon* 207.

¹⁴ Ibid., 492, 493.

Pentecost.

The people who occupied the upper room on the Day of Pentecost had been prepared for the convergence of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove. Arthur Booth-Clibborn has stated the case well:

Any cheapening of the price of Pentecost would be a disaster of untold magnitude. The company in the upper room, upon whom Pentecost fell, had paid for it the highest price. In this they approached as near as possible to Him who had paid the supreme price to send it. Do we ever really adequately realize how utterly lost to this world, how completely despised, rejected and outcast was that company? Their master had just passed, so to speak, through the ‘hangman’s rope,’ at the hands of the highest civilization of the day. Their Calvary was complete and so a complete Pentecost came to match it. The latter will resemble the former in completeness. We may, therefore, each of us, say to ourselves: As your cross, so will your Pentecost be. God’s way to Pentecost was via Calvary. Individually it must be so today. The purity and fullness of the individual Pentecost must depend upon the completeness of the individual Calvary. This is an unalterable principle.¹⁵

This profound truth must come to the fore: the 120 believers had to go through Calvary in two ways in order to be prepared for the Day of Pentecost. First, they had to go through it by extension, watching Jesus the Messiah die that agonizing death. This participation was not the light thing we sometimes make of it. When Jesus died on the Cross, their hopes and dreams of Messiah and His Kingdom died, too. The thought of a triumphant, reigning Messiah was too engrained in them to be dislodged by anything except the death and resurrection of Jesus. In fact, when Jesus died and rose again, the worldview of the disciples was turned upside down, because the resurrection forced the acceptance of the Cross-death. This turning up of the worldview leads to the second way the 120 believers had to go through Calvary, that is, personally. It was one thing for Jesus to go through with His perfect obedience to the will of the father in His Cross-death. But when He said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me,” He required a personal Calvary of His followers.

It is this personal Calvary that the 120 each had to work through in the days between the crucifixion and the upper room. The resurrection appearances and the ascension of Jesus certainly helped, but isn’t it interesting that of the 500 people who saw Jesus ascend into heaven, only 120 persevered in *obedience to Jesus* and showed up to tarry in the upper room? These personal Calvaries

¹⁵ Quoted in: Frank Bartleman, *Another Wave Rolls In (What Really Happened at Azusa Street?)* (Monroeville, PA: Whitaker Books, 1962) 56.

of dying out to the flesh and to self came together into a corporate experience of *unity* of the believers before the mighty outpouring of the Spirit. Acts 1:14 says, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus..." (NKJV). Acts 2:1 says, "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were *all with one accord* in one place" (NKJV). This unity through personal Calvaries brought the ability to pray in harmony and agreement with one another. It is one of the keys to understanding the dynamic power of the event we call Pentecost.

With their obedience to Jesus in place, the unity of their mutual personal cross-deaths prepared the 120 believers for the power of the Dove. Jesus set this pattern in place, and it is unalterable. The power of the Dove comes in direct proportion to the power of the Cross at work in the life of the Christian. We will enter into a thorough discussion of the aspects of Holy Spirit baptism in a later chapter. For our discussion here, it is important to notice that the baptism in the Spirit which Jesus had promised (Acts 1:5) was delivered in a three-part package in Acts 2:1-4. The 120 were filled, they spoke in tongues, and the fire of God came on them. The speaking in tongues is significant here, because it is a clear and undeniable sign of God's power and presence with these people.

After the crowd marvels that Galileans were able to speak in the languages of fifteen different nations, Peter (of all people) stands up to address the crowd. This is the same Peter who started out as son of the Dove in Matthew 16, rebuked Jesus, and was rebuked by Jesus in turn.¹⁶ But here in Acts 2, Peter comes into his own as son of the Dove. Notice that Peter has been through Jesus' Calvary, and with all of his foibles and failures in that event he nevertheless came through to his own Calvary, which was prophetically anticipated by Jesus' act of calling him son of the Dove in Matthew 16:17. Peter begins by answering the first objection to the Pentecostal experience by stating that the 120 could not possibly be drunk, since it was only nine o'clock in the morning (Acts 2:14,15). But then he launches into a powerful proclamation of the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy of the Spirit of God being poured out on all flesh. The striking features of this OT prophecy are that young and old, men and women, upper and lower classes of society would all participate in this *prophetic* activity. The statement of this fulfillment certainly cut across the grain of the teaching of the religious leaders of the day. They were not interested

¹⁶ See chapter 1.

in seeing the young, or women, or the lower class of society participate as sons of the Dove, but that is exactly what happened on the Day of Pentecost. The fact that the leaders of the 120, and that most of the group were Galileans, meant the religious intelligentsia of Jerusalem despised them. They had women among them, Mary the mother of Jesus, and other women who actively participated (Acts 1:14). This participation by women in prophetic ministry as “sons” of the Dove was certainly against the teaching of some of the leading rabbis of the day.¹⁷ Many of the members of the group were too young to be taken seriously by their societal and cultural leaders. The apostle John himself may still have been a teenager at this time. This motley crew, by their society’s standards, nevertheless became the sons and daughters of the Dove in a manifestation of God’s power and presence that has no equal.

Notice how the leading son of the Dove, Peter (a fisherman) presents the message. He does not attempt to draw people to Jesus. He simply lifts up Jesus. He boldly proclaims the crucifixion and death of Jesus to the very people who participated in causing it (Acts 2:22,23). Then he declares (again with scriptural support from the OT) the resurrection of Jesus. Finally, he makes it clear that this crucified, resurrected, exalted Jesus received this mighty outpouring from the Father and is the one responsible for the supernatural events they had just witnessed (Acts 2:33).¹⁸ The response of the crowd to this lifting up of Jesus is that they are cut to the heart and *they ask* what they should do (Acts 2:37). They were drawn to Jesus by the lifting up of Jesus. Peter’s answer to their question contains both the power of the Cross (repent, that is, die to the love of sin) and the power of the Dove (you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, that is, the power to participate in this prophetic company of people) (Acts 2:38 NKJV).

The following verses of Acts 2 make it clear that the people who came to Christ on the Day of Pentecost and those who were saved daily (Acts 2:47) were not continuing to be enmeshed in the sins of their culture. They *continued steadfast* in the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42) and there was a *fear as awefull reverence* of the presence of God among them. If there had been a person like George Barna in the city of Jerusalem at this time, doing statistical work like that shown in chapter one, the results would have been very different. These Christians were not compromised to indulgence in the sins of their culture.

¹⁷ Doris Lankin, “Woman” *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 16 (New York: MacMillan Publishers, 1971) 625-627.

¹⁸ Cp. Luke 24:49 where Jesus prophesies this event in advance “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city until you are endued with power from on high” (NKJV).

This was a community of the power and presence of the living God. They had died a complete death in their personal Calvary, and then they received a complete Pentecost with tongues, prophetic power and signs and wonders. They lived, for decades, as the rest of the book of Acts shows, at a convergence of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove.

The evidence for the presence of this convergence is found throughout the book of Acts, but we will focus on two persons of that early community of faith who are not named as apostles, Stephen, the first martyr, and Philip, the evangelist. Both of these men were deacons in the early beginnings of the church (Acts 6:1-6).

Stephen was a man who was “full of faith and power, and did great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8 NKJV). When he was brought before the council of religious leaders on false charges, he did not defend himself, but rather he set forth a condensed history of the nation of Israel. By the power of the Spirit, he brought a prophetic rebuke of these religious leaders:

You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you have now become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels, and have not kept it.¹⁹

When the leaders heard this, they were enraged. But Stephen, “being full of the Holy Spirit,” had a mighty revelation of the glory of God and heaven, in which he also saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. The religious leaders could not stand the impact of this revelation, because it disproved their contentions, and showed Stephen to be right about Messiah Jesus. So they dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death.

There are two points about Stephen that show the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. The first is the power with which he spoke. In Acts 6:9,10 certain men from the synagogue of the Freedmen disputed with Stephen and were not able to refute him. After this, the plot against Stephen began, and then culminated in his martyrdom. Stephen was clearly full of the work and revealing power of the Dove. But the second point about Stephen, which shows the presence of the Cross, is the way he died. He died, just like Jesus did, asking that his killers not be charged with this sin (Acts 7:59,60). This was Stephen’s cross, and he had heard the call of Jesus, and when the time came, he took up his cross, and

¹⁹ Acts 7:51-53 (NKJV).

followed Jesus, becoming the first martyr of the church. The power of the Cross and the power of the Dove converged mightily in Stephen. Notice what we learn from Stephen's life and death: the convergence does not mean that we are always delivered from unpleasant circumstances. Sometimes, in God's time, the faith-filled saint of the living God walks through the fire, sometimes unto physical death.

Next, we will look at the ministry of Philip the Evangelist to see the convergence of the powers of the Cross and the Dove. The eighth chapter of the book of Acts tells us that Philip traveled to a city in Samaria, and preached Christ to them. Remember that Philip was operating in clear obedience to the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, *and Samaria*, and to the end of the earth (NKJV). Philip clearly demonstrated the power of the Dove in Samaria, as he cast out many demons, and saw many paralyzed and lame people healed (Acts 8:6,7). In the midst of this mighty move of the Spirit of God, things got even better, as Peter and John came down from Jerusalem, and many people began receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the midst of all of this, an angel spoke to Philip, and told him to leave the city, and travel into the desert (Acts 8:26). The fact that Philip was willing leave a place of the mighty moving of God's Spirit, and go to the desert, indicates the working of the cross effectively against Philip's self-life. Who but God could justify taking Philip from a mighty revival into the desert to speak to an Ethiopian eunuch? And the passage Philip must explain to the eunuch is none other than several verses from Isaiah 53, the Mt. Calvary of the OT! So Philip lifts up Jesus, using a cross-centered passage and the eunuch is drawn to Jesus. Philip lived at the convergence of the power of the Cross and of the Dove, and therefore he could instantly obey the voice of the Spirit, whether the ministry involved great crowds, or one man. How many times do our numbers-conscious procedures push us away from the convergence of the powers of the Cross and the Dove? I suspect it is more often than we would like to admit. In the strength of this obedience, the message of Jesus rolled forth into the world of the Roman Empire, attested by mighty signs and healings by the power of the Dove, but accompanied at every turn by the self-defeating, Jesus-exalting power of the Cross.

The Division of the Cross and the Dove in Church History

With the powerful commencement of the Church which is shown in Acts, we may rightly ask how the Church could ever depart from its calling and ability to impart the life-changing power of the Gospel? How could the Church live anywhere else than at the convergence of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove? As unthinkable as it seems, this was already emerging as a problem during the life of the apostle Paul. He foresaw what was coming and in II Timothy 3:1-5 he warned the young pastor Timothy about the dangers:

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, *having a form of godliness but denying its power.* And from such people turn away! (NKJV, emphasis mine)

This passage is not talking about unbelievers. Paul never tells us to stay away from unbelievers because of their sin.²⁰ We are to be the influence of salt and light upon them. But when these sinful attitudes and practices emerge among people who call themselves Christians, Paul commands us to turn away from them! Strong medicine for a deadly disease! The “Christians” whom Paul foresees here will be caught up in the behavioral patterns of the culture that surrounds them. Does that sound familiar? How would the apostle Paul respond to the statistics cited in chapter one of this book? Church member, would the church you attend receive this message from Paul if he were alive today? Pastor, would the church you lead receive this powerful rebuke from the aged apostle if he visited your services?

But this problem of accommodation to the cultural sins did not begin in the twentieth century. Its seeds were already present before the apostles themselves were dead. And these seeds sprouted and grew already in the second and third centuries of the history of the Church. They bore the fruit of corruption that continues to be bitter to the taste of the zealous Christian who lives at the convergence of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove, but their fruit is sweet to the compromised “Christian” in every age of the Church.

As the first century melted into the beginning of the second, two powers began to emerge which

²⁰ See I Corinthians 5:9-13 for a comparative study on this.

drew the Church away from living at the convergence of the powers of the Cross and the Dove. It took decades and even centuries for them to supplant the original truth of Acts 1 and 2, but their march forward was inexorable, fueled by the work of Christians who did not listen to Jesus' words to Peter in Matthew 16, but allowed themselves to become "mindful of the ways of men." These two are: ecclesiastical power and intellectual power.

These two powers many times maintain their reign by appearing to be arrayed against each other, but in reality, they are working for the same goal. They wish to divide the power of the Cross from the power of the Dove. They wish to establish their own convergence as the place where Christians should live, and unfortunately, they have been highly successful.

Ecclesiastical Power

The ecclesiastical power emerges quite innocently in the words of a man who himself lived at the convergence of the powers of the Cross and the Dove- Ignatius of Antioch. He was a charismatically gifted person himself who died as a martyr. He was a Christian prophet as well as being a bishop (overseer of a number of churches).²¹ His Letter to the Philadelphians, written in the first twenty years of the second century, contains the following statement, which later, in the absence of the Cross-Dove convergence, became a rallying cry for the power of the bishop over the local church:

While I was among you, I cried out, I was speaking with a loud voice, God's voice, "Pay attention to the bishop, to the presbytery and deacons." And some were suspecting that I said these things as one who had prior information about a division which certain people had caused, but he for whom I am in bonds is my witness that I did not get this information from any man. But the Spirit proclaimed aloud, saying, "Do nothing without the bishop; keep your flesh as the temple of God; love unity; flee divisions; be imitators of Jesus as he is of his Father."²²

This may very well be the report of a prophetic utterance by a bishop, as Kydd asserts, but it also became a foundation for the assertion of the power of the bishop (ecclesiastical power) in the decades and centuries that followed. This happened in spite of the pure life and intentions of Ignatius himself. Even the best of intentions can be and are corrupted by people who are "mindful of the things of men." In the wars of words against the heretics that followed the lifetime of Ignatius, the bishop came to be viewed as the bastion and bulwark of the truth. Instead of keeping their eyes and hearts on the Cross and the Dove,

²¹ Ronald A. N. Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984) 15.

²² Quoted in Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts...* 16.

instead of staying in prayer and supplication and remaining steadfast in the apostles' teaching, the Christians of the second, third and fourth centuries became absorbed in questions of apostolic succession to put down rival groups. In the fourth century, the emerging ecclesiastical power of the bishops was joined to the political power of official Roman acceptance. The dried morsel of apostolic teaching on the pages of the Bible had to sustain a Church that for centuries could not heal the sick, cast out demons or raise the dead. Yet the major contention of every group was that they were the true heirs to the apostles of the book of Acts. This disunity and spirit of competition is the outcome of ecclesiastical power, when it is not grounded in the Biblical mandates of love, purity, and simplicity, and power, which is most of the time.

Intellectual Power

The assertion of intellectual power in Christianity also begins innocently. The people who laid the foundation for an intellectual Christianity did not do so with evil intent. In fact, they were doing the work of God. The problem is that they were doing it with their eyes on the "things of man." One of the big problems that the Church faced in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries was that of heresy. When people who claimed to be Christians taught contrary to the apostolic doctrine, the leaders of the church felt it necessary to defend the correct doctrine by refuting the heretics. During the lifetimes of the apostles the problem of false doctrine was present, but the powerful authority that lodged in the apostles answered it. This authority was upon them as a result of their living at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. When the leaders in the Church no longer lived at this intersection, it was necessary to call upon a different authority, because they no longer possessed the apostolic authority that Jesus had delivered to the Church.

The most notable heresy of the second century was Gnosticism. Its foundational teachings are based on the teachings of Plato, the Greek philosopher. He taught that matter is evil and spirit is good. Therefore, the human body is evil, because it is made of matter, and the human spirit is good, because it is (or can be) detached from matter. The Gnostics keyed in on an interesting character in Plato's writings named Demiurge. In the Gnostic system of belief, Demiurge was the creator god. Because he had involved himself with matter, he was viewed as an inferior god. The high god was Jesus, who was

perfected spirit. Thus the Gnostics taught that Christians were higher than the god who created them, because they could be free from the corruption of matter (human bodies). They also taught that when Jesus was on the earth, He was divine, but only appeared to be human. In their view, this protected Jesus from the close association with matter, which corrupted Demiurge. Jesus in this form, then, can be the high god, above Demiurge. The great problem with this teaching is that it denied the humanity of Jesus, and scripture makes it plain that Jesus was human and divine.²³ This was obviously the imposition of a philosophical system upon Biblical teaching, and it was a serious distortion of that teaching. But the error was not obvious to the Gnostics, and it was necessary to refute them.

The Church Father Irenaeus arose in these times and became a champion of the correct teaching that Jesus was divine and human. But he found it necessary to do so from the *authority of intellectual persuasion*, not demonstration of the Spirit and power. The church began to depend on intellectual authority more than the authority that comes by living at the intersection of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove. In the end, the Gnostics were defeated, which is a good thing. But the way they were defeated meant that Christianity would travel a path never designed for it by Jesus. In Irenaeus' day the Church was not walking in the authority of humility, self-denial, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Another authority was substituted, intellectual and rhetorical skill. Christianity was defended, but this was something Jesus never practiced or taught. A defended Christ is different from a demonstrated Christ.

The demonstrated Christ of the apostles became the defended Christ of the Church Fathers. It's nice to have a defended Christ, but as the records of those times make clear, miracles and the power of the Spirit were on the decline. This defended Christ did less and less miracles, fewer and fewer healings, and an increasingly smaller number of deliverances from demons, but he eventually became a Christ of whom a Christian could be proud. Even in martyrdom, which we would think is the highest form of self-denial, Christians became proud. Some even sought martyrdom by exposing themselves to the Roman authorities as Christians, because they believed that by this action they would have a better place in the coming Kingdom of God.

In the midst of this controversy, Tertullian rose up as a leader in the Church. He was active in the

²³ Scriptures that show Jesus' humanity: Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15. Scriptures which show Jesus' deity: John 1:1; 8:58; Revelation 1:8.

battle against the Gnostics, and effectively refuted them. But he is famous for a statement that shows the inability of human philosophy and logic to defend the truth of God:

What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem?
What between the Academy and the Church?
What between heretics and Christians?²⁴

In this statement, Athens symbolically represents the intellectual world of ancient Greece. Jerusalem represents the spiritual world of the apostles and the book of Acts.

Unfortunately, this statement has been much quoted and little heeded. Athens came to have too much to do with Jerusalem. The slow and gradual exchange of the authority of Jerusalem for the authority of Athens is clear as we examine the third and fourth centuries. Many sincere and Godly people wrote and taught in those times, but sincerity alone is no defense against the loss of the authority of humility, self-denial, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Probably the most pivotal figure in this whole discussion is the Church Father Augustine. He lived at the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth. He is probably the closest example of a systematic theologian we have in the ancient world. His book, *The City of God*, projected a well-thought-out vision of Christianity in Biblical and philosophical perspective. But that philosophic perspective is exactly the problem. The Kingdom of God, in his view, was to be established in this Age, by a church with an orientation to this world. Such a church can defend God and Christ intellectually, but it cannot demonstrate Him in living apostolic power.

The Division of the Cross and the Dove in our Day

The ancient errors of the Church Fathers that we have named above are still with us today. One of our main problems is the religious impulse of “Christianity” to arise to the defense of Christ. In the USA we have defended Christ until many unbelievers will no longer listen to us. We have used the Constitution and the courts to do this. But Jesus did not ask us to *defend* Him, He asked us to *demonstrate* Him. When the church began defending Jesus, it slid into the trap of becoming a religious movement with a particular set of teachings and practices. That is why Christianity is studied as one of

²⁴ Quoted in Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983) 40.

the great religions of the world, along with Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. on many university campuses today. As long as “Christianity,” with its defended Christ, remains one of the great religions of the world, it will never accomplish its mission of bringing God’s love, with conversion, holiness, and power of the Dove to every person on this planet. This religious practice of defending Jesus has become a substitute for living at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove.

The other power that draws people away from the convergence is dependence on the intellectual. As we saw above, the church chose this path early in its history. By doing so, Christianity became another thought-form or philosophy in the minds of many. This problem is still with us today. During the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, the prowess of the human mind has been unleashed upon problems and challenges that we face in our human existence. Many of these challenges have been met, many of these problems solved. Life in our modern and post-modern world is better than it was for centuries before. Who would want to go back to scrubbing their clothes on a washboard after they had used a washing machine? Who would walk to distant cities when cars are available? However, the comfort and ease of life that the intellectual power has brought also deceives us. We readily carry its ability over into areas where it does not belong. If intellectual activity can give us a better automobile, surely it can also give us a better Christianity, right? Wrong, the *discovery* that comes from human intellect can never equal the *revelation* that comes from God. You need to clearly understand the difference. The blurring of this difference has diffused the power of Christianity, which is a simple convergence of the Cross and the Dove. In many ways, this power of the mind has come into the Church of the modern times, especially in higher criticism of the Bible. Jesus did not tell us to figure it all out with postulates and theorems. He told us to trust Him and love people. He told us to live and proclaim a Gospel that really does not make sense to unbelievers (I Corinthians 1:18). When we force it to “make sense” to pagans and carnal Christians, we weaken its offense to the human intellect. But when this message stands in its simplicity and offense to human sophistication, people are drawn because the real Jesus is being lifted up.

Finally, because in the “modern and improved” church we do not demonstrate Jesus with power, we find ourselves needing to draw people to Jesus. We would rather spend vast sums of money to attend conferences on church growth or new trends in evangelism than to fall on our faces and cry out to

God in desperate intercessory prayer. Jesus never told us to draw people to Him. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus did tell us to lift Him up, and that He would draw all people unto Himself. When we decide to draw people to Jesus, we drive a wedge between the power of the Cross and the Power of the Dove. Then they do not converge, and we bring people into a rationalized, anemic form of Christianity that *denies the power of God!*

If you are a person who is tired of this rationalized, anemic Christianity, there is something you must do. Fall on your face before God in prayer, and ask Him to change your heart. Ask Him for His fire to burn out the complacency, the religious attainment, and the pride in knowledge. You will die, but this is a good thing, because Jesus loves to raise people from the dead. When you are raised from the dead, you will never be satisfied with lukewarm, sin-tolerating "Christianity." You will press in to the things of God until you live at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. If you want this, kneel where you are and pray this prayer: "Father, I desire the fullness of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in my life. I confess to you that I have defended Jesus when He desires to be demonstrated. I have let religious structures push out the joy of receiving your revelation. I wish to die to these sins. I ask for the blood of Jesus to cleanse me. Raise me from the dead to live at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name, Amen!"

In the terms introduced in this section, the need for revival becomes clear. Revival is needed wherever and whenever the ecclesiastical and intellectual powers of the Church have established their convergence and have divided the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove from each other. Revival occurs when the reign of the convergence of ecclesiastical and intellectual power in the *status quo* of religious comfort is challenged by the restoration of the convergence of the powers of the Cross and the Dove.

Chapter 3- The Cross and Jesus' Joy

In this chapter of the book we will set forth the Biblical understanding of the power of the Cross.

We will use a scripture passage as the support for the message in each section. Other scriptures will be used as needed to support the main one. Each of these sections will set forth a key issue of the Cross' power.

I Corinthians 1:18-31

Even a surface reading of this passage of scripture shows that something very unusual is being set forth here. The apostle Paul declares to a church ripped apart by divisions, immorality, greed, and other problems that: "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1:18 NKJV). Boiled down to its essentials for the church, the verse says: "*for Christians, the cross is the power of God*" (my paraphrase). The parallels between the church of Corinth, with its immorality, lawsuits, etc., and the church in the USA today should be noticed (cp. the statistics in chapter 1). If the Corinthian church needed the message of the cross in Paul's day,²⁵ it is needed at least as much by the church in our day.

In the terminology we discovered in chapter one, we could readily call the Corinthian Christians "sons of the Dove." In I Corinthians 1:5 Paul says of them, "you were enriched by Him in all utterance and all knowledge." And in verse 7 he says, "...you come short in no gift..." The Corinthian church was certainly well endowed with spiritual gifts and manifestations. They were the recipients of revelations from God. But like Peter in Matthew 16, they had managed to leave out the cross. And like Peter in Matthew 16, they needed the rebuke of Jesus. They got it from His apostle-Paul.

We have the same problem in the church of today. We are "sons of the Dove." We have received revelation from God, but we are not holy and we are not filled with the power of God. It is this challenging power of the cross that is lacking in the church of our times. We do not like to have our worldviews and our intellectual and/or religious structures of reality turned upside down. But that is exactly what the cross does every time its true power is unleashed. This is why the cross is foolishness

²⁵ In chapters 3 and 4 of I Cor, Paul addresses the problem of divisions, in chapter 5, immorality as fornication, in chapter 6, lawsuits, in chapter 7 issues of marriage and celibacy, in chapters 8-10, idol-meat and idol temples, chapters 12-14 spiritual gifts, chapter 15, the Resurrection. Each of these subjects was a problem of practice or teaching in the Corinthian church.

to those who are perishing. But the problem is far worse *when the cross is nonsense to the church!* Yet that is exactly where the Corinthian church was at then, and unfortunately, where much of the modern day church is, too.

Before we proceed further in I Corinthians 1, we need to examine two scriptures that will help us understand that there is actually a joy associated with the power of the cross. In Hebrews 12, verse 2, the Bible says, "looking unto Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (RSV). There was a joy set before Jesus that was not the joy of conquest or the exercise of superior force, even though Jesus, as God himself, was superior in every way to Satan, demons, the crowd at His trial, and Pilate, the Roman governor. Jesus could not be true to his own teaching and receive joy in this way. Consider Matthew 5:11,12:

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. *Rejoice and be exceedingly glad*, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you (NKJV).

Rejoice in persecution?! This teaching is certainly against the *status quo* understanding of the times Jesus lived in and of ours. Vast resources are being expended by Christian organizations right now to prevent believers around the world from ever having to be persecuted, but Jesus said to rejoice when this happens. When a Christian suffers persecution for the cause of Christ, it brings into being a heavenly reward that cannot even be understood on the earth. Jesus apparently was operating with a different framework than what we are used to.

In Luke chapter 10 we also find Jesus rejoicing, and it helps our understanding of the passage in Hebrews. In this chapter, Jesus sent out the 70 disciples to announce the presence of the Kingdom of God, and to demonstrate it by healing the sick. When they returned, we find that not only were they successful, they were also able to cast out demons, and in this they rejoiced (v. 17). Jesus instructed them that proper rejoicing is not to be done over the subjection of demons, but rather in the fact that their names are written in heaven. Thus Jesus again focused the point of joy and rejoicing to heaven, above and beyond this life on earth. But in verse 21 we find what made Jesus rejoice while he was on the earth:

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even

so, Father for so it seemed good in your sight" (NKJV).

*This is what it takes to make Jesus rejoice?! That "babies"²⁶ are moving in the power of God, driving out demons, healing the sick, advancing the Kingdom of God, while the wise and prudent have these things hidden from them?! Yes, yes, and a thousand times yes!! Dear reader, would you take a moment to let the Holy Spirit examine you on the inside? Would you ask yourself what makes you rejoice? Are they the same things that made Jesus rejoice? Or are they cars and houses and lands, or success in ministry, and a thousand other things that are legitimate in their proper places, but they are not for our rejoicing, unless our hearts are in different place than Jesus' heart was? Jesus rejoiced in *people*. Little people, people who were insignificant in the eyes of the world of that day. By rejoicing this way, Jesus anticipated the joy he would ultimately receive when he completed the work of the cross.*

The Cross Reverses the Intellectual World

The power of the cross is really a strange kind of power because it does the opposite of what we normally expect power to do. For instance, if we have intellectual power, we are able to exercise that power to create arguments and logical systems that dismantle the arguments and logical systems of our opponents. Then we are able to establish our triumph over them. If we do this repeatedly with success, we will attract a following and gain a name for ourselves. The apostle Paul was familiar with the power of the leading philosophies of his day, having encountered their representatives on his second missionary journey in the city of Athens.

Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection (Acts 17:18 NKJV).

When Paul wrote this first letter to the Corinthians about 5 years later, he clearly warned them about this very issue. The power of the cross is not the power of logical persuasiveness or of systems of philosophy.

The reversing power of the cross opposes the Gentile structures of knowledge and wisdom with *foolishness*.

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and *folly to Gentiles*, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the

²⁶ Jesus uses the word as a metaphor here to show the inexperience and incompetence of his disciples in the view of the religious leaders of his day.

power of God, and the wisdom of God (I Cor 1:22-24 RSV emphasis mine).

The Greek word used here is moria, from which we get our English word moron. Its meaning is "foolishness, generally of worldly wisdom."²⁷ To anyone in the Gentile world of Paul's day it was foolishness to assert that a crucified person could save. It would be like saying that in order to be saved, you must believe in a person who was sent to the electric chair. How would that message be received in the respectable churches of the USA? About 100 years earlier, in 63 BC, the Roman orator Cicero had made a famous speech against the brutal nature of the cross. He said:

If we are to be threatened with death, then we want to die in freedom; let the executioner, the shrouding of the head and the very name of the cross be banished from the body and life of Roman citizens, from their thoughts, eyes, and ears.²⁸

These words made such an impact that the Roman Senate soon afterward enacted legislation that banned the crucifixion of Roman citizens. This is why Jesus could be crucified and Paul could not, rather he died by beheading in a Roman prison. Thus crucifixion was viewed as the worst kind of death in the Roman Empire. Slaves and rebellious revolutionaries were killed on crosses. Even the worst murderer could not be crucified if he were a Roman citizen. So you can see why Gentiles in Paul's day viewed the message about Jesus as foolishness. But it is the power of this foolishness with which we are concerned. This is the power that is unleashed through suffering, pain, and anguish. It is really the power of powerlessness. When Jesus died on the cross, he willingly put himself in a position where he had no power. Even though He was God the Son, even though he could have called down many angels to save Him from death, He knew the power of the cross could not be established that way. He had to go through the trial, the whipping, and the torture of the nails and the crown of thorns in a body of flesh just like ours. Powerless by choice! Powerless, not for himself, but for you! Powerless in a death that established power on a different foundation.

The challenge of this teaching is very clear. If you call yourself a Christian and are enmeshed in a power system outside the cross, you are living an unacceptable contradiction.²⁹ If the economic power of your culture overrides the power of the cross, you have denied the cross' foolishness. If you have

²⁷ Bauer, *Lexicon*, 531.

²⁸ Quoted in Han-Ruedi Weber, *The Cross: Tradition and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 1.

²⁹ See David Nichols, *Christianity Without the Cross* (Minneapolis: Heart of the Father Ministries, 2000) 9-15.

been highly educated and have adopted intellectual and/or logical systems that debase the power of the cross you have denied the foolishness that is necessary to save you. The call to the power of the Cross is a radical call to live in the world while being dead to it (Galatians 6:14).

The Cross Reverses the Religious World

There is another realm of human life that is severely challenged by the power of the cross. The religious realm is one that is commonly viewed as being exempt from this kind of challenge. Yet Jesus' worst struggles in His days here on the earth were not with sinners but with religious people.³⁰ Thus it should not surprise us that when He died on the cross, establishing the cross' power, its power was arrayed against many of the religious sensibilities of that day.

We saw above that the power of the cross combats human wisdom and knowledge with foolishness, but how does the power of the cross combat religion and religious pride? The traditional answer is that Christianity has grander schemes of salvation and greater ideas about God than any religious movement that went before it. This is true, but it is not the way the power of the cross overcomes the power of religion. Paul lays out the strange character of the cross' power against religious pride and tradition in I Corinthians chapter one. In verses 22-24 he says:

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a *stumbling-block to Jews* and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (RSV emphasis mine).

The Greek word that is rendered stumbling-block here is skandalon. It means “stumbling block, that which causes revulsion, a trap or snare.”³¹ It is the source word from which we derive our English word scandal, although the meaning of the Greek word is stronger. When Paul says, “the Jews request a sign,” he is speaking from his own personal experience and from his long history in Judaism as a Pharisee and rabbi himself. Several times in the Gospels Jesus was asked for a sign to prove his authority. Even though Jesus did perform many signs out of his compassion and love for the people, he

³⁰ See Matthew 9:10-13; 12:9-14; 23:1-36 among many other passages in the Gospels where Jesus was in conflict with the Pharisees. The Pharisees were the leading group of teachers and scholarly religious authorities of that day. See Matthew 22:23-40 among other passages where Jesus is in conflict with the Sadducees. The Sadducees were a group of religious leaders in Judaism who oversaw the political relationship with the Romans and the service of God in the Temple.

³¹ Bauer, *Lexicon*, 753.

did not do them on demand to satisfy religious curiosity. But the skandalon is certainly as repulsive to the Jews as the moria is to the Gentiles. Jesus' death on the cross is revolting to the Jews. The negative attitude of Jewish people to the cross is implied in these words of the historian Josephus:

(Speaking of the Roman governor Felix) The number of robbers he had crucified and of inhabitants whose connections with the robbers could be proved and who were similarly punished rose to terrible proportions.³²

The robbers in this quote are the Jewish revolutionaries who rebelled against Roman rule and fought in the ongoing guerrilla warfare in Judea in Paul's day. To associate crosses with salvation was an abhorrent idea to the Jews. Yet this was the message of Christians from the very first, that it is the cross of Christ and the blood shed there that saves. Paul wants to make it clear to the Corinthians that the religious advantages of the Jews, which are many,³³ must meet the scandalizing power of the cross. The cross opposes our human attempts to explain God and justify ourselves, even when there is a basis in God's revelation, the OT. In other words, the Jewish person who desires to be saved must be willing to be humbled and contrite before God, just like Jesus was.

It is verse 25 in I Corinthians chapter 1 that really makes clear the issue of the cross' power. "Because the foolishness of God (the message of the death of the cross) is wiser than men, and the weakness of God (Christ crucified) is stronger than men" (NKJV my parentheses). When we see Jesus on the cross, we see God at his weakest and most foolish moment. And *it is there*, not when he created the world, not when he drowned Pharaoh's army in the sea, not when the walls of Jericho fell, but on the repulsive, offensive cross that God was wiser than men, and stronger than men. Without the cross, you will be mindful of the ways of men like Peter (Matthew 16:23), but with the cross, in humiliation and offense, you will be in a stronger power. How about you, dear reader, are you ready for your religious impulses and accomplishments to be placed on the cross? They will need to die there. If you are ready, say this prayer; do it now:

Father, I bring my religious pride out into the open where it can be seen. I recognize it as sin before you. I ask you to crucify the religious impulse in me that puffs me up in pride and makes me feel superior to others. I confess it as sin before you and I ask you to wash me in the blood of Jesus. I now forsake my religious outward appearances and hypocrisies. I take the cross of

³² Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*

³³ See Romans chapter 2.

Christ as the power of God against all sin, even mine. Thank you; Father, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Take some time to let the presence of God come over you right now. He wants to enclose you in His love. His love for you is greater than any sin you have committed against Him, but your sin and your flesh, which enjoys sin, must die at the cross. This is really the point of examining the truths of the cross, not to gain more intellectual understanding of it, but to let it confront your sinfulness, with the love and mercy of God washing over you. Do not resist, let the love and mercy of the Father come over you now.

The Status of the Called People

With the true nature of the power of the cross in place, we can now be taught what the people of God are like. In our natural fleshly selves, we like to think of ourselves as wise and strong, whether physically, mentally, socially, or in other ways. We like to have rich, distinguished, well-placed people come to our churches, don't we? Jesus himself quoted Isaiah 61 when he began his ministry to make it clear he came *to preach to the poor*. Surely Jesus was confused about this, right? If you want your movement to succeed, you preach to the rich and powerful, so that they will advance your cause. But Paul says (in agreement with the teaching and example of Jesus) that not many wise, or mighty, or noble people are called. All those fleshly advantages, *and the desire for them* must be rooted out of us by the "power" of the Cross. God's choice is to shame the wise things of the world with foolish things, and to shame the mighty things of the world with weak things (verse 27). This is not the human way of establishing greatness, but it is God's way, and you and I will either conform to this strange power of the cross or continue to accomplish tasks and achieve recognition through might and human wisdom. Are you truly a called person? Then live and move in agreement with the power of the cross, which made it possible for you to be called in the first place.

Paul continues in this passage, and things get worse for the flesh. God has chosen "base things" and despised things and "things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are." This last one is bad news for the philosophers, because in their realm of thought "not-being things" do not bring down "being things."³⁴ Paul is asserting here that the very structures of human logical thought must be subject to the death-dealing power of the cross.

The reason for all this is given in verse 29. The way of the cross will ensure that God gets the

³⁴ My literal translation of Greek words in I Corinthians 1:28.

glory. Human flesh cannot receive glory in His presence. In fact, the only thing that can happen to human flesh in the manifested presence of God is that it gets burned!³⁵ If human flesh is receiving the glory, if the names of people and their reputations are being exalted, you are not in the presence of God, but in some other presence. This is the answer to the question, "why the cross?" After all the mental and physical abilities God gave to mankind in the creation, we constantly turned the glory to ourselves. After all the revelation that God gave to the nation of Israel, they constantly turned the glory to themselves. They are not alone in this. Religious systems across the world are able to succeed because they let people get glory for themselves. But the cross stands alone in human history and experience. Here in this presence, all other glories have been abandoned. The flesh must die. When it does, the human being in whom it died is able *to glorify God.*

All of this is extremely relevant to the subject of revival. It is difficult to move into true revival. This is true because the way of the cross is difficult. If it is not difficult it is not the way of the cross. In revival, people repent and there is a heightened awareness of the presence of God, because in repentance, people have died to the love of sin. They become aware of the awesome power of the love of God and the price of the delivery of that love. That price is the death of God the Son, Jesus, on the cross. If revival comes in by means of the cross, with repentance, humility, lowness, we should not be surprised that revival offends religious sensitivities. It is no more or less than a function of the cross itself. We should not be surprised that intellectual people and structures rise up against revival when it advances by the cross, for true wisdom is only in this crucified Messiah, Jesus.

³⁵ Tommy Tenney, *The God-Chasers* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1998) 55-57.

Chapter 4- You're Out of Your Mind!

How many times have you heard someone speak out these words? Sometimes they are used as a joking expression of disagreement. Other times, however, they are used seriously to convey to someone that their expression or message has gone too far. It does not make sense, or it is beyond the boundaries of normal human thought and practice. Being out of one's mind is not a condition that anyone would choose in the normal flow of human events. But when we take the message of the NT seriously, we find that quite often we are told that we must get out of our minds, at least as our normal human orientation to life and culture. In fact, the statistics presented in chapter 1 are evidence that many people who call themselves Christians have not gotten out of their minds, when Jesus has called them to do exactly that. They are in their minds, in fact, they are imprisoned there, unable to live a life of self-denial and total consecration unto God. Be warned in advance: this chapter is a call to get out of *your* mind, and to get into *the mind of Christ!*

I have spent a goodly portion of my life as a Bible College professor and academic dean. I have an earned Ph.D. in New Testament Studies. With all of this intellectual attainment, I spent much of my time trying to get people *into their minds*. I never really understood why doing more and more of this intellectual activity did not make people righteous, and it did not make them holy. I was doing all the right things, I was teaching correctly, according to the doctrine of my denomination, but something was missing. The more I accomplished intellectually, the prouder I got. As I taught and caused my students to get into their minds, some of them got prouder. I had ignored Paul's words in I Corinthians 8:1: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (my translation). Then one day in May of 1997, Jesus' presence came into my car on a lonely road in North Dakota. I had been listening to Matthew 23 on tape- Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees. I was weeping, and Jesus asked me a question, "Are you a Pharisee?" I didn't answer Him then, because it was too tough to face. I wept a long time. Two weeks later I visited a church where a major revival was taking place. The preaching was hot against pride and sin. I felt conviction like I did when I first got saved at the age of seven. I ran to the mercy seat and wept hot tears into that carpet. I repented of real sins that were coming up into my mind by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus forgave me, and washed me, and *took me out of my mind*. You see, my problem as a Christian leader was that I was in *my mind*, not the mind of Christ.

In I Corinthians chapter two, the apostle Paul addressed the Corinthian church, many of whom seemed to be “sons of the Dove” like Peter in Matthew 16. They received revelation from God by the Spirit, and were behind in no gift (1:7). But they were in their own human minds, being “being mindful of the things of men.” I’m sure that Paul’s address to them was shocking as they read it, because he was telling them that he was out of his mind, both when he planted the church there originally, and as he wrote this epistle.

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (I Corinthians 2:1-5 NKJV).

Paul was apparently persuaded that the only solution to the Corinthians’ many problems was a radical call to the power of the cross. If Paul had been attempting to be culturally relevant to the Corinthians, he *would have come* with “excellence of speech and wisdom.” After all, that is what the Corinthians were used to hearing. They lived just a few miles south of Athens, the greatest intellectual center of that day. The traveling philosophers regularly passed through Corinth, attempting to win disciples by their logical and persuasive words.³⁶ But instead of a culturally sensitive approach, Paul says he determined to know only the crucified Christ. In other words, Paul was telling the Corinthians that he was out of his mind, because that is likely what most of them thought when they heard this stern reminder of Paul’s original message. Wonderful things happen when Christians get out of *their* minds: churches are planted, the power of the Spirit is demonstrated, and more people get saved. *If they get far enough out of their minds, revival can come, as well!!*

Interestingly enough, Paul draws a sharp contrast between the wisdom of humans and the wisdom of God. It is the wisdom of God, based on the cross alone, which enables the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Here in verse 4 we are certainly discovering a *convergence of the cross and the Dove!* But to live at that convergence, Paul is telling the Corinthians, you must set aside the human wisdom of your culture, and embrace God’s wisdom, which shows the inadequacies of these others, and appears to them as foolishness (1 Cor 1:18).

³⁶ Abraham Malherbe, *Paul and the Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1989).

After stating that the cross is the basis of everything in Christianity, Paul goes on to speak of the revelation of the Spirit. Using a quote from Isaiah 64:4 and 65:17, Paul establishes the inability of human beings to receive the knowledge and wisdom of God on their own:

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

In other words, the things of God's good pleasure for His people are not humanly knowable, they must come by *revelation*. That is exactly what Paul says in the next verse.

But God has *revealed* them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God (I Corinthians 2:10 NKJV).

It is the Spirit of God alone who is qualified to make known to us the things of God. No human structure or delivery system is sufficient in itself.

There are two human approaches to knowledge and wisdom that we are accustomed to in our modern culture. The first one is probability. During the period of history called the Renaissance, and later during the Enlightenment, philosophers became concerned with the issue of possibility vs. probability. They raised a critique of the previous centuries which stated that thinking and living only in the realm of possibility was pre-critical or undeveloped thinking. The better way, according to the philosophers, was to establish probability. Many famous philosophers of the period were involved in this development of thought. Among them were Spinoza, Newton, Leibnitz, and Descartes. It is in this time period that the foundations of the modern scientific method were laid. The natural world was governed by laws, as illustrated by the famous story of the apple falling on Newton's head, and his discovery of the law of gravity. Many such discoveries were made during these centuries. But Descartes is the man who is usually credited with the founding of the deductive method of reasoning and discovery of truth. His famous *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am) is still a fundamental insight in philosophical reasoning although centuries have gone by. But when Descartes put thinking first, he created a shift in the basis of the delivery of truth to human beings. If thinking is the basis for my being, then I had better be thinking correctly, or my being/existence is jeopardized. Thus we have highly exalted the power of critical reasoning skills in our Western culture. But the framers of these methods themselves would admit that their goal is to establish probability. Certainty is not available to practitioners of these methods. This is why scientific theories must be constantly re-criticized. Many ideas that were accepted as truths have

been later rejected because further scrutiny has discredited them. But notice this truth please: *no matter how much probability you establish, it never changes to certainty without faith.* Ultimately, you must believe in something for it to have certainty to you. But science itself, if it is true to its own methods, cannot deliver certainty.

Unfortunately, many or most people who live in Western cultures have conveniently blurred the difference between probability and certainty. The influence of the scientific method has been so strong that we consciously or unconsciously carry over its power into realms where only certainty is proper. After all, it is science that has given us all these modern conveniences that make life so comfortable for us. It is science that has taken us to the moon and back. This method must be able to deliver truth, right? Yes, but the truth of probability and the truth of certainty are two different things. Paul says in I Corinthians 2:14:

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (NKJV).

In the natural realm, the truth of probability is an advance over the truth of possibility. That which is probable will deliver better results than that which is merely possible. Put yourself back in time before the invention of the internal combustion engine and the automobile. If someone said to you that gasoline or oil could make a carriage with wheels move down a road to a destination fifty miles away, it would be nothing more than a possibility. Yes, it is possible, but will it ever happen? It is also possible that the moon is made of green cheese. Most people doubted it, some even laughed. But when Henry Ford and others brought the internal combustion engine together with the horseless carriage, they utilized the principles of scientific probability. And now, it is much better to drive a car down the road than to walk or drive a team of horses for fifty miles. But in spite of all this probability, we have not come to certainty, have we? Cars break down sometimes. It is probable that you will get to your destination fifty miles away when you take off in your car, but it is not certain. And for all their claims to the contrary, Ford, Chev, and Chrysler cannot make it certain. And for those of you with foreign cars, neither can Honda or Isuzu or BMW. But probability puts our minds in control; no one wants to be out of his or her mind, right? There is, however, a realm of truth that is beyond the reach of probability. It is the truth of certainty in the revelation of God. The confusion between these two is the reason why it is so hard to believe God for

healing, or deliverance, or daily provision in Western modernized cultures. Human approaches to truth have changed and continue to change, but the truth God wants to reveal does not change, and the way he wants to deliver it does not change, either. He reveals the wisdom of a crucified Messiah. To believe this, you must suspend your desire for the probable, because the cross and its saving outcome defy probability. On the day Jesus hung on the Cross outside Jerusalem, the probability of this event being the salvation of humankind seemed to be zero. Even after Jesus rose from the dead, the message of the cross faced all the best possibilities and probabilities of its day. It was denounced as foolishness. People who believed it were “out of their minds.” The same is true today, when it seems that we have much more to lose. But the revelation of the Spirit today makes Jesus and his cross clear, plain, and *certain*.

The second approach to knowledge and wisdom that has become widely used and recognized as powerful is the giving of opinions. Everyone has opinions, of course, so there must be a hierarchy of opinions. Your opinion does not carry more weight than mine unless you are an “expert” in the subject under discussion. If you do not agree with your doctor’s prognosis, what do you do? You seek a *second opinion* from a person who is either a peer or higher in rank of expertise than the first doctor. This giving of expert opinion is so widespread through our culture that it would be hard to conceive of the disciplines of medicine, law, economics, political science, and many others without it. This practice of opinion-giving is a function of the truth of probability described above. We hope that the opinion of the better qualified expert will give us a higher probability of truth. In the natural realm, this is a proper thing to do. Unfortunately, the practice of opinion-giving has spilled over into the church! Pastors and evangelists have become “holy opinion-givers” to a body of disinterested probability seekers. There is a big problem with this. The prophets, apostles, and Jesus Himself, rarely gave opinions in the Bible. In fact, the authority of the Word of God comes from its certainty, not from probability. Throughout the Bible, we are told to believe in things we can’t see, to trust God for things that seem impossible. We are told that healing of the body and of the soul are available through faith in Christ. And we are told that Christ’s cross is the focal point of the revelation of wisdom!! These revelations are acquired by faith, and they lead to certainty. We cannot stay in our probability-craving, opinion-seeking minds and still have the truth of the wisdom of the cross of Christ! If we do, we will be part of the statistical nightmare described in

chapter one. But what will happen if you get out of your mind?

There is a mind better than the mind of Spinoza, Descartes, and Newton. This mind is better than the minds of the qualified opinion-givers of our day. If you are willing to get out of your mind (and theirs) you do not have to be insane! You can be in *the mind of Christ!* Paul says in I Corinthians 2:16:

For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the *mind of Christ* (NKJV).

If you are concerned about getting out of your mind, relax. The mind of Christ is better than your natural human mind. Christ, with His crucified approach to everything, wants you to have His mind instead of your own. With His mind fully in place in you, you will want to serve instead of being served. You will want to lower yourself so others will be exalted. You will think realistically about yourself and highly of others. And he will change your inner orientation so that you will actually enjoy these actions of ministry!

In Philippians 2:5-7 Paul says:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

This command is ignored by many Christians who do not wish to have the power of the Cross arrayed against their pride and self-serving ways. But Jesus is the ultimate example. We do not need to trouble ourselves with comparisons amongst ourselves. They are fruitless. Jesus is the standard of comparison. The mind of Christ was set to serving and dying. Ours must be, too.

Another way we can know the nature of a person’s mind is by the way they relate to time. There are Christians who live in the past. They believe the best things of God have already happened, maybe in past revivals or in Scripture itself. There are other Christians who live in the future. They believe that the past and present are hopeless, so they escape to the future to avoid the responsibility of dispensing the power of God in the present.

The account of Jesus’ interaction with Martha and Mary in John 11 shows this truth. To begin with, Jesus delayed coming to Bethany even though He knew Lazarus was sick (John 11:6). Jesus knew Lazarus was dead before He got to Bethany (John 11:11,15). Martha came to Jesus with a strong orientation to the past. She said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” Not only

was she living in the past, she was blaming Jesus for Lazarus' death, since she believed Jesus could have healed him. This removal of the power of God to stand at a distance is a function of the natural human mind. But Jesus says, "Your brother will rise again." Now Martha must decide between the present and the future. She says, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection of the last day." First a delay by reference to the past and now a further delay by escape to the future! But Jesus proclaims His power and authority in the present when He says: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." Jesus' mind was set to act on the reality of the Kingdom of God in the present. Even Mary, the one who sat at Jesus' feet, was caught in a faith that was tied to the past. She said in John 11:32, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." After this Jesus begins to exhibit compassion through weeping and groaning. The mind of Jesus was set to bring the power of God into the present. This spectacular miracle, raising the dead, occurred because Jesus would not be distracted to the past or the future, even by people who believed in Him. Jesus' mind was set to interject the power of God into the present, and to radically change it. The minds of Martha and Mary were set to delay and postpone the power of the Kingdom of God. Which of these minds is most like yours? Jesus' or that of Martha and Mary?

Now that the Kingdom of God has been declared to be at hand (Matthew 4:17), in other words, present, who are we to delay it? Jesus' mind is set to inject the mighty power of God into the present. If you are going to get out of your mind, and into the mind of Christ, you will have your mind set to dispense the power of God in the present. *The delay is over!! The postponement is ended!! Jesus is saving, healing, and delivering!!* Are you in the mindset of delay, or in the mind of Christ?

In the Mind of Christ

If you get out of your mind and into the mind of Christ, it will affect the way you boast. In the natural human mind, we boast of our accomplishments, our children, our possessions, etc. In the mind of Christ, we boast in our afflictions and weaknesses. The Apostle Paul gives us a strong lesson in this in II Corinthians 11:22-12:10. Paul's authority in the Corinthian church had been severely challenged by a group of people who were boasting in their backgrounds and accomplishments. The Corinthian Christians were listening to these people and were being deceived by them. If Paul had been in his mind,

he would have written to the Corinthians using his pedigree and accomplishments as a base for refuting the opponents. But Paul was out of his mind, remember? He was in the mind of Christ, so he “boasts” in his stonings, shipwrecks, beatings, jailings. When Paul says in II Corinthians 11:32,33 that he was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, he was creating a satire on the Roman army’s *corona muralis*. This “crown of the wall” was a great reward given to the soldier who first scaled the wall of a besieged city through his bravery and valor. The Emperor gave it to the soldier after the city was conquered. But Paul tells us that instead of going up the wall to conquer a city, he was let down the wall in the night, in disgrace. After the list of horrible things he went through, he tells the Corinthians, and us, “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (NKJV II Corinthians 12:9b). What a clear function of the mind of Christ through Paul! That the opponents would be overcome when he “boasted” in the weakness and defeats?! Paul lived at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove, notice that real power is released here, but it is the power of the Cross. He was out of his mind, and in the mind of Christ?

How about you, friend, aren’t you tired of “solving” everything by staying in your mind? Aren’t you tired of a Christianity that is contained in the mind(s) of pastors, evangelists, boards, and committees? These are all necessary for the function and administration of the work of the ministry, but they were never intended by Jesus to produce the agenda for Spirit-empowered ministry. Jesus *wants to reveal* His mind to His Body once again. If you want to understand how matters could be as bad as the statistics in chapter one show them to be, you need to realize that the *Body of Christ* has been functioning without the *Head*. When we set the human agenda, based on our opinions and humanistic insights, and even pray and ask God to bless it, we are operating from within our minds. When this happens, the Body of Christ comes to be controlled by a different head, ours. This is why Jesus so strongly rebuked Peter in Matthew 16. The problem was that he was *mindful* of the things of men (human things as opposed to God’s things). Remember that Peter was even called a ‘son the Dove’ by Jesus before he failed to get out of his mind and into the mind of Christ. How about you? Are you in your mind or in the mind of Christ? If you desire to get out of your mind and into the mind of Christ, pray this prayer out loud. Do it now.

“Father, I ask you to take me out of my fleshly human mind. I realize that I cannot proceed into your

presence with my mind in control. I release these worldly and sensual thoughts and desires, which are sin. I ask you to forgive and wash me in the blood of Jesus. I want His mind, the mind of Christ. I desire to quit controlling the agenda of life and ministry. I want the revelation of your agenda to me, Father. I will hear and obey. Thank you for receiving me and hearing me today, in Jesus' name, amen.”

Chapter 5- Holy Arson!

We have seen that the power of the Cross is the awesome power of God to kill sin and put to death the flesh. It comes through the reversing, opposing method that Jesus unleashed when he died. Now we will consider the power of the Dove, the Holy Spirit. To begin with, the power of the Dove is for you as an individual. This does not mean that you should stand separated and distinct from your local church body, but God wants you to walk in this power yourself, even if others will not join you. Just as conversion is an individual experience before God, so is the reception of the power of the Dove. Many people receive the power of the Dove in a group setting, as the earliest Christians did in Acts 2:1-4, but the individual experience is still very important.

When Arson is Good

God wants to reveal Himself as the holy arsonist. Human arsonists are criminals who use fire as a weapon of retaliation or intimidation. They understand the incredible power of fire, but they use it for a destructive purpose. But God is an arsonist who is setting fires that help. It is like forest rangers battling a huge blaze who set new fires and send them in the direction of a large forest fire in order to "fight fire with fire." Some fires can only be conquered in this fashion. Inside of us there are fires of lust, pride, greed, envy, and other sins that can only be defeated by God's fire being set against them, so God becomes a holy arsonist.

The Presence of God as Fire

One of the most striking characteristics of the Dove's power is fire. This fire is, metaphorically, passion for the Presence of God and for people to come into His Presence, but it is also an experience of the Presence of God that radically changes us. It is an encounter with God Himself. There is a preparation for the power of the Dove that is accomplished by the fire. Our God is holy; He cannot be near sin. He cannot stand sin. Hebrews 12:29 says: "Our God is a consuming fire" (NKJV). He manifests Himself as a fire because His wrath burns against sin. Once we have been forgiven of our sins in conversion, we are candidates to have the fire of God fall on us to judge sin. This is an individual experience. It is the realization that Jesus' death on the Cross was necessary because of your sin. The work of God by the Cross does not end with forgiveness only. He wants to make you holy. If you say you

are a Christian, and you have no desire to be holy, something is wrong! The Bible teaches us that at conversion, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us. But remember, He is the *Holy* Spirit! If you stop with forgiveness, and continue excusing sin, you are nullifying the reason Jesus died on the Cross. Jesus died to defeat sin! What we desire most from salvation and what God desires most are sometimes different things. We desire forgiveness because we know we are guilty. God forgives us by the shed blood of Jesus, and we feel good because we are acquitted of guilt. But God's desire is for us to be like him. He is holy. If we are to be like Him, we will be holy. This requires the burning fire of His Presence. God comes to forgive, but then he comes as a holy arsonist. He wants to set on fire everything that is unholy. It is like the difference between being declared not guilty in a court of law and being innocent. No human court presumes to declare anyone innocent. The best they can do is to render a verdict of not guilty. The punishment that was threatened will not be delivered. And the person is free to leave the courtroom. But no human judge can make a defendant innocent, much less holy. Many Christians stop at the stage of being declared not guilty, when God wants to make them innocent as lambs, and holy as He is holy.

Isaiah's Revelation of Fire

The prophet Isaiah found this truth about God early in his ministry. He was one of the most righteous men of his nation, but when he got close to God's Presence, he discovered that he needed fire to purge him of sin and make him holy. When Isaiah saw the Lord, he saw that He was holy.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim: each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew: And one cried to another and said: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: The whole earth is full of His glory (Isaiah 6:1-3 NKJV).

The Hebrew word which we translate 'holy' is godesh. It means "holy, consecrated, separate."³⁷ What is revealed here is that God is separated from all that is not pure and righteous. Angelic creatures who constantly proclaim his holiness surround him, and yet He wishes to make His holiness known to humans. If you wish to know this God, you will have to know Him as holy. Any other depiction of Him is a distortion. It is possible to allow other real activities of God to obscure our view of His holiness. Remember, He forgives us so we can be holy, not so that we increase His workload by sinning more so

³⁷ Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon, 871,872.

that we can receive more forgiveness (Romans 6:1,2). Do not let your view of His forgiveness obscure your vision of His holiness. Even the powerful workings of the Spirit of God can be allowed to obscure His holiness. If you see and participate in healings, deliverances, miracles, that is wonderful, because these workings advance the Kingdom of God. But do not let them obscure your vision of His holiness. Sometimes God uses people who have sin in their lives to do mighty things for him. Some of the healing evangelists of the 1950s are examples of this. But this does not diminish the need for God's fire. Think of what these men could have done if they had let God's fire burn their sin, whether it was large or small. The children of Israel in Egypt saw miracle after miracle as the Lord defeated the gods of Egypt in the ten plagues. But when they stood before the mountain of God, they could not endure the revelation of His holiness.

When Isaiah perceived this holiness, his response was one of urgent desperation:

And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts (Isaiah 6:4,5 NKJV).

The true revelation of the holiness of God does not give us warm, fuzzy feelings. It shows us that we are sinful. Tommy Tenney, speaking of the OT sacrifices, has clearly stated what happens when we really get close to the presence of God:

The more death that God smells, the closer He can come. It's as if the smell of that sacrifice was a signal that God could draw near to His people for a moment without striking them down for their sin...God cannot come close to living flesh because it reeks of the world. It has to be dead flesh for Him to come close.³⁸

As God continues to prepare us for revival, we must be willing to go beyond blessing to holiness.

Blessing is good, and we all need more of it, but if we stop there, we have a very shallow view of the presence of God. The holiness of God is in itself a burning fire of recognition of my human sinfulness.

Sergio Scataglini says:

When the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire comes over your life, it develops in you a very holy indignation against the power of sin. You will begin to hate every wrong and evil path. Holiness is not only loving God, but also hating sin. If you do not hate your sin, you will not be free from it. I pray that God would give you a perfect hatred for your sin.³⁹

³⁸ *The God Chasers*, (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1998) 60.

³⁹ *The Fire of His Holiness*, (Ventura, CA: Renew Books, 1999) 124.

When we get close to God, we will inevitably have an experience like that of Isaiah. He realized that his mouth was speaking unclean things and that he lived among people who were doing the same thing. Our speech is one of the most important indicators of our inner spiritual condition. Jesus said: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34 NKJV). Every time you open your mouth, the abundance of your heart is flowing out. If you wish to know the inner condition of your heart, listen to your words. Are they condemning words? There is condemnation in your heart! Are they critical, biting words? There is criticism in your heart! When Isaiah realized this, he cried out in desperation for the Lord to heal him of the condition of inside uncleanness.

The response of God is striking! God does not tell Isaiah that he is pretty good, so he should just keep coming back to the Temple periodically. He does not tell him to use more self-discipline. *He sends fire!!*

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal that he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: Behold, this has touched your lips: Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin is purged Isaiah 6:6,7 (NKJV).

The solution to the problem of sinning lips is the fire of God's holiness. The imagery here is striking. A hot coal, seized from a fire, is placed upon his lips, one of the most sensitive areas of the body. Dr. Michael Brown has illustrated this well by saying that you can understand this by asking your host at your next outdoor barbecue, as the burgers are sizzling, to grasp one of the coals with a tongs and press it on your lips!⁴⁰ There are some problems that can only be resolved by complete removal. Sin is such a problem. Every excuse, every religious activity, every promise to improve, is doomed to failure. It has all been tried before. Sin will not yield to anything except the blood of Jesus and the fire of God. Friend, do not be deceived into thinking that sin can be tamed. Maybe you think you are such a strong Christian that you can control that little portion of sin you are allowing. A little sin is still sin!⁴¹ You are being deceived! You are called to be like Jesus, and Jesus did not entertain sin in any way, shape, or form. Let the coal from the fire of heaven touch your lips. Let your heart be purified by fire. Then a pure flow will come forth from your lips. You see from this that God is a holy arsonist. He comes to set fires to the inner recesses of our hearts. It is an encounter, an experience with Him, which leads to a lifetime of diligence against the

⁴⁰ Michael Brown, videotape, *Fire!* "Leadership Sessions at the Brownsville Revival."

⁴¹ Scataglini, 35,36.

power of canceled sin, as Charles Wesley expressed it in the hymn *O for a Thousand Tongues*.

Jesus, the Holy Arsonist

The Old Testament is not the only place we find fire associated with the issues of sin and holiness. Jesus, God in human flesh, stands forth in the Gospels as the holy arsonist. In Luke 12:49 Jesus says: "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled" (NKJV). It is here we see that fire is about judgment. In the surrounding passage Jesus was telling parables and teaching about His Second Coming. The fire Jesus came to deliver is judgment of sin. For those whose sins are not covered by the blood of the Lamb, this judgment is a fearsome revelation of the wrath of God. Jesus accomplished this perfect sacrifice for sin, taking the wrath of God against Himself when he died on the Cross (I John 2:1,2). Once this was accomplished, the fire of God could come with great positive effect upon the person who is already under the blood of Jesus. Here is a place where the Cross and the Dove begin to converge. It is the blood of Calvary that determines whether the fire of God will put you in eternal destruction in hell, or whether it will make you holy like Jesus. Everyone will have to deal with the fire of God. Jesus is casting it on the earth now. If you receive the fire now, it will burn and hurt your flesh. It will purge out your sinful practices. But you will not have to face the fire of judgment in hell. If you do not receive the fire now, you face a future that has one certainty: fiery judgment. So Jesus is the holy arsonist who judges by fire. John the Baptist prophesied this about him:

John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16 NKJV).

Jesus fulfilled this prophecy both by personal participation and by His mighty act of sending the Spirit and fire on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus won the right to cast fire on the earth by going through His own baptism of fire. He says in Luke 12:50, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished (NKJV). Jesus' baptism of fire was his immersion in the suffering and death of the Cross. It was not for purging of his own sin, since he did not have any. But when the sinless one, Jesus, went through a fiery baptism of suffering, he won something no one else could win. He now has the right to throw fire on the earth. God the Father had the right for this by creation, but God the Son

reinforced this right, and made it better, by dying on the Cross. Jesus experienced more of the wrath of God in his time on the cross than anyone else could. He gives the fire from the standpoint of personal participation.

The Power of the Dove as Fire

The absolute fulfillment of Jesus' mission of baptizing in the Holy Spirit and fire came on the day of Pentecost. The 120 believers were immersed in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) and there was visible fire upon their heads. There are two purposes for the fire of the Holy Spirit, not just one. The first purpose is the purging and cleansing that we have discussed above. The second purpose is the empowering of fire to accomplish the mission that Jesus set before the apostles. The biggest problems we face in the church today are the results of attempting these in the flesh, or in the power of human intellect, or human determination. We cannot be holy by self-discipline; it is by faith. We also cannot work miracles, cast out demons, heal the sick, and powerfully proclaim the Gospel by mere human effort, either. In both cases, a transformation is required. In both cases, God's power and presence must come in with life-changing effect. So there is a progression in which conversion becomes a lifestyle of holiness, leading to a mission of power and the presence of God being manifested in schools, homes, malls, grocery stores, not just churches. But each of these three is also an event of a face-to-face encounter with the presence of God. When the basis of holiness has been established by fire, it is possible to expect the fire to erupt in powerful demonstration, as it did on the Day of Pentecost. When this happens now, we call it revival.

Bartleman tells of the awesome presence of God to convict and clean up saints who were serious about pressing in to a baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. Speaking of the mighty move of God at Azusa St., he says:

No man "durst join himself to them" except he meant business, to go through. It meant a dying out and cleaning up process in those days to receive the "baptism..." The Spirit wrought very deeply. An unquiet spirit or a thoughtless talker was immediately reproved by the Spirit. We were on holy ground. This atmosphere was unbearable to the carnal spirit. They generally gave this room a wide berth unless they had been *thoroughly subdued and burned out*. Only honest seekers sought it, those who really meant business with God.⁴²

As seen in Acts 2, the power of the Dove brings forth a mighty sign. The disciples are enabled to speak in a language they never learned. The power, or ability, to do this does not come from a human

⁴² Bartleman, *Another Wave Rolls in...*, p.56, emphasis mine.

source. They are sons (and daughters) of the Dove and they are not mindful of the ways of men. Remember Peter's shortcoming in Matthew 16. The convergence of the Cross and the Dove brings forth fire that transforms. In Acts 2 Simon Bar-Jonah stands up covered with blood and fire. He has more than just a revelation, by which he could be called son of the Dove. *The cross and the Dove have converged, and fire is breaking out.* Notice that in Acts 2, under the power of this fire, Peter did not defend Jesus. He had the perfect opportunity to do so, and Jesus is perfectly defensible. But instead, Peter lifted Jesus up, and 3000 people were drawn unto Him.

It is time for the Church to quit denying the need for the fire of God. We need it desperately in this hour. But as great as the corporate need, the personal need is greater. Friend, the power to be a witness (Acts 1:8) comes from the full immersion in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) and nothing less. My friend, you have far more control over your personal approach to the fire of God than you do over any corporate setting. God wants church bodies and large gatherings of people to draw near to Him. But He is also looking for the man or the woman who will come before Him in the secret place (Psalm 91:1), desperate for the fire. My friend, you can choose to be a person who causes the temperature to rise in cold icebox services of religiosity if you will let God's fire burn you in secret. If it's really God's fire, you will not be proud, but humble. You will not be self-assertive, but will serve others, even as you are being a vessel for the rise in temperature.

If you desire the fire, stop right here and pray this prayer:

Father: I desire the fire of heaven to burn my flesh and carnality. I am tired of excusing sin and giving way to the flesh. I accept the judgment of your fire against my sinful practices and attitudes. Burn me like you did Isaiah, until I am holy on the inside. I want to be holy like you, Lord God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 6- A Powerful Dove

In chapter 5 we saw the power of the Holy Spirit as fire unto holiness. This fire creates a passion for holiness that cannot be produced any other way. This is the cleansing aspect of the fire of God. There is another side to the power of the Holy Spirit. It is His dynamic power to do miracles, signs, and wonders. In mighty displays of power, the Holy Spirit has shown the supernatural ability of God to answer prayer and bring revival. It is an amazing fact that Jesus did no miracle until the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove (Luke 3:21,22). Jesus Himself, in His life on this earth, is a tremendous example to us of the necessity of the coming of the power of the Dove. After Jesus endured temptation in the wilderness, He returned in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14). It was then that Jesus began to preach with mighty power, cast out demons, and heal the sick. Clearly, from that point on, the power of the Dove was flowing through Him to meet human need.

The Kingdom of God

The miracles, signs, and wonders that are done by the power of the Dove are not arbitrary or capricious. These signs are the means God has chosen for the advance of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is His reign over the lives of people by the Gospel, and it also is His conquest of the kingdom of darkness. These two kingdoms are in a tremendous struggle and conflict with each other. Jesus made it clear that when He was healing the sick and casting out demons, He was advancing the Kingdom (Matthew 12:28). When Jesus sent out the twelve, and later, the seventy, he commissioned them to do the same things He did: casting out demons, healing the sick, mightily proclaiming the Gospel. As they did these things, they were advancing the Kingdom because the powers of enemy enforcement, disease, literal demons, and death, were being pushed back. When the Day of Pentecost came, the 120 were filled with the power of the Dove. Peter, the son of the Dove who had to be rebuked as Satan in Matthew 16:23, now stood up and moved decisively in the power of the Dove. He preached and 3000 people were cut to the heart and asked what they should do. Peter and John raised up the lame man in Acts 3. In Acts 4, the building shook. Throughout the book of Acts, miracles and signs advanced the work of the Kingdom. The early disciples did not conceive of doing anything else. They were not involved in building their own little kingdoms. They had seen too much of the real thing with Jesus Himself to be deceived by

that. They obeyed Jesus' command to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom in the power of the Holy Spirit. As they did, the supernatural realm became natural to them. They lived in the expectancy every day that Jesus would do signs and wonders and miracles.

It was clear to the earliest Christians that the Kingdom doesn't advance without the power of the Holy Spirit. What they accomplished is truly impossible in the natural human realm. They had no political or economic support. Their message was out of touch with the popular philosophies of the day. They emerged from a "fringe area" at the edge of the Roman Empire. But as days turned into weeks and months, thousands and thousands of people were turned into Christians, not by logical persuasion, but by the piercing of the heart. The Holy Spirit truly led them into all truth. And they continued to lift up Jesus, who drew more and more people unto Himself. It was only when human interests were allowed to dominate the field of battle that Christians began to lose the power of the Dove. The power of "correct" teaching alone began to replace the power of the Holy Spirit to do signs and wonders and miracles. To the question, "Why don't we see more miracles in the Church today?" came the answer, "Because you are willing to live without them." Personal kingdoms and personal agendas replaced the Kingdom imperative of conquest by love and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Cessationism

Christians have lived for long periods of time in Church History without the power of the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. When this happens, explanation must be given as to why the real power of Christianity is not evident in the life of the Church. For centuries now, a favorite explanation of this has been cessationism. This teaching states that although the apostles and deacons of the early church in the book of Acts moved in the power of the Dove, we should not expect to do so today. The usual explanation is that the apostles lived in a special age or dispensation of God's power. It is also stated that the powerful working of the gifts of the Spirit was only necessary for the founding of the Church. Now the church is established, and we no longer need this radical power. There are two kinds of cessationists: formal and functional.

Formal Cessationism

Formal cessationists are those whose actual doctrine and public teaching state that the powerful working of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit are not for today. They sometimes actively oppose Christians who move and operate in these gifts. The refutation of this position has been done very adequately by Jack Deere⁴³, and will not be repeated here. The position of formal cessationists is a serious attempt to solve the problem of the powerless character of Christianity. The solution comes at a very high price. By removing the possibility of the powerful intervention of God by the Spirit, the formal cessationists create another division between the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove. This division has reigned in the teaching and practice of many sincere Christians in the Western world. But this price is too high to pay for anyone who has seen God heal the sick and do miracles in our present time. God is raising up testimony to His awesome power today, not only among charismatics and Pentecostals, but also among Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Catholics, and many others who are hungry for the manifestation of His glory.

Functional Cessationism

A greater peril, however, seems to exist in the ranks of Christians who have teaching and doctrine which supports the present working of miracles by the power of the Dove. Many of these Christians give intellectual assent to this power, but never expect to see it at work, let alone participate in it. Their posture is, "Yes, God does miracles, but I don't expect to see any today." These are the functional cessationists. We find them in evangelical and even in charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Lulled to sleep by high-powered programs and a compromised message of the Gospel, these Christians will see no more miracles than the formal cessationists, who actually deny them. And the outcome is the same, another division between the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove. It is actually a denial of the living reality of the Dove. So, the convergence cannot take place. And millions of Christians who could be living in power and victory are depressed, defeated, and in some cases suicidal. Their marriages are failing at the same rate as those of unbelievers.⁴⁴ We need revival, even in segments of

⁴³ *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1993).

⁴⁴ George Barna, *Barna Research Online* "Evangelical Christians" August 1, 2000 <<http://www.barna.org/cgi-bin/PageCategory.asp?CategoryID=17>>

Christianity that have rightly taught and understood that the power of God is for this present time.

Cessationism, in either of its forms, is unacceptable because it drives a wedge between the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove.

The Enforcement of the Resurrection

After Jesus died on the Cross and lay in the tomb for three days, he was raised from the dead (Luke 24:34). The power of the Resurrection is God's final statement about death. In fact, the Resurrection is the certainty that Jesus defeated sin as well, because death is the enforcer of sin's tyranny. So by defeating death, Jesus also overcame sin. Therefore He can be the perfect Judge of sin. In Romans 5:12, the apostle Paul says: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (NKJV). If Jesus has defeated death, there is no more enforcement of the power of sin. Sin's tyranny over humans no longer has any basis. Satan's claim against the human race has been canceled by Jesus' victory, so he must depend on deception. He attempts get you to believe that death is still against you, enforcing sin. But this only true if you have yielded your mind to the deception. And it is a good reason for getting out of *your mind* and into the mind of Christ (chapter four).

If God the Father could raise Jesus from the dead, after He had *died* under the sins of the world, He can do anything. And His power to do anything is not limited to the future Resurrection at the end of this Age. That will be glorious, but the fact that Jesus rose from the dead *in the same body* in which He died means that God's power has decisively entered our world of matter, space, and time. The power and presence of God is present now through the Resurrection. The delay of the arrival of the mighty power of God is over. Death has been defeated. Why would the apostles surprise us when they raise people from the dead in our human history? And why should we be surprised when God raises the dead in our times, as He has hundreds of times in recent years, especially in Latin America? The basis of the power of the Dove to do signs wonders, miracles, is the Resurrection of Jesus. He is Lord and King. By the mighty Holy Ghost, Jesus is healing, delivering from demons, and raising the dead through His humble servants today. On a trip to Argentina in May 1999, this story was related to us by Alberto Scataglini, father of Sergio Scataglini, and former General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Argentina. This miracle had recently happened when he told it to us. In the south of Argentina, a Christian woman had a son who died. He was placed in the morgue, awaiting the funeral. The mother, impressed by the Holy Spirit, asked the morgue people if she could pray over the body of her son. They

gave permission, and she went in. As she stood by the head of her son, who lay on the morgue slab, she cried out, "God, give me my son back!" After a short time of praying in this way, the dead boy sat up, raised from the dead!! But what happened next is awesome. When the teenager sat up, his arm swung down and landed on the man lying on the slab next to him. He was raised, too!! And five gunshot wounds caused his death. What a God we serve! He raises the dead! Not just in the Bible, but in 1999 in the land of Argentina. It is powerful evidence that Jesus is Lord and King over all, even over death in the here and now!!

The Nature of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

This awesome resurrection power has been focused for this present Age in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Dove of heaven. He comes to make Jesus known. He does not exalt himself. Jesus promised a baptism, an immersion, in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). We should not be satisfied to be sprinkled with the Holy Spirit. The 120 believers in the Upper Room were soaked, saturated, and immersed in the blessed Holy Spirit. The Cross had emptied them of their religious and cultural notions of Messiah. So when they were filled, they were totally filled. It seems that many Christians today come to be filled with the Spirit, but they are half full of pride, lust, greed, or self-assertion. When they receive prayer for the filling of the Spirit, they are filled, but only to the extent that they were empty. If you take a glass half full of gear oil and pour in water, it will be filled, but the oil will stay in the bottom half of the glass because it is heavier than the water. This is why it is so important to have the complete work of the Cross preceding the work of the Spirit. The fire of God must burn the vessel until it is empty (see chapter five). Then an empty vessel can be filled to overflowing by immersion in the Spirit.

When a human vessel is filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit, a stream begins to come forth from the mouth. As we see in Acts 2:4, they begin to speak in a language they have not learned through rational processes. This speaking in tongues brings glory to God and is a sign that causes multitudes to stop and pay attention. In Acts 2, the believers spoke in tongues that people in the crowd could understand. This miracle was repeated at the Azusa St. revival in 1906-1908 in Los Angeles.⁴⁵

The power of the Dove was manifested in the book of Acts through the Apostles and others who

⁴⁵ Wayne Warner, ed. *The Azusa Street Papers* (Foley: AL: Together in the Harvest Ministries, 1997) 20, 22, 27.

performed many signs and wonders among the people. This power was not limited to the apostles, since we find in Acts 8:4-6 that Philip, the deacon was used by God to bring miracles, and healings to many in a city of Samaria. The expression of this power of the Dove is never an end in itself. These signs always point to Jesus. And they cause people to believe in Jesus as savior and deliverer.

When this power of the Dove is unleashed, it takes the form of the gifts of the Spirit from I Corinthians 12:9,10. These gifts are the manifestation of the Spirit (12:7). The Church must use them today with mighty effect. One great example of this is in Acts 13 where Paul encountered a false prophet named Bar-Jesus. This man was trying to dissuade the political leader of the area from believing the message Paul was preaching.

Then Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand (Acts 13:9-11 NKJV).

Several of the gifts of the Spirit were clearly working through the Apostle Paul here. First of all, by discerning of spirits, he knew the inside condition of the man. Secondly, a working of the gift of miracles is apparent, because the power of God struck the false prophet blind for a season. The powerful working of the Dove comes through these gifts in the lives of believers as they did through Paul in the ancient world. But notice outcome of this exercise of power. "Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord (Acts 13:12)." The outcome of the powerful working of these gifts was to lead the proconsul to Jesus. It was not to exalt Paul, or any other human being. But Jesus was lifted up, and the proconsul came to Him. This is truly teaching to be astonished about, because the power does not lie in the logical nuance of persuasive technique. This teaching is validated by the power of the Dove.

In the Church of the USA, we have entertained a procedure in which the power of the Dove is optional. But it was not so for the Christians in the book of Acts. Teaching and preaching which is done without the power of the Dove validating it could be correct, but how do we know? Most Christians in the USA make the decision according to rational logic and according to exterior appearance. Neither is a proper criterion for establishing truth. Jesus did not require people to believe His message without the

attestation of mighty signs and wonders. Neither did the apostles and other workers of the New Testament. Have we really improved the Gospel so much that it can be preached without the demonstration of signs and wonders? Have we become so arrogant that we disregard and treat lightly what Jesus gave His life to provide? This Christian life, lived in the power of the Dove, was intended by Jesus to be a life of abundance, joy, and purpose. The resources of heaven are available, to be distributed by means of the gifts of the Spirit. That is why they are called gifts. They are distributed freely to whoever needs them. This is a firm and straightforward call to every Christian who says he or she believes in the present reality of the God of the Bible. Are you satisfied with the level of power of the Dove you are walking in now? If you are, I take it to mean that your shadow is healing the sick, and that handkerchiefs taken from your body are driving out demons. If that is not the case, you have room for improvement! If you are tired of proclaiming a Gospel you can't demonstrate, get on your face before God. Cry out to Him! This is a day of the urgent necessity of the fire and power of God to fall upon the earth! Ask God for His fire to consume your flesh, your secret sins, and your lethargy toward the holy things of God. He will sanctify and purge you and fill you so that His power demonstrates the message you are proclaiming.

Chapter 7- Twentieth Century Fire and Power!

We have worked to set forth the dynamic relationship between the Cross and the Dove. It is a relationship that must have a meeting. When that meeting occurs, the living water of life pours forth and revival comes to dry and thirsty souls, who are languishing in spiritual deserts. Fire breaks out, energizing sleepy, lethargic Christians, galvanizing them into Kingdom action. In this chapter we will investigate several revivals of the past century, to see the results of this convergence of the Cross and the Dove.

The Welsh Revival

The name of Evan Roberts is tied to the Welsh Revival because he is the principal human figure God used in this mighty move. But it should not be forgotten that the Welsh Revival was also a revival of the people. Once the common people began to be renewed, they spread the flame corporately as much as Evan himself and Seth Joshua spread it through their efforts in meetings. The role of Evan Roberts should not be downplayed in any sense. For thirteen years he prayed for revival. For three months before it broke, he was awakened every night at the same time, just after 1:00 AM to be in the presence of God for 3-4 hours. On September 29, 1904, the convergence of the Cross and the Dove broke out on Evan Roberts. He was at a prayer meeting where others were praying out verbally. Here are his words:

After several had prayed, I felt 'living force' entering my heart; it held my breath; my legs trembled violently. And after each prayer I kept asking. "Shall I now?" while the 'living force' went on increasing, increasing, almost to bursting. At last, when someone had finished praying, with my heart quivering, I would have burst had I not prayed. I fell on my knees, with my arms over the seat in front of me, the perspiration and tears pouring down, so that I believed blood was flowing out.⁴⁶

What may we say about such an outburst, except that heaven opened, and the Cross and Dove came together to rest upon the man who would lead this remarkable revival? The narrative of that remarkable day continues:

One or two near at hand were wiping his face, while the agony continued some two minutes. His repeated cry was, "Bend me! Bend me! Bend us!" "It was 'God commanding His love' that bent me, and I had never seen anything in it to command! After I was bent, a wave of peace went over me...I thought of the bending in the Judgment Day, and I was filled with compassion for the people bent in Judgment Day, and I wept. Afterwards, it was the salvation of souls that weighed on my soul. Ever after that hour I was on fire to be allowed to go through the whole of Wales, and

⁴⁶ Lewis, Morgan, Neprash, *Glory Filled the Land: A Trilogy on the Welsh Revival* (Wheaton: International Awakening Press, 1989) 39,40.

if it were possible, I was willing to pay God for the permission to go. A plan was drawn out, according to which eight of us were to go through Wales, I paying the expenses.”⁴⁷

The inevitable result of the convergence of the Cross and the Dove is clearly present here! Evan Roberts was *on fire!*

It is Evan Robert's short, but now famous prayer, “Bend me!” which advances our theme of the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. This recognition of his own sinfulness and the necessity of cleansing and change which alerts us to the presence of the power of the Cross. The brokenness that results from the arrival of the Presence of God is a result of the power of the Cross. R.B. Jones describes the weightiness of God's presence in a meeting in early 1905:

The memory of that meeting, even after more than a quarter of a century, is well nigh overwhelming...The light of God's holiness was turned upon the hearts and lives of those present. Conviction of sin, and of its terrible desert, was so crushing that a feeling almost of despair grew over all hearts. So grievous a thing was sin; so richly and inevitably did it deserve the severest judgment of God, that hearts questioned, Could God forgive? Could God cleanse?⁴⁸

This unveiled horror of the reason for the Cross, when it focuses on me, is the first movement of God on the individual heart. It must be restored this way every time the Church drifts away from it, wallowing eventually in permitted sins. How else could we know the real meaning and identity of the sin which has been entertained within us, through years of “normal” church life? Would we compare ourselves among ourselves? Scripture tells us that then we are unwise. We also become prideful Pharisees, because we always can look good when we choose a human person for our comparison. But the standard is not your brother or sister sitting on the pew next to you! The standard is Jesus! The final comment of the Godhead on sin for this Age is the Cross. Praise Him for a time of revival, when the Cross once again does what it does best, convicting sinners of sin. Even if they are in church when it happens! The Welsh Revival was one of the great moves of God in history because Jesus once again became the standard of comparison. The Cross' reason and purpose was brought directly to bear on human hearts that needed it desperately.

When the Cross has done its work, the joy and glory of forgiveness and holiness in the presence of God can be overwhelming.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 40.

⁴⁸ *Rent Heavens: The Revival of 1904* (London: Pioneer Mission, 1931) 42.

Then came the word about the altar, the tongs, and the live coal touching the confessedly vile lips, and the gracious and complete removal of their vileness. After all, there was hope! God was forgiving, and He had cleansing for the worst. When the rapt listeners realized all this the effect was--well, "electrifying" is far too weak a word; it was absolutely beyond any metaphor to describe it. As one man, first with a sigh of relief, and then with a delirious shout of joy, the whole huge audience sprang to their feet. The vision had completely overwhelmed them and, one is not ashamed to tell it, for a moment they were beside themselves with heavenly joy.⁴⁹

God does not reveal our sinfulness to destroy us. He wants a complete inner renovation by fire so that the true heavenly joy of the Holy Spirit can be manifested in us. This bittersweet combination of sorrow and joy swept over the land of Wales until the fabric of society was affected. Merchants could not get consumers to go into debt. The mines were places of prayer, praise, and Bible study during break times, and of harder than usual work, with greater productivity during the working hours. For months in 1904-05, a nation was under the manifested presence of God.

This manifestation of God's presence was one of the striking characteristics of the Welsh Revival. This presence was not found only in the meetings. It was out in the villages and countryside.

A sense of the Lord's presence was everywhere. It permeated, nay, it created the spiritual atmosphere. It mattered not where one went the consciousness of the reality and nearness of God followed. Felt, of course, in the Revival gatherings, it was by no means confined to them; it was also felt in the homes, on the streets, in the mines and factories, in the schools, yea, and even in the theatres and drinking-saloons.⁵⁰

We are told that men would order drinks, and then leave them untouched because of the nearness of the presence of God. At other times arms were paralyzed before drinks were lifted to the lips. Sports teams were disbanded. They preferred to be in the House of the Lord. Dear reader, I trust you are paying attention here. When we pray for revival and the arrival of the presence of God, we are praying for the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. When they converge, the presence of God breaks out in direct manifestation. The normal rules of life are changed. The presence of God that swept Wales in 1904-05 proves this. God wants to do it again. Can your precious American lifestyle receive the altering power of the convergence of the Cross and the Dove? Get ready, it's coming!

The Azusa Street Revival

The revival that occurred in Los Angeles, CA from 1906-1908 was one of the most remarkable convergences of the Cross and the Dove in the history of the Church. This revival gave rise to the

⁴⁹ Ibid., 42,43.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 41.

modern Pentecostal movement, which includes dozens of denominations and other groups. Two subsequent moves of God grew out of the Azusa St. revival: the Latter Rain Movement of 1948-1953 and the Charismatic Renewal, which began in the early sixties and ran to the late seventies. It is now estimated that between five hundred and seven hundred million persons worldwide identify themselves as Pentecostal or Charismatic believers. This is definitely a revival that has had world-changing implications.

As is so often the case, this move of God began with an intense burden of prayer that lasted over two years. Prayer was going up to heaven from a number of locations in Southern California in 1904 and 1905. By prayer, I mean extraordinary intercessory prayer, agonizing travailing prayer that is birthed by the action of the Holy Spirit on a willing human heart. The power of the Cross is evident in the birth-pangs of this revival. Bartleman wrote in his diary in 1905:

Some churches are going to be surprised to find God passing them by. He will work in channels where they will yield to Him. *They must humble themselves* for Him to come...The people are too well satisfied with their own goodness. They have little faith or interest for the salvation of others. *God will humble them* by passing them by. The Spirit is breathing prayer through us for a mighty, general outpouring.⁵¹

This feature of brokenness and humility is the foundation of the Azusa St. revival. It is the power of the Cross at work to convict human hearts (of Christians) of lethargy, complacency, and sins of the flesh. This work brings forth repentance, an abandonment of sin, and a fervency for the things of God. The relationship of the power of the Cross to the power of the Dove is made clear in this statement of Bartleman:

There is much need always for heart preparation, in humility and separation, before God can consistently come. The depth of any revival will be determined exactly by the spirit of repentance that obtains. In fact this is the key to every true revival born of God.⁵²

This spirit of repentance is the determining factor in the depth of revival, so why do we go out of our way to ignore it today? This work of the Cross is the beginning, middle, and ending point of all true spiritual work in a person's life, and yet there is so little preaching of true repentance. This is why the Church is not in continuous revival. The "fuel" for the flame of revival is the rotten flesh of Christians who will need to be consumed by the flame of God's passion before revival and the power of the Spirit can come! This

⁵¹ Frank Bartleman, *Another Wave Rolls in (What Really Happened at Azusa St?)* 23,24 (emphasis mine).

⁵² Ibid., 24.

truth was driven home deeply to a large number of people in and around Los Angeles in 1904 and 1905. Bartleman tells of times when he prayed day and night.⁵³

While some Christians were responding with repentance and humility in the presence of the Lord, others were not interested.

I found most Christians did not want to take on a burden of prayer. It was too hard on the flesh. I was carrying this burden now in ever increasing volume, night and day. The ministry was intense. It was “the fellowship of His sufferings,” a “travail” of soul, with groanings that could not be uttered”—Rom. 8:26,27. Most believers find it easier to criticize than to pray.⁵⁴

The sifting of those who would, on the one hand, interrogate, and those who, on the other hand, would propagate the working of the Lord’s power had begun. The revival in Los Angeles was deeply divisive because many in the religious community could not endure this depth of lowering to humility in repentance. This working of humility and contrition is the beginning of a true move of the Spirit.

The tie between the Welsh revival and the Azusa St. outpouring is clear. Pastor Joseph Smale of the First Baptist Church in Los Angeles visited the Welsh Revival and met Evan Roberts. He returned to California on fire to have revival in his own church. The saints prayed under the burden for God to move mightily. Bartleman himself corresponded with Evan Roberts, and prayer was going up each for the other, on both sides of the Atlantic. Roberts exhorted the Californians to total surrender, daily meetings, and radical faith in God. Fire, which had been burning in Wales for two years, finally blazed into a spiritual inferno in 1906.

The work of the power of the Cross had been going on for two years when William Seymour arrived in Los Angeles from Houston. Seymour began preaching the baptism in the Holy Spirit, an experience he had not yet had himself. On April 9, 1906, a man named Edward Lee was baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues at his home when Seymour prayed for him.⁵⁵ From there, a landslide of spiritual power began to cascade down from above as person after person was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Soon they were meeting in the Azusa Street Mission, a former horse stable that had been converted into a church building/mission house by the Methodists. Now many were being baptized in the

⁵³ Ibid., 24-28

⁵⁴ Ibid., 27.

⁵⁵ *Azusa Street Papers*, 6.

Holy Spirit every day. The services began at 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning and usually went till at least midnight. Here at this humble mission building, one of the mightiest revivals in Church History took place. The convergence of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove lasted there for about three years.

Once the work of the Cross had been given free reign, the dynamic work of the Dove could come in that blessed convergence which is so excellently portrayed in Acts 2. In God's mercy it was repeated in Los Angeles in 1906. The fire of God sprang forth from the convergence of Cross and Dove, and it lit up first the surrounding countryside, then the USA, then the world. At Azusa, the humbling and repenting always preceded the blessings of power and anointing.

Divine love was wonderfully manifest in the meetings. They would not even allow an unkind word said against their opposers or the churches. The message was the love of God. It was a sort of "First love" of the early church returned. The "baptism," as we received it in the beginning did not allow us to think, speak, or hear evil of any man. The Spirit was very sensitive, tender as a dove. The Holy Spirit is symbolized as a dove. A dove has no gall bladder. We knew the moment we had grieved the Spirit by an unkind thought or word. We seemed to live in a sea of pure divine love.⁵⁶

It is not a common thing to have a convergence of the Cross and the Dove, especially when we understand the message in the words above. The Spirit of God is the *Holy Spirit*. How it must grieve Him when we criticize, find fault with, and downgrade our brothers and sisters in the Lord. But where people have been made holy on the inside, so that it shows up on the outside, the Holy Spirit will abide. Where the fire of conviction and repentance has burned, the Dove can land and stay, for holiness has been established. In that environment, the power of the Dove really shines forth! And shine it did at Azusa Street Mission.

The signs and wonders which burst forth from the Azusa revival are partially tabulated in the *Azusa Street Papers*, a collection of the newsletter which was sent out from the revival during the years 1906-1908. I will set forth several examples of the power of God that occurred at this intersection of the Cross and the Dove. The power of God truly was falling on the entire region, as this story illustrates. In Oakland, CA, a Bro. Manley was conducting services in a tent. A rough-looking man came forward and told how he had received a university education and had practiced law. He had become a hobo and was ready to commit suicide by jumping in the bay. But a friend told him that God was healing people in this

⁵⁶ Bartleman, 55.

tent. The man was severely crippled by having been kicked by a horse. The bone healed in a lapped position, and he could barely walk with crutches. But then:

...Bro. Manley and the saints went right back to the chair where the man was sitting, and Bro. Manley prayed the prayer of faith, laying his hands on the man's head. And in a few moments, the man jumped to his feet, looked amazed and said, "It's done! It's done!" threw away his crutch and cane and went all over the tent, walking as good as anybody.
The most profound sensation was produced by this exhibition of the power of God, and nearly everybody was in tears and praising God.⁵⁷

God's power to heal was demonstrated many times in this revival, as the fire of God emerged to do dynamic works of power.

Demons were cast out of many people who were afflicted with their presence. One remarkable case was of a woman who had been a spiritualist from the age of sixteen. She had a legion of demons. The demons threw her on the floor and spoke out in blasphemy against Jesus and the work of God.

She pointed right up in the faces of those praying for her, with a hellish laugh, challenging and defying God Almighty, saying, "Ha! ha! She is mine, ha! ha! She belongs to me, etc." Well, we prayed in Jesus' name till she was gloriously delivered, and settled down like a lamb at the feet of Jesus, and for hours prayed and praised Him, until He forgave her...⁵⁸

The power of the demonic realm must give way when the power of God is released at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. That is exactly what happened in this instance, and many others in the Azusa revival.

It is remarkable that so many workings of the Spirit that we see in the book of Acts were also found at Azusa. Perhaps most remarkable, and controversial, were the tongues which were spoken in the hearing of persons who knew the language because of their particular national origins. This happened with many languages, including French, Russian, Italian, African and Indian tribal languages.⁵⁹ This direct repetition of the miracle of the Day of Pentecost is a clear sign of the presence of the fire of God that breaks out at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove.

We will leave our treatment of the Azusa revival with the lengthy testimony of a missionary who came to Azusa from China. Her words draw together the truth of the Cross leading the way to a convergence with the power of the Dove, resulting in the fire of His Presence.

⁵⁷ *Azusa Street Papers*, 29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 15, 39, 47.

It only took a short time after the beginning of the first meeting, to know it was of God. And when the altar call came, I went forward.

Before this I had asked God to turn His great searchlight upon my heart and was astonished to find so much worldliness, spiritual pride, vanity, insincerity, lack of love, selfishness, and other things. When I had left for the foreign field seven years before this, I thought I had died to everything; but when the Spirit began to deal with me in preparing me for the fullness of the Spirit, I found I was very much alive, in fact had scarcely begun to die to self. Although the Lord had given me wonderful victories in my life and what I thought was the baptism of the Spirit, yet when God began to search me as never before, I had to confess that I had never even been sanctified.

I had been taught the suppression theory, and now and again the "old man" would pop up in a greater or less degree; sometimes harsh words did not escape, but I would feel the boiling up inside. But God showed me that His word meant just what is said, that provision was made in the atonement--not only for our sins but for our sin, the old Adamic nature (Rom. 6:6,18,22). How I did rejoice that at the last, the longing of my heart to be rid of that which had kept me from being entirely free from sin was to be satisfied. I had sought my baptism of the Spirit three times, when the Lord told me that I must be sanctified before the Spirit could take full possession of my body. Just so were the disciples sanctified before Christ left them (John 17:17,19), that they might be ready for the baptism of the Spirit.

After some of the saints had prayed for me, one of them asked me if I had the witness of the Spirit to my sanctification according to Heb. 10:14,15. For some years back I had been taught of the Spirit to keep "short accounts" with the Lord, and there was nothing left to do in the way of restitution; and having laid all on the altar, I knew I had met the condition, and that God had fulfilled His promise; although there was no other feeling than the assurance that God had done the work because of His Word. I then began to praise God audibly, and in a few minutes I was flooded with billows of glory, and the Spirit sang through me praises unto God. Besides this witness of the Spirit, was the witness of the fruits; for under whatever provocation, there is no uprising, for there is nothing to rise up. Glory to Jesus.

When sanctified, I was filled with such glory that I felt sure it must be the baptism, which did not come for three weeks. In the meantime, the power was upon me almost continually, sometimes lying under the power for hours, while I consecrated myself to God as never before.

At last after a real dying out, as I never dreamed could be possible on earth, in the upper room at Azusa Mission, the promise of the Father was made real to me, and I was charged with the power of God and my soul flooded with glory. The Spirit sang praises unto God. Glory to Jesus. He gave me the Bible experience, speaking through me in other tongues.

The Lord showed me that the cross was going to mean to me what it had never meant before. One morning the Spirit dealt with me, singing through me--

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free:
No, there's a cross for every one,
And there is one for me."

The last line He just seemed to burn into my soul by repeating it over and over again. Sometimes the Spirit would sing a line and then sob out a line. Although I wept and was in anguish of soul, it was all in the Spirit.

The life of Jesus passed before me, and He asked me if I was willing to follow Jesus in living absolutely for Him in ministering unto others. I thought I had known something of what this meant in China; but now to preach the everlasting Gospel in the power and demonstration of the Spirit and to truly go out on the faith line and to minister day and night, sometimes unto the hungry multitudes in the face of fierce opposition, meant far more than ever before. But He enabled me to say, "By Thy grace I will bear this cross."

The Garden scene came up before me next, as the Spirit again sang, "Must Jesus bear the cross alone?" And He seemed to say, "Your friends will forsake you, your own family will misunderstand you, you will be called a fanatic, crazy; are you willing to bear this cross?" Again I

answered, "By Thy grace, I will."

The crucifixion scene then came before me and it seemed as if my heart would break with sorrow, and I could only wait in silence. Then I said, "Lord, if it was to be beheaded, I could; but--" I could go no further. Later in the day, the Lord spoke to me again as I was under the power. It seemed as if I would almost perish in soul anguish. I was unconscious of the workers all about me. It seemed as if Jesus Himself stood beside, looking down upon me. I could only say, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, I will, I will, I will." His promise came to me as distinctly as if audibly said, "My grace is sufficient for you." And in a flash, He gave me to understand the secret of the endurance of the martyrs who were burned at the stake with the glory of heaven upon their faces, and seemingly free from pain. And He enabled me to say, "Yes, Lord, your grace is sufficient."

Then the Spirit began to sing in a joyful strain, repeating over and over again the last line until I could almost see the crown:

"The consecrated cross I'll bear,
Till Christ has set me free;
And then go home a crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me."

To sum it up, the baptism of the Spirit means to me what I never dreamed it could this side of Heaven: victory, glory in my soul, perfect peace, rest, liberty, nearness to Christ, deadness to this old world, and power in witnessing. Glory to His name forever and forever!---Antoinette Moomau, Eustice, Nebr.⁶⁰

The Indonesia Revival

On September 26, 1965 a surge of God's power flowed through a Presbyterian church in the village of Soe, island of Timor, Indonesia. As people began to praise God with lifting of hands, others began to speak in tongues. Mel Tari, who was present at this Divine visitation, says:

Then I noticed the lady in front of me. She was an illiterate person and didn't even know our official Indonesian language that is used all over our country. She only knew her tribal language, which is Timorese. Naturally she didn't know any English. At that time, however, I knew a little English because I had studied it in school. And this lady began to pray out in very beautiful perfect English. "Oh, Jesus, I love you," she said. "Oh, I want to take the cross and follow you. Oh, I love You, Jesus," and she just went on and on worshipping the Lord.⁶¹

The unmistakable presence of the Dove, through a supernatural act of speaking in tongues, brought this simple woman to the power of the Cross. It is fair to say that these two powers converged that night. Tari says:

As the Holy Spirit moved, people all over the church came under conviction and accepted Jesus as their own personal Savior. They repented and ran back to their houses and got their witchcraft materials and their fetishes and their astrology stuff and their dirty books and their books on how to interpret dreams and they brought them all back to the church and burned them all in a fire.⁶²

The power of the Dove brought conviction, leading to repentance, which is death to the love of sin. This

⁶⁰ Azusa Street Papers, 56.

⁶¹ Like a Mighty Wind, (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, no date) 22,23 (emphasis mine).

⁶² Ibid., 23.

death is none other than the working of the cross-death of Jesus. Notice, please, on the very beginning night of this revival, the Cross and the Dove converged. They had previously been held apart by a formal doctrine of cessationism in this church. But that understanding changed for hundreds of people in a single night. Soon the crowd of 200 swelled to 1000, as the presence and power of God swept through the church and the village.

In the weeks that followed, God did a deep work of the power of the Cross, that is, of conviction of sin leading to repentance. Sometimes the Lord moved through gifts of the Spirit to bring sins to light. Here is the story of one of those times:

One night a woman went to one of the men in the church and said, "Brother, you have committed adultery and the Lord wants you to repent. You have never brought it to the light." That brother's wife was there, and she got mad. "I know your secret now," she said. "Oh, no, I've never done it!" the man replied. "What do you mean, you have never done it!" the woman with the gift of knowledge said. "I will tell you the details." And she gave the exact date, the place and the name of the other woman involved. And then she said, "Now can you still deny it?" Finally the Spirit of God fell on this man and he confessed his sin.⁶³

When the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove converge, no secret is safe! He will expose sin to cleanse the temple. It is important to notice that cleansing at the foot of the Cross is the first work of the Dove. This is a common feature of revivals, which links them all together. At that point it is no longer necessary to logically persuade and cajole people into "repenting." The mighty presence of the Living God makes the need for repentance to become an act of urgency. Tari says: "All over the church that night, people confessed their secret sins. And the Lord really cleansed their lives of all of those sins and made the people ready to be used in His service."⁶⁴ Deep cleansing prepares for deep consecration and powerful service.

If you are praying for revival, personal or corporate, realize that you are asking for the arrival of the presence of God at a level that can be lethal! Many Christians have problems believing that God would strike people dead, as He did Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5. But there is accountability to truth when there is a convergence of the powers of the Cross and the Dove that is not present at that level in "normal" times. Edward Miller speaks of ministers in the USA in the 1920s and 1930s who spoke

⁶³ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

against the moving of the Spirit during a strong manifestation of the Presence of God. One of these men on his deathbed screamed, "I'm going into outer darkness!"⁶⁵ In the Indonesia Revival a brother was confronted about a specific sin he had hidden in his house. The Lord revealed that he had 24 hours to "come clean." He refused, and here is the account:

The next day when the man came to the meeting, he was told that he had only one hour left to repent. "If you don't repent, you'll die," the people said. "I don't care; I don't have any liquor," he said. "Now you have only half an hour," they told him. "Ah, you're crazy. I have more (time) than that," he replied. When they got within five minutes of the time, they tried to help him, but he still said, "No, I don't have any secret sin." "Please," they begged him, "confess your sin." Then there were only thirty seconds left, and he said, "Nah, don't tell me that stuff. You're crazy." Finally they pleaded as others counted 9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1. Then the man fell down and died.⁶⁶

When the presence of the living God is in the house, it is a time for total honesty and transparency before Him!! You may be able to get away with secret sin when the Cross and Dove are divided, but when they come together, be careful, you are dealing with the Living God, who is a consuming fire! This radical purging of sin unto holiness is the mark of real revival. It is the preparation for being sent out to declare the truth and power of the Kingdom of God. Tari's words so clearly show this outcome of the convergence of the Cross and the Dove:

In the Indonesian revival, confession was one of the characteristics, for the Lord wanted us to be set free from demonic power and to cleanse our hearts so we could live holy lives. First the Lord would bring *all* of our sins to the light. Then we would ask him to forgive us and heal our broken hearts. We would renounce all demonic relationships of the past. After this, God enabled us to preach the Gospel. When we went out, we could see the power of God moving.⁶⁷

Make no mistake about it; this cleansing is not optional. When we pray and ask God to send revival, we are praying for Him to expose *all* secret sin so that He may cleanse us. Notice that the moving of the mighty power of God in Indonesia followed the deep cleansing described above. Are you willing to experience this depth of exposure, my friend? If not, you're not really ready for revival. The transparency and exposure are well worth it, as the following accounts make clear. Once the fire of the presence of God cleansed the church, they were sent out in teams into the surrounding areas. In those years of visitation, God did signs and wonders and miracles at a level hardly seen since the Book of Acts. Demon power was totally subjected when the teams obeyed Jesus. At a gathering of demonic pagan priests, the

⁶⁵ Edward Miller, "Revivals I have Known" (videotape) Tape #1.

⁶⁶ Tari, 28,29.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 29 (emphasis mine).

Christians believed the words of Jesus in Mark 16, and prayed against the demons in the name of Jesus. The leader of these priests began to tremble, and wanted to accept Jesus immediately. They asked him what changed his mind and heart so suddenly:

"Oh, Jesus is more powerful than the devils," he replied. "How do you know that?" one of the team members asked. "I am a pagan priest," he replied. I have talked with the devils. "I know many of them by name." Then he started to cry, and couldn't control himself. "What is the matter? We don't know what is going on," someone from the team said. "Yes, yes, I know," the pagan priest replied. "But when you prayed in the name of Jesus, and bound all the demonic power here and commanded them to flee, do you know what happened?" "No," the team said, "we don't know what happened. You just tell us what happened." "I tell you," said the priest, "I saw with my own eyes and I heard with my own ears all the demonic power that has rules this village: They just gathered together, one by one, from the biggest to the smallest, and they ran away crying, 'Jesus won't permit us to stay here. We must go because Jesus wants these people.' Jesus must be a tremendous God. I want to know Jesus."⁶⁸

The man got saved then and there and the whole village repented and was converted. Jesus exerts absolute authority over the kingdom of darkness through his simple people, who are cleansed of sin by the fire of the Dove.

The signs and wonders in the realm of nature are too numerous to record, but I will list several to show you how intense the power of God can be when the Cross and the Dove converge. The teams had power over snakes and crocodiles in rivers as they were crossing.⁶⁹ As they commanded, the creatures fell back. In one village, the team ate poisoned food, and after several hours was still standing. The villagers demanded to have this power, which they said was greater than their witchcraft and potions.⁷⁰ A team crossed a flooded river in obedience to the command of Jesus to go and preach at a village on the other side. Although the river was twenty-five feet deep, the water never came past their knees all the way across.⁷¹ These teams traveled by foot across Timor for years, seeing every miracle of the Bible. The purpose of these mighty miracles, and the presence of the living God, which went before them, was the salvation of thousands upon thousands of people who were lost in pagan religious deception. The fire of God erupted from the convergence of the Cross and the Dove, as simple people trusted a loving God, who has given His Word. He will heal; deliver from demons, and save tens of thousands again if we will

⁶⁸ Ibid., 33,34.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 34, 35.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 36, 37.

⁷¹ Ibid., 39, 40.

entertain a convergence of the Cross and the Dove.

Chapter 8: Conclusion**Choosing a Place to Live**

We began this adventure together with a look at the dismal condition of the Church in the USA. We saw that statistically, there is little difference between the Church and the world in practical lifestyle and the practice of everyday life (chapter one). America needs revival desperately. But the revival we need will only come because some Christians are willing to live, for a time at least, at the convergence of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove. This is not an easy place to live. But I trust you see, through the chapters of this book, that every “easier way” is a deception. The temptation to divide these two powers, and live only, or mainly, in one of them, is a huge temptation. The vast bulk of the Church, through its history, and today, has given in to this temptation. If you choose to live at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove, you will be broken. You will weep between the porch and the altar. Many religious people who are satisfied with these two powers being divided will misunderstand you. But you will also be purified and made holy, because you can’t remain long at the intersection of the Cross and the Dove without the fire of God coming upon you!

It is easier to take the power of the Cross as an end in itself than to live at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. It is easy to console yourself, and think, “I’m forgiven, I am denying myself, yes I’m miserable, but at least I’m saved, why should I be concerned with demonstrating the power of the Dove?” Friend, there is a greater reality to this Christian life than just falling over the threshold in the door of God’s house. He wants you to enter in and enjoy His fullness. This is not “getting over” the Cross as much as it is “getting on” with the Cross. You have been called to be more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus. Are you? You have been called to exercise dominion over evil spirits and disease and infirmity in the spiritual realm. Do you? The life of the Cross can never be used as the excuse for a powerless, weak presence in the spiritual realm. Many Christians have misunderstood this. It is because they have divided the Cross and the Dove. The more you die, the more you live. The more you are broken, the more you are established. The more you suffer, the more you reign. The more you are persecuted, the greater your joy! That is why you must live at the convergence of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove.

It is easier to take the power of the Dove as an end in itself than to live at the convergence of the

power of the Cross and the power of the Dove. When you see and understand how desperate our Father is to manifest His power so that lost people are converted, you can take manifestations of spiritual power as the only thing. But if your speaking in tongues and prophesying is done without love, you are a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. If your healings and words of knowledge are brought forth without compassion, you will be hardened in deceit. Even your spirited presentation of the Gospel can be "making them twice as much a child of hell" as yourself, if you are a Pharisee! The answer is to live at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove. It's like living on the dividing edge of a mountain range. Who would want to live with the peak of the mountain sticking up in their living room? Steep slopes beckon your descent on either side. But if you will stay on that uncomfortable edge of discipline, you will have a view (vision) which the people on the slopes only dream of. And you'll be like a mighty eagle, ready to soar into flight at the impulse of your Master. Instant obedience will be available from the life lived at the peak of discomfort. There will be no need to clear more hurdles on the slopes, struggling past trees and brush. You choose to live daily in denial of the flesh, and yet in the dynamism of the Spirit. You are an overcomer who cannot be proud about it.

Life at the convergence of the Cross and the Dove is never boring, it's always exciting. But not in a humanistic, fleshly manner. It is exciting because you are fulfilling the destiny for which you were created. At the convergence of the Cross and the Dove, the presence of God is a constant lived reality. You really do not ever need to leave His Presence if you live at this convergence. This is how Jesus lived His life. He wants you to do the same. At the convergence, the fire of God burns hot continually. It purges and cleanses when that is needed. It empowers and emboldens when that is needed. You are not interested in rationalizing or excusing sin in any way. You are interested in seeing it destroyed. And you yourself are actively engaged in doing what Jesus did all the time, destroying the works of the devil. Finally, at the convergence of Cross and Dove, you live in constant expectancy of the Glory of God. He can break in with His manifested presence any time! And when he does, revival is in the land!!

Sons and Daughters of the Dove

Perhaps you are reading this book and you are finding yourself identifying with Peter as we find him in Matthew 16. Although he was a son of the Dove, Peter failed miserably in the matter of the Cross.

The stern warning that is obvious becomes a huge opportunity. Peter did not remain in the state of a floundering, uncertain son of the Dove, full of revelation one minute, and full of defeat the next. By the time of the Day of Pentecost, Peter had been through the Cross and the Resurrection. The fire fell on him, and he was ready to heal the sick, raise the dead, and preach boldly. He was also ready to go to prison, be tortured, ridiculed, and misunderstood, and finally die a martyr's death. Sons and daughters of the Dove, the fullness of Spirit is available to those who will live at the convergence of the power of the Cross and the power of the Dove. We are entering a time in God's economy when living at the convergence is no longer optional. It is absolutely necessary, and absolutely available. Take up the challenge to live there. One hundred years from now, you will be very glad you did!