
Subject: The Church of Tomorrow.

Dear Saints

Below please find an excellent article recently circulated by Revival Network.

Blessings!

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THE CHURCH of TOMORROW
-by Andrew Strom.

A lot of people probably read some of our writings and wonder, "Where is all this headed? What is the goal?" A glib answer might be- "We want to get back to real 'New Testament' Christianity." But what exactly does that look like?

This is an important topic - and something I have pondered a great deal over the years. What exactly would the 'New Testament Church' look like if it was translated into a modern western city?

To get started, I want you to forget about today's church just for a moment - with all her obvious problems and contradictions, and picture something quite different. I want you to imagine that you are still living in the same city, in the same year, but you are right in the middle of a 'Book of Acts'-type scenario. Somehow everything has changed.

For some reason, all of the Spirit-filled Christians in your city have left their Denominations and divisions behind. They have truly begun to fulfill the prayer of Jesus - "That they all may be ONE". They now hold huge gatherings all over the city - right out in the open. And as well as these united gatherings, on most streets there is now a house-meeting, where all the Spirit-filled believers from that street gather together, eating and sharing and having communion, etc. (ie. A "NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH"). The power of God flowing in these house-meetings is amazing. Many healings and miracles are occurring. The 'gifts' flow freely every day.

It seems also that many of the church buildings and cathedrals have simply been abandoned. No longer do Christians want to hide themselves away behind "four walls". They want to gather out where the people are - presenting Jesus to the whole world. They want to be truly "one body". There is no way that any of their old buildings could contain the crowds, anyhow.

And the men whom God has raised up to lead this vast movement do not seem much like the 'Reverends' or even the 'televangelists' of old. In fact, quite a few of them have never even been to Bible College, and they seem to be very plain, ordinary people from humble backgrounds. But what an anointing! It is very clear to everyone that these 'apostles and prophets' (as they are known) have spent many years in prayer and brokenness before God - drawing closer and closer to Him. When they speak, the very fear of the Lord seems to come down, and many people repent deeply of their sins. Demons are cast out and the blind and crippled are made whole. -These kinds of things are happening all the time. The whole city is just in awe of what is going on, and thousands upon thousands are being saved. Even the newspapers and television are full of it.

As soon as someone repents they are immediately baptized in water and hands are laid on them for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. -This is expected from day one! And it is also expected that every Christian has a gift and calling from God - and that they should be encouraged to move forward and fulfill their calling. No longer is

there a distinction made between those who are "ministers" and those who are merely 'laity'. Now it is expected that EVERYONE is a minister of the Lord! (However, there are 'elders' - ie. older Christians to guide things).

Some of the bishops and pastors from several denominations have actually denounced this great move of God very strongly. They say it is "deception" and warn their people to stay away. (-Every Revival in history has been accused of this - usually by religious leaders). But to be honest, it is so obvious to most people that God is the one behind it all, that very few take these men seriously. The Spirit of God is sweeping all before Him. The glory of the Lord has come.

One of the reasons that these leaders are so upset is that a lot of the Christians' GIVING now does not go to church buildings, but rather to the POOR. In fact, God has spoken to many people to start supporting widows and orphans overseas, etc. They also give generously to anyone in their midst who is in need. Many even sell their own possessions in order to do this.

The huge over-riding theme of this great movement is LOVE. "Behold how they love one another" is the catch-cry of many who watch this 'new church' in action. And everyone is given to MUCH PRAYER.

And so, gathering "as one" in the outdoors and breaking bread from house to house, they eat together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord adds to their number daily those who are being saved.

CAN This REALLY HAPPEN?

The above description is taken straight out of the Book of Acts - as applied to today. Everything in the above paragraphs is put there to give you an idea of what it would be like to live in the Jerusalem church at the start of Acts. -And it was like that for YEARS. Imagine the impact of such a church on the world around it! God is wanting to do this again. And He wants to use ordinary people like you and me to help bring it to pass.

I am convinced that we are NOT supposed to treat the early church as a "special case". It was given to us as an 'example'. It is what the "normal" church should be like all the time! And yet we have fallen so far below this standard. Only in times of Revival do we approach it again for a time. But I believe it is supposed to be "normal" for the church to be like this - day in and day out. This is the way that Jesus always wanted us to be.

However, one thing is clear. It will take a great "SHAKING" for us to get anywhere close to the above description today. You have to be aware that in order to get there from here, a whole lot of 'hierarchies' and church boards and careers and titles and positions would be on the line. And a lot of men simply don't want to lose those things. It doesn't matter to them whether it is Truth or not. If it affects their reputation, their position or their organization, they will oppose it with everything they have.

Sadly it is very difficult to see a "smooth" transition to this kind of Christianity. I believe we are in for a shaky ride. But I certainly believe that it is on God's agenda. And like the Great Reformation before it, I believe He will do WHATEVER IT TAKES in order to get us there.

Here's to true 'NEW TESTAMENT' Christianity, my friends - the kind that Jesus and the apostles actually invented in the beginning.

Let us settle for nothing less - WHATEVER IT TAKES.

God bless you all.

Andrew Strom.