

PENTECOSTAL

VS

CHARISMATIC

PART TWO

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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PENTECOSTAL VS CHARISMATIC

HERESIES WITHIN THE CHURCH

We will endeavour to briefly describe some of the different kinds of false teaching which the Church world has embraced in these last days - to their detriment and the destruction of many lives. We have already touched on some of these teachings in the previous section.

Today God still equips and strengthens those who would listen to His Spirit and the message of the Cross - what it has afforded those who would believe. Today there is a strong wind of the Spirit blowing from heaven to give revelation that would bring the standard and the power of God into the Church in these last days. Indeed God has said in His Word, *“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him”* (Isaiah 59:19). Amen.

When revival which embraces this holy standard sweeps the Church and the lands of the earth, it will not be like the revivals of the past in one respect, for God has left the best till last. Why has He done this? It is because the world has returned with full vigour to Sodom and Gomorrah. Indeed our world has travelled down an unholy road that produces sin of the most hellish origin, inciting the lust of corrupt hearts to allow abortion (murder), defacto relationships instead of marriage, same sex marriages, euthanasia etc. Some faithful Saints of the Cross believe that because of this evil that the western world has never before experienced on this scale or to this level, God will raise up an opposing standard of revelation and provide an increased level of power to those who would seek and follow His will for their lives in total surrender. God will use these, the few, not the many, to bring revival first to the Church, then to the nations of the earth. At this time the Pentecostal power of the Church (or part of it), surrendered to God, will turn timid pussy cats into bold lions of God - as happened with the equipping of the Church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts Ch.2). The revival fires of Pentecost will then bring the standard of the Spirit to the Church, to break down the walls of hell in people’s hearts and lives, adding thousands and even millions to the Kingdom.

Some believe that as the Church as a corporate body began in revival on the Day of Pentecost, so it will finish in revival, and that

God has saved His best until then. Sadly, along with this revival will come apostasy, at the very least that which is evident within the Church today but probably far worse. Nevertheless, much revelation and power will be the order of the day in this last revival, and with this will also come much persecution. If the people in Jesus' day nailed a man to a cross who healed the sick and raised the dead, in other words, came in much power and revelation, then shouldn't we also be prepared for persecution! Indeed we are promised in the Word of God:

2 TIMOTHY 3:12 Yes, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Once again, the answer to persecution is to meet it head on, with and by the power that comes to us through the Cross - the power of the Divine Nature and the Anointing of God.

“. . . Today there is a strong wind of the Spirit blowing from heaven to give revelation that would bring the standard and the power of God into the Church in these last days. . .”

In these end times, however, the Church desperately needs God's Spirit of revelation and power because much of the Church has fallen into doctrinal disrepair and therefore heresy which leads to apostasy. The result of heresy will be a lack of power to fight the good fight on both corporate and personal levels, and to wage spiritual warfare. Let us look more closely at the terms "heresy" and "apostasy" to discover what is involved and what are the consequences when the Church (or a large section of it) espouses false doctrine.

A simple introduction to the words "heresy" and "apostasy" is as follows:

Heresy is teaching lies about God and His Word, knowingly or unknowingly. The word heresy in an historical sense describes beliefs, views and teaching that contradict the core doctrines of the

Christian faith. Such doctrines, also called “Christian orthodoxy,” include those that relate to God, Christ, salvation and certain Biblical revelation. As such these doctrines are vital in regard to one’s redemption, ongoing walk with the Lord and entrance into heaven. To develop and teach error within these core doctrines is to undermine the finished work of Christ on the Cross, and all that pertains to it - God’s wonderful plan of redemption fulfilled at Calvary.

Apostasy, on the other hand, is treason - an abandonment of the faith that makes the apostate a deserter, one who has abandoned what he formerly professed. The English word “apostasy” comes from the Greek “apostasis” meaning “defection” or “revolt.” It can also mean “a falling away.”

Therefore there can be no apostasy (falling away) **without heresy** (false teaching), **and there can be no heresy without dogma** (the system of true Christian doctrine to measure all teaching against). Heretical teachings and doctrines within the Church bring those who embrace them into apostasy - of varying degrees, depending on the gravity or seriousness of the heresy.

As we have said, apostasy is “a falling away” from the faith of Jesus Christ and the Cross of Calvary where He became the atoning sacrifice that satisfied the courts of heaven. Apostasy is also the Church turning from taking up the cross in the power of Pentecost to do God’s will - to becoming a formularized religion. Again apostasy is a falling away from faith in the foundational fundamentals of Calvary - Christ being the vicarious atoning offering for man. Synonyms for apostasy are “defection,” “desertion,” “falsehood.”

“. . .Heretical teachings and doctrines within the Church bring those who embrace them into apostasy - of varying degrees, depending on the gravity or seriousness of the heresy. . .”

Concerning the Christian faith, apostasy has, in one form or another, always existed. Paul said this concerning apostasy, in the latter days before Christ’s return:

1 TIMOTHY 4:1 Now the Spirit speaks expressly (clearly and pointedly), that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (doctrines inspired by demons and taught by men);

1 TIMOTHY 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron

Apostasy is a turning away from truth, through heresy. Most heresy is a deadly combination of a little of the Word of God mixed with human ideas. This causes the truth of God's Word to be polluted, and creates doctrines that take people away from the faith. So by the mixing of God's Word and man's ideas, heresies are created within the Church. As we have said, this term is usually reserved for teachings which depart from the fundamentals of God's Word, and thus, when believed, cause problems in relation to salvation, e.g. the Cross, the Blood, eternal life, etc.

There are many heresies taught within the Church today. For example, we find the following false doctrines to be extremely prevalent: once you are saved you cannot fall away and so become unsaved, Jesus died spiritually and needed to be born again in hell, the Cross is a place of defeat, Jesus actually became sin on the Cross, to gain what we desire we must have faith in faith. All these false heretical teachings will invariably take people away from the message of the Cross and our need for repentance so that the Blood may wash us and ready us to serve the Father in Christ.

The term Apostate Church is quite often used. There are two versions of the Apostate Church:

1. That which ignores the Cross altogether, by teaching its own brand of righteousness.
2. That which claims to believe in the Cross, but adds to the finished work of Christ, so really nullifying what Christ has done.

Depending on the degree of heresy/apostasy, there will be problems which relate to:

(a) People becoming born again (through repentance and forgiveness, the Blood of the Lamb and Christ's vicarious sacrifice)

(b) Christians frustrating the grace of God by which they could walk in His will and be progressively freed from bondages of the mind and the flesh.

GALATIANS 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the Law (any kind of law or works), then Christ is dead (has died) in vain.

JOHN 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, "If you continue in My Word (seek, find and embrace My teachings), then are you My Disciples indeed;

JOHN 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (deliver you from bondage)."

When men devise (even with so-called good intentions) their own rules, so as to take away from or even add to the Cross, then this becomes heretical teaching and causes a departure from the Truth.

“. . . Most heresy is a deadly combination of a little of the Word of God mixed with human ideas. . . ”

We quote on the subject of heresy: *“The 21st-century Christian is faced with a plethora, a virtual ‘legion’ of gospels. All of these are garbed in the most alluring of dress and call to the Believer in the most seductive of whispers. As quoted above, Irenaeus, the great 2nd-century defender of the faith against the heresy of Gnosticism, warned that error is never put forward in a manner that exposes its grotesque deformities. Instead, it is packaged in outward adornment so appealing that it appears ‘more true than truth itself.’ The tremendous appeal of heresy is that it looks and sounds like the real thing! Consequently, the demarcation between heresy and orthodoxy is rarely clear cut.*

The most dangerous heresies lie in the gray area, a shadowy place of both light and darkness. These ‘different gospels’ may vary in the particular doctrinal error they propagate but all heresies have one thing in common: their threat to the Church is directly proportionate to the degree in which they appear orthodox. The most dangerous of lies is not the bald-faced lie, for that is easily detected and rejected. A half-truth always does far more damage than a bald-faced lie.”¹

(underlines added)

Some modern day examples of heresies which are prevalent within the Church today are as follows:

1. HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Most of the Body of Christ has embraced humanistic psychology. This is a definite departure from the teaching of Romans Ch.6 and therefore the Gospel that Jesus gave to the Church to proclaim to the ends of the earth. Psychology consists of man’s ideas on how man functions, and is based on anything but God’s Word. Even the Church, by and large, seeks victory through its philosophies and methods. Nothing will ever compare, however, to the Creator’s Manual of Life which tells us that evil must be dealt with in a person’s life, and only repentance, the Blood of Calvary and the grace it affords can do this. There is no other way for man’s woes, either in the short term or the long term, to be dealt with effectively. The root of man’s problems and ills is spiritual. Thus we must come to God through Christ if we are to have the victory. We therefore need the wisdom of God and the gifts of the Spirit to help others - to identify problems and give direction to highly complex individuals for whom formulas and generalizations will not work.

“ . . .Psychology consists of man’s ideas on how man functions, and is based on anything but God’s Word. . . ”

The reason most of the so-called Bible Colleges and Charismatic ministries have embraced psychology is because the doctrines that the majority of the churches are teaching are not giving the answers required and so are not meeting the needs of man. Charismatic doctrine will never provide what is needed to do God's will in the power of His Spirit. Along with their feeble doctrines, ministers add new so-called "revelations" from God in order to keep the interest of the sheep. So they add a new arm to the arsenal of their doctrinal mix and guess what, humanistic psychology comes to be included in the syllabus of their particular Charismatic Bible College. These then churn out "ministers" to doctrinally pollute and poison the streams and rivers of the Church world.

Human thought (accepted thinking) has been progressively corrupted by psychology, and this corruption has been embraced by most of the Church. Psychology is really a philosophy that gives man credibility within society to address and rectify the woes of man. In embracing psychology, Christianity has become philosophized. The reason psychology has crept into the Church is because of unbelief - man trusting man instead of God and His Word! Many churchgoers simply do not believe in God's power operating through the Cross, and what it can do according to His Word. They may acknowledge that there is a God, but they do not embrace the Word of God. There is therefore no power to deliver or restore.

For many years there has been debate in the Church world concerning many aspects of the Bible, as to whether different areas are of God or not. Some areas are regarded as true and other areas are seen as fables, myths and symbols. In other words, the authority and the infallibility of God's Word are questioned. Many do not believe the Word is authoritative, or they wouldn't meddle with it in the way they do. As a consequence of unbelief, men and women in deep turmoil and suffering depression go to the elders of the churches for help and are referred to so-called "Christian psychologists." The Word tells us to do something different, and reveals to us what the outcome can be.

“. . .As a consequence of unbelief, men and women in deep turmoil and suffering depression go to the elders of the churches for help and are referred to so-called “Christian psychologists.”. . .”

God says that those who are sick (in mind or body) should call on the elders of the church, confess their sins in repentance and allow the Blood to cleanse them. Then the elders are to pray the prayer of faith in Jesus’ Name, according to the Word of God. Responding to an open heart and the prayer of faith, God will raise that man or woman up out of their sickness, spiritually and physically:

JAMES 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord (the oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit; here it is to be used as a point of contact from which one can release one’s faith when the prayer is prayed):

JAMES 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save (heal) the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him (if he repents).

JAMES 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

This kind of prayer can bring healing to those with physical sickness and mental sickness which includes mood and emotion disorders, and serious psychiatric illness. However, just as many Christians fail to gain healing of the body, many also fail to gain healing of the mind. These then need to seek medical help and appropriate counsel. For some, medication will be required to counter extreme mental problems - to level out emotions or nullify hallucinations and delusions for instance.

Mind disorders vary from minor to the extreme. Today many so-called normal people are not thinking clearly and become depressed and even suicidal. Anxious and negative thoughts flood and virtually drown them so that they cannot function properly in day-to-day life. They need friendship, love and common-sense counsel, not a donkey to pin the tail on. They may even need medication for an interim period. What they don't need is humanistic psychiatry or psychology which looks for the reason for our ills, in other words, someone or something other than ourselves to blame!!

At another level entirely, we find people with schizophrenia or other forms of psychosis who are experiencing delusions (believing things that aren't true e.g. paranoia) and hallucinations (seeing or hearing something that doesn't exist). This kind of problem involves a loss of connection with reality and requires intervention by appropriately trained doctors i.e. psychiatrists. Psychiatry can assist people and level out such extremes of mind disorders. Psychiatry mixed with common-sense counselling can bring relief to sufferers and help to some extent, but psychiatry mixed with human psychology treats no man effectively.

The complexity of this subject is overwhelming and there are no formulas for success because each individual is different, and needs vary from person to person. Mind problems can be the result of poor genetics, chemical imbalances, neurological disorders and even chemical abuse. Today it is being found, for instance, that the use of marijuana can trigger off schizophrenia in people who have a predisposition towards this illness, despite no prior symptoms.

As stated, medication may be needed, at times or for periods - sometimes lengthy periods. However any counselling that people receive, to be of any true value in the long term, must be based on God's truth. This truth is that man without God's help or reliance on God's grace will always be a failure as a person - a sinner needing the Blood of Jesus to wash their sin through repentance and the acceptance of Jesus' Lordship. It is not to be denied that men, because of the Fall, have "bad genetics" that affect them at a neurological and even psychological level.

One of the problems with psychology is its core belief that man is inherently good. Psychologists then tell man how good he really is, and that his problems have arisen through externals - environmental inconsistencies and training. Then because he is inherently "good," within him dwells the strength and goodness to do

good, firstly for his own benefit, and secondly for the benefit of others. However we see that the Bible teaches the very opposite. Indeed man is inherently evil, dominated by the sin nature and able to do nothing but sin against God (Jeremiah 17:9). Without God's help, he will remain a sinner who sins, bound for eternal punishment. There is no inherent goodness in man, only a shadow of God's image that causes man to do "good" things, even with seemingly good motives. Man, however, cannot deal with his own sin, and cannot truly treat his fellow man as he ought until he deals with God first. This is the reality of the situation, despite the psychologists' claim that man can deal with man, addressing the difficulties which supposedly have arisen purely from circumstances rather than circumstances plus an indwelling and intrinsic sin problem.

“. . . One of the problems with psychology is its core belief that man is inherently good . . . However we see that the Bible teaches the very opposite . . . man is inherently evil, dominated by the sin nature and able to do nothing but sin against God. . .”

When will the Church ever wake up to the incumbent darkness that is more than a shadow - it is like an eclipse on the landscape that is frozen in time, causing hearts to grow or remain cold towards the things of God. Only when churches and ministries come back to the Cross, the Blood and the Book of Acts, will Pentecostals be led and empowered by the Spirit. Only then will hearts be thawed by the Pentecostal flame so as to bring the passion of God into the Church. Only then will the Pentecostal Church be truly Pentecostal, which is to be Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered, and to bring the passion of true love into the Church.

2. METHODS AND FORMULAS

Satan has his hordes working overtime, attacking the Christian churches from within. When Pentecostal churches use mainline

human-devised methods (e.g. the “purpose driven” life) and the formulas of the seeker-sensitive Charismatics that have replaced seeking the Lord’s mind on all matters, no matter what cost is involved, then they have lost their Pentecostal way and have no real experiential relationship with God. Indeed magic formulas are religion not relationship, for religion follows formulas, even if these seem to be “good” to the natural mind. God said clearly in Isaiah 55:8-9:

ISAIAH 55:8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.

ISAIAH 55:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

He has told us to base our relationship with Him on His truth illuminated by His Light (John 8:31-32), and to be led by His power at work in us. This is a daily ongoing journey of faith, not a response to a set of formulas.

Let us be clear and state that any person not empowered and enriched by God’s Light (and this is the Holy Spirit’s ministry) cannot properly see the righteous path of God’s choosing - His will for them. Some examples of the way the Light of God (the leading and empowerment of the Spirit) is rejected, and the consequences of doing so, are as follows:

The grace of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not promoted as it should be in many Charismatic churches - or if it is, it is not for the right reasons. If this is so then it is a rejection of God’s way.

“Charismatic” Pentecostal churches which use mainline teachers and preachers in order to promote unity are really promoting the unholy ecumenical movement. In other words, to do this is to promote the unity of man, while calling it the unity of the Spirit of God. It is a joke to suggest we bring in grade one teachers to instruct the teachers of grade six. This, spiritually speaking, is what is taking place and it makes no sense.

The mandate of mainline teachers at Charismatic conferences, churches and meetings is to keep unity. Therefore they only teach doctrinally that which would cause this bond to be strengthened. Anything controversial, or whatever would cause argument, is

avoided. Just because they say “I believe God has brought us together,” does not mean that He has.

“ . . . “Charismatic” Pentecostal churches which use mainline teachers and preachers in order to promote unity are really promoting the unholy ecumenical movement . . . ”

This practice causes spiritual apathy because what is said is devised from the human mind with human intentions, at best, with no power of the Spirit. What else can it bring but apathy because like all religion, it preaches something it cannot deliver. Spiritual apathy comes when churches do not follow that which Christ has said to do, i.e., to be saved, be water-baptized, be Spirit-baptized and then follow the leading of the Spirit. What follows apathy, if not corrected, is usually heresy, and unfortunately this is what has happened in most of the Church.

The Pentecostal way will always try to bring the yielded Saint to experience a relationship with God at the most intimate level - in fact to try to bring that person not just to heaven’s gates but into the atmosphere of God in His throneroom. The Charismatic way with its glitzy formulas, cannot even transport you out of earth’s atmosphere, let alone bring you to the gates of heaven. The reason is that Charismatic doctrine is not built on the rock of God’s revealed Word. Rather, as we have said, it is built on the sand of man’s emotional desires and demands.

“ . . . The Pentecostal way will always try to bring the yielded Saint to experience a relationship with God at the most intimate level . . . ”

We are to love mainline and Charismatic Christians and encourage them if possible (if they have an open heart) in the

Pentecostal truth that God has given, not the religion man has made out of Christianity. Yes we can have limited fellowship of sorts, and for their sake, we are not to ignore them completely, the genuinely saved. We are to give them at least a chance to hear the truth we know in God, but we cannot share a platform that denies the power of Pentecost in any way. This method is powerless through the compromise that religion exercises. Therefore we are not to bow our knee to ecumenicalism at the expense of fundamental truth - for if we do so, it is treason. In fact to reject God's way is sin, for there can be no compromise with God on the matter. It is our responsibility as Christians to seek His will according to the scriptures, knowing that if we seek properly (with an open heart), we will find His will. Scripture shows us that all churches are to be "Book of Acts" churches, promoting first Calvary and the Blood of Christ. They are then to promote the second great grace after salvation, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit - again with all the energy that is available to them. In the last days of the Church Age, Paul warned:

2 TIMOTHY 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous (difficult, spiritually dangerous) times shall come.

2 TIMOTHY 3:2 For men (who call themselves Christians: 2 Timothy 3:5) shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous (lovers of money), boasters, proud (arrogant), blasphemers (abusive), disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy (profane),

2 TIMOTHY 3:3 Without natural affection (unloving), trucebreakers (unforgiving, seeking no reconciliation), false accusers (slanderers), incontinent (lacking self-control), fierce (brutal), despisers of those who are good,

2 TIMOTHY 3:4 Traitors (treacherous), heady (rash), highminded (conceited), lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

2 TIMOTHY 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away (avoid

such people because their conduct contradicts what they profess).

2 TIMOTHY 3:6 *For of this sort (for among them) are they who creep into houses, and lead captive (captivate) silly women laden with sins, led away (swayed and led) with (by) divers lusts (various evil desires),*

2 TIMOTHY 3:7 *Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (because of carnality and bias).*

Of course at worst these scriptures talk about people who call themselves Christians but are enshrouded in deep darkness and living a lie. At best they speak of Christians who are forever looking for truth that suits their agendas. If one looks at the beginning of this chapter, the Spirit through Paul is addressing the end-time Church and the part that has been corrupted. Revelation 3:14-22 prophetically addresses the Laodicean Church of the end times. We believe we are now living in the end times of the Church Age and that many of the Pentecostal churches are “Laodicean” in nature and so have become “Charismatic.” Let us therefore be aware, and warn our brothers and sisters, as we have the opportunity, of the false teaching within the Church, i.e. the departure from the Gospel truths of the Cross, holiness and service.

3. THE INCLUSION DOCTRINE

With the false teaching and heresy so evident in the Church today, from some mainline and Charismatic churches comes doctrine that gives false hope of “inclusion” to many outside the Kingdom - and this, of course, appeals to human nature, flawed as it is in the absence of God’s Light or empowerment. Their argument to support this doctrine is based on their imaginations, on what they think, and is therefore, as we have said, built on sand, having no true Biblical foundation. Yet they raise a darkened banner to proclaim its authenticity. “Inclusion” is a demonic doctrine that includes, at worst, all (i.e. all will enter heaven), and a little less than worst, many from false religions, be they Moslems or Buddhists or Hindus, can enter heaven through Christ even though they don’t know Him!!!

“ . . . From some mainline and Charismatic churches comes doctrine that gives false hope of “inclusion” to many outside the Kingdom - and this, of course, appeals to human nature, flawed as it is in the absence of God’s Light or empowerment. . . ”

The Inclusion Doctrine encompasses what is known to **Universalism**. Basic to this gross heresy is the belief that Jesus Christ, through His death and Resurrection, paid the price for all of humanity to enter heaven, without anyone being required to repent of sin and receive the gift of salvation. Therefore salvation is unconditional, and all people, regardless of their worship of idols or religious beliefs, will have their destiny in heaven. This of course is a complete contradiction of Biblical truth.

Another aspect of the inclusion doctrine that is being proclaimed today by some well known ministers is what is termed “**the Wider Mercy Doctrine**.” This maintains that those who have never heard of Christ and have never been exposed to a Bible but who try to live good lives and know in their hearts that there is a God, will enter heaven. In other words, only God can judge a man’s heart, and we will not know who we will see in heaven, once again “good” Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus etc.

“ . . . Another aspect of the inclusion doctrine that is being proclaimed today by some well known ministers is what is termed “the Wider Mercy Doctrine” . . . ”

All of this contravenes what the Bible, God’s holy Word, says about the situation. For example, Romans 10:9 and 10 teach us that faith comes by hearing the message of truth proclaimed, and that salvation is received through faith - by confessing the Lordship of

Christ and receiving Him as such. Why preach the Gospel to every tribe and tongue if heaven is open to those without light? Why did Jesus give the Great Commission to the Church to be its pre-eminent purpose if its declaration was not to be the only means by which people could be saved? And why empower the Church to evangelise the world through the mighty Spirit Baptism if there existed other ways to obtain eternal life? Jesus Himself said with absolute clarity:

JOHN 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me.”

MATTHEW 7:13 “Enter ye in at the strait (narrow) gate (this is the only Door - Jesus: John 10:1): for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

MATTHEW 7:14 Because strait (narrow, small) is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.”

The inclusion doctrine, if proclaimed at any level, again brings an unholy ecumenical spirit into the Church to produce a corrupt foundation. God’s answer to this heresy within the churches was planned before creation and revealed at the Cross. Again it was and is only the Blood of Christ that saves us from our sin. There is no other way, no other formula, no second chance. Christ is the one and only Mediator between God and man, and repentance and receiving Him as Lord and Saviour is the only way to enter heaven.

Another aspect of the inclusion heresy is concerned with unconditional eternal security, and the false belief that those who receive salvation can never become unsaved. How absolutely unscriptural! (Matthew 5:13; Galatians 5:4; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 2:20-22). Yet man without God’s help will gladly embrace anything that will give him control, that will give him licence to self-rule or satisfy his greed while absolving him from all responsibility. Those who repent of their sin and accept Him, but then turn away, cannot be “included” - for they have chosen through unbelief, or other sin unto death, to re-enter the darkness (Hebrews 10:26-31). Unless they repent, they remain outside His Kingdom, and eternally lost.

Ministers who don't warn their people, especially their young people, concerning the boundaries of salvation, will be held accountable by God. As a consequence of the heretical ramblings of these so-called ministers, many sitting in Pentecostal congregations are unsaved, ignorant of foundational doctrines which relate to salvation, and unaware of their deathly plight.

4. DENOMINATIONALISM

It is sad today to see the brick walls of denominations causing segregation, even among Pentecostal churches, in terms of fellowship and denial of truth.

Denominationalism has robbed untold numbers of Christians of vital truths understood and explained by anointed teachers outside their particular denominations.

Concerned about error, Pastors of these churches, like overprotective fathers, treat their 60 year old members like 10 year old children. The answer is to seek truth whatever it is and wherever it is to be found. Their fault or mistake lies in their bias regarding their own denomination. God's truth is not given to just one denomination, let alone one church - how foolish.

God has given to the whole Church - all Believers - His whole Word, and no one has copyright, sole ownership or complete understanding. Therefore we need one another, or should we say God in and through one another. But every morsel of understanding must come through the Light of Calvary and the power of the Spirit. There is no other way, method or means of revelation.

Scripture shows us from the beginning that church structure consisted of local independent bodies (churches) gathering under the banner of Christ, and relying on the Holy Spirit for leading and power. As the Church grew, denominations became one means by which churches could affiliate, bringing a common Holy Spirit standard which all agreed upon for the sake of integrity.

“. . .Denominationalism has robbed untold numbers of Christians of vital truths understood and explained by anointed teachers outside their particular denominations. . .”

The Church government of denominations is good if this type of government helps bring a Holy Spirit standard to the churches - again gathering under the banner of Christ and the Cross. But a local independent church, which may have affiliations with other churches or denominations but stands on its own with regard to its own independence, should be seen in the same light as a recognized denominational church. In all things we are to be led by the Spirit, with or without denominations. The only thing which is right for a local body is the direction the Spirit gives, i.e. to be independent with or without affiliations, or to be part of a denominational structure.

Both independent (with or without legal affiliation) and denominational churches have their place in the Body of Christ. Furthermore, it is not necessary to belong to a particular denomination, or indeed any denomination in order to be saved. What is required is a personal commitment and faith in that commitment until one's last breath, so that one may "stay in Christ." This is the only guarantee of salvation - repentance, the acceptance of Jesus' Lordship, and continuing to abide in Him! Let us therefore fellowship together in the knowledge of Him Who has made us one by His Blood. Also, God's holy Word must have the last say on all matters, for no board, pope, or church can overrule or overturn that which God has declared on any matter in His Word. It is to be the first and final authority and should not be taken out of context or interpreted outside of the harmony of scripture.

5. THE NEW "EVANGELISTS"

In the Church today we have a new breed of so-called "evangelists" who espouse and preach a new gospel. At the heart of this gospel is not the Cross of Calvary and the cross of self-denial (Matthew 10:37-39; Luke 9:23, 24) but the satisfaction of human wants and desires.

Unchurched new converts within the Charismatic churches must be made comfortable in church life, so all is geared to achieve this goal. Sermons to stimulate the interest of the masses include those which focus on self esteem, self-wants and all is wonderful so just rest in His blessings! Let us give you the formulas, the buttons to press so you can have all you desire. These are the unholy doctrines of a Laodecean Church.

If preachers had the power of the Holy Spirit operating in their ministries, this human response to man's spiritual needs would be shunned. The reason churches and ministers appeal to their converts in this way is because they do not truly know the ways of the Holy Spirit. Therefore in their responses to men's needs, there is no evidence of God's power moving through their ministries or coming forth from their so-called doctrine. Because very little seems to work, new doctrine is continually churned out and preached from the pulpit in order to maintain an appearance of life and progress in these churches and ministries. In fact there is little life and much darkness, and heartache results! The failure rate is like an ever increasing road toll, perpetuated year after year with no end in sight.

Nothing much will work in these churches or ministries spiritually speaking, let us say it again, without the preaching of Christ and Him crucified, and that all sin must be put under the Blood through repentance. Then the mighty Baptism in the Holy Spirit must be preached and accepted in order to bring the enriched atmosphere of heaven to the Believer's heart so He is better able to absorb heaven's graces and so do God's will.

Ongoing sanctification, obedience and yielding to the Father's will are neglected by the new Evangelists while Believers are encouraged to seek the desires of their hearts which God will and must deliver to them in the form of blessing after blessing. There is no focus on personal responsibility, just on what can be gained, what is rightfully ours! This is worldly, fleshy and unscriptural.

“ . . . Ongoing sanctification, obedience and yielding to the Father’s will are neglected by the new Evangelists while Believers are encouraged to seek the desires of their hearts. . . ”

All doctrine regarding our personal responsibility must have its roots in Calvary. This spells ongoing relationship and complete dependence on the Lord and His leading.

Doctrine is not to be baked in the oven of the human mind to produce a formula for human manna (food). No, doctrine is to lead us deeper into our relationship with our loving Father through Jesus Christ by the intimate power of the Holy Spirit. This is the Gospel which should be preached in the churches all around the world.

The new Evangelists, however, bring a new gospel that omits nearly all of this. Whether this occurs by choice or by ignorance does not excuse them. Nor does it excuse the people with itching ears who come to hear their latest so-called revelation or dream.

Again let us state that doctrine is meant to bring us into deeper relationship, not give us formulas so we can press all the right buttons (in prayer of course!) and wait for the mailman (who is God) to deliver the heavenly package. This turns the Bible into a mail order catalogue!! Whatever you desire can be yours! How impersonal and how wrong. God will never respond by rewarding His children who treat or try to use His holy Word in this manner. He is a personal God Who wants to fellowship in an intimate and powerful way with His sons and daughters, in all aspects of their lives. To reduce His living Word to a set of formulas aimed at personal gain shuts the door on God. Faith comes, yes in part by hearing, but we must not stop there for relationship must be incorporated in order for His Divine gift (of faith) to be developed in the mind and heart of the Believer.

“ . . . Again let us state that doctrine is meant to bring us into deeper relationship, not give us formulas so we can press all the right buttons. . . ”

Let us pray that God will raise up a standard against these new Evangelists that will expose their doctrine for what it is - darkened, decaying rubbish that people are digesting with the result that their minds become infected. Let us pray that a holy standard of God's grace will be set in place in the Church, a standard which cannot be ignored. Amen.

6. GOVERNMENT OF TWELVE

There is a growing movement within the Body of Christ called “the Government of Twelve” or “G12,” and it epitomizes what we have taught in regard to formulas. This is a system of church rule which basically constitutes cell groups only, under the leadership or rule of particular men who are answerable to other leaders in a pyramid structure. At the top level are 12 leaders who are answerable to a single head. Thus the acronym “G12.” There is no corporate worship or structure as in a normal church, just cell groups. This full emphasis on cell groups gives opportunity for control and denies the normal checks and balances which are present when ministers operate in a typical church environment. The freedom present in the normal church setting is also denied in the “G12” cell group system.

This system has the goal of winning people to Christ, but under a tyrannical kind of rule. “Trained leaders” bring to the groups intense teaching, including the breaking of generational curses, the false doctrine of inner healing and much more. A large amount of this teaching is based on visualization methods and so much time is spend on the devotees “visualizing what God has for them.” Let us state that nowhere in scripture is this validated. Rather we are to be led personally, first and always, by the Holy Spirit, and not by what we dream up or decide we want - in other words, “visualize.”

The G-12 movement believe they have a mandate from God to rule disciplined nations as a religious government. In believing this

they are actually taking on aspects of the Dominion (Kingdom Now) teaching which we will discuss later in this document. In this they pull away from individual relationships with the Lord at an intimate level, to turn their religious zeal loose on this goal. The end result is quite often a religiously based political movement that uses the “Church” to recruit volunteers who can bring them into government, all this of course, “in the Name of the Lord.” Such a “Christian government” sounds very appealing, but the Bible gives no mandate for such - only to win the lost by sharing and preaching, to heal the sick and to take up our cross and follow Jesus!

Without going into great detail, let us tell you that the goal of this movement, in terms of the individual, is to control them, again “in the Name of Jesus.” Some of the methods used are comprised of nothing more than the cult practice of brainwashing - using psychological methods to condition the converts to submit to the leaders of their group. In other words, they use the Bible to make a law out of their faith, and therefore a religion. To live in the Law of God without the grace of the Spirit empowering us is to bring our Christianity to the level of a dead religion. It is lifeless but it appeals to some because they falsely believe that “works” please God. In this system of works, man is self-ruling with no grace. This means that only defeat and failure will follow. Jesus said:

COLOSSIANS 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you (take you captive) through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men (man’s ideas not God’s), after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

MARK 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

We have not covered “G-12” in detail, only sufficiently to bring to you an awareness of this new brand of false teaching in Charismatic circles. It is a system that tries to bring an unholy control into the Body of Christ. Although the proponents say they are wanting to win people to Christ, their methods and practices are unscriptural and, in fact, evil. All that will be accomplished by these methods is to place and keep people in bondage. Love does not control. It gives people space to live and breathe, and allows people to make their own choices. Yes love will, if allowed, inform and

challenge in regard to truth, i.e. tell it like it is, in wisdom of course. But love will always give the other person the right to choose, in their own time. The system of “G12” does the very opposite.

“. . .The G-12 movement believe they have a mandate from God to rule disciplined nations as a religious government . . . but the Bible gives no mandate for such - only to win the lost. . .”

In fact the more one properly researches the G-12 movement, the more one can see the unscriptural practices and principles it teaches. It is not a movement in which to be involved, or with whose members to fellowship.

Our advice is to keep away from it, warn others about it and pray for anyone you know who is involved in it that they may see the Light of God’s way and decide to fellowship in a proper church which is flowing in the power of God’s love and truth.

7. THE CIRCUIT OF POSITIVE MOTIVATION SEMINARS

Certain corners of the Charismatic world provide nothing more than a platform for a circuit of positive motivation speakers. These people teach false doctrine, using scripture taken out of context to put their “Christian” slant on their teachings. This makes what they say sound like the greatest “deal” going when nothing could be further from the truth. You can dress up a pig all you like, but even with the most expensive clothes and the best makeup, it will always be a pig. It is the same with false doctrine. No matter how much scripture one uses, unless doctrine is validated by the whole Word of God, not taken out of context and not backed up by an invalid translation, a paraphrased distortion of the original meaning, it is not truth.

“ . . . Certain corners of the Charismatic world provide nothing more than a platform for a circuit of positive motivation speakers. . . ”

The Bible is there to lead us to God and reveal His thinking on all matters - in order to help us in our daily relationship and reveal our responsibility to Him in our position in Christ. Many Charismatics use the Bible for their own purposes, interpreting it according to their own bias and agenda, or finding a translation that will do so, always referring to scripture to prove that God must act accordingly if you press the three designated scriptural buttons. This is sometimes termed “working the Word.” On they go with formula after formula, replacing the teaching of proper Divine relationship with their view of what God has put into place so that all we have to do is confess our desires into existence. Let us tell you that unless you develop, after salvation, a personal relationship which is expressed on a daily basis, you will disqualify yourself from heaven’s graces on this earth - which are needed to live your life experientially in Him. So do not place your intellectual knowledge of the Bible, important as it is, above your personal relationship with the Lord.

In this, the Bible as an entity in itself is considered to be the source of all that is good, containing, as it does, all the necessary magic formulas. Without an ongoing two-way relationship which is expressed on a daily basis, however, we can make the Bible (which is good) an idol in our so-called faith.

Once we are saved, if we don’t experience the Divine energies afforded to us through the Cross according to our Divine connection (which is us experientially partaking of the Divine Nature), there will be no real experiential relationship.

We are not to worship the Bible, as important and invaluable as it is, but rather the Author of it. Then if we yield to Him with an open heart, He will show us how to read and understand it (or Him) as we seek His truth contained in it with no personal agenda - no desire for self-gain (Luke 24:45). Our desire should be to know more of God and His ways, and to be growing to be more Christ-like.

Then God will use us to help build the Kingdom, according to the plan and purpose He has set for us.

The preachers who are no more than positive motivation speakers fanning the evil flame of the “prosperity doctrine” shout from the microphone, “I believe God wants to do a new thing in the Church.” It is deceptive and misleading for it appeals to the emotional wants of the trained hearer to expect “new” things from God. The truth is that there is nothing “new,” for the truth needed to serve and live for God has already been given. Yes God allows for the cultural changes that have occurred throughout history - but not at the expense of His principles. His grace and mercy are new every morning, but God never changes and neither do His Kingdom principles. They are not new and they never change.

“. . . Unless you develop, after salvation, a personal relationship which is expressed on a daily basis, you will disqualify yourself from heaven’s graces on this earth. . .”

Self-esteem classes based on humanistic psychology will never deliver a person from the sin of self-rule. But this many so-called preachers promote. These philosophies are heralded as the formulas for success. They are nothing but cheap, dark substitutes for the power of truth and the fire of Pentecost. They are broken cisterns that will not hold God’s living water needed to germinate the seeds of truth (Jeremiah 2:13).

Jesus in His sinless walk came to point out again and again that man is a sinner by nature, and needs deliverance through the power of God. Then every day, even regenerated man needs to rely on God’s power in order to walk righteously. However these preachers teach with all the hype they can generate, appealing to the emotional wants of the hearers, again those with ears itching to hear what they want to hear. It is so easy to appeal to the flesh and twist a scripture or two or even three, and then say “I believe God is doing a new thing.” Then they give the seven steps to obtaining one’s desires, the desires of one’s heart - which are usually in the material realm. Of course nothing is mentioned about anything that is of a so-called

negative or confronting nature, or about anything to do with total surrender. Repentance, the Blood and total yieldedness are never taught within any proper structure.

Some say enough so as to mouth (or give lip service to) these words but give no real teaching. They use just enough of the right words to make the message seem of God. They may believe that they are sincere in their hearts, but the truth is that they are confused and deceived in their doctrine. The “prosperity teachers” base their doctrine on human want or greed, not God’s Word, having twisted the Word to accommodate their particular bias. The message is not Godly but fleshy and humanistic, and in fact of a dark nature - for anything not of God is dark, by reason of the absence of His Light.

People then attend teaching seminar after teaching seminar, following their latest star preacher so as to obtain the latest keys to success in gaining their wants from God. Formula after formula is presented at these positive motivation / self-esteem classes. Each time a person goes to them they are moving further away from the true Pentecostal teaching of “experiential relationship” by the power of the Spirit in the atmosphere of Pentecost. It is this which causes the child of God to be willing to give up anything and everything if God asks it.

The preaching of self-esteem from a humanistic viewpoint will never give man the power to let go of the steering wheel of self-rule. These new preachers of humanistic doctrine have lowered the spiritual bar to a new level in this modern era. Holiness, ongoing sanctification, repentance, yielding, persecution and sacrifice are words that do not fit easily into the sermons of these new Charismatics. Such concepts cannot be blended with their “new word from the Lord” doctrines.

“ . . . These new preachers of humanistic doctrine have lowered the spiritual bar to a new level in this modern era. . . ”

People are encouraged to give to their ministries and are told that whatever they give financially, they will receive back 100 times as much so that they can buy whatever they desire - all based on certain selected scriptures of course!! This is simply a “give to get”

approach which promotes the greed of the flesh (1 John 2:16). It is one thing to believe for God to provide for your need of a house or a car, and just trust that all will work out, to laying down cash and expecting a return on your so-called “investment.” Godly character can never be developed in a man or woman who will not lay down their life so that God’s will can be done - in their heart and life.

Lay down little and receive little.

Lay down much and receive much. This is the truth involved in becoming more Christ-like.

MATTHEW 16:24 Then said Jesus unto His Disciples, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself (his own ambitions, wants, ideas, plans, etc. - everything concerned with self-rule), and take up his cross, and follow Me.

MATTHEW 16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.

MATTHEW 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

8. THE SELF-ESTEEM DOCTRINE

The responsibility of the Christian is to live for God in Christ, by the leading and power of the Holy Spirit. In this our joy may be fulfilled. For this to happen, the scriptures tell us that “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” (John 3:30). John the Baptist said these words, but they also constitute a universal and everlasting principle by which we should order our life. Self must not be allowed to rule and Christ must be Lord of all. When this righteous order governs our life, self is in Christ, this being the only secure and safe place of refuge from the flesh, our negative emotions and the devil.

The false doctrine of self-esteem is wrong because it appeals to our senses and fleshy emotions, and promises to build our feeling of self-worth through man-made methods. In fact the doctrine of self-esteem is humanistic and entirely man-made. Our esteem is to be

built on us in Christ, and all that this pertains to, not on us alone, striving to increase our feelings of self-worth, therefore self-love:

GALATIANS 2:20 I am crucified (have died) with Christ (Romans 6:3-5): nevertheless I live (have new life); yet not I, but Christ lives in me (leading and empowering me): and the life which I now live in the flesh (my daily walk on this earth) I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

Jay E. Adams in his book, "The Biblical View of Self-Esteem," says: "*Any system that proposes to solve human problems, apart from the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit (as all of these pagan systems, including the self-worth system do) is automatically condemned by Scripture itself. Nor does this system in any way depend upon the Message of Salvation. Love, joy, and peace are discussed as if they were not the fruits of the Spirit, but merely the fruits of right views of oneself, which anyone can attain without the Bible and the Word of the Spirit in his heart.*

*For these reasons, the self-worth system with its claims of Biblical correspondences must be rejected. It does not come from the Bible. Any resemblance between Biblical teaching and the teaching of self-worth originators is either contrived or coincidental."*²

“. . .Our esteem is to be built on us in Christ, and all that this pertains to, not on us alone, striving to increase our feelings of self-worth. . .”

The thought and practice in the circles that teach the false self-esteem doctrine centre around gently pampering and pandering to the Christian, smiling and saying "God loves you, just as you are." Yes He does love them, but He does not love where they are at. This sort of non-confrontational contact with the heathen and Christian alike, supposedly causes the elevation of self-esteem. This approach appeals to the lower base nature of man, saved or unsaved, for this

nature loves the promotion of self with no personal accountability or responsibility. People then think they are doing well, and are acceptable to God Who loves them (which He does) without any expectations (or personal responsibility).

In past times, say 50 to 100 years ago, the Gospel was generally not presented as a pleasant introduction between the sinner and his Creator, his Father. It was presented as a confrontation between the sinner and his Creator, his Judge. Proper preaching delivered the Gospel message of the Bible to give the heathen God's mind on the matter. It was that they were born dead to Him from their mother's womb, with the terrible blight of sin causing separation from a holy God. True preaching also informed the unsaved that they were, in fact, all sinners by nature. The Gospel not only reveals these truths, it declares that man is evil, full of darkness and cannot save himself (John 3:3; Romans 3:10-12, 23).

This Gospel has been replaced in the Charismatic churches with a false gospel that strokes, pampers and panders to his flesh and thus the sin nature - the dark side. In the name of elevating or not affecting the people's self-esteem in a negative way, the reality of the evil nature of man is hidden. That which is preached by these new Evangelists and Teachers then inflates the people's minds with egotistical praise, pumping them up to such a point that the hearers start to believe the rubbish which has been spewing forth from the pulpit, all in the Name of Jesus!

Not only is the self-esteem of Christians encouraged in this false way, the presentation of the Gospel is sometimes presented in this "light" (darkness). Much is omitted of the true Gospel for the sake of not offending people's sensitive self-esteem. Then people start to call themselves Christians because they believe they are good - for they haven't deliberately hurt or robbed anyone. All this because the preaching they hear in the churches or on TV or at funerals is so pathetically weak. The issue of man's sinfulness and his inability to please a holy God by his own feeble and grubby works is not addressed (Isaiah 64:6). Those who do not preach the Gospel as the Bible declares it, for fear of causing self-esteem problems, or losing valuable members, will cause many to die unsaved, having sat in their churches sometimes for many years. What a terrible indictment and what gross irresponsibility!

“ . . . The thought and practice in the circles that teach the false self-esteem doctrine centre around gently pampering and pandering to the Christian. . . ”

When man fell in the Garden, he lost his God-consciousness and fell to the lower level of self-consciousness. Once his eyes were always on God and now they are on self. Therein lies the problem. Today man fails every time he centres his thoughts inwardly. From this consciousness of self comes selfishness, lust, greed, depression, error and all kinds of false perspectives - in other words, darkness in the mind. To infect the church with a doctrine called self-esteem is a travesty that has caused misery in the lives of millions over the years.

With this false doctrine in the churches, men and women are taught that the answer to their depression or low self-esteem is that they do not really know the true estimate of their self-worth. Therefore they need their self-esteem to be elevated, to be pumped up with anything that sounds good to the flesh. All this does is bring the Christian back to Egypt, to the Garden again, to continue to be “self” conscious, and it is a recipe for defeat. If we are to be lifted out of the valley of self, we must look upward in prayer that seeks God - for this is our redemption and He draws nigh. Again we must become God-centred not self-centred, absorbed into the black hole of self. In Christ we have been given both the pathway and the power to do this. The way is not found, however, by the preaching of self-esteem.

To be inflated with this false doctrine will cause us to become egotistical Christians, full of pride. What we need is the opposite, not to be absorbed with self and self-worth, but to know that all we can have that is of any real value, and even the development of our character, can only come as a result of Christ and the Spirit’s graces working through us as we yield to the Father’s will. This will give us a humble acceptance of who we are, and will develop in us a gratitude that God loves us, even as we are, and can empower us to think as He thinks and to love as He loves, as we yield to His will, His ways. Again, *“He must increase, but I must decrease”* is the key. Indeed Jesus said, *“Without Me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5). Without Him and His empowerment through the Spirit’s

graces, we won't amount to anything either. Remember that the Word tells us, "*For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think . . .*" (Romans 12:3).

So we must put every thought and intent through the filter of God's will on the matter, to bring "*into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*" (2 Corinthians 10:5). This is the true Pentecostal way. Charismatics hate it but Pentecostals love it, for this is the opposite of seeking the elevation of our self-esteem. Indeed we can come to realize that every good thing we do or have within us is only there because of that which God has already deposited into our lives as we flow with Him. There is nothing innately good about us. Only as we live and move in Christ by the Holy Spirit's power can fruit be produced in us that will last for eternity (John 15:5). Then God receives the glory for every good thing we do in Him. Again, the answer is to look upward and to understand the love and goodness of our God - not to look inward so as to enthrone the sin nature by elevating self.

“. . . To be inflated with this false doctrine of self-esteem will cause us to become egotistical Christians, full of pride. . .”

Without God's spiritual Light and the grace of His Divine Nature, we will stumble around in darkness for we cannot see without the light of God's Word. Because we, in ourselves, have no insight or foresight, how can we be qualified to direct our own lives? The new breed of Christian Teacher promotes this false theology of self-esteem which is based on self-appraisal by a flawed individual - self. Again we say that scripture is taken out of context and misinterpreted in order to back up humanistic philosophy. Eager to receive any sugar-coated philosophy or formula, the masses digest this rotten meat into their hearts. Because it is coated with an appetizing coating they love it and swallow it, for it tastes sweet to the tongue. Eagerly looking for more, they become, in fact, addicted to it. Seminar after seminar follows. The spiritual substance of false doctrine, when in the spiritual stomach of the hearers, begins to

dissolve. When it does it poisons the minds of these people against that which is true Pentecostal teaching - which always points people away from self and towards God. As a result, as we have said, they do not want to digest good doctrine that would point them continuously back to God through the message of the Cross. This is rejected because it is not sweet enough to the tongue.

Again, because self-esteem teaching centres on self, it caters for man's lower nature and will always lead to the elevation of self. A.W.Tozer said: *"If self occupies any part of the Throne, we cannot say that Jesus Christ is on the Throne of our heart. Self is man's greatest enemy. It embodies selfishness, greed, and all that opposes God. If Jesus Christ is centred on the Throne, self-will is eradicated. And until self-will is totally eradicated, there can be no Christ-centred Throne in our lives."*

The answer to low self-esteem is to run to Christ and in His strength, to take on His yoke and learn from Him. Then our focus will be outwardly (and upwardly) directed, and we will come to know and understand, with humble acceptance, how great is His love for us.

MATTHEW 11:28 Come unto Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:29 Take My yoke (the cross of self-denial) upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.

MATTHEW 11:30 For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light (as we carry this cross in God's strength).

Then too the glory will be rightly directed, being given to the One Who is the Deliverer, the Empowerer and the Giver of everything good. Amen.

9. THE NEW WAY TO PRAY

The "government of law" or "doing" will not work - empower or deliver. It is only in the "government of grace" that all things come to us who believe through the Cross of Christ. To do anything else

will frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21), in other words, lessen or block the benefits that have been afforded to us through the Cross.

Under this principle of law, as we have said, many Charismatics teach another law and this is “the law of confession.” They say that we can confess something into existence by quoting certain scriptures over and over. This comes from the belief that by doing so (by confessing scripture), the Believer is self-energized by the Word of God and he is then able to make proper demands on God’s power. Charismatic Believers do this to have a cold healed, or to bring into existence the desires of their hearts, which could be anything from a new house to a new car or a diamond ring, etc. In this, along with their desires, the Bible increasingly becomes their source and centre of attention - rather than the Author of it and seeking His will for their lives, and an intimate experiential relationship with Him.

The teachers of this method believe that the Christian, when born again, is given in Christ all the faith he will ever need. He must then simply speak into existence that which he “desires.” Apparently quoting scripture over and over until one becomes self-energized amounts in their eyes to “faith” activated. Don’t get us wrong, we can make proper demands on God’s power through God-given faith (developed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit). However this will not take place under the “government of law” by which God’s hand is forced. Rather it is always to come through “the government of His grace.” In this, God is always the originator, instigator and giver according to His will, and this includes timing. God’s will is not for us to be the self-led by human “desire.” It is God who leads, motivates, empowers and delivers, and it is He Who can give us Divine desire. Thus it must be God at work in us, not us in God but He in us. Let us never forget that it is by His grace, wisdom and love that we are to live our life. His desire must replace our desires - which are flawed with self-wants when we try to live our life outside of a complete yieldedness to Him. In a state of self-want and self-rule, how could God, in His wisdom, grant to the immature that which they desire? This would simply increase their pride and add fuel to the fires of false teaching within the Church.

“. . .The teachers of this method believe that the Christian, when born again, is given in Christ all the faith he will ever need. He must then simply speak into existence that which he “desires.” . . .”

God always uses His wisdom in dealing with His children, even though many, out of lustful desire, continue to quote God’s Word to the Father, demanding whatever they confess to come into existence. God still loves His people when they do this, but He hates their ways. He is relegated to a corner while they pursue what is really the accumulation of worldly desires. This is not the way of the Gospel. God is looking for Christians who will deny self, take up their cross and serve Him all the days of their life - in His strength not theirs. He will give grace to those people that will cause others to know about God’s love in Jesus. This brings real spiritual treasure - that of souls and lives that are changed and enriched by God’s grace. Indeed scripture urges us:

COLOSSIANS 3:1 *If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above (the truth, wisdom and love of God), where Christ sits on the right hand of God.*

COLOSSIANS 3:2 *Set your affection on things above (things of an eternal nature), not on things on the earth (temporal, worldly things).*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:18 *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen (seen by faith, not by the human eye): for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

We can see from these scriptures where our attention should be focused.

However in this new way of praying, using “the law of confession,” very little priority is given to Christlikeness, ongoing sanctification, righteousness and holiness. The reason is simple - selfish gain promotes the sin nature (1 John 1:8) and causes it to be enthroned in one’s life. In this darkness, the mind of the Saint is warped and they cannot see the error of their thinking or correctly discern their lust.

***“. . .In this new way of praying, using
“the law of confession,” very little
priority is given to Christlikeness,
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and holiness. . .”***

The promised land is God’s will. To use His Divine Words to apply to our human desire and command Him to perform our will - to bring into existence something out of nothing - is both foolish and evil. People call it holy faith but what a deception. The Church has been weakened by this type of doctrine. The faith of those who “confess into existence” is not rooted in Christ and what He did at Calvary. Rather it is rooted in scripture taken out of context and turned into a formula, a button to push to make a withdrawal from heaven’s ATM (Automatic Teller Machine). How wrong they are, and how disappointed they will be when heaven’s ATM says “Sorry, insufficient funds.”

Let us pray however, that God, through anointed preaching and teaching, will continue to correct any arrogant attitudes and beliefs we may have so that our thinking may be transformed and straightened - lest we become proud and deceived (Romans 12:2). There are many areas in our lives that need addressing by the Lord so that we may grow and mature in Christ. Therefore, before we smugly point the finger at our brothers, let us deal with the beam in our own eyes. Yet we must consider and analyze what takes place in the Church lest we too become deceived, not living for or serving God. Indeed this should always be our desire, to please the Father. We should not want to serve ourselves but God. This is the right way, the way of righteousness.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:15 And that He died for all, that they who live (by accepting Christ) should not henceforth live unto themselves (through self-rule), but unto Him (to do His will) Who died for them, and rose again.

10. KINGDOM NOW THEOLOGY

Unfortunately within the Church and steadily gaining in popularity is a doctrine called “Kingdom Now.”

Other names for the theology of “Kingdom Now” are “Dominion Theology” and “Reconstruction Theology.” All teach (falsely) that man with God’s empowerment must take dominion of the earth and change it for the better before Jesus can come back at the Second Coming. Their emphasis is to look around (at a horizontal human level) rather than looking up (to a vertical Divine level). They are therefore focused on what can be done to patch up the environment and change society in general into a more Godly one.

Proponents teach and believe that it is God’s will to use them to bring governments, the armed forces and other authorities under the control of God through the “Kingdom Now” Church. In other words, God’s Kingdom will be established now, on the earth, through Christians, with the help of the Holy Spirit, before Jesus returns at His Second Coming.

They see that in order to achieve these goals, the world must be evangelized and cleansed, but this they realize cannot be done by individual churches or denominations. To achieve this, world evangelization will require the coming together of many denominations, each putting aside doctrinal differences, even fundamental ones, in the name of ecumenicalism.

Of course they teach that the Church and its Believers have been invested with the authority to “possess the land” in the Name of Jesus. And a favourite misinterpreted scripture used by these teachers and Christians is found in Ephesians 5:27:

EPHESIANS 5:27 That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (without fault).

With this scripture they declare that we must be readied to prepare the Church so that it will be found, on Christ's return, to be "*a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing . . . holy and without blemish.*"

Those who espouse this doctrine forget or overlook the phrase "*He might present.*" We will not present the Church to Jesus for He must present it to Himself, washed, cleansed and transformed at the Rapture. The Church will not be without spot or wrinkle until the Rapture. What foolishness it is to interpret this verse outside of the harmony of scripture, while neglecting the use of proper hermeneutics.

At the end of the Church Age, as we have said, scripture tells us that it is Christ Who will present to Himself "*a glorious Church*" which, with the Saints of the Old Testament, will form the Body of Christ, and dwell in heaven with our Lord. In this, the Church will have become what it was intended to be - "*holy and without blame*" in Christ (Ephesians 1:4).

Only those who are born again and remain "in Christ" shall have their part in this. Sad to say, scripture tells us that not all who call Jesus "Lord" shall be found in the Body of Christ but rather shall have their place in the Lake of Fire (Matthew 7:21-23).

There are some with this "Kingdom Now" doctrine who have even prophesied that in these end times of the Church Age, God will remove the evil from the earth before His return. They believe that new teachings, prophecies and interpretations of scripture are progressively being unveiled. Even though such prophecies, as we have just discussed, are not supported by scripture, they are nonetheless "canonized" as doctrine - all because the giver of the prophecy is well known in their movement, having said "Thus saith the Lord," with maybe even an accompanying so-called vision or spiritual experience. Sometimes even a healing or two can cause such Charismatics to claim "verification" of a doctrine taught. Alternatively there could have been a dream which has been interpreted according to their doctrinal bias.

*“ . . . They believe that new teachings,
prophecies and interpretations of
scripture are progressively
being unveiled. . . ”*

All, and we mean all things, no matter what, must line up with the Word of God. What we have highlighted here as so-called “prophecy,” when measured against the Word of God, is easily exposed as false. We must not introduce doctrine through prophecy. Biblical doctrine is exactly that - Bible doctrine. It needs no help from over-zealous preachers or those with certain biases and agendas to back up their latest spiritual experience or dream. Let all experiences be interpreted in the light of God’s holy Word, for our emotional or intellectual bias cannot hold a candle to God’s wonderful Word.

The Bible never tells the Christian to take dominion. A search for such a mandate will prove fruitless. The mandate of the Church is to share and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to the leading and under the Anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Church’s main responsibilities are evangelism and discipleship, not the political activism that this new movement has promoted around the world.

Within this movement, Reconstructions (Dominionists) teach that the mission of the Church goes beyond the scriptural transformation of individuals to a mandate (through these teachings) to even change society! Because of this, Christians are therefore to become political and social activists. We believe, however, that God’s Kingdom will only be established and society changed with Jesus’ return at the Second Coming. He will then rule for 1,000 years with a rod of iron after dealing with the Antichrist and all those nations that came against Israel at the Battle of Armageddon (Zechariah Ch.14; Revelation 19:15; 20:4).

Within the Kingdom Theology movement, the doctrine of the Rapture is often shunned and called false, with the claim that those who hold to this Biblical teaching are merely “escapists.” Instead,

their belief is that after the Church establishes the Kingdom of God's rule in society, everyone in the Church will be "caught up" emotionally when Jesus returns at the Second Coming. According to this view, it is then the Church and what it does that will determine when the Lord returns. With no Rapture also comes a denial of the seven year tribulation period in which mankind's circumstances will become progressively worse, not better (Revelation Ch.6).

The Kingdom Now movement contains many people who have a desire for power and therefore rule. With this goal they believe to gain ascendancy in the political arena which includes determining government policy - setting the educational agenda and other platforms that pertain to every aspect of human interaction.

Many of these people whose desire is for power justify their approach with the belief that they are following the directions of some higher authority - God. Pastors have left their churches and entered into the political arena - and this ought not be the case with Pastors who are called to a specific, God-anointed and appointed ministry. Other Christians are wasting their time chasing these secular rainbows through their endeavours to reach a so-called "noble" end.

“. . . Many of these people whose desire is for power justify their approach with the belief that they are following the directions of some higher authority – God. . .”

Yes we are to pray for governments and support the introduction of Godly laws into our societies. Yes we are to exercise righteous "dominion" and in proper Holy Spirit led prayer, to come against the forces of darkness in Jesus' Name when the opportunity presents itself. But the Church has not been given any general scriptural mandate to seek or foster nationwide or worldwide political dominion before Jesus' return. In fact, as the day of the return of the Lord draws closer, along with revival we believe that heresy and apostasy will also increase.

Note that we are not, as the Church, to prepare for such with a defeatist attitude, even if it is to get far worse. Rather we are to

prepare to come against it. We do this by declaring God's Word, the Gospel of Jesus and Him crucified - according to the leading and by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are also told to hold on in faith that God, through His faithful servants, will raise up a standard against the evil in the Church and in the world in these end days before His return.

Therefore let God be God in us and let us be Spirit-led. This is the standard to raise against the darkness in the world, and the darkness in the Church. Jesus, His Blood, His Word and the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us - this is the way God has set before us, the way we are to take and the river in which we are to flow.

Note: There are many varied views held by the "Kingdom Now" adherents. We have tried to give a brief introduction to expose the mindset of those involved, and to present some of their end-time teachings in order to shed some light on their general thinking.

11. THE NEW GNOSTICS

In the Church worldwide new "gnostics" have emerged, especially in Charismatic circles. The word "gnostic" comes from the Greek "gnosis" which means "knowledge."

Paul had to deal with "Gnosticism" in his ministry. In the letter he wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit to the Colossian Church, Paul sought to deal with several serious internal doctrinal problems (Colossians 1:9,10; Colossians 2:4). The Colossians needed correction because of false teaching which denied Christ's supremacy and all sufficiency as Head of the Body, the Church. One of the problems he had involved the gnostics, a select few who set themselves above others through their possession of so-called "superior knowledge." Their perceived idea of truth was not dependent on the Word of God - which was, in that day, the Old Testament. They felt superior to ordinary Christians who had to stumble along by faith when they had access to greater levels of knowledge - which gave them a false sense of having a superior depth of relationship with God.

New Charismatic gnostics also believe, like the gnostics of old, that they possess a superior knowledge. Again, as some did in the early Church, they believe they are not dependent upon the Bible. This new breed of gnostics within the Church rely on emotional

experiences and their interpretation of these experiences to gain an understanding above others. They take only the parts of the Bible that seemingly agree with their interpretation in order to support their perceived experience. This is viewed by them as “superior knowledge” that would guide their steps. Let us warn you that when emotional feelings alone become the doctrine of God’s presence, then God in one’s life has been reduced to a “gnostic” type of religion, with no real relationship. What they feel and think about God is all in their minds, divorced from any kind of reality.

For instance, when people hear a voice that tells them to do something that contradicts God’s Word, and feel a “peace” because this thing is something they agree with or want to do, then this is “superior knowledge,” above and beyond the Word. The voice is obviously not that of the Holy Spirit, for He will not contradict Himself. Therefore their so-called “knowledge” is false, being based on their emotions and biased thinking.

“. . .They felt superior to ordinary Christians who had to stumble along by faith when they had access to greater levels of knowledge - which gave them a false sense of having a superior depth of relationship with God. . .”

Let us be clear about emotions based on our own thinking, without God influencing, empowering or illuminating our mind and heart with His truth and power. Obviously this God - factor is necessary because we find in Isaiah:

ISAIAH 55:8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.

ISAIAH 55:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

We cannot understand God's nature and character, how He thinks and how He works, from the darkness of our own thinking and the confines of our own mind. Illumination by the Holy Spirit is needed so that our thoughts and feelings come to align themselves with the Lord - His thoughts and His ways.

Man is an emotional being, and God did create us that way, not for our own so-called pleasure and purpose, but for His pleasure and purpose (Ephesians 1:3-9). This is God's purpose for us, in Christ to know and feel His will, His power and His love.

Many in the church talk about all these things, raise their hands and try to worship God. However they do not do so in spirit (their human nature being energized by God's Divine Nature) and in truth (John 4:23).

***“ . . . They take only the parts of the Bible
that seemingly agree with their
interpretation in order to support their
perceived experience. . . ”***

They think because of their deluded, emotionally-based interpretation of the goose bumps on the back of their necks that the Anointing of God was on their meeting and so validated their teaching. Or else some dream that has been spiritualized comes under the banner of “higher revelation.” Using faulty hermeneutics or no hermeneutics at all, they take scripture out of context, spiritualize it when they shouldn't, or take it literally when they should have spiritualized it, according to the harmony of scripture, etc. And on it goes. The ways, methods and doctrines are endless, but this constitutes the new gnosticism of this age - which is really not new at all.

Jesus said that within the Church, they would do all these things and more (2 Timothy 4:3). The same spirit behind the gnostics of Paul's day is working overtime in the modern Church today to convince people who want to be convinced that they have or can gain this “higher revelation.” In seeking such, they don't realize that this knowledge is not from God, and that in pursuing it they are actually gaining knowledge from Satan and thus digesting darkness.

Today, especially in the Charismatic churches, quite often, as we have said, a “prophetic” “Thus saith the Lord - I am doing a new thing” flows freely from their lips. New truth, new ways, lost knowledge found - all this and more are the titles under which the new “superior knowledge” teachings are located. Within them a new form of gnosticism has put perceived personal experience and personal interpretations above the absolutes of God’s Word.

Vain imaginations, bias and wants are catered for in their false teaching. There is little respect for the Word of God as the foundation of all doctrine and the filter through which everything gained apart from the Word should be passed. This opens the door to all kinds of error which puffs up man’s mind and so gives opportunity to feed the flesh, e.g. Colossians 2:18-23.

The knowledge of God as revealed in His Word is to go beyond and indeed supersede the reasoning of the mind, the logic of the intellect and the unstable (negative) emotions of man. Indeed God’s Word is the catalyst that can cause a holy emotion to well up from deep within, not from the mind or the flesh which are both unstable, but from the centre of man’s regenerated spirit, as the human nature is energized by the Divine Nature.

There is only one way and that is the way of the Cross - if we want to reach heaven at salvation and connect with heaven’s graces in an ongoing way. We need to go to the Cross daily in order to let God transform us into the person we should be, and that is to be Christ-like in character and also in deed. Only in this way can we fulfill His desires and His purposes for our life.

Today, therefore, we must not step down to man’s perception of “higher revelation.” Instead we should step up to the higher ground of Calvary, the highest spiritual ground that man will ever encounter. Only at the Cross can the Blood of the Lamb wash the stain of sin from our heart and life, for it is only from here that heaven’s graces flow to transform and enrich our lives. There is only one way, as Paul tried to tell the church at Colossae, and that way is Christ and Him crucified (John 10:10-11). He alone is supreme and totally sufficient for all man’s needs and requirements. Superior knowledge does not reside in us but rather in Christ, and all man’s attempts to gain holiness or please God by his own methods are doomed to utter failure:

COLOSSIANS 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men (man-made doctrine: Matthew 15:9), after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (His teachings).

“ . . . We must not step down to man’s perception of “higher revelation” - instead we should step up to the higher ground of Calvary, the highest spiritual ground that man will ever encounter. . . ”

Finally let us say in conclusion that Charismatics who are truly Charismatics, do not like or enjoy fellowshiping in Pentecostal services and vice versa because two different gospels are involved. The true Pentecostal message is that of the Cross, service and holiness. The Charismatic message is that of me, myself and I - self-esteem, self-gain and self-fulfillment.

The two cannot and should not mix. One is from the Laodicean Charismatic Church, and the other is the true Pentecostal Church found in the Book of Acts. Yes there is still some sin in it, but because the true Pentecostal doctrine of repentance is preached, there is opportunity given for the Holy Spirit to convict the sinner of his sin, and so allow the Blood of Calvary to deal with it. The sinner is then given access through the Cross to the energizing power of God’s Divine Nature which they have, in Christ, been made partakers of. This is the power of His holiness in which we are to flow. Repentance from sin, however, must be taught so that we can then be forgiven and readied to receive these holy graces of God to serve Him and do His will.

The emphasis within our Pentecostal churches should be the love of God, repentance, conversion of souls through sharing one to one, the preaching of the Gospel, and teaching that promotes God’s will and not ours in our lives. Furthermore in this end-time age of the Church, we must remember that the Kingdom of God is of a spiritual origin, and is “*not of this world*” (John 18:36). The Kingdom of God is to be, by God’s grace, His spiritual rule in the

hearts of yielded, sold-out-to-Jesus men and women (John 17:20-21). Only on Christ's return, called the Second Coming, will He establish His literal and physical reign. So let us as Christians follow the Spirit of Revelation and stay in, return to, or find a church that is based on true Biblical promises and not "new revelations."

Let us therefore complete this brief teaching with the warning that the Christian as a "watchman" (Isaiah 21:6) is to expose the work of the enemy in the camp - with the following attitude and reverence for God:

1 PETER 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:

1 PETER 5:7 Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you.

1 PETER 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

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FULL GOSPEL MINISTRIES
crossroadsministries.org.au**

NOTES

- 1 D.R.McConnell, A Different Gospel.
- 2 Jay E. Adams, The Biblical View of Self-Esteem.

*"We have a vision
to see people living
in abundant life
by the power of God
through Jesus Christ"*



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