

THE SLEEPING GIANT

A CALL TO AN URGENT
SPIRITUAL REAWAKENING



TOFUNMI AKINYEMI

DEDICATION

Specially dedicated to all Christians who are really living to honour God, and also very passionate about Soul-winning and Discipleship; and all that will be challenged through this Book to join this Glorious Team.

A SPECIAL APPRECIATION

All thanks, glory, honour and praise to the Almighty God for His help these past twenty years of the ministry of THE MARANATHA COMMISSION. The Almighty God will forever be my God; and that of my generations in Jesus Name, Amen!

There is no doubt the journey has been full of challenges, but You Lord have been awesome and faithful! Thank You for Your mercies, kindness, encouragement, loving rebuke, favour, provision, protection, and guidance. Thank You for fighting our battles!!! Thank You for the victories wrought for us!!! I am eternally grateful!!!

I re-affirm my total commitment to only You the Almighty God in Jesus Name, Amen; as I sing this song by Pastor Nathaniel Bassey:

⊕ *The Sleeping Giant*

“I have no other God but You
I have no other God but You
(For You have done for me)
You have done what no man has done
(That's why I know)
You will do what no man can do”

*From the song “**No other God**”.*

With a heart full of gratitude, I once again say, thank
You Lord God Almighty!!!

*Your daughter by grace,
Tofunmi Akinyemi.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am eternally grateful to the Almighty God for making it possible to write this book in celebration of the **20th ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARANATHA COMMISSION**. Looking back at the journey of the last twenty years, I just know that it has been God all the way; God has been good and faithful. May His Holy Name be praised forever!

I really appreciate my husband, Kola; and all our children (both by biological descent, and in the Lord) for the unflinching support over the years!

I am also very grateful to:

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- ◆ All who attended **the Ministry's dedication on that Saturday, July 20, 1996**; you are greatly appreciated for being part of our very humble beginning!
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✠ *The Sleeping Giant*

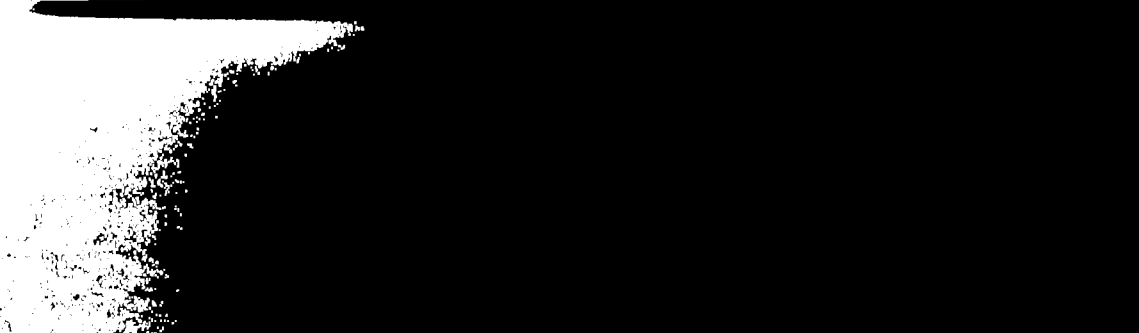
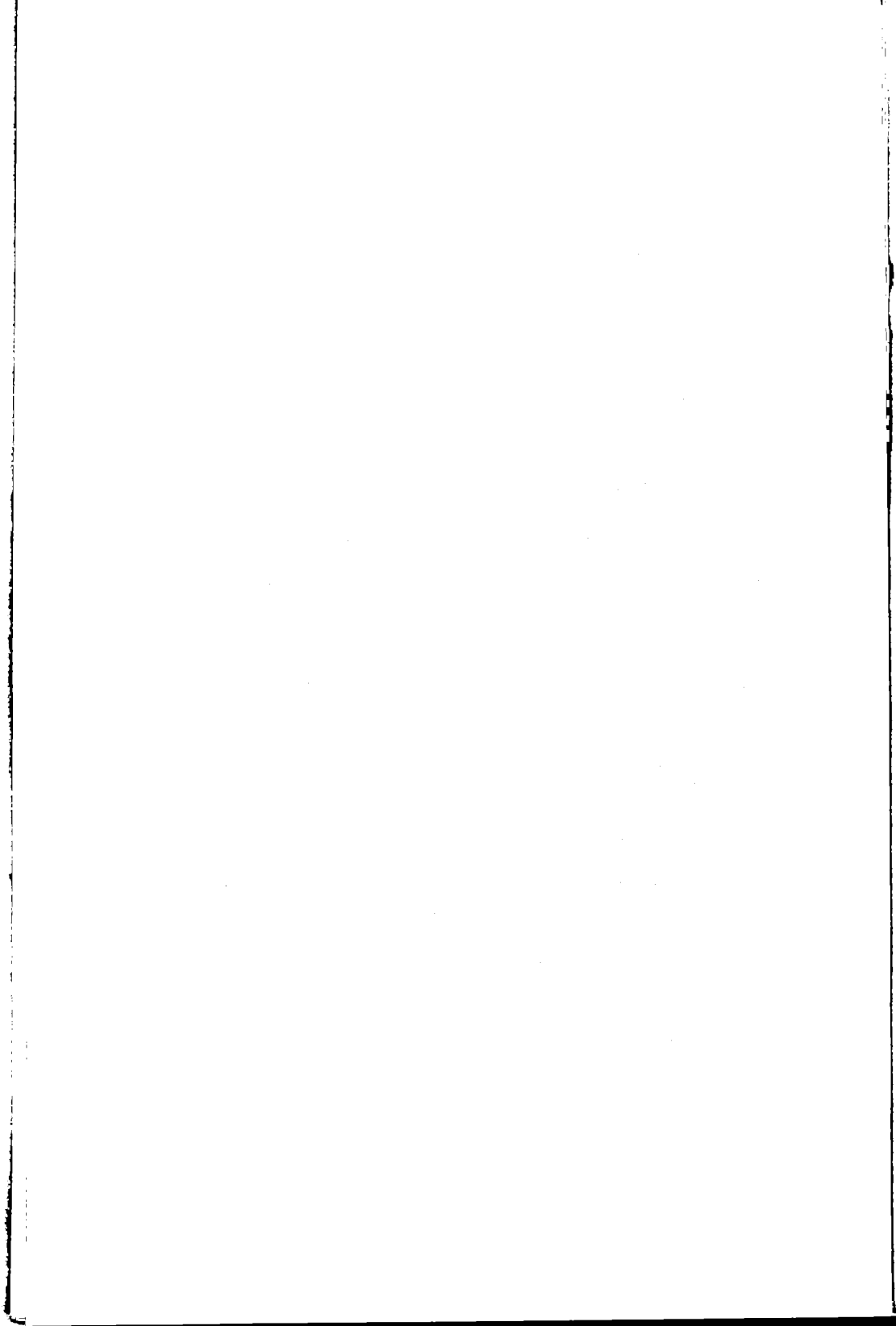
- ♦ I acknowledge my children of the **MARANATHA BIBLE CLUB**, and the **LIFEGATE CRECHE**; a big thanks to their highly esteemed parents for the great confidence reposed in us, by entrusting their children into our care. These children will be great instruments in God's Hands in Jesus Name, Amen.

You all mean so much to me than you can ever imagine; so also your support, so please, don't relent! The Almighty God will surely reward our labour of love; and uphold us all to the end in Jesus Name, Amen.

In the words of Morakinyo and Oluwatoni Olumodimu, I say to you all, "I love you big"!

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever." 1 Timothy 1:17.

Tofunmi Akinyemi (Mama Jochebed),
Akure. Ondo State. NIGERIA.





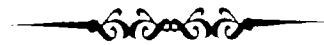
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PART ONE



**THE BLOOD-BOUGHT
CHURCH**



CHAPTER ONE

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Preamble

The Church is used here to mean all those who have truly repented from their sin, accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour, and are growing in Christ; that is they are born again.

All such born again people in the various denominations and Fellowship groups are redeemed from the penalty of sin, through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. This is why the Church is said to be Blood-bought!

“ ... You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18 & 19.

A necessary clarification

The Church of Christ is deliberately used here. This distinction becomes very necessary today because it is not all the congregations that call themselves “church” that belongs to Christ. There is even a denomination that outright calls itself the “Church” of satan! Indeed, we are in the end times!

Those that preach and practice what is contrary to the teachings of Christ are not part of the Church of Christ; but rather, they are of the devil their master. The Bible says:

*“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. **You will know them by their fruits** Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit Therefore **by their fruits you will know them.**”* Matthew 7:15-20. (Emphasis mine).

The Church

The Church refers to all the people who are truly born again and living for Christ, in all the various denominations all over the world.

This means that the Church is not the building; but rather, the community of truly born again people in

all denominations. The Church is also known as the Body of Christ.

This Book

This Book is about the Church of Christ, the people He purchased with His precious Blood; who are truly born again, and daily living in obedience to God.

All truly born again people are Spiritual Giants! This is because our Lord Jesus Christ says we will do greater works than He did in His earthly Ministry!

*“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and **greater works than these he will do**, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My Name, I will do it.”* John 14:12-14 (Emphasis mine).

However, despite the fact that **Jesus Christ has made provision for us to do greater works**, the reality of the state of the Church shows that **we are operating far below our capacity**; hence the title of this Book **“The Sleeping Giant”!**

This is not to mean that the Church has achieved nothing; far from it! What we are saying is that the Church has the enablement through Jesus Christ, to do far above our current achievements!

This Book is **to challenge the Church to urgently arise to fulfill her highest potential in Christ.** We are able through Jesus Christ!

A worthy prayer

“O God, make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need human love & fellowship, and a heavenly Father's care;

And narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and hate.


Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children or straying feet,

But rugged enough to turn back the tempter's power;

Make it a gateway to Thine eternal Kingdom.”

Thomas Ken (1637 – 1711).

The above prayer, originally written by Thomas Ken, was inscribed on the wall at the entrance of a Church in South East London. When I saw it, I was deeply touched that I had to jot it down at that time.



✠ *The Church of Christ*

This prayer is the urgent need of the Church; and therefore, a worthy goal for the Church! It doesn't matter whether it is physically inscribed on the entrance wall like that Church did, or "spiritually" written on the heart of individual Christians.

What matters is for this vision to be passionately pursued by the Church; for the eternal blessing of mankind, and the glory of the Almighty God!



CHAPTER TWO

THE GREAT COMMISSION

As mentioned in Chapter One, our Lord Jesus Christ bought the Church with His precious Blood. When He has completed His Mission on earth, before He returned to the Father, He gave a very important Assignment to all His disciples in all ages.

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”. Amen.”
Matthew 28:18-20.

The Great Commission

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave the Church an Assignment to go preach the Gospel and make disciples for Him. **The Assignment consists of two sides of the same coin:**

- ◆ Preaching to people to repent from their sins, and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour.
- ◆ To follow-up the souls won so that they will understand the implication of their decision for Christ; stand for Him, and be able to win others for Christ.

Saved to Serve

This means Christians have been saved to serve. Since our Christ is worth having, He is worth sharing! We are to be channels of passing God's Message of salvation to the unsaved; otherwise we are failing to fulfill purpose.

If our salvation is just for us to make heaven, from the moment we became born again, maybe we would have been taken there straightaway!

However, God left us here to take the Gospel to the unsaved; and disciple those already saved to join this glorious Kingdom workers.

✠ *The Great Commission*

We are assured of the ever-abiding Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ as we evangelize. This should embolden us, and encourage our hearts to be actively involved in this eternally rewarding Assignment!

The Watchman

The duty of the watchman is to watch over a City. This is to enable him know when evil is coming so he can blow the trumpet to warn the people of the impending danger.

“... he who takes warning will save his life.”

Ezekiel 33:5b.

The Assignment given to Christians by our Lord Jesus Christ is comparable to the role of the watchman.

“... God has given us the responsibility to take His message of forgiveness and new life through Christ to the entire world(Mt 28:18-20; Acts1:8) This message includes the warning of eternal death for all who refuse to give up their own way and accept Christ's forgiveness and leadership in their lives.... God has made all of Christ's followers His watchmen....” **Footnote on Ezekiel 3:18 on page 1403 of the Fire Bible.**

“So you son of man; I have made you a watchman ... When I say to the wicked ... you

*shall surely die! And **you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.** Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”*
Ezekiel 33:7–9 (Emphasis mine).

Failure to preach the Gospel

In view of the above Scripture verses, if we fail to preach the Gospel, and the person dies in his sin, **one becomes guilty of the blood of the people God wants us to preach to!** Also, failure to preach the Gospel is:

- ◆ Disobedience to the instruction of Jesus Christ, our Commander-in-Chief. A soldier who disobeys the instruction of His Commander is toying with his life!
- ◆ The height of wickedness! We Christians know that the Blood of Jesus Christ is the “medicine” to cure sinners from their sins because we are a living proof. Is it then not wickedness when we don't tell the unsaved to come and use this very efficacious sin-cure?

Please, ponder on all these things and **quickly** make amends where necessary!



CHAPTER THREE

SALT AND LIGHT IN THE WORLD

The Church is expected to be the “salt” and “light” in this decadent, and sin-darkened world.

The Church refers to all Christians, i.e. all who are truly born again, and living to please God; while the world refers to all forms of values and systems which are contrary to the will and glory of God. The Church and the world are two opposing camps.

Called out of the world

The Christian has been called out of the world to live a separated life from the world; to show forth the praise of the living God by living in obedience to Him. The Bible says:

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is

then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.” Matthew 5:13-15.

The Christian as Salt

Salt is a preservative that prevents decay. This brings to mind an example during my growing –up years in my town, Ayede - Ekiti. Then, locust beans which was (I think it still is) a staple soup ingredient among the Ekitis was usually preserved with salt.

My Mother (**Late Mrs Comfort Adeyemi Akerele**; the **beloved wife of Late Evang. Samuel Ajibade Akerele**) usually add salt to the locust beans to prevent it from decay until she was ready to use it to make soup. Like salt, the Christian is expected to serve as a preservative in the world by living holy, in order to prevent moral decadence.

The Christian as Light

The world lies in darkness as a result of sin. Wherever there is light, darkness is dispelled. The Christian is

expected to shine as light in this sin-darkened world, through a life of holiness, so as to dispel the darkness of sin. It is written:

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16.

A Call to Holiness

The implication of comparing the Christian to salt and light is that one has been called to a lifetime of consistent holy living.

“...As He Who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:15.

Even though the Christian is still in the world, one is not to live according to the ungodly standards and values of this world. The Almighty God says:

“... you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His Own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...” 1 Peter 2:9.

Therefore, the Christian is expected to live for Christ throughout his/her lifetime. This brings glory to

God, makes one a blessing to others; and takes us safely "Home" in the end.

Expect Persecutions

In living godly, the Christian will be hated and persecuted by the ungodly people in the world. *"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."* 2 Timothy 3:12.

Our Lord Jesus Christ says:

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." John 15:18&19.

Therefore, the Christian should not be surprised, discouraged, nor give up the faith when persecutions come. *"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ."* 2 Timothy 2:3.

The Bible says: *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of God."* Matthew 5:10.

This should encourage one's heart to keep going for Jesus Christ till the end.

And Temptations!

As the Christian daily lives as “salt” and “light”, he/she will surely encounter temptations; therefore be prepared! The Bible says:

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13.

“Those who claim to be Christians must never justify disobeying God's standards with excuses that they are simply human and imperfect, or that no one can go without sinning in words, thoughts and actions (cf. Ro 6:1).... No true follower of Christ need ever run the risk of compromising their relationship with Him.

It is not a sin to be tempted.... But giving in to temptation is sin.... God provides His children with the needed strength and opportunity to overcome every temptation they face.... God's faithfulness expresses itself in two ways: (a) He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can handle and resist with His help and (b) for each temptation, He will

provide a specific way for us to endure the temptation and overcome sin (cf. 2Th 3:3)....”

Footnote on 1 Corinthians 10:13; on pg.2193 of the Fire Bible.

“But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from evil.”

2 Thessalonians 3:3.

To strengthen the Christian against temptation, it is very important to daily saturate one's heart with God's Word which is the spiritual immunization against sin!

“Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” Psalm 119:11.

Given in to Temptation?

Perhaps you have given in to temptation? As mentioned above, “... giving in to temptation is sin”; and when this happens, any true follower of Christ will feel grieved for failing his/her Lord. Like Peter when he denied Jesus Christ (Luke 22:54-62), such Christian will have a godly sorrow for sin, and be sincerely sorry.

Therefore, if you are truly sorry for your sin, and ask God for forgiveness, He will forgive, cleanse and restore you to Himself. He did it for Peter, and

afterwards used Peter for His glory; He can do it for you too, as long as you are sincerely repentant.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.

However...

The Christian should not abuse this privilege of receiving forgiveness for one's sins by going in and out of sin; thinking, I can always ask for forgiveness. This is too risky for a child of God.

“You were indeed called to be free, brothers and sisters. Don't turn this freedom into an excuse for your corrupt nature to express itself....” Galatians 5:13 (God's Word Edition).

Yes, toying with sin is very risky, as sinning may soon become habitual; and also looks “normal” that one feels comfortable in a sinful lifestyle. Also, it will amount to taking God for granted, and therefore an abuse of grace!

“... Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” Romans 6:1 & 2.

Trials will Come

Also, as the Christian journeys on the godly way, situations that will try one's faith will definitely come.

“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” 1 Peter 4:12 & 13.

“A focus on NT teaching is that troubles and difficulties are inevitable for faithful followers of Christ in an ungodly world controlled by satan and opposed to Christ's message.... Through painful, faith-testing trials, God allows Christians to share in His sufferings while He forms within them the quality of character He desires.... When you endure trials and remain faithful to Christ, you will be considered blessed....” **Footnote on 1 Peter 4:12; on pg. 2480 of the Fire Bible.**

Therefore, we should be encouraged to rejoice in our trials, and remain faithful to Christ; for

“... the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the

✠ *Salt and Light in the World*

glory which shall be revealed in us.”
Romans 8:18.

*“And we know that all things work together
for good to those who love God, to those
who are the called according to His
purpose.”* Romans 8:28.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE BIBLE ON CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Any organization without rules to administer it is like a ship with no compass for direction; the Church inclusive. Such will be tossed to and fro on the deep seas and may eventually sink, or get lost except help is forthcoming.

The Church of Christ

This consists of all truly born again people in the various denominations and Fellowship groups; these are also referred to as the Body of Christ.

The Church, like every other organization requires rules for her administration.

The Bible is the "Compass" for the Church; to guide on how to administer the Church for her smooth-running.

The Bible and the Church

The Church has been given the Bible for her guidance in the wilderness of this world.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16 & 17.

The Bible is complete. It is enough to guide on how to administer, and also equip the Christian in righteous living in every aspect of life – family life, work place, business transactions, social interactions etc.

Church Administration

The Bible makes room for different categories of leaders to be appointed for running the affairs of the Church e.g. Bishops, Pastors, Deacons and Elders.

It also specifies the appointment of leaders, and qualifications for leadership positions in the Church etc.

The Appointment of Church Leaders

(i). **No hasty decision**

The Bible specifies the importance of careful consideration before appointing a Christian leader. It is written:

*“But **let these also first be tested; then let them serve ... being found blameless**”.*

1Timothy 3:10. (Emphasis mine).

Even though Apostle Paul was speaking here concerning the appointment of Deacons, we can infer that it also applies to other leadership positions in the Church, especially going by the warning in the verse below.

*“**Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.**” 1 Timothy 5:22.*
(Emphasis mine).

“... For a church to ordain or appoint anyone to a position of leadership too quickly, without regard to God's guidelines, causes the church to be a “partaker” in that person's sins. Paul's warning to “keep thyself pure” means to refuse to become involved in the choosing or ordaining of anyone unworthy for the office of pastor.” **Footnote on 1 Timothy 5:22 on pg. 2372 of the Fire Bible.**

(ii). **Prayerful handling**

God's guidance as to who should occupy one position or the other should be sincerely sought in prayers before appointing Church leaders. For example, the early Apostles sought God's guidance before Matthias was appointed as an Apostle to replace Judas Iscariot.

*“And they proposed two.... **And they prayed and said, You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two you have chosen** to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell.... And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles”*
Acts 1:23 – 26 (Emphasis mine).

(iii). **The leading of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Godhead. He is the Comforter sent to help Christians in the race.

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever –that Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither

sees him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” John 14:16&17.

“...When He the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth; ...He will tell you things to come.” John 16:13.

As sincere prayers for guidance are raised to God, the Holy Spirit will guide Christians into the truth of appointing the right leaders to lead the flock aright.

Qualifications for Church Leadership

As the Church carefully considers who to appoint to Church leadership positions, the Bible specifies certain qualities to look for in a prospective Church leader:

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not

a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” 1 Timothy 3:2-7.

Also, concerning the qualifications expected of those to be appointed as Deacons, the Bible says:

“Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.” 1 Timothy 3:8 – 12.

From the two passages above, it is evident that those to be appointed as Church Leaders must possess certain qualifications; and some of these are outlined below:

(1). **Salvation**

A person to be appointed to Church leadership position must have been genuinely born again, and maintaining a steady growth in Christ.

(2). **Spiritual Maturity**

Must not be a new or young convert.

“Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.” 1 Timothy 3:6.

(3). **Godly behaviour**

A prospective Christian leader must not be double-tongued, violent, quarrelsome, or covetous; rather should have integrity; be self-controlled, gentle, trustworthy, peaceable, sober, and hospitable.

(4). **Not greedy for money**

Greed for money will water down the desire for holiness in personal life and Ministry.

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Timothy 6:10.

Therefore, a Church leader who is greedy for money cannot be useful in leading the sheep aright. The Bible says:

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24.

(5). **Marital faithfulness; a true Christian Home, and godly children**

A prospective Church leader must not be morally bankrupt; must be faithful to his/her lawful spouse; the wife/husband of one's youth. “Lawful spouse” is deliberately used here because any marriage contracted contrary to God's Word is unlawful.

Also, such must have built a Christian Home in the true sense of it; not in name only! It is expected that the children must be godly and well-behaved.

“Among the most important aspects of Christian life are servanthood, humility and **responsibility in home, marriage and family relationships** (1Tim. 3:2, 4-5; Ti 1:6). For this reason, **a church leader must be an example of God's people especially in his**

faithfulness to his wife and children. After all, if there is failure in this area, “how shall he take care of the Church of God? (1 Tim. 3:5). **He must be “the husband of one wife”** (1Tim. 3:2).... **The faithful husband of his wife.** This expression has a female counterpart – “**the wife of one man**”- which appears in Paul's instruction in relation to widows (See 1 Tim. 5:9)....” **Footnote on page 2366 of the Fire Bible** (Emphasis mine).

(6). Ability to teach the balanced Word of God

Must be deep in the knowledge of God and His Word; thus will be able to teach the whole counsel of God's Word – the fall of mankind, and the need for repentance from sin; salvation through Jesus Christ; holiness; forgiveness; God's Mercy; God' Anger and judgement of sin; the Beauty of Heaven; the horror of hell; Christ's second coming etc.

All the above will bring great harvest of souls to the Kingdom, will sustain Christians in the race; and help us to make Heaven at last.

(7). A godly example to the Flock

“ ... Christian leaders must be “an example of the believers” (1Tim. 4:12; cf.1Pet. 5:3) – an example of

faith and conduct that people in the church can follow.(a)**Pastors and church leaders must show through their lives the highest example of consistent Christ-like character, faithfulness, purity in the face of temptation, loyalty to Christ and love for His message** (1Tim. 4:12, 15).(b)God's people must learn Christian ethics(i.e., standards of moral conduct) and true godly character not only from the Word of God, but also from the example of pastors who live by the standard of that Word. **The daily lifestyle of a pastor is to be a model of God's standard of faith and godly behavior.** Pastors must be people whose devotion to Christ can be held out as a pattern and example for people in the Church to follow....” **Article on Moral qualifications for Ministers on pg. 2366 of the Fire Bible** (Emphasis mine).

(8).Honourable among those outside the Church

“Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”
1Timothy 3:7.

In Conclusion

The above Biblical guidelines are to ensure that the Church is spiritually healthy. This will enable each Christian to live holy, fulfill God's Heartbeat (which is Evangelism and discipleship); and as each Christian remains faithful to the end, one will make it safely "Home"!



CHAPTER FIVE

MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH

Introduction

Organizations are set up to achieve a particular purpose or the other; and the Church is no exception. The Church is Christ's Representative on earth as Soldiers of the Cross; the Army of the Lord.

The Lord's Army

The Lord's Army consists of all Christians, i.e. all truly born again people all over the world. Christians are involved in a spiritual battle against the spiritual forces of evil headed by satan.

The Lord's Army is headed by Jesus Christ Who is the Christian's

"Shepherd and Overseer of ... souls"
(1 Peter 2:25).

The Lord's Army must be disciplined!

It is a well-known fact that the Army is a highly disciplined profession; this is very essential for victory in battles. Therefore, the Army of the Lord must be highly disciplined too!

The Christian Soldiers must maintain strict discipline within its ranks for her to fulfill purpose, and be victorious over the arch-enemy and his team.

This means, for purpose fulfillment, there must be discipline; otherwise an organization will soon collapse, and unable to fulfill its purpose. To prevent this disaster in the Church, the Bible provides instructions on how to maintain discipline in the Body of Christ.

Discipline in the church

The Bible contains instructions on how the Christian can live a holy and disciplined life. However, there are times that a Christian falls below the expected Biblical standard of holiness; thus sinning against God, and unable to effectively fulfill purpose.

Therefore, to restore discipline in the Church, the issue of sin must be dealt with.

✠ *Maintaining Discipline in the Church*

Once the sin is confirmed to be true, for the sake of the offending Christian, and to serve as a deterrent to others, **the sinning Christian must be prayerfully, lovingly, and firmly reprimanded; and carefully nurtured to spiritual wholeness.**

The Almighty and merciful God who does not want any to get lost has provided how the Christian who sinned can be lovingly disciplined, and helped to stand on his/her feet again. **Submission to discipline by such sinning Christian is to his/her own benefit; both in this world, and in eternity!**

The Aim of Discipline

The aim of discipline in the Church is to lovingly help the "wounded" Christian to realize his/her sin, be truly sorry, receive God's forgiveness, and be restored to spiritual wholeness. It is very important for those saddled with the maintenance of Church discipline to seek God in prayers for the needed wisdom to achieve this.

The Christian who has fallen into sin is like a wounded soldier on the field; in actual fact, such is a wounded Christian Soldier, and so should not be neglected nor despised. He or she is to be prayerfully and carefully handled, and nurtured

back to spiritual wholeness. This is to be lovingly and humbly done to the glory of God.

Instructions on maintaining Discipline

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”
Galatians 6:1.

“The word “restore” (Gk. *katartizo*) is used in the NT for mending fishing nets (Mt. 4:21), but in reference to people it means developing and perfecting human character (2 Cor. 13:11). With this in mind, **Christians must help wayward believers to mend and heal spiritually by guiding them in their desire and efforts to turn from their own defiant ways, to surrender to Christ's control and to renew their full devotion to Jesus Christ.** This may involve disciplinary action... which should be done humbly and firmly but “gently”.

Paul here is not thinking of the serious sins and open and unashamed moral violations that bring public disgrace to Christ and the

congregation (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5)....” **Footnote on Galatians 6:1 on page 2270 of the Fire Bible** (Emphasis mine).

Let's see what the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 5:5:

“Deliver such a one to satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

“ ... Such sins may require temporary exclusion from the Church before restoration is granted (1Co5:11).” **Pg. 2270 of the Fire Bible.**

Let's go again to the Bible:

“But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner – not even to eat with such a person.” 1 Corinthians 5:11.

“ ... Those whom Church members are to judge and restrict their contact with are individuals within the Church (v. 9, 11) who claim to follow Christ but dishonour Him with their openly immoral behavior. While Christians must not unjustly criticize other Christians (cf. Mt. 7:1-5), they must still hold each

other accountable to the standard of God's Word when serious sin or persistent ungodly conduct is involved. **Such wicked actions demand judgement and discipline for the sake of the person involved, as well as the purity and influence of the Church on those who do not know Christ....** Footnote on 1 Cor. 5:10-12 on pg.2179 of the Fire Bible (Emphasis mine).

Sin must be judged among Church Ministers

If the sinning Christian is among the Church leaders, discipline is to be meted out to such without partiality as specified in the Scriptures.

“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.” 1 Timothy 5:19–21.

“God's Word gives principles and guidelines with regard to the correction and discipline of Pastors and Church leaders (vv. 20-22). Because **godly leaders**

are essential to the Church, the following actions must be taken when a Pastor or Church worker defies God's standard and that sin is confirmed. (v.19).

- (1) **Leaders must not cover up or remain silent about the sins of other leaders.** The offending Pastor or leader **must be "rebuked"** (i.e., reprimanded) **and disciplined.** His **offence must be exposed "before all [publicly]"** in order **that the rest of the leaders and people in the Church may take warning and have a godly fear of defying the Lord.**
- (2) Paul warns that the **above action must be carried out without bias or favouritism.** In other words, regardless of who the leader is, he or she must be disciplined the same because all will one day face impartial judgement from God (cf. v.21; Ro 14:12; Heb 4:13).” **Footnote on 1 Tim.5:20 on pg. 2372 of the Fire Bible** (Emphasis mine).

“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:13.

Finally...

A disciplined Army will be victorious over the enemy. Therefore, the maintenance of discipline in the Lord's Army will make her victorious over satan and his team.

As the Church remains a disciplined Spiritual Army to the end, she will go from victory to victory; and from one level of glory to another, until we make Heaven at last.



CHAPTER SIX

THE WILES AGAINST THE CHURCH

The Church of Christ is faced with a very wicked arch-enemy who fights against the spiritual health of the Church. This fight is spiritual; it is very real, but very subtle because he uses wiles! The Bible talks about "*the wiles of the devil*" in Ephesians 6:11b.

Yes, the arch-enemy uses wiles; he doesn't fight us directly, but in a very subtle way that if we are not discerning, we won't easily take note until the havoc is done!

The wiles of the devil

There are many wiles the devil uses against the Church, and some of these are:

1. The false security of sin

The false security of sin is used here to mean when a Christian is living in sin, or there is prevalent sinning

in the Church, and they feel comfortable in it as if all is well!

Also, the business of a sinning Christian may be prospering; or a Church where sinning is prevalent may seem to be prospering physically in spite of the internal spiritual rottenness! These physical blessings may make a Christian/Church feel God "approves" of their sinning; and this is not so. The Bible says:

"Though they join forces, the wicked will not go unpunished; but the posterity of the righteous will be delivered." Proverbs 11:21.

The danger of a sinful lifestyle is that, sinning begins to look normal that one continues to feel at ease and "secure"! This false security of sin is the devil's wile so that the Christian/Church will not see the need to repent until they are consumed.

2. **Hypocrisy**

"Hypocrisy means acting as if you are what you are not. For example, it could involve acting outwardly as a godly and faithful Christian, when in reality (in your private life or with a different crowd) you are hiding sin, immorality, greed, lust or other ungodly attitudes or behaviours While remaining in this condition, a person cannot "escape the damnation

of hell" (Mt. 23:33). **Footnote on hypocrisy on pg. 1878 of the Fire Bible.**

This is also one of the wiles of the devil to weaken the Church, and destroy the soul of the hypocritical "Christian" in the end.

3. **Dysfunctional "busyness"!**

This is used here to mean anything one is busy with at the expense of other important things in one's life. That is, anything the Christian spends time on that debars him/her from attending to other important areas of one's life. Some of these are:

- (i). Neglect of one's personal relationship with God: When one neglects personal Bible Study, prayer, evangelism, Corporate Fellowship etc., one's spiritual growth suffers. The neglect of any of these parameters for Christian growth will make one to gradually dry up spiritually in one's personal life. This will eventually have a negative effect on one's home, Ministry, and also the Church.
- (ii). Neglect of one's marital relationship: Also, when a Christian fails to spend enough time with his/her spouse and household; this could be because of Career, business, or even Ministry work!

Anything that robs the Christian of the time one should spend to build healthy marital/family relationships is dysfunctional. It will weaken one's marital bond/family ties; and also makes a Christian more vulnerable to sexual temptations, and any other type of sin. Sin brings shame to the Church, and evil speaking against the Name of our God!

(iii). Lack of adequate rest: It is very important to have enough rest so that our physical bodies can last! Even our Lord Jesus Christ while in the physical body took time to rest. For example, while He journeyed in a boat with His disciples, Jesus “*was in the stern, asleep on a pillow*” Mark 4:38.

Our Lord Jesus Christ also counselled His disciples to take time to rest.

*“And He said to them, “**Come aside** by yourselves to a deserted place **and rest** a while.” **For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.** So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.”*
Mark 6:31 & 32 (Emphasis mine).

When the Christian fails to give adequate rest to his/her physical body, it will soon wear out! This can

lead to **avoidable premature death**; and this will be a loss to the Church. May we not die before our time in Jesus Name, Amen.

4. **When the Christian struggles alone with his/her challenges**

Challenges could come in a Christian life in form of:

(i). Fiery trials: There are times the Christian may be faced with fiery trials e.g. persecutions, marital problems, joblessness, business failure, sickness etc. Any of these problems could become overwhelming that he/she may be getting weary, discouraged and hopeless.

There are times the weary Christian keeps struggling alone with the problem, **rather than confide in a mature Christian who will keep it confidential**; and give prayerful and emotional supports. Eventually, such Christian may be defeated; and this is a blow to the Church.

(ii). Besetting sin: Also, the Christian may be struggling with besetting or secret sins (e.g. fornication, adultery, pornography, masturbation, unforgiveness, prayerlessness etc.); and not seek help on how to be victorious over such sins.

Instead of struggling alone with sin, **the sinning Christian ought to find a mature Christian that will treat the issue with confidentiality, be empathetic, and also hold him/her accountable.** He/she will be able to receive counsel, loving rebuke, encouragement and follow up; and also prayerful/emotional supports to stand on one's feet again.

However, when a Christian struggles alone with any sin one is finding difficult to overcome, he/she is like an isolated soldier surrounded by many soldiers of the opposing camp. He/she will soon be overpowered and become a victim on the battlefield!

5. Breaking the confidentiality ethos of Counselling.

When a Christian confides in a fellow Christian or Church leader about the problems he/she is facing, it is a great trust that must not be betrayed.

Careless handling of counselling information has discouraged many from seeking help about their struggles until they are crushed by it! This is avoidable, and therefore very saddening!

6. **Wrong choice of a life partner**

Healthy Christian Homes are very crucial to the health of the Church; and even the larger society. When a Christian misses it in the choice of a life-partner, a faulty foundation for the marriage is already laid.

This may be due to anxiety to settle down; sheer sentiments; leaning on one's own understanding; inexperience or spiritual immaturity; or it could be in outright disobedience to the Word of God by being unequally yoked etc. Except there is divine intervention, the wrong choice will negatively affect his/her life, Home, and Ministry; and of course the Church.

7. **Weakness in the place of prayers and intercessions**

We need one another in the place of prayers; we need to regularly pray for one another!

*“Therefore I exhort first of all that **supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in***

all godliness and reverence. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.”*

1 Timothy 2:1-3 (Emphasis mine).

However, rather than strictly obey the above injunction, we often talk about what satan is doing in the life of a Church or individuals (saved or unsaved). What is acceptable to God is for us to be burdened to intercede for their deliverance and restoration as the case may be!

Intercession “ ... is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:3 & 4.

When the Church fails to intercede; when she is weak in the place of prayers, we are failing to do what is pleasing unto God! This means we are displeasing God! Also, we lose the benefits of prayers; and the blessings of standing in the gap for others!

Some of the other wiles of the devil against the Church are:

- ◆ Discouragement, distraction and diversion.
- ◆ Self- advertisement by servants of God, rather than pointing people to Jesus Christ the Owner of the Work.

✠ *The Wiles against the Church*

- ◆ Pride and sharing God's glory, as if one is the doer of the work.
- ◆ Self-indulgent, extravagant, and ostentatious lifestyles of some Church Leaders and Ministers; even Church members too.
- ◆ Idolizing and deifying servants of God by members.
- ◆ Greed and the love of money
- ◆ Dwindling passion for Evangelism/Discipleship.
- ◆ Envy, and character assassination of one another.
- ◆ Division and extreme denominationalism.
- ◆ Rigidity, and putting one's Church doctrine as superior over the revealed Word of God in the Bible.
- ◆ Unhealthy competition, and comparing ourselves with ourselves! The Bible says:
"...But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." 2 Corinthians 10:12b.

Our Lord Jesus Christ should be our utmost role model. We may admire the lifestyle of fervent Christians, but Christ should be our example.

“To compare ourselves with worldly standards or to the lives of others – even other Christians – shows that we lack a proper understanding of God's will for us as individuals and as part of His body (i.e., the Church, the community of all true Christians). The only standard by which we must measure ourselves is revealed by God through Christ and His Word.”

Footnote on 2 Cor. 10:12 on pg. 2244 of the Fire Bible.

The three-fold Agenda

The aim of the devil's wiles against the Church is to fulfill his three-fold ministry to kill, to steal, and to destroy (John 10:10)! It is to make the Church to stumble from the Holiness Way so that Heaven can elude the Christians.

“But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:57.



CHAPTER SEVEN

OUR BLESSED HOPE

In the midst of all the turmoil and persecutions encountered by the Church, we have a “Blessed Hope” ahead; which is the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This will put an end to all the trials and temptations; it's going to be a happy re-union with our Commander-in-Chief and Bishop of our Souls! Alleluia!!!

Christ's Second Coming

Our Lord and Saviour promised us:

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to His work.” Revelation 22:12.

The above promise from the One Who is “... *the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.*” (Revelation 22:13), is very comforting; and should encourage us to live righteously till the end.

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. . . .” Titus 2:11-13.

Our Lord Jesus Christ will adequately reward our faithfulness to Him if we don't faint, and give up the faith!

Exact time unknown

The exact time that our Lord Jesus Christ will arrive is not known.

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only... Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. . . . Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”
Matthew 24:36, 42, 44.

Live consistently for Christ

Since we don't know the exact time of Christ's arrival, it is wise to live each moment as if Christ is coming that very moment; thus one will not be put to shame when He comes.

✠ *Our Blessed Hope*

We should daily think of Christ's second coming so that we would get our priorities right in the light of eternity.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Luke 12:34.

The Trial of our Faith

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not sweet talk us into the Christian race. He made it clear that trials are part of the package of living for Him.

"... In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33b.

To be fore-warned is to be fore-armed! Therefore, we should expect trials and persecutions as we journey on the Christian Way.

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12.

This realization will adequately prepare us to stand for Christ, even in difficult times.

Keep your Lamps burning

Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning.... Blessed are those servants

whom the master, when he comes, will find watching...." Luke 12:35 & 37.

"... From the time Jesus left the earth to the present, He calls all of His followers to be spiritually ready at all times as they wait for His return.(1) Jesus' followers must be so attached to Him as their greatest love and treasure(v.34) that their deepest hope and longing is for His return (vv. 35-37). (2) They must be spiritually dressed (i.e., living with His character traits and serving His purposes) and ready as they wait for the uncertain time of Christ's coming.... (3) Christ could come at any time (v.38), so we must be waiting and looking for Christ Himself...." **Footnote on Luke 12:35-40, on pg.1880 -1881 of the Fire Bible.**

Be faithful to the end!

In spite of the fiery trials Christians have to go through, we must keep living for Jesus Christ till the end of our lives.

We know that the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will be a happy re-union with our Saviour! It will put an end to all trials; and be the beginning of a glorious dawn where we shall forever be with the Lord!

"And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." 1 John 3:3.

SLEEP

THE DEADLY

PART TWO





CHAPTER EIGHT

AGENTS OF THE THREE-FOLD AGENDA!

“For the lips of a Priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.

But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi. says the Lord of Hosts.” Malachi 2:7 & 8.

The above verses best describe the Altar today. The Altar is used here literarily. It is also used to refer to the Spiritual leaders of the Church; and all who are responsible for sharing God's Word to people - whether through Drama; Music; Writing; or teaching of the Word.

The Altar is polluted!

The Altar is polluted because those who are to lead the sheep in the way have departed from the right way; their lips have ceased from keeping knowledge.

Ordination for Sale!

The major pollutant of the Altar is the faulty criteria for choosing who to be ordained in the Church; and this in total disregard for the Bible's instruction on the qualifications for Church leadership positions.

Ordination is for sale to “moneybags”; even where such lack the spiritual maturity to correctly handle leadership positions in the Church! It is made available to members who donate to the Church (in cash or kind), and at times to the highest bidder! This is sad; very sad!

The pollution of the Altar is also a result of the menace of:

Distracted Ministers

Those who are called by God to minister at the Altar are gradually departing from the truth of God's Word, both in their personal lives, and in their ministrations. God's servants preach, sing, write, and produce films they feel people want to hear,

† *Agents of the Three-fold Agenda!*

read, and watch respectively; and not what God want them to give to the sheep.

The Word of God is heavily diluted; there is the compromise of the standard of God's Word, and the principles of His Kingdom! There is greed for money and power; and in some cases theft; yes, theft of God's money! The Altar is polluted!

Self-called “Ministers”

Furthermore, the altar is polluted with those who have no call of God on their lives but yet are “serving” at the Altar in one capacity or the other. They are self-called, either because of the love of titles, or because of the “benefits” and prestige of Ministry work!

Therefore, such do not have strength for personal holiness; also no burden for the unsaved, nor desire for souls to be established in Christ. Such are only after the money of men, rather than the souls of men!

Hirelings

Hirelings are not Shepherds, even though they may be so called. They do not have any personal commitment, or sense of responsibility to the sheep.

They are only concerned about their “pay”. Hirelings pose great danger to the body of Christ because they do not care about the spiritual welfare of the sheep under them.

“But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.” John 10:12 & 13.

This means that any “Pastor” who is unconcerned, or carefree about the spiritual welfare of the sheep is a hireling!

Occultic “Ministers”

Some “Ministers” are actually in the occult; consciously serving the devil, and passionately recruiting souls for hell!

False Apostles

False apostles disguise themselves as apostles of Christ, and as ministers of righteousness; but in actual fact, they are ministers of satan!

⊕ Agents of the Three-fold Agenda!

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works” 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

False Apostles are doing great havoc to the Church. Except they quickly repent and forsake iniquity, their *“end will be according to their works”*. 2 Corinthians 11:15b.

Agents of the three-fold Agenda!

All the above are not fulfilling the purpose of God in the Church. They are the devil's messengers to pollute the Church; agents of the three-fold agenda - to kill, to steal, and to destroy! Except they quickly repent and forsake iniquity, the wrath of God is coming upon them.

The negative effects on the Church

- ◆ Motivational and Prosperity Talks are gradually replacing talks on Holiness; Heaven; Hell; Passion for Souls; The Christian and Trials; Persecution; The day of the Lord; Christ's

Second Coming etc. This results in spiritual mal-nourishment for the Sheep!

- ◆ The quality of the Messages coming from the Altar is producing “Christians” who are “*having a form of godliness but denying its power....*” 2 Timothy 3:5.
- ◆ Church leaders are deified, and nearly worshipped as “gods” – “the great man or woman of God”, rather than “the man or woman of the great God”! This is idolatory par-excellence!
- ◆ Some “Christian Films” are not God's Word-compliant! They cause further decay in the Church.
- ◆ Songs which are not Word-based are produced by the so-called Gospel Singers. Some of these so-called Christian songs are sensuous, and mere entertainment.

This is the type that the world want to hear, and so will sell fast! However, they are not good for the spiritual edification of Christians.

- ◆ Some Christian authors release into Christendom “Christian books” that do not

✦ *Agents of the Three-fold Agenda!*

contain balanced teaching that can win souls, nor help believers to grow in Christ; not to talk of preparing them for the coming of the Lord, and for eternity.

- ◆ The passion for evangelism and discipleship is going down.
- ◆ **Altar calls for salvation and rededication are gradually becoming scarce!** In some cases if they are made, it is merely to fulfill all righteousness; or presented as a condition for material prosperity. Any of these cannot produce brokenness and genuine conversion in the sinner.
- ◆ **Sinners feel very comfortable in the Church;** no true conviction of sin because **the Minister and the message lack the Fire of the Holy Spirit.**
- ◆ Sinners in the Church become more hardened; some believers are beginning to stumble, and some have actually fallen!
- ◆ Worldliness is spreading like cankerworm in the Church.

✚ *The Sleeping Giant*

- ◆ No clear-cut distinction between the “world” and the Church.
- ◆ It is becoming increasingly difficult for the Church to affect the world for God.
- ◆ The Church is “spiritually drowsy”! In fact, the Church has fallen into a spiritually dangerous and deadly sleep!

God's judgement is imminent!

The righteous judgement of the Almighty God is looming on the Church except we quickly repent, return to our first love for God; and make soul-winning/discipleship which is God's Heartbeat, our very own heartbeats too!



CHAPTER NINE

THERE IS BLOOD ON THE ALTAR

Evangelism is the Heartbeat of God! Christians have been saved to serve; all are to passionately reach out to the unsaved with the salvation message. Passionate Evangelism ought to be spear-headed by the Church Leaders who should be examples to the flock.

But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi. says the Lord of Hosts.” Malachi 2: 8.

Deadly distractions

The ***Priests have been distracted from preaching “the whole counsel of God”***. There

is a subtle and gradual diversion into Motivational and Prosperity Talks.

Please, don't get me wrong, **material prosperity is very good; but when it is emphasized at the expense of spiritual prosperity, it becomes evil!** God's desire for the Church is to have all-round prosperity:

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” 3 John 2.

The use of the anointing oil has been grossly abused. “Anointing Services” are now commonly organized as if it is the oil that does the miracle, and brings the breakthroughs! This is not so.

It is the Word of God in the Christian's heart that fires one up to pray, guides on how to pray; and sharpens one's faith to do spiritual warfare for breakthroughs!

Furthermore, the Word of God in the heart of a Christian strengthens against temptations, keeps away from sin; and guides one aright. It is written:

*“Your Word I have hidden in my heart,
that I might not sin against You
Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a*

✠ *There is Blood on the Altar*

*light to my path.” Psalm
119:11&105.*

Therefore, **when the oil is poured on the head, without the Word of God in the heart, it is of no spiritual benefit at all!**

Also, “Breakthrough Services” for material prosperity are gradually gaining ground; whereas **the greatest breakthrough is victory over the flesh and its lusts!**

All these deadly distractions have watered down the balanced teaching of God's Word, passion for evangelism/follow-up, and holy living in the Church.

Guilty of blood

Salvation Messages, Evangelism, and discipleship are no longer priority on the Agenda of many denominations and fellowship groups.

The Almighty God says when the sinners are not warned about the need to repent from sin, and such sinners die in their sin, the Church (Christians) become guilty of blood!

“So you son of man; I have made you a watchman ... When I say to the wicked ...

*you shall surely die! **And you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.** Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”* Ezekiel 33:7 – 9 (Emphasis mine).

The spiritual Abattoir!

The Altar which is supposed to be the source of Life-giving messages has become a “slaughter” slab; a “spiritual abattoir”! There is blood on the Altar!

- ♦ The **stern rebuke of sin is gradually disappearing from some of our Altars, and souls are perishing!** Sinners (both the unsaved, and those who claim to be born again, but are enslaved by sin) feel very comfortable in their sin, and in the Church.
- ♦ There is the **scarcity of the systematic teaching of the undiluted Word of God needed to sustain Christians in the race.** Precious souls are spiritually mal-nourished,

✠ *There is Blood on the Altar*

while some are “spiritually dead”, and wallowing in their vomit!

- ♦ Altar **call for salvation/rededication is gradually becoming “unfashionable”!** Sometimes, when they are given, **it is with little or no passion at all**; and this may result in no conversion of souls.
- ♦ At times, people are called to receive Christ **as a pre-condition for material prosperity**. This may result in an insincere decision for Christ; a “decision” made because of the desire for material prosperity, and not necessarily because they are truly convicted of their sins!

Indeed, our Altars are fast becoming “Spiritual Abattoirs”!

Blood on the Altar!

There is blood on the Altar as a result of failure to warn sinners to repent from sin, and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour!

There is blood on the Altar through lack of follow-up of new converts! Yes, there is blood on the Altar through the havoc of “the agents of the three-fold

agenda”; Ministers who are not concerned about the salvation and eternal welfare of their members!

There is blood on the Altar, and it stinks! **The Altar stinks of the stale blood of many lives that have been “slaughtered” on it;** and this through failure to preach salvation messages to the unsaved, and failure to feed the flock with balanced spiritual Meals!

The stench of the Altar has attracted an army of “spiritual flies” hovering around it, and they are having a field day “stealing, killing, and destroying”!

A serious “spiritual epidemic” has begun to break out in the Church; and to stop its further spread, a thorough cleansing of the Altar is urgently required!



CHAPTER TEN

THE CHURCH AND MAMMON

Definition of terms

(I) The Church

As earlier mentioned in Part One, we are talking about the Church of Christ; bought with His precious Blood. This refers to all who are truly born again in all denominations and Fellowship groups.

(ii) Mammon

"A way of talking about money and wealth when it has become the most important thing in somebody's life and as important as a god." Oxford Dictionary.

(iii) Materialism (in the sense used here)

"The belief that money, possessions and physical comforts are more important than spiritual values." (Oxford Dictionary).

From the above definitions, **the Church and mammon are two parallel lines that should never meet!**

However,

Taking a look at the situation of the Church today, it is very glaring that **there is an unholy alliance between the Church and mammon**; and this deadly romance is gradually making the Church's love for God to wax cold because:

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24.

The greed for money

There is greed for money and position; both among the Church leaders, and the members. Materialism is gradually been enthroned in the Church; **messages (sermons, music, Christian books and films) are centred so much around material prosperity** as if we have only been saved to “enjoy” every imaginable comfort of life - build good houses, ride the best cars, wear expensive clothes etc.

Preaching on material prosperity is good as long it is balanced with preaching on holiness. However, it becomes evil when it is emphasized at the expense of spiritually important things like holiness, evangelism and follow-up of converts etc. The Bible says:

✠ The Church and Mammon

“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”
Luke 12:15.

The greed for money has led to using gimmicks, coercion, and outright deceit to swindle money out of members. There is stealing of Church's money by some “Pastors”; and there are Ushers that steal from the Offering bags!

Also, the greed for money has made **some** “Ministers” in the Church to join cults so as to have large congregation members, and an increasing income!

This is not to say that all Church Leaders/Ministers will large congregations are cultists! There are still some who sincerely laboured in prayers and Evangelism to build up large congregation members. May God continue to strengthen such ones in Jesus Name, Amen.

There are Christian Singers, Authors, film producers etc. that respectively sing, write, and produce films which are “spiritually sub-standard”! This is because they feel that is what will sell fast, and give them “cool cash”; and this at the expense of the precious souls for whom Christ died and rose!

Materialism in the Church

The Church passionately celebrates material prosperity as if that is the yardstick for success in life and Ministry,

whereas "... one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Luke 12:15.

True prosperity is to know Christ as Lord and Saviour, faithfully serve Him; and continually live in obedience to God till the end.

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his own soul?" Mark 8:36 & 37.

The Church celebrates the materially wealthy but morally bankrupt members of the Church; and sometimes "ordain" them to occupy leadership positions in the Church, all in the name of money!

The Church has fallen headlong in love with money; and as a result, all forms of evil are found in the Church.

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
1 Timothy 6:10.

The Church is hotly pursuing money rather than having a hot pursuit after souls! She is really very busy with "money business" rather than "Soul business"; which is the very essence of our existence after our salvation experience!

First thing first!

The greed for money and what money can buy, rather than the pursuit of holiness, passionate evangelism, and discipleship is a misplaced priority! This is too costly now, and in eternity. The Bible says:

“Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Matthew 6:31-33.

To awake from this deadly sleep, the Church must get her priorities right in the light of eternity. The warning of our Lord Jesus Christ to those buying and selling in the Temple is still very relevant to today's Church:

“... Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!” John 2:16.

Therefore, righteousness must be the first, and only worthy pursuit by the Church! God has promised to take care of the rest.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

The Church and the world are two individual systems that are very different from each other.

The Church: refers to Christians; that is, all who are truly born again and living to honour God.

The world: in the sense used here, represents ungodliness and every form of evil. It is therefore not surprising that the Bible says:

“... Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” James 4:4.

Christians are “a called out people”.

Christians have been called out of the darkness of the world system into the light of the Kingdom's

lifestyle; to a life of holiness unto the praise of God.

*“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, **a holy nation**, His Own special people, **that you may proclaim the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light**; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” 1 Peter 2:9–10 (Emphasis mine).*

Some Implications of the Call

That Christians are called out of the world system means:

- (i) Church is a “holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9)
- (ii). No more conformity with the world.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:1.

- (iii). Christians must be unspotted by the world

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: ... to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” James 1:27.

(vi). No “romance” with the world

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:15-17.

The state of the Church

Even though the Church has been called out of the world to be separated unto God in holy living, the situation of the Church is such that she is:

- i. A spiritually “mixed community”; a polluted nation!
- ii. In conformity with the world
- iii. Being “spotted” by the world
- iv. In deadly romance with the world

The Church is gradually mixing with the world that one finds it difficult to see the clear-cut separation

that should exist between her, and the world from which she has been called out!

The Church is worldly!

The Church is gradually patterning her lifestyle to be in conformity with the values and systems of the world.

For example, among the people in the world, there is fornication, adultery, pornography, masturbation and different sexual sins and perversion; and sadly these sins are in the Church too – committed by people who claim to be born again!

In the world, there is materialism, in decent dressing, dishonesty, greed, pride, love of money, occultism, indecent dressing, jealousy, hatred, abortion (which is murder); and sadly, we also have these sins, and many more in the Church!

The world has entered the Church, and the Church has entered the world. **There is a deadly romance between the Church and the world;** an unholy fusion that has weakened the Church, and made her ineffective in affecting the world for God.

Urgent Revival Needed!

This deadly romance between the Church and the world has "lulled" the Church into a serious spiritual coma! A whirlwind of spiritual revival is urgently needed in the Blood-bought Church!

Food for thought

1. On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame,
And I love that old Cross where the dearest and blest
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Refrain: So I'll cherish the old rugged Cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down,
I will cling to the old rugged Cross,
And exchange it someday for a Crown.

2. Oh, that old rugged Cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me,
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary.
3. In the old rugged Cross, stained with blood so divine
A wondrous beauty I see,

For 'twas on that old Cross, Jesus suffered and died
To pardon and sanctify me.

4. To the old rugged Cross, I will ever be true,
It's shame and reproach gladly bear,
Then He'll call me someday to my Home far away
When His glory for ever I'll share.

George Bernard (1873-1958).

In conclusion

Jesus Christ suffered on the old rugged cross to purchase our redemption. In appreciation of this great sacrifice, Christians are to daily live in obedience to Christ through out our lives.



CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CHURCH AND THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Introduction

The family institution was established by God Almighty with the joining of the first couple, Mr & Mrs Adam in the Garden of Eden.

“And the Lord God said, “It is not good that a man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him. ... Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Genesis 2:19; 22 & 23.

Please note:

God joined a man and a woman together as husband and wife respectively; and not two people of the same sex! This explanation becomes very necessary because of the current issue of homosexuality!

Also, the Almighty God affirms monogamy by providing only one woman for Adam. This means God wants **a man to be the husband of one wife;** and **a woman to be the wife of one husband!**

The importance of marriage

(i) . The joining of the first couple by God shows that God is interested in the marriage institution; and that marriage is very important.

(ii). Jesus Christ attended a wedding ceremony, thereby affirming the beauty and dignity of marriage. He performed His first miracle at this wedding in Cana of Galilee (See John 2:1-11).

(iii). Marriage is a thing of honour. The Bible says:

“Marriage is honourable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and

adulterers, God will judge.” Hebrews 13:4.

The reasons for marriage

A man and a woman are joined as husband and wife for the reason of:

- ◆ Companionship (Genesis 2:19)
- ◆ To guard against fornication and adultery (1 Corinthians 7:2)
- ◆ Procreation (Genesis 1:27 & 28)

The “Manufacturer’s instruction manual”

As the “Manufacturer” of the family institution, the Almighty God has accompanied it with an “Instruction Manual” on how to handle it correctly; that is, the law of God on family matters as contained in the Holy Bible.

The family Institution

The family institution is an age-old institution comprising of the father, mother, and the children. It is the basic unit of society; and its well-being is very crucial to the health of the society. That is, healthy families will produce a healthy society.

Also, if we have healthy families, we shall have a healthy Church; and a healthy Church will produce healthy Christian families.

The Church

As mentioned earlier in this Book, the Church refers to all truly born again people in all the Church denominations; and such born again people are expected to maintain steady growth in Christ.

The Christian Family

This is used here to mean the family established by a Christian man and a Christian woman who are lawfully married to each other. It also includes the children from their marital union.

The Christian Family is established, organized, and handled in accordance with Biblical instructions. Therefore, **the Christian Family is expected to be a beacon of hope for the society.**

The Almighty God is the overall Head of the Christian family; and He has spelt out in the Bible the respective roles of each family member. This is to ensure the smooth-running of the Christian family.

(i). **The husband/father**

The Christian husband/father is God's representative as the head of the family; and also its spiritual overseer.

He is to ensure the physical and spiritual welfare of his family members - by providing for them; praying for them, and with them. Above all, he is to be a godly example to them.

The Head of the man

The Christian husband/father also has his own head:

“... the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” 1 Corinthians 11:3.

Therefore, it is wise for the Christian husband/father to submit to Christ his own Head; so that he can receive the needed grace to effectively run the affairs of his family to the glory of God.

Some other roles of the husband/father are:

- ♦ He is to make a life-long commitment to his wife; and also cleave to her so as to strengthen their marital bond.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24.

- ◆ Unconditional love for his wife; loving her as Christ loves the Church, and gave Himself for her (Ephesians 5:25, 28 & 33)
- ◆ To honour his wife; and treat her kindly (1 Peter 3:7)
- ◆ Godly child training (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4))
- ◆ Marital faithfulness to his lawful wife (Malachi 2:14-16; Hebrews 13:4)
- ◆ Meets wife's sexual need (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

(ii). **The wife/mother**

- ◆ Husband's helpmeet (Genesis 2:18)
- ◆ Submits to husband's authority (Ephesians 5:22)
- ◆ Honours and respects her husband (Ephesians 5:33)
- ◆ Co-operates with husband in raising godly children (Proverbs 6:22)
- ◆ Marital faithfulness to her lawful husband (Hebrews 13:4)

✠ *The Church and the Christian Family*

- ◆ Meets husband's sexual need (1 Corinthians 7:3-5)
- ◆ Builds her Home for God's glory (Proverbs 14:1)
- ◆ Makes a life-long commitment to her husband; and also takes good care of her home and her household (Proverbs 31:10-31)

(iii). **The children**

- ◆ Obedience to parents (Ephesians 6:1)
- ◆ Honour to parents (Ephesians 6:2)

As each Christian family member performs his/her God-ordained roles, the Christian family will be harmonious and God-glorifying; a boost to Evangelism, and a blessing to the society.

The Church and the Christian Family

The Church is the parent institution for the Christian family. The Church is expected to be the custodian of the Christian family; teaching, nurturing, upholding, and jealously protecting its Biblical ethos and sanctity.

When Christian Homes are Christian Homes indeed, the cause of the Gospel will be

enhanced; and God's Holy Name is glorified.

The Church is to ensure the welfare of the Christian family to enable the latter fulfill her role in the Kingdom, and the larger society.

The situation of the Christian Family today

There is **a consistent, wicked, and aggressive spiritual attack against the Christian Family!**

It is particularly saddening that the Church seems helpless; and this is very dangerous, and spiritually deadly!

There is **a systematic destruction of the Christian Family through adultery!** Other forms of attacks against the Christian Family are pornography, domestic violence, neglect, separation, absentee father or mother, spouse abuse (verbal, emotional, physical) etc.

Yes, the Church has successfully salvaged some ailing Christian families; but there are still many in need of restoration! It is like the Church is gradually losing the battle to sustain healthy Christian Families! God forbid in Jesus Name, Amen.

Yes, we know there are some very healthy Christian families in the Church; but many Christian Families

have been wounded, and are seriously "sick", and in need of help.

One Christian Family after the other is cast down by the enemy's bullet! The Christian family is sadly part of the divorce statistics; this is very saddening!

Some Areas of Concern

- ◆ The alarming rate at which adultery has crept into the Christian Family; even among Church Ministers! Adultery in the Christian Family has terribly weakened the marital bond between lawfully married husband and wife, and brought shame and scandal against the Church.
- ◆ The gradually increasing number of Christian couples staying apart because of career pursuit, business, or even Ministry work! This also weakens the marital bond of lawfully married couples; and makes them more susceptible to sexual sins.
- ◆ Christian couples that are separated; either because of marital crisis, care-free attitude, or ignorance about the importance of staying together as a family.

✠ *The Sleeping Giant*

- ◆ Christian families are breaking up through divorce; and the resultant heartbreaks, negative effects on the children, and the evil speaking against the Church.
- ◆ Some Christian Families are just staying together physically, but are emotionally and spiritually separated!
- ◆ The increasing number of wayward children from Christian families.
- ◆ Some Christians are entering into the family institution with inadequate knowledge of what it entails to run an effective Christian family.
- ◆ The worldliness in the Church has negatively affected the Christian Family. The Church that is supposed to be the custodian of the Christian family is sick; and so, the Christian Family is sick!

The clarion call

The Church should wake up to her God-given role as the parent institution of the Christian Family. She should quickly arise to take positive actions to salvage the Christian family from total collapse!



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CHURCH SHOOTS HER WOUNDED ONES!

All true Christians are Soldiers of the Cross; members of the Army of the Lord. We are involved in a spiritual battle against satan and his team. It is very important to know that this spiritual battle (even though unseen) is as real and dangerous as physical battles!

On the spiritual battlefield, there are times that the Christian Soldier may be “wounded” and in need of care; so as to be on his/her feet again to continue the battle till the end.

A Christian soldier may be “wounded” as a result of many factors; and some of these are:

- ◆ Gradual or total neglect of the Christian's personal fellowship with God; in prayers, and studying/meditation on the Word.

⊕ *The Sleeping Giant*

- ◆ Gradual or total neglect of corporate fellowshiping.
- ◆ Gradual or total neglect of personal evangelism/follow-up.
- ◆ Besetting sin, and the Christian becomes weighed down with guilt; and a feeling of worthlessness and hopelessness.
- ◆ Weariness and discouragement. This could be as a result of fiery trial of faith; or life's problems like lack, sickness, business failure, debt, marital challenges, disappointments and heartbreaks; loneliness as a result of "delay" in getting married, single parenthood, widowhood; or being a widower etc.

When any of the above happens, the devil has shot an arrow at the Christian in order to fulfill his three-fold agenda to kill, to steal, and to destroy. (John 10:10).

A Stitch in time....

As the adage goes "A stitch in time saves nine"! What the Church is expected to quickly do is to come to the aid of such "wounded" Christian:

⊕ *The Church Shoots Her Wounded Ones!*

- ◆ To “clean the wound” in preparation for “treatment”.
- ◆ Apply “spiritual antiseptic” to prevent infection from “spiritual bacteria”.
- ◆ Give “spiritual analgesic” to ease the “pains”.
- ◆ Carefully nurse the wounded back to wholesome spiritual health; thus he/she is equipped to fight on in the Lord's Army.

All the above could be in the form of counselling; encouragement; sharing God's Word; praying; provision; visitation; loving but firm rebuke/disciplinary measures where sinning is involved; emotional support; follow-up etc. as the case may be.

The Bible says:

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:1 & 2.

However,

Rather than “bear one another's burdens”; rather than help the wounded Christian soldier, there are

times the Church further “shoots” him/her through our action or inaction. Some of these are:

- ◆ Indifference to the plight of the “wounded” by not helping them to come to their feet again.
- ◆ Avoidable delay in starting the intervention process.
- ◆ Carelessly handled intervention by the Church thereby becoming dysfunctional.
- ◆ High-handedness on the part of some Church leaders, instead of loving, but firm corrections and guidance.
- ◆ Lack of continuity or perseverance in the intervention process, whereby the problem remains unsolved; or even gets worse.
- ◆ Intervention in the power of the flesh, or leaning on one's own understanding; instead of prayerful handling, and relying on God's Holy Spirit for Wisdom/sense of direction.
- ◆ Judgemental attitude/words from fellow Christians; rather than compassionate and understanding gestures.

✠ *The Church Shoots Her Wounded Ones!*

- ◆ Contemptuous attitude towards the wounded Christian by fellow Christians; rather than showing respect and agape love for them.
- ◆ Christians gossip about him/her; and at times under the pious pretext of giving such issues out as prayer points!

In some cases, there is total abandonment of the wounded Christian soldier to “rot” away spiritually, emotionally, maritally, financially, and maybe physically too!

But the Church is trying!

Yes, there are times the Church has sincerely arisen to help the spiritually wounded, and this is commendable.

Some have been helped back to their feet, while some have refused to be helped; but at least the Church has done her part.

However, as long as there is still one unreached wounded Christian soldier for whatever reason, we are still guilty of “shooting” that unreached wounded one!

The truth is, there are many unreached wounded Christian soldiers in the Church; therefore, the

Church is guilty of “shooting” some of her wounded ones!

These “shootings” must stop!

The situation whereby the Church sometimes “shoots” her wounded soldiers (through actions, and inactions) is a step in the wrong direction; and this is detrimental to the Army of the Lord.

“... Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.”

Matthew 12:25.

Jesus Christ our Captain, and Commander-in-Chief has not authorized us to shoot one another. His instruction is:

“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2.

In view of the above, and in obedience to our Commander's instruction, we must “bear one another's burdens” by passionately been there for one another in time of need. Therefore, these **“illegal and unauthorized”** shootings must stop!



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE SHEEP DISREGARDS THE SHEPHERD'S ROD

The Shepherd, the Sheep, and the Shepherd's rod

These words are used here as follows:

- ◆ **The Shepherd:** This refers to our Lord Jesus Christ Whom the Bible calls "... *that great Shepherd of the sheep*" Hebrews 13:20c.

Christ is also referred to as:

- (i) The Lord our Shepherd(Psalm 23:1)
- (ii) The good Shepherd Who gives His life for the sheep(John 10:11)
- (iii) Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25)
- (iv) Chief Shepherd(1 Peter 5:4)
- ◆ **The Sheep:** This refers to believers; all who have truly repented from their sins, and

received Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour; and are maintaining a steady growth in the Lord till the end. Christ called His disciples sheep:

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep... I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own ... My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10:11,14 & 27.

- **The Shepherd's rod:** The instrument of discipline and correction for any sheep that is wandering away from the flock; to protect it from danger, or prevent it from getting lost.

Representatives of the Chief Shepherd

As mentioned above, our Lord Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd. True Leaders in the Church of Christ are His Representatives as Shepherds of the flock. They are overseeing the Body of Christ on behalf of Christ; and will one day give account of their stewardship to Him.

Apostle Paul said in his exhortation to Church leaders.

"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit

✠ *The Sheep Disregards the Shepherd's Whistle*

has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God.” Acts 20:28.

To shepherd the church of God includes being a godly example to the flock (1 Peter 5:2 &3); declaring the whole counsel of God in the teaching and preaching of the Word (Acts 20:27); warning against sin, and also maintaining discipline in the Body of Christ.

In view of the above, faithful ministers will warn sinning members of their congregations to quickly repent otherwise sin will prevent them from the Kingdom of God!

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the Kingdom of God.” 1 Corinthians 5:9 & 10.

Enforcing Discipline in the Church

The Bible says:

“... When a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity...

because you did not give him warning, he shall die in His sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand.” Ezekiel 3:20.

Therefore, if there is sinning in the Church, and it has been carefully investigated, and is confirmed; the ministers go to God in prayers for a sense of direction as to how to handle it, and the disciplinary measures to be given the person.

The discipline is to be meted out in the Spirit of humility. The aim of such discipline is to nurse the “wounded” Christian back to spiritual wholeness.

*“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”
Galatians 6:1.*

If the ministers fail to warn and discipline their sinning members, and such die in their sins, God says such ministers will be guilty of blood (Ezekiel 3:20).

Discipline among Church Leaders

If the sinning is among the Church leaders themselves, others are to mete out discipline without

partiality as stipulated in the Scriptures.

*“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you **observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.**”* 1 Timothy 5:19–21 (Emphasis mine).

The aim of discipline

The aim of discipline is **to help the sinning “Christian” realize the danger of a sinful lifestyle, and run for his/her dear life!** The wise response is to run for your very precious soul now!

- ♦ Be sincerely sorry for your sins; also for the evil-speaking and shame brought against the Church; and the Name of Christ.
- ♦ Genuinely repent, and forsake your sinful lifestyle, and you will be forgiven by God.

*“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: Let him **return to the Lord, and He will have mercy** on him;*

and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:7 (Emphasis mine).

- ♦ Humbly submit to the Church's disciplinary measures lovingly given you for the sake of your eternal welfare.
- ♦ Rededicate your life to Jesus Christ **now!**
- ♦ Get a mature Christian to hold you accountable, so that you don't relapse into the sins.

Positive response to discipline

If the Christian being disciplined responds positively to it, and also genuinely repents and forsakes sinning, he/she has preserved his/her life; so also the Minister has delivered his/her own soul. God says:

“Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you have delivered your soul.” Ezekiel 3:21.

Refusal to submit to discipline

However, there are times that sinning Church members; or Church leaders refuse to repent, nor submit to the disciplinary measures given them by Church authorities.

✠ *The Sheep Disregards the Shepherd's Whistle*

Such "Christians" may feel "insulted", be angry, and leave the Church for another Church; some may go and establish "their own ministry"; or in extreme cases, may refuse to have anything to do with the Church generally.

Disregard for the Shepherd's Rod!

As earlier said, Church leaders are acting on behalf of Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd. Therefore, any disciplinary measures they give to a sinning Church leader or member is done on behalf of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, **failure to submit to Church disciplinary measure is disobedience to Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd on whose authority the church leaders are acting.**

It is **therefore a disregard for the Shepherd's rod which has been applied to warn that danger is ahead!** This is to one's own eternal doom! God says:

"Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul." Ezekiel 3:19.

This means that there is eternal death for sinning "Christians" who refuse the warning to give up their

sinful lifestyle, submit to Church discipline, and receive Christ's forgiveness and leadership in their lives. However, the Minister who warned the sinning Christian is not guilty of blood.

Direct intervention by the Lord God!

There are times that the Almighty God in His loving kindness and mercy can permit certain problems in the life of a sinning Christian. Through such hardships, God wants to draw the sinning Christian to Himself in true repentance and restoration. An example that readily comes to mind here is that of Jonah.

Jonah's story

Jonah was to go to a town called Nineveh, to warn them of the coming judgement of God as a result of their sins (Jonah 1:1&2). Jonah refused to go to Nineveh, but rather took a ship to Tarshish (1:3).

On the Tarshish journey, God permitted a strong wind at sea that refused to subside.

*“But the Lord sent a great wind on the sea,
and there was a mighty tempest on the sea,
so that the ship was about to be broken up.”*
Jonah 1:4.

✠ *The Sheep Disregards the Shepherd's Whistle*

After much trouble and fact finding, the sailors knew that Jonah was the reason for the troubles!

*“And he said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. **For I know that this great tempest is because of me.**”*

Jonah 1:12 (Emphasis mine).

After further unsuccessful effort to get the ship to safety, the sailors reluctantly threw Jonah into the sea (vv.13-16); *“and the sea ceased from its raging.”* (1:15b).

God arranged for a big fish to swallow Jonah, and he was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights (1:17).

Jonah's condition in the belly of the fish is better imagined than experienced! While inside the fish, Jonah prayed to God for mercy! (2:1-9).

The fish “vomited” Jonah to the dry land on God's instructions! Awesome God!

“So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah unto dry land.” Jonah 2:10.

It was after this hard experience that Jonah went to deliver God's message to Nineveh! (Jonah 3:1-4).

The people of Nineveh repented (3:5-9); and the Almighty God forgave them (3:10).

The Lord's rebuke

There are times that a sinning Christian may experience a type of "divine blockage" to turn him/her to God in repentance.

*"... For whom the Lord loves He chastens,
and scourges every son whom He
receives."* Hebrews 12:5b.

If the sinning Christian ignores this loving rebuke from the Lord, and refuses to repent, it is also a disregard for the Shepherd's rod. The end result is eternal disaster!

In Conclusion

When the sinning Christian refuses to repent, submit to Church discipline, and the Lord's direct intervention/loving rebuke; such has disregarded the Shepherd's rod

The "sheep" that disregards the Shepherd's rod is about to get lost in the wilderness of this world; and at the end of life's journey, will be lost forever!



—*decorative flourish*—
PART THREE

—*decorative flourish*—
**AWAKE FROM
SLUMBER**



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

PREPARE FOR WAR!

As the Church takes step to awake out of its deadly slumber, we must prepare for real war! The devil, our arch-enemy will wage a big battle to ensure the Church remains the sleeping giant, so that he can continue his three-fold agenda:

*“... to steal, and to kill, and to destroy
....”* John 10:10a.

The nature of the warfare

It is a spiritual one! It is between the forces of Light, consisting of Soldiers of the Cross with Jesus Christ as our Captain and Commander-in-Chief; and the forces of darkness consisting of the devil and his cohorts.

Please note that the devil does operate through human agents too, but they are not our real enemy because the Bible says:

"... We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12.

Our Able Helper in the War.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was about to go back to the Father at the end of His earthly Ministry, He gave an encouraging promise to believers:

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." John 14:16 & 17.

The Holy Spirit lives in the Christian to help one on the Christian journey. He is our Source of strength in the battle. As each Christian acknowledges Him and submits to His guidance, one will be helped to live in victory over sin, satan, and the world; and the more victorious the Church will be in the battle.

✚ Prepare for War!

The devil's weapon

As earlier mentioned in this Book, the arch-enemy uses wiles; and remember, he fights rough; he is not a gentleman at all!

The Weapons of the Church

“ ... the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and **being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”** 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 (Emphasis mine).

For us to be victorious in the battle to wake up from our deadly sleep, it is of utmost importance that all besetting sins must be truly repented from and forsaken; individually and corporately.

The Name of Jesus Christ

In the spiritual warfare against satan, God has given the Church the weapon of the Name which is above every other name; and that is, the Name of Jesus Christ.

“... God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” Philippians 2:9-11.

The power in the Name of Jesus Christ is effective in all realms (heaven, earth, and under the earth); and all Christians have been given the full authority in that Name. However, the use of the Name of Jesus Christ must be accompanied by holiness and faith to achieve the expected results.

The Almighty God Who made heaven and earth stands behind the use of the Name of Jesus Christ in order to perform whatever Christians ask, bind, or loose in that Name; as long as it is in accordance with His will.

The Blood of Jesus Christ

As Christians war against the arch-enemy, we should constantly be armed with the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The Blood is a very powerful spiritual weapon against satan and his team!

☩ *Prepare for War!*

In the Old Testament, **the Israelites were protected from destruction when by faith, they put the blood of the slain lamb on their doorposts**; on the lintel and two side-posts (Exodus 12:1-29).

In the New Testament, **Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God that was slain for our redemption (1 Corinthians 5:7b)**; so Christians (the spiritual Israel) are guaranteed the protection and security of whoever, and whatever **by faith**, we put the mark of the Blood of Jesus Christ upon.

The Blood of Jesus Christ draws us near to God whereby we have access to Him. *"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ."* Ephesians 2:13.

It also gives us confidence to boldly enter into the Holy place to do real spiritual warfare; to approach God with our prayers, petitions, praises and worship. *"...having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus."* Hebrews 10:19.

The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us (1 John 1:7); provides forgiveness of our sins (Hebrews 9:22); cleanses one's conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14); sanctifies us (Hebrews 13:12); and heals us (1 Peter 2:24) etc.

Therefore, **in our prayers and intercessions; and with implicit faith in God, we should regularly apply the Blood of Jesus Christ against satan** concerning our lives, Christian race, ministries, spouses, children, parents, challenges, needs etc; and do the same for our brethren.

As we do, the Blood of Jesus Christ neutralizes the power of darkness; provides a realm of divine power that shields and protects Christians against all satanic attacks and afflictions. Thus we have victory, and are able to stand in dominion over the works of satan, and all the forces of darkness. Alleluia!!!

The power of praise and worship

Praise and worship are strategic weapons for victory in spiritual warfare. These involve adoration, thanksgiving, playing of instruments, dancing, clapping or lifting up of hands etc.

When the Almighty God is sincerely worshipped and praised by Christians in the beauty of holiness, it is an expression of faith in God; and that He is in control of our situations.

In response to our praise and worship, God descends in His glory, power and anointing; and of course, the power of darkness flees! Alleluia!!!

✠ *Prepare for War!*

Also, yokes are broken; and God's children receive victories, breakthroughs, and deliverances etc. e.g. the crumbling of Jericho's walls (Joshua 6:1-21); Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16:23-26) etc.

The Victory of the Cross

The victory has been won for us over two thousand years ago! **Jesus Christ defeated satan (and his team) through His shed Blood on the Cross; and His subsequent resurrection!** Alleluia!!!

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He had made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”
Colossians 2:13-15.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has sealed satan's defeat!

What we just need to do is to enforce the victory of the Cross by exercising our faith in the finished work of

Calvary; by reminding Satan as the need arises, that Jesus Christ has defeated him and his team for us!

The Whole Armour of God

*“... be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil... Stand therefore, having girded your waist with **truth**, having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, and having shot your feet with the **preparation of the gospel of peace**;*

*Above all, taking the **shield of faith**, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God, **praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, **being watchful** to this end with all **perseverance** and **supplication for all the saints** ... “
Ephesians 6:10–18 (Emphasis mine).*

From the above Scripture verses, we can safely say that the Church's armour of victory against the wiles of the devil are:

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- ◆ The strength of the Lord through the indwelling Holy Spirit in Christians.
- ◆ The Truth; as against falsehood that is being peddled by agents of the three-fold agenda.
- ◆ Righteous living.
- ◆ Evangelism/discipleship; which are two sides of the same coin as per the Great Commission.
- ◆ Faith; yes tough faith to quench all the fiery darts of the devil!
- ◆ One's salvation status must be genuine before going into spiritual warfare; otherwise one will be messed up!
- ◆ The word of God; which is sharper than any two-edged sword
- ◆ Persistent praying
- ◆ Watchfulness
- ◆ Perseverance
- ◆ Intercession for all Christians; that like Apostle Paul, we may:
 - (i) be given utterance
 - (ii) open our mouths boldly to make known the misery of the gospel
 - (iii) speak boldly as we ought to in spite of the persecution that we often encounter.

As the Church is armed with the whole armour of God, she is battle-ready to awake out of slumber; and will *“be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”* Ephesians 6:13.

Please note

There is no armour to protect the back! Therefore, to prevent becoming a prey to the devil, stay away from sin; and don't give up the faith because of trials or whatever reason. We must keep going for our Lord Jesus Christ against all odds! Remember:

“No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.” 2 Timothy 2:4.

Therefore:

1. Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the Cross;
Lift high His royal banner;
It must not suffer loss,
From victory unto victory
His army He shall lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed.

✚ *Prepare for War!*

2. Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict,
In this His glorious day;
Ye that are men now serve Him
Against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose.

3. Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you,
Ye dare not trust your own;
Put on the gospel armour
And guard it on with prayer;
Where duty calls or danger,
Be never wanting there.

4. Stand up, stand up for Jesus!
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song;
To him that overcometh,
A Crown of life shall be;
He with the King of glory,
Shall reign eternally.

Words by George Duffield (1818-1888).

Music by George James Webb (1803-1887).

Hold the Fort till the end!

As gallant Soldiers of the Cross, we must not seek repose at anytime; it is not over until it is over! We must keep fighting on till the end; until we safely get Home!

Our Victory is sure!

Our Lord Jesus Christ Who has come to give us abundant life (John 10:10b), has assured us that:

“ ... I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18 (KJV).

This should encourage the Church to move on with strong determination and courage to awake out of her deadly sleep to fulfill purpose!

“... thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:57.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

LET THE ALTAR BE CLEANSED

The Altar is used here to refer to the Spiritual leaders of the Church; and all who are responsible for sharing God's Word in one way or the other (through sermon, seminars, drama, music, writing of Christian books etc.).

As earlier mentioned in part two, the Altar is polluted. Therefore, to commence the healing processes of the Church, the spiritual stench of the Altar must first be completely cleared, and the Altar thoroughly cleansed. This is Word of God to the Church leaders and ministers:

“Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, you who minister to my God;” Joel 1:13.

To achieve the cleansing of the Altar, here are some steps to be taken.

(1). Church Leaders and Ministers who are not born again should urgently repent and be saved!

Insult!

Awww, that's an insult; a General Overseer, Bishop, Apostle or Pastor to make a decision for Christ? Did I hear you say that? Enh, did you just say that? Remember, *"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."* Proverbs 28:13.

Oh, perhaps you are thinking of what people will say? Hmm, your soul is more precious than any "insult", or whatever people will say! The most important thing is to be in the right relationship with God, and reign with Him in eternity.

No matter the position you occupy, or the title you hold now, if you were never born again, hell is very certain in the end! God is very merciful, however, He is also just, and will surely judge sin except one repents! Please, note that:

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"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 10:31.

"... For our God is a consuming fire."
Hebrews 12:29.

Except you truly repent, become born again, and live for Christ till the end of your life; you will surely miss heaven! Please, remember what Jesus Christ told one of the Jewish religious leaders:

" ... Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3.

Escape for your very precious soul now!

It is too costly (now and in eternity) to ignore this important warning for whatever reason. You can deceive man, but you cannot deceive God!

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." Galatians 5:7 & 8.

Therefore:

- ◆ Humble yourself under the mighty Hands of the Almighty God in true repentance and readiness to forsake sin.
- ◆ Go and wash in the pool of the Blood of Jesus Christ by asking God to forgive and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.
- ◆ Invite the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart as personal Lord and Saviour.
- ◆ Afterwards, submit yourself for follow-up/discipleship, and accountability under a mature Christian; whether titled or untitled!

Such mature Christian should ask God for the needed wisdom and grace to do this important Assignment in the Spirit of humility and the fear of God!

- ◆ Maintain a steady growth in the Lord; and stand firm for Christ.

As you grow in Christ, you will be able to know whether God is calling you to full-time Ministry or not. Obey whatever is God's purpose for your life, because He will only supply grace for what He sends you to do.

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(2). **False Teachers are to genuinely turn away from all heresies;** and *“having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof”* (2 Timothy 3:5). They should repent and turn to God for mercy!

Such should forsake their sins, receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour; or rededicate their lives to Christ as the case may be. It is very important to build a strong relationship with God.

(3). **Church leaders/Ministers not called into ministry by God should quit the Altar;** and go get a paid job! If they already have one, let them stick to it, and work hard in it to the glory of God.

Refusal to heed this warning means you have agreed to work in vain, because you cannot expect God to reward you for what He did not authorize you to do!

(4). **Only those called of God into Ministry should remain!**

- (i). Such should rededicate their lives to Jesus Christ, and renew their commitment to Him.
- (ii). Those who have been preaching “diluted Word”; or have drifted into

motivational/prosperity talks at the expense of balanced teaching of God's word should sincerely repent now!

They are to re-dedicate their hearts to JESUS CHRIST, and preach only what God sends them to say; and not what people want to hear!

(5). **Corrupt and immoral Church Leaders/Ministers are to quickly repent!**

They should urgently set their lives in order; and flee for their very precious souls now! It is written:

"And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." Luke 3:9.

- (i). Those who **have turned God's work to "Business Enterprises"** should repent of making merchandise of Ministry work; because this is disobedience to Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd Who says: *"... Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"* John 2:16.
- (ii). Where any has **embezzled Church or Ministry money**; or defrauded anyone of

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his/her money or property, restitution should be done by such Church Ministers because of their eternal welfare.

(iii). Church Leaders/Ministers **who are committing sexual sin** (adultery, fornication); or any type of sexual perversion or addiction (homosexuality, masturbation, pornography etc) are to quickly forsake immorality.

(6). **Occultic “Ministers” should truly repent now!**

They are to genuinely repent, give their lives to Christ, and maintain a steady growth in Him. If they have been truly born again before joining the cult, such should also repent, and rededicate their lives to Christ. Both groups are to renounce the membership of such cults!

Do not be afraid to quit the cults; **if you are truly repentant and growing in Christ, no evil will befall you.** Therefore, be courageous; come out from among them. It is written:

“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4.

They may threaten and try to harm you, but **they cannot prevail over you**; because, the Almighty God says:

“No weapon formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue which rises against you in judgement you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me, says the Lord.” Isaiah 54:17.

(7). All are to rebuild their personal, marital, and ministry lives.

- (i).** The Ministers of God are to daily live in obedience to God's Word thereby been a worthy example to the flock!
- (ii).** Each should rebuild his/her marital relationship with their respective spouses as the need arises; and continually build their Homes for God's glory.

This is very important because the Home is the primary ministry of God's servants; a very strong Christian Home brings glory to God, and adds value to Ministry work.

- (iii).** They are to constantly wait on God to receive grace for the race; and power for the work. Just

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like the battery of a cell phone is plugged into the power source for recharging, Church Ministers are to regularly "plug in" to God for spiritual recharging.

- (iv). It is very important that Church leaders and Ministers would be much in the "closet business" - studying and meditating on God's Word.

They should also include fasting and travailing in prayers and intercessions; regularly seeking God's face to know His mind for them, and the Ministry God has committed into their hands.

- (v). They should seek God's face to receive what God want them to teach the people (through music, drama, writing, and preaching of the Word etc.) per period of time.

Let no Minister of God feed the flock with anything without first confirming from the Chief Shepherd what He wants for His sheep.

As they sincerely seek God's face to receive what to feed the flock, the Almighty God Who knows the different needs of the congregation will give them inspiration as to the Music,

Drama, Book, or Sermon that will meet the specific needs of the people now; and also prepare them for eternity.

- (vi). Each Minister should be contended with, and operate in the area of his/her spiritual gift; and not covet the spiritual gift of another. This is very important; otherwise, one will resort to human wisdom to simulate the manifestation of such coveted gift!

God will only equip you to function in the area of your gift; and that is when you can positively impact lives for His Kingdom.

- (8). **All should embrace moderation in all things!**

Moderation should be the watch-word of all servants of God - in eating, talking, sleeping, dressing etc.

It is also important that God's servants be moderate in the use of material wealth. They must not be self-indulgent; or live an extravagant and ostentatious lifestyle. The Bible says:

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Philippians 4:5 (KJV).

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(9). **Church leaders/Ministers that are materially wealthy through clean means should continually pump back into the spread of the gospel.**

They should remain humble, and keep touching lives through their wealth to reach souls for Christ. It is written:

“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, Who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (Emphasis mine).

The above is not a matter of choice; it is what is “written”! **This is not to say that:**

(i). The rich Christian should not take care of personal and family needs; but should remember to regularly share with others. It is pleasing to God, and very eternally rewarding to impact lives for Christ with one's wealth.

(ii). Those who are not so rich should not give for the work of God. From the little you have, you can still give; remember the poor widow who gave and was greatly commended by our Lord (Luke 21:1-4).

Even if one doesn't have any cash to give, you can give time and services for the furtherance of God's work - prayers, godly counsel, follow-up of new converts, cleaning God's House etc. God will surely reward you too!

All we give to the Lord (in cash or kind) will be adequately rewarded as long as one gives with a pure motive. *"For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love"* Hebrews 6:10.

(10). **Ordination** to Church leadership positions **is to be prayerfully and carefully handled!**

"God insists on the highest moral standards for ministers in the Church. They must have proven character and blameless conduct in all aspects of public and private life. Their character is to be of such integrity, inside and outside the church community, that no justifiable charge of immorality or misconduct can be brought against them. If leaders do not hold to this standard, the

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congregation is likely destined to abandon Biblical standards for living because of the lack of godly role models....” **Footnote on Titus 1:7 on page 2394 of the Fire Bible.**

Church leaders are expected to:

“... be able to teach, encourage and challenge people with the truth of God's Word in order to lead the people into lives of complete and passionate devotion to Christ, His Word and His standard of truth (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2).

They must be able to correct those who teach things contrary to God's written Word (i.e., the Bible) so that they can lead misguided individuals back to the truth (2 Tim. 2:24-26). If people refuse legitimate Biblical correction, leaders must expose their false message and guide believers back to sound truth and doctrine....” **Footnote on Titus 1:9 on page 2395 of the Fire Bible.**

Definitely, the appointment of such calibre of spiritual leaders needs careful and prayerful handling to get it right!

(11). In view of the above, **the Church should not rush the decision to ordain people to Church**

positions - General Overseers”, ” Pastors”
“Evangelists”, “Prophets”, “Apostles”, “Bishops”
etc The Bible says:

*“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily,
nor share in other people's sins; keep
yourself pure.” 1 Timothy 5:22.*

“... For a church to ordain or appoint anyone to a position of leadership too quickly, without regard to God's guidelines, causes the church to be a “partaker” in that person's sins. Paul's warning to “keep thyself pure” means to refuse to become involved in the choosing or ordaining of anyone unworthy for the office of pastor.” **Footnote on 1 Timothy 5:22 on pg. 2372 of the Fire Bible.**

(12). Also, **ordination to Church positions should no longer to be “enterprised”!** A person is to be ordained because he/she is morally and spiritually qualified, and not because he/she has “paid” for it; either in terms of gifts(in cash or kind) donated to the Church, or directly to the Supervising Pastor; or the General Overseer.

“Today's churches must not abandon the requirements for ministry leadership established by

⊕ *Let the Altar be Cleansed*

God in His NT revelation. The church must continue to require from its leaders the highest standard of moral purity, personal integrity, separation from evil, godly living and faithfulness to God and His Word" **pg. 2367 of the Fire Bible.**

(13). All should pray, fast, and plead with God to salvage the souls of those they have led astray through their ungodly lifestyles, or diluted preachings etc.

Where such souls are still within their sphere of influence, they should go apologise sincerely to them for leading them astray; and also tell them the true Word of God by ministering salvation to those not yet born again; and re-dedication to those who were already born again.

(14). All Church Ministers should see themselves as "servants of the great God"!

It is the great God doing the Ministry work through mere mortals! Therefore, Church Ministers are "men and women of the great God"; and not "great servants of God", or "great men and women of God"!

(15). Ministers of God should run away from sharing part or all of God's glory.

As God uses them, they should never share any bit of the glory (one should be afraid to do this); rather, it should always and sincerely be “To God be the Glory”!!! This way, God keeps supporting them to do more exploits for the Kingdom!

(16). Passionate Altar Calls for Salvation and rededication should be part of every Ministrations –whether Drama, Song, Sermon, Seminars, Prayer meetings etc.

Every ministration should be concluded with a call for people to repent and give their lives to Jesus Christ; or rededicate their lives to Jesus Christ as the case may be.

(17). Material prosperity is not to be given as “bait” for people to come and give their lives to Christ!

Sinners should be lovingly but firmly warned of the dangers of sin, the end of an unrepentant sinner in hell for eternity, the horror of hell, and the beauty of the Heaven that will be lost forever; so they can **urgently run for their precious souls!** Backsliders too should be given the same warning.

✠ *Let the Altar be Cleansed*

The above list is not exhaustive!

As the Church Leaders and Ministers sincerely humble themselves in genuine repentance before the living God, He will show any other step that needs to be taken for the thorough cleansing of the Altar.

Benefits of cleansing the Altar.

When the Altar is cleansed and healed, the Ministers of God (whether Teachers of the Word; Christian Writers, Christian Counsellors, Music and Drama Ministers etc) will:

- ◆ Be rekindled in their love for God.
- ◆ Have the fear of God, speak the truth, and live holy lives.
- ◆ Be full of the Holy Spirit and power.
- ◆ Give Holy Spirit-inspired, and power-packed Ministrations that will lead to conviction of sin, salvation of souls, and edification of Christians.
- ◆ Dethrone mammon in the Church, and no longer use gimmicks to “extort” money from people.
- ◆ Preach Sermons, compose Songs, write Books, produce Drama; and offer Counselling services which are based on the undiluted Word of God.

- ◆ **Be very passionate about Evangelism/follow-up.** This is God's Heartbeat; it will be our very own heartbeats too!
- ◆ Be God's instrument of turning many away from iniquity.
- ◆ Ensure that converts are properly followed-up so they can stand for Christ, and become God's instruments to win/follow-up others for Christ.
- ◆ Have a functional discipleship Programme in order to continually equip and renew standing Christians for holy living.
- ◆ Be usable by God (through their sermons, Music, Books, Drama, Counselling etc) to build up Christians in godliness and usefulness in the Kingdom; and thus make heaven at last!

The healing of the Altar will produce a crop of spiritually vibrant Church Ministers that will be useful in soul-winning/discipleship; and in preparing Souls for the soon-coming King; even our Lord Jesus Christ.

Above all, the Church leaders and Congregation will be candidates of Heaven; and God's Holy Name is glorified!



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

CALL A SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

After the Altar has been thoroughly cleansed, through genuine repentance by the church leaders and Ministers, the stage is set for revival in the general congregation. Like prophet Joel, the church leaders should:

*“Sanctify ye a fast, **call a solemn assembly**, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.”*
Joel 1:14 (KJV) Emphasis mine.

“ ... The prophet calls the people together for an extended fast (i.e. going without food for the purpose of giving greater attention to spiritual matters). They needed to show their dependence on God and to repent of all sin in their lives... That is to say, they needed to ... turn from their own ways and return to

following God and His purposes" **Footnote on Joel 1:14 on pg. 1548 of the Fire Bible.**

This is the urgent need of today's Church!

The Revival of Ezra

Ezra the Priest was concerned about the sins of the people of Israel. He prayed to God for mercy (Ezra 9); and also challenged the people to repent of their sins, and return to God.

"Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly. . . . Then Ezra the Priest stood up and said to them, you have transgressed. . . . Now therefore, make confession to the Lord God. . . and do His will Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, Yes! As you have said, so we must do." Ezra 10:1; 10-12.

The spiritual Israel

Christians are the spiritual Israel; and like Ezra, Church leaders are to arise and lead the people in a prayer of genuine repentance unto the Lord. They are to call for a solemn assembly of the members for

✠ *Call A Solemn Assembly*

personal sober reflections, true repentance, and re-dedication of lives to God.

A call to true repentance

Those who are in the church but not yet born again should quickly repent, and sincerely give their lives to Jesus Christ.

Those already born again are to have a prayerful and objective appraisal of their respective relationship with God; genuinely repent from all sins, and be sincerely ready to forsake them.

*“Now, therefore, says the Lord, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. **So rend your heart, and not your garments;** return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness” Joel 2:13 (Emphasis mine).*

“The act of rending (i.e., tearing) one's garments was a sign of grief, mourning or despair. God was telling the people that He did not desire an outward display of sorrow, sacrifice or regret. Instead, He desired hearts that were truly broken and filled with sorrow over sin (See Ps 51:17). This would lead to true repentance – a change of heart toward God and

a readiness to turn from selfish ways in order to follow God and His plans. If the people had this attitude of true humility, God would have mercy on them. It is God's character to show compassion to His people if they humbly repent.... **Footnote on Joel 2:13 on pg. 1550 of the Fire Bible.**

Please note:

Most of the recommended steps to be taken by Church Ministers for the cleansing of the Altar (Chapter Sixteen), are equally applicable to individual Christians for the cleansing of the Church. You may wish to re-read it.

Corporate repentance on behalf of the Church.

The Church leaders are to be truly concerned about the deplorable spiritual situation of the Church like Ezra was concerned about the people of Israel.

"Ezra's deep distress and forceful prayer are a classic example of the serious concern that all true ministers and leaders of God's people should have when they see the people turning from the holiness that God requires.... Ezra possessed a deep sense of God's purity, righteousness and love, which the people had taken for granted and treated with disrespect... Ezra prayed to God in humility and true sorrow Ezra

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associated himself with the people for whom he was praying. He spoke of "our iniquities" and "our trespasses" (vv. 6-15)" **Footnote on Ezra 9:3 on pg. 830 of the Fire Bible.**

Also, Nehemiah pleaded with God on behalf of the Israelites; and also identified with their sins.

" ... I pray before you now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned"
Nehemiah 1:6 & 7.

Like Ezra and Nehemiah, Church leaders are to **confess the general sins prevalent in the Church today**, among which are: adultery, fornication, abortion, mammonism, indecent dressing, dishonesty, unforgiveness, envyings, manipulations/witchcraft in the Church; and our failure in the place of prayers and intercessions! They are to ask for the mercy and forgiveness of God on behalf of the Church.

God forgives and restores

As the Church truly repents and forsakes sin (individually and corporately), God will forgive and bring restoration. The Almighty God says:

“If My people who are called by My Name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Persist in Prayer and holy living

Fervent praying, intercessions, fasting, and a holy lifestyle should not end with the Solemn Assembly; but rather should be permanently in the Church!

It is also very important that Christians regularly slow down for a time of sober reflections; and renewal of our commitment to Jesus Christ.

Like the early Church fathers, Church leaders should regularly uphold Church members in prayers. *“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers” 1 Thessalonians 1:2.*

The Church should also continually pray for Church leaders; those in authority, in Government, and for all men.

*“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, **that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all***

godliness and reverence. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*” 1 Timothy 2:1-3 (Emphasis mine).

When we live holy, and are prayerful; and regularly uphold one another in prayer, we are united in the Spirit to be a formidable Army against the devil and his team.

Season of Revival

Genuine repentance, and holy lifestyle in the Church, will give birth to spiritual revival in the lives of individual Christians; who in turn will go out to impact the world for Jesus Christ our Lord. That is, we will be able to:

- ◆ Fulfill the Great Commission of Evangelism, which is the purpose God left us in this world after we became born again.
- ◆ Prepare the ground for the coming of our Chief Shepherd, and Commander-in-Chief; even our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Meet Him with great confidence when we die, or on His arrival; whichever comes first for us.
- ◆ Receive great rewards from Him. “ ... *My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*” Revelation 22:12
- ◆ Reign with Him in eternity!



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

EMBRACE A BALANCED SPIRITUAL DIET

A balanced diet is usually recommended for good physical growth and development. In the spiritual too, a “balanced diet” is required for Christian growth, and sustenance in the race.

When we talk about **dishing out a balanced spiritual diet, we mean teaching the whole counsel of God; not emphasizing one aspect at the expense of the other.** This is the perspective on which this Chapter is based. The Bible says:

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16 & 17.

A balanced spiritual diet.

The importance of teaching the balanced and undiluted Word of God (through Sermons, Seminars, Bible Study, Writings, Music, Drama etc.) in the Church cannot be over-emphasized.

The Word of God is **the light to guide us in this sin-darkened world!**

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105.

God's Word is **the Christian's spiritual immunization against sin!**

“Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” Psalm 119:11.

Our Lord Jesus Christ used the Word to defeat satan when tempted in Luke 4:1-13; Christians cannot afford to do less. We need to **be constantly armed with God's Word for victorious Christian living.**

The whole counsel of God

There is the need for a balanced teaching of the Word of God to cover all aspects of the Christian doctrine –rebuke, correction, encouragement, exhortation; and instruction in righteousness.

- (1). There should be **teaching on the Person of the Holy Spirit; and His Ministry in the life of a Christian, and in the world.**

This will help Christians to benefit maximally from Him in our personal lives as we run the Christian race; and in receiving help as we preach the Gospel to the unsaved.

- (2). The balanced spiritual diet includes teaching on the importance of hymns, Psalms, and spiritual songs; corporate praise and worship; and personally flowing in ceaseless praise to the living God.

*“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, **teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.** And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:16 & 17 (Emphasis mine).*

*“... be filled with the Spirit ... **speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord,** giving thanks always for all things to God the*

Father in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”
Ephesians 5:18-20 (Emphasis mine).

In view of the above Scripture verses, we can safely say that:

- (a). Singing the Psalms is an act of worship to the Lord God Almighty; and not to be read to curse a perceived enemy, or used as charm!
- (b). Singing of Hymns should really be encouraged in our Churches; and during the Family Altar in Christian Homes.
- (c). Christians should only **compose, sing, and listen to spiritual Songs that are edifying.** Secular songs, and so-called “spiritual songs” which are not edifying are to be totally rejected!
- (d). God does not want us to be sad or depressed; we are to heartily flow in songs of praise to the living God! The Bible says: “... **making melody in your hearts to the Lord**” Ephesians 5:19b.
- (e). Christians are to **always give thanks to God through Jesus Christ; even in difficult and trying moments!** This honours God, and shows we have implicit faith in Him to perfect all that concerns us. God will show up for us in the nick of time!

† Embrace A Balanced Spiritual Diet

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1.

- (3). Included in the balanced spiritual diet are teachings on holiness; baptism in the Holy Spirit; speaking in tongues; Christian growth; Persecutions; Trials; Forgiveness; Judgement; Heaven; Hell; Christ's Second Coming.

Also, the importance and power in the Blood of Jesus Christ; the power in the Name of Jesus Christ; and the authority of the believer. etc.

- (4). There should be balanced teaching on Pre-marital and Marital issues like, Knowing God's will in the choice of a Life Partner, Godly Courtship, Ingredients for building a Christian Family; Marital faithfulness.

Also, raising godly Children; Handling Crisis in the Home; Integrity in Business and Work place; Striking a reasonable balance between Career or Ministry work and Family etc.

- (5). It is very important to include talks on eating balanced physical meals; the importance of rest and relaxation; physical exercises to keep physically fit; keeping our Homes clean;

maintaining personal hygiene to be in good health;
the need to rejoice, laugh and be happy! etc.

This is because **the Almighty God is not only interested in our spiritual well-being, He is also very much interested in our all-round welfare too!** It is written:

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” 3 John 2.

Need for a paradigm Shift

There is an urgent need for **the balanced teaching of God's Word to replace the current one-sided motivational and business teachings** prevalent today.

It is the teaching of the whole counsel of God that will make for salvation and Christian growth. That is, the balanced spiritual diet will bring salvation to the unsaved; equip the believer for holy living, prepare them for the coming of our Lord, and help them to make Heaven at last!

Therefore, the Church is to **have a systematic teaching of the whole counsel of God;** in our Sermons, Seminars, Bible Studies, Drama, Music, Writings etc. **There should be a balanced**

presentation of what the Christian race entails; the good times, the trying times, and times of persecutions and temptations!

Our Lord's fore-warning

In His Valedictory Words to His disciples, our Lord Jesus Christ informed them of the hardship and persecutions ahead of them; but also told them of the victory He has wrought for them. This Message is still very relevant to His disciples down the ages. Jesus Christ went further to say:

"... these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:4 & 33.

Therefore, **the teaching of God's Word ought not be limited to how to receive material wealth alone. It should include the fact that Christians can experience hardships and persecutions;** so that when faced with life's challenges, the Christian will not be discouraged, depressed, or give up the faith.

It is the dishing out of the whole counsel of God that makes for a balanced spiritual diet; and this is the only way that Christians can remain spiritually healthy to receive grace for the race.

Be watchful

*“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom: Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. **Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.***

*For **the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,** but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” 2 Timothy 4:1-5 (Emphasis mine).

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In the above passage, the Bible alerted us that a time will come that people will not want to listen to sound doctrine; but rather what will suit their "itching ears"! This is the time we are in now!

However, the Church is admonished to stick to the balanced teaching of the undiluted Word of God, and also obey it!

"In order for a Church to prosper, she must obey Jesus' teachings in all things." William Seymour.

Food for thought

As a minister of the Word, whether through sermons, seminars, music, writing, drama etc, are you working to please God or man?

It is wise to teach what God wants, and not what people want to hear; thereby being men-pleasers rather than God-pleasers! Preaching to please men means one is not a servant of Christ!

"... For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ." Galatians 1:10.

The example of Apostle Paul in his Ministry is worthy of emulation; and should be the Christian's goal in whatever one does for the Lord.

"But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we

“speak, not as pleasing men, but God Who tests our hearts.” 1 Thessalonians 2:4.

Obedience is paramount!

As the undiluted Word of God is taught precept upon precept (whether through drama, sermons, seminars, writing, music etc.); **Christians are to daily live in obedience to the balanced spiritual diet dished out to us in order to avoid “spiritual constipation”!** This is the only way we can have maximum benefit from the undiluted Word we receive.

Obedience to the undiluted Word of God preserves the Christian in the race; and takes one safely Home in the end.

Prayers too!

(i). The Church ought to always pray for one another, and especially those who minister in the Word - Preachers and teachers of the Word, Drama and Music Ministers, Christian authors etc.

“... praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints ... that

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*utterance may be given ... may open ...
mouth boldly to make known the mystery
of the gospel ... may speak boldly as ...
ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:18-20.*

This way, Ministers of the Word will boldly proclaim the balanced diet of God's Word; thus each Christian is strengthened and sustained in the Christian race. Also, souls will be won unto the Lord.

(ii). We are to pray for our nations too; and for civil authorities at every level of administration in our nations.

*“ ... I exhort first of all that supplications,
prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks
be made for all men, for kings and all who
are in authority, that we may lead a quiet
and peaceable life in all godliness and
reverence. For this is good and acceptable
in the sight of God” 1 Timothy 2:1-3.*

A word to the faithful ministers

Ministers who uphold the teaching of the balanced spiritual diet will definitely be persecuted. It takes courage to stand for what is godly in the midst of so

much ungodliness around us; but please keep standing!

Also, you may be unpopular for taking a strong stand for sound doctrine and what will honour God; but please, don't relent!

You may not be materially wealthy, and your Ministry may not be as "big" as those of the Ministers who are compromising the Word. This is not to mean that all Church Ministers who are materially wealthy, or have big Ministries are compromising the Word; there are still some who have refused to bow to the idol of this age!

However, what we are saying is that success in Ministry is not determined by numerical size, or material wealth; but rather by the lives which are truly impacted for God; and make heaven at last!

By upholding sound doctrine and impacting lives for God, you are spiritually rich; and that is the wealth that endures for eternity! (Matthew 6:19-21). Heaven sees you as honourable ministers.

"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially

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those who labour in the Word and doctrine.” 1 Timothy 5:17.

Stand firm for Christ till the end by:

- ◆ Upholding holiness in your personal life, home, and ministry.
- ◆ Holding on to the undiluted Word of God.
- ◆ Standing for sound and balanced teaching in the Church.
- ◆ Continuing to labour on in the Vineyard against all odds - winning souls; actively involved in discipleship; warning against sin; and maintaining discipline in the Church.

While **those who compromise the Word of God now will be put to shame in the end**, except they repent; your labour of love will be adequately rewarded!

“For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His Name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” Hebrews 6:10.



CHAPTER NINETEEN

EMBARK ON CHRISTIAN FAMILY CRUSADE

The family is a God-ordained institution, and the basic unit of the society. Its well-being will determine that of the larger society. Healthy families, healthy societies; and vice versa!

The Christian Family

The Christian Family is used here to mean the family established by a Christian man and woman as husband and wife respectively; and its continuity is handled on the basis of Biblical instructions on family matters.

As earlier mentioned in this Book, the Church is the parent institution and custodian of the Christian Family. The well-being of the Christian family is to a very large extent dependent on the spiritual health of the Church.

On the other hand, since the Church is made up of Christian Families; the well being of the Church can be measured by the health of its component families.

In view of the above, a rebuilding of the Christian family is part of the necessary steps for the Church to awake from her deadly sleep.

The Strategy

Having established the fact that the healing of the Christian Family is essential to the healing of the Church, there is also the need to appraise the current state of the family institution generally, and its negative effects on the Christian Family.

We then map out our strategy on re-building the Christian Family according to the undiluted Word of God.

An Appraisal of the Family Institution

Today, there are many factors militating against the family institution generally; and some of these are:

- ◆ Adultery which weakens the marital bond of lawfully married couples
- ◆ Fornication; whereby children are born outside of wedlock

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- ◆ Cohabitation; whereby a man and a woman live together as a “husband and wife” without being married.
- ◆ Homosexualism
- ◆ Different types of sexual perversion
- ◆ Separation
- ◆ Divorce
- ◆ Pornography
- ◆ Domestic Violence
- ◆ Physical, verbal and emotional abuse
- ◆ Alcoholism
- ◆ Little or no understanding of what marriage entails before entering into it etc.

The deplorable situation of the family institution has taken a heavy toll on the Christian Family, as some of the above evils have crept into Christian Homes!

Therefore, there is a very urgent need for the Church to arise to salvage the Christian Family; and the family institution generally from total collapse!

The Christian family is to take the lead by being a worthy example of God's ideal for the family. This can be achieved through a determined and

continuous effort by the Church to build Christian families indeed.

Christian Family Crusade

1. As the Church plans for Evangelism Crusades, it is also very important to plan for Christian Family Crusades.

This is **to sensitize Christians to the need for healthy Christian Homes in the Church**; and also how to build our Homes in accordance with the "Manufacturer's Instruction Manual"!

2. The Church should provide adequate teaching to members on family matters; and also **do real intercessions, supplications, fasting, and spiritual warfare for the restoration of the Christian Family.**

3. She is to **regularly teach members on the need to establish, and build our families as expected by the Almighty God.**

This means that the Church will regularly plan programmes on the correct handling of the pre-marital and marital lives of members e.g. Love Feasts, Family Life Seminars, and regular Family Retreats etc.

4. The **importance of regularly holding the Family Altar should be stressed!** We must not allow any factor to crowd it out of our daily family schedule. As the saying goes, “the family that prays together stays together”.

5. There ought to be an **effective Family Counselling Department** in each Church to handle pre-marital, and marital matters.

Topics to be covered should include preparation for marriage, dealing with foundational or generational curses before marriage; marital faithfulness, maintenance of marital relationships; and timely intervention in conflict resolutions etc.

6. The **Family Counselling Team should consist of genuinely born again Church members**, who are spiritually mature, and **can do real spiritual warfare!**

They must have a good testimony of having built godly homes, and raised godly children. They **must not be careless talkers**, because such will be unable to maintain the confidentiality of matters committed to them.

7. Also, there is the need to **maintain loving, but firm discipline** where any Christian falls short of

God's ideal for the Christian Family.

♦ **The Christian Singles/Youths**

They are to be taught how to maintain a consistent Christian growth (2 Peter 3:18); knowing God's will in the choice of a life partner, by refusing to lean on one's own understanding (Proverbs 3:5 & 6).

Also, the dangers of unequal yoke (1 Corinthians 6:14-18); Purity in Courtship, and the evil of co-habitation (1 Timothy 2:22) etc.

♦ **The Lawfully Married**

The phrase "lawfully married" is deliberately used here to mean those joined in accordance with the Word of God. As often mentioned during Christian Marriage ceremonies, **as many as are joined contrary to the Word of God, their marriages are not valid.**

Lawfully married couples are to be taught of the need to spend time together for good bonding; be faithful to each other; strike a reasonable balance between their Career and family, even between Ministry work and family life.

The Home is the primary ministry of the Christian, and so must not be neglected for whatever reason at

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all. The Church must make every godly effort to help members build healthy Christian Homes.

Also, how to maintain a consistent and closer walk with God; performing their respective God-ordained roles in the Marriage; raising godly children; Conflict resolution in Marriage; Forgiveness; relationship with in-laws, etc.

♦ **Children and Teenagers**

As part of the family membership, they too should be reached with the gospel; so that they can give their lives to Jesus Christ, and live to honour Him.

They are to be taught to work hard in their studies, help with household chores, have balanced self-esteem; respect for elders and constituted authorities etc.

Charity begins at Home!

As earlier mentioned, the Christian family is that which is established in accordance with God's Word as contained in the Holy Bible.

This same Word of God should guide the handling of the Christian Family; and also the individual lives of members – in their values, dressing, decision making; posters hanged in the Home, and every other forms of home decorations and designs!

“Therefore, you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied”
Deuteronomy 11:18-21.

Obedience to the above verses will bring God's blessings on the Christian Family, strengthen their bond with one another; and also with the Almighty God.

Christian Homes Indeed!

When Christian Homes are Christian Homes in the real sense of the word, the Church is able to have a positive impact on the society; and the cause of the gospel is enhanced. Also, this brings glory to God.

Christian Widows and orphans

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble” James 1:27.

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The Church should not neglect the Christian widows (**and widowers too**); so also the orphans. They need **encouragement, visitation, prayers, provision as the need arises; and of course godly counsel**. They should be taught to live holy, and put their trust in God.

(i). Older widows with children and grandchildren:

“... if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God ... If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened....” 1 Timothy 5:4 & 16.

(ii). Older widows without children or grandchildren:

“Honour widows who are really widows ... Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.” 1 Timothy 5:3 & 5 (Emphasis mine).

“Widows who have devoted themselves to the supreme work of prayer should receive recognition

and help (if need be) from the church (v.3). Remember the widow, Anna, who “departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.” (Luke 2:37)....” **Footnote on 1 Timothy 5:5 on page 2371 of the Fire Bible.**

The Church is to provide for this category of widows as mentioned in v.16.

“If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.” 1 Timothy 5:16.

(iii). The younger widows

The Bible encourages the younger widows to remarry. This is to avoid idleness, and misbehaviours that may bring reproach against the Church.

“Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” 1 Timothy 5:14.

We can safely say that Christian widowers are permitted to re-marry too. However, the Christian

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widow or widower is expected to be married to a born again person who is single; or is a widower or widow respectively.

The single parent

The **single parent (father or mother) in the Church** should **be made to understand that failure is not final**; that it is still possible to get up, and become useful for our God Who gives “*beauty for ashes....*” Isaiah 61:3.

Their salvation status should be ascertained; and any who is not yet born again must be prayerfully given the salvation message in a non-judgemental manner. They are to be properly followed-up to stand for Christ; and also become soul-winners.

Those already born again are to be encouraged to rededicate their lives to God; and be subsequently nurtured to spiritual wholeness.

They are to be **lovingly but firmly warned** against indulging in sin; and also to avoid unequal yoke. They should be guided on handling relationship matters in a godly way, so they too can be lawfully married to establish Christian Families to the glory of God.

**Our fervent prayers and constant goal
(FPCG):**

GOD GIVE US CHRISTIAN HOMES

1. God give us Christian Homes!
Homes where the Bible is loved and taught,
Homes where the Master's will is sought,
Homes crowned with beauty Your love has
wrought;
God give us Christian Homes;
God give us Christian Homes!

2. God give us Christian Homes!
Homes where the father is true and strong,
Homes that are free from the blight of wrong,
Homes that are joyous with love and song;
God give us Christian Homes;
God give us Christian Homes!

3. God give us Christian Homes!
Homes where the mother in Queenly quest,
Strives to show others Your Way is best,
Homes where the Lord is an honoured Guest;
God give us Christian Homes;
God give us Christian Homes!

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4. God give us Christian Homes!
Homes where the children are led to know,
Christ in His beauty Who loves them so,
Homes where the Altar fires burn and glow;
God give us Christian Homes;
God give us Christian Homes!

Benjamin Baylux Mckinney
(1886- 1952).



CHAPTER TWENTY

ATTEND TO YOUR ASSIGNMENT

After the completion of His earthly Ministry, and before His departure to heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ gave the Church a very important Assignment.

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”. Amen.” Matthew 28:18-20.

The Assignment

As earlier mentioned in Part one of this Book, the Assignment consists of two sides of the same coin:

- ◆ To preach the Salvation Message to the unsaved so that they can repent from their sins, and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour.
- ◆ To follow-up the souls won so that they can stand for Christ, and be instruments of winning others for Christ.

Evangelism is a continuous Assignment that must be daily attended to; not just a one-off, or once in a while periodic Assignment! It is God's heartbeat; it must be our very own heartbeat too!

Children and Youth Ministry too!

Children Evangelism and Youth Ministry should not be neglected; these are the ones that will take the baton from us!

If we fail to win their souls for Christ, and disciple them now, who takes the baton of Evangelism from us after we have left the scene? May we not labour very hard now only for it to be wasted after we are gone in Jesus Name, Amen.

Follow-up/Discipleship Programmes

Our Assignment is not yet complete if we don't follow-up new converts, to ensure they understand

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the implications of the decision they made for Christ.

Therefore, **our Assignment includes teaching new converts the undiluted Word of God precept upon precept.** This is to enable them grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As they stand firm for Christ, they will be equipped to confidently go out to preach the salvation message to others.

The **older converts should continually be given balanced Biblical teaching that will give them increasing understanding of what the Christian race entails;** and how to live victoriously in these perilous times!

As we diligently attend to our Assignment, God will keep giving us new ideas on how to effectively reach out to the unsaved. Also, the Church is built up, and well-equipped to prevail over satan, the enemy of our souls.

Our Able Helper

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom

the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” John 14:16 & 17.

The Holy Spirit is our Helper in the Christian race; both in our personal lives, and in carrying out the Assignment.

We cannot effectively do the Assignment in our own power or eloquence. We need the Holy Spirit's enablement because He is the One Who convicts the sinner of sin, and brings him/her to the saving knowledge of Christ.

Hold fast what you have!

As we attend to our Assignment, we must remain steadfast for Jesus Christ to the end. Our Lord says:

“Behold I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.” Revelation 3:11.

It may be inferred from the above verse that ...

- ◆ The coming of our Lord is very certain.
- ◆ Jesus Christ is coming quickly.
- ◆ There are factors that can make one drift away

⊕ *Attend to your Assignment*

from being faithful.

- ◆ It is possible to loose what you have; and by extension your Crown.
- ◆ There is therefore the need to hold tightly to sound doctrine.

Again, in Revelation 2:25, our Lord Jesus Christ says, *“But hold fast what you have till I come.”*

“Christ's words “till I come” and “unto the end” (v. 26) make it clear that His messages, warnings and promises to the seven churches apply also to all churches until the end of time as we know it.”

Footnote on Revelation 2:25 on pg. 2546 of the Fire Bible.

Keep working on.

This means it is not over until it is over! **All Christians must continue to live righteously, and keep winning souls until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; or till death, whichever comes first!**

Therefore, do not rest on your oars. Continually occupy more ground for Jesus Christ; and endure the persecutions that will definitely come to you because of your stand for Christ.

Reward for Soul winners

There is great reward for the soul winner both in this world, and the hereafter; and some of these are:

Your soul is preserved; genuinely sharing the Gospel helps you to guard against sin. It is not surprising therefore that the Bible says he who wins soul is wise! (Proverbs 11:30b)

You will have fulfillment in being God's instrument of getting people saved.

God will be happy with you because evangelism is His heartbeat; God is

"... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

2 Peter 3:9c.

As you continue to live in holiness till the end, one will make heaven; and also receive great rewards too!

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58.



CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

YOU NEED TO HEAR THIS!

My dearly beloved reader,

Greetings to you in the worthy Name of Jesus Christ. Thank you for showing interest in this Book, "The Sleeping Giant".

How are you? How is it with your soul? Have you made Jesus Christ the Anchor for your soul? If Yes, Congratulations!

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever" Hebrews 6:19 & 20.

"Like an anchor that holds a ship safely in place, our faith and hope in Christ assures our safety and security as long as we are anchored in Him. While a

ship's anchor goes down into the depths of the sea, the Christian's anchor goes up into the heights of heaven, into "that within the veil." This describes the Most Holy Place ... in the earthly tabernacle (i.e. worship centre), which represents God's very presence. The faithful Christian's life is securely anchored in God Himself" **Footnote on Hebrews 6:19 on pg. 2422 of the Fire Bible.**

Therefore, continue to let Jesus Christ be the Anchor for your soul, by daily living in obedience to Him till death closes your eyes; or till He comes, whichever comes first!

If you have not yet made Jesus Christ the Anchor for your soul, then you need to hear this!

This means you are not yet born again; then your soul is like a ship without an anchor to hold it safely in place! Just like such a ship will be tossed to and fro on the sea, so also is your soul on the tumultuous sea of this world!

There is no safety or security for your soul. This is a great risk that must be urgently rectified to avoid eternal disaster!

☪ *You Need to Hear This!*

But:

"I go to Church; I try my best to be good; I am a Church Worker; I pay my tithes, and I donate heavily for Church projects" etc. All these are commendable; but it is not synonymous with salvation. The Bible says:

"But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags"
Isaiah 64:6.

Salvation is by grace; and not attained by one's religious deeds. It is written:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Ephesians 2:8.

You must be born again!

- ♦ **Acknowledge your sin:** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23.
- ♦ **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ:** "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto

righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
Romans 10:9 & 10.

- ◆ **Confess your sins to God:** Confess your sins to God, and ask for His forgiveness. Be truly ready to forsake your sins.

Sin is disobedience to the Word of God. It is living to please oneself rather than God; and this is the way to eternal disaster!

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”
Galatians 5:19-21.

Sin kills, and sends a person to hell in the end.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23.

🕊️ *You Need to Hear This!*

Therefore, urgently **run for your very precious life now; genuinely repent and be ready to forsake your sins!** Then, **invite Jesus Christ into your heart as your personal Lord and Saviour.**

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to Him and dine with Him, and He with Me.” Revelation 3:20.

If you have sincerely taken the above steps, Congratulations!!! Your soul is now anchored in Christ; so you are safe and secure as long as you keep going for Him till the end.

To continue in Christ till the end:

1. **Read your Bible Daily.** *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.” 1 Peter 2:2.*
2. **Obey God's Word.** *“If you love Me, keep My commandments.” John 14:15.*
3. **Be prayerful.** *“Pray without ceasing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17.*
4. **Tell others about Jesus Christ;** how they too can anchor their souls in Christ,

and be secured. "... Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."
Mark 16:15.

5. **Fellowship with other children of God.**

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."
Hebrews 10:25.

6. **Expect Christ's second coming.** *"And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure."* 1 John 3:3.

Remain Rapturable!!!

Yours in that Blessed Hope,

MamaJoch.

(On behalf of the Chief Shepherd).

REMEMBER: JESUS IS COMING SOON.

(Revelation 22:12)

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✚ OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

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✚ INFORMATION ABOUT THE MINISTRY

The Maranatha Commission is a non-denominational Christian Organisation committed to the propagation of the Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. To achieve this, we currently offer the following services:

Evangelistic Outreaches

Family Harmony Crusades

Children and Teen's Concerns

Counselling Services and Youth Mentoring

Sale of Bibles, Christian Literature, CD's, Gift Items etc.

Publication of Christian Books and Tracts.

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LIFEGATE CRECHE: for Baby day-care and Play-group Services at moderate fees. We provide a physically and spiritually healthy atmosphere where parents can restfully keep their children while away to work.

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TMC: Preparing Souls for the soon-coming King.

Are you burdened, troubled, traumatized, or confused? Perhaps you are beaten, battered and shattered; and you need an empathetic and non-judgmental listener?

Perhaps you want to know about God's plan of salvation for mankind; or you are thirsty for more of God?

Please, feel free to talk to us at:

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ABOUT THE BOOK

The Sleeping Giant is about the Church of Christ; the people He purchased with His precious Blood. Christians are Spiritual Giants because our Lord Jesus Christ has made provision for us to do greater works than He did while physically on earth!

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." John 14:12.

However, the reality of the state of the Church shows that we are operating far below our capacity! Therefore, this book is intended to challenge the Church to urgently arise to fulfill her highest potential in Christ!

The book brings the salvation message to the unsaved; restoration and hope to the spiritually wounded; and a fresh reawakening to all Christians to be fully determined to do the promised greater works! We are able through Jesus Christ! MARANATHA!!!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Oluwatofunmi Temiloluwa Akinyemi (Mama Jochebed), is a child of God, having given her heart to the Lord Jesus Christ on November 28 1978. She is God's instrument in propagating the same gospel that brought salvation to her soul.

She is a Sociologist and an alumna of the prestigious University of Lagos, Nigeria. While on campus, she was a very active member of the popular Lagos Varsity Christian Union. After graduation, she served in Sokoto State under the compulsory National Youth Service Corp Scheme in Nigeria, she was the Prayer Secretary of the 1982/83 set of the Nigeria Christian Corpers' Fellowship, Sokoto State.

A former employee of the Ondo State Teaching Service Commission, Nigeria, she voluntarily retired in 1996 in obedience to God's call on her life. She has a great burden for the salvation of souls, and for such to be firmly rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ. She fulfills this Assignment at "The Maranatha Commission" through which God has used her to bring salvation, hope, and joy to many.

She has been privileged to minister in different Church denominations and Fellowship groups. "The Sleeping Giant (A Call to an Urgent Spiritual Reawakening)" is her 22nd. Book.

Tofunmi has been married to her Sweetheart, Kola for over three decades; and their union is wonderfully blessed. This testimony is sealed with the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, Amen TO GOD BE THE GLORY.

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