18. Members One of Another

This truth is the whole reason for everything I have ever written, the whole reason for my life on this earth. This is my vision, my heart. We are now entering the fullness of times. God is releasing upon us the full measure of Himself, not known by anyone before on this earth save Jesus.

The responsibility of the kingdom does not rest on our shoulders; it rests upon the One who is our life. Nevertheless, the level of spiritual warfare – darkness, in a terrified attempt to keep us from walking in all the heavens of God right here on this earth, increases daily. But God is fortressing our hearts with strength. We are greater and mightier than they. They have no more place upon this earth.

This is the vision that fills my heart. The testimony of Christ in the earth is community.

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body… and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many… that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 & 25-27

I can share only what has come to me over the years, trusting always that God directs my steps and teaches me. But I also know very well the “Christian” stuff that brings hurt and confusion to God’s dear people. I know the thread of misused Scripture and limited understanding of Christ that weaves its way through them. This firsthand knowledge is also a gift of God.

To know Jesus personally in all that He is in every part of me without any shadow of separation or division is the most precious thing I have ever found. Those of us who are hearing these things are scattered all over, far from each other. And that is by the season of God. But as all things, that scatteredness is only for a season. It is not what is in my heart.

I am of Christian community. I know the testimony and power a small group of believers walking together in love, sharing a property and the means of life together, is of the reality of Christ. Christ is a many-membered body.

I also know well all the things that come in to such a way of living that bring disruption and pain. But the anointing and the glory that comes upon brethren walking together in unity is worth far more than the little bit of discomfort that also comes in that package.

We left Christian community in 1998. I left because the vision in my heart for Christian community could not be fulfilled in move community as it was then – and as it is now. But all these years, I have carried a desire to return to Christian community based on the revelation of Christ as God has taught me.

However, the desire to return to community, to the gathering together of like precious faith on the same property, sharing the means of life together, only increases. My heart says, “It is time.” Yet I know that God must do it. I also know that it takes money. But more than money, it takes the anointing.

Here is my problem. I will not join with any community or group of brethren where the word and the vision and the way of walking together is other than that which is coming out of my own heart. That sounds “selfish,” yet that determination comes out of a knowledge of all the things that bring hurt and confusion and out of a growing joy of the reality of Christ that is opening up in me.

We left community with the certain knowledge that two cannot walk together unless they are agreed. That agreement must be on the core issues of life and reality, which includes an enjoyment of one another’s differences. It
is not an external agreement, but one centered on a word, and that word is Christ revealed in us.

There is a “Go and tell” in the gospel. That is the task given to most who belong to Jesus. But there is also a “Come and see.” I know that the second is far more powerful and real than the first. The first gathers in multitudes, and that is part of the Father’s heart. But the second shows Christ as He really is in a people walking together in humility, in kindness, in generosity, in love. I know well the power of that testimony – though I’ve seen only glimpses of what it really is.

I want be part of a new Christian community, a shared property, and a sharing of the means of life, that will be the expression of the word God has extended to me. Out of that community will go forth a clear trumpet call, “Whosoever will may come and freely drink.”

It will be, first, a teaching community. A place where people can come for a day, a week, a month, a year, as is convenient to their own desires, to enjoy teaching – of the word, yes, but also of the ways of life, of the reality of brethren walking together in unity – and teaching of many good natural things as well, including how to grow your own food, and the teaching of children. I am a teacher, and I want to be a part of a teaching community. I am also a builder; I have designed and built every part of community.

What it will not be is a community that places obligations upon people, except to know the Lord Jesus as He reveals Himself in what and who they are. And it will certainly never bind anyone to itself. It is better to suffer continual loss than to bind people in any possible way to the “group.” Christ is the life of the church; “group think” is its death. My wife and I are ready to move to such a community this afternoon. And we would do so if God gave us the means. I have no ability to make it happen myself, but it is the only direction I want to go. I share these things with you because I must share them with someone – someone who is hearing the same thing from the Lord Jesus Christ that I am hearing.

The Testimony of Community

There are several particular books I would recommend you get if you would like a larger picture of the actual practice of intentional Christian community. There have been many attempts at community, many different flavors and experiences. Many of those attempts were unsuccessful, but many knew (and know) the success of Christ in surprising ways.

Don’t ever forget, the Promised Land was filled with giants and fortified cities. It could be taken only through battle. The Promised Land of Israel typifies the life of Christ being formed in us. It is won only through the conquering of giants. Most Christians assume that because Goliath always “wins,” everyone should just stay away from him. David thought otherwise.

Let’s start with a remarkable book, *The Siberian Miracle*, by Peter de Bruijne. Please, get it and read it. I know these people; I have met Victor Walter personally, and some of the others mentioned. I helped them briefly as they established their communities in northern British Columbia near where I lived at the time.

It is fascinating that the Holy Spirit led them into an expression of Christian community in 1972, the same year that the communities in British Columbia where I lived for many years began.

There are many reasons given for the collapse of communism and the Soviet Union. I am convinced that one of the primary reasons was this community of believers in Jesus Christ. Their testimony – how they walked together as a community of Christ in love – is vital for us to know how to face the great contradiction that is coming. Please, get the book and read it.


Then, there is *Pilgrim Church* by E. H. Broadbent. This book gives a different view of church history than that taught in most Christian schools. It abandons the “Catholic” story and traces the flow of those set-apart Spirit-life fellowships that have always persevered around the edges of “mainstream” Christianity.

You can find a copy of every one of these books, mostly used, on Amazon. There are many other books, but Christian community is not something that can be known by study. It must be lived to be known.


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And what, exactly, is church life? Church life is something which was experienced by all believers of the first century… Church life was born when a bunch of believers, half out of their minds with joy, gave up all they owned and piled into a few houses and started living together. So, the experience of the church, this thing called “church life,” was born in the homes of Jerusalem.

Church life is hard to explain. You have to experience it! But know this, dear reader, God never intended you to be His follower without it. The life of a believer was never intended to be experienced alone. You were meant to know Christ in a corporate situation. Being a follower of Christ just does not work without church life. God never intended for you to be a follower of Christ except in the context of the experience of church life. The Lord's life does not even work – nor did God intend it to – except as it is experienced corporately…

Yes, the church had confidence in Stephen, and it was because of how well they knew him, because of the things they had seen him go through. They had watched him grow up in Christ. Through all his trials, they had seen him turn again and again to the Lord. After years of pressure, testing and exposure, he had come forth as a proven vessel. His spirit, his love for Christ, had been proven by years of practical, daily, bedrock experience, all of which went on right out in the open – in the church of God.

This is how it was throughout that whole century. The servants of the Lord were trusted because they had been exposed and broken… in full view of everyone. In our day, because there is no church life to do all this exposing, men have not allowed themselves to be known… Men today have simply not lived in the open glare of the church…

When Stephen proclaimed the Gospel, everyone knew his words were honest, his power real, his humility a fact… Stephen's devotion to his Lord was a solidly established fact. Established before the eyes of thousands of his brothers and sisters.

A life proven in the fire of church life! That is the test every man who ministers the Gospel should have to experience.