



Willing and Obedient

By Albert Hannigan

In our walk with the Lord, our willingness to do His will and obey Him is our challenge throughout our journey from start to finish.

In the beginning of our encounter with the Lord, the Holy Spirit brought conviction to our hearts. We realized we were sinners and needed the Saviour to come into our hearts and wash our sins away.

When Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee and saw Peter and Andrew busy fishing, He bade them come and follow Him, and said he would make them fishers of men. They did not hesitate to obey His call, but as it says in Mark 1:18, "Straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him." Likewise, when Jesus came across James and John mending their nets, at His beckon, they immediately left their father Zebedee and his hired servants and followed Him (Mark 1:19 & 20). I am impressed with their desire to obey, and that without delay.

Jesus stands at the door of our hearts and knocks. As we will-

ingly open the door to him, the ultimate rewards and blessings are so very great. There will doubtless be challenges to our natural wishes and desires. But "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). Our cross will be our ministry in the Body of Christ, which was given to us by prophesy and the laying on of hands. It will include our duties in our home, in the church, in the work place, and everywhere. Our walk will be a walk of humility, of love and kindness, and serving others. We will want to be in the place where the Lord can say at the end of our journey, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21).

In Hebrews 13:17 we read, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls."

So often in scripture children have been admonished to obey their parents, that their days may be long upon the land which the Lord has given them. Learning obedience has such long lasting effects, and it is incumbent upon parents, in wisdom, to teach their children obedience at a very early age. Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It is wonderful to see a close loving relationship between parents and their children. As we parents grow older, our families mean so much to us. Where once our children

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depended on us, now we tend to depend on them. Obedience is important at any age.

We are so thankful for our elders and deacons in the church. Their caring for, and nurturing of the members in the assembly is such a blessing. Their example in the church is just as important as their ministry in the Word. It is good to take heed to their instruction and counsel, for they “watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:17).

We thank God for the way He has led us in our worship and ministry in the church services. Body ministry is so important. We desire the leading of the Holy Spirit in the services. Our daily walk and communion with the Lord is so important in order that we might be sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit in the services. Immediately after that great chapter on love, 1 Cor. 13, we read in the first verse of chapter 14, “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but

rather that you may prophesy.” The word and mind of God is ministered to us through prophesy, and it is so important to lift and comfort the church. Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs are a very important part of a worship service, as we are led by the Spirit and ministered to from the Word. May we strive to follow the leading of the Lord in these areas, and that “all things be done decently and in order” (1Cor. 14:40).

Partaking of the Holy Communion is an exercise that we can always look forward to, for life is in the Communion. By faith we believe and receive when we partake of Him in this way.

Also, it is a privilege to give of our tithes and offerings as the Lord has prospered us, thus enabling us to minister to the needy and also to spread the gospel abroad. We thank God for the open doors of ministry at home and also in far away places; in India, Africa, South America, the islands of the sea, etc. Let us be much in prayer for those who travel abroad, as well

as their families at home. Jesus’ commission was “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14). Praise God for giving the brethren willing and obedient hearts to share this glorious gospel abroad.

With all the unrest and uncertainty in the world today, we thank God for the hope we have for better things ahead. His kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy, of which there shall be no end. Glory to God!! “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). Let me quote a song by Esther Kerr Rusthoi

*“It will be worth it all,
when we see Jesus,
Life’s trials will seem so small,
when we see Him.
One glimpse of His dear face,
all sorrow will erase,
So bravely run the race,
‘till we see Christ.”*

Truth

By Markus Hansen

What is “TRUTH?” Is there such a thing as absolute truth? These are questions that have been pondered, discussed and argued since the beginning of time. Records indicate that the question, “What is truth?” was being asked 2600 years ago and it is still being asked today.

A clear understanding of what constitutes “the truth” is of paramount importance to Christians because intellectuals, philosophers and lawmakers of our lands do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes “TRUTH.” If you take a course in philosophy your professor will likely begin

with opening remarks something like this: “Is truth a property of sentences, or is truth a property of propositions such as nonlinguistic, abstract and timeless entities? The term has no single definition about which a majority of professional philosophers and scholars agree.” The purpose

of this article is to explore what the Bible has to say about this important question.

Turn to John 18:33-38,(NKJV) "Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all.'"

The word "TRUTH" is mentioned three times in Matthew and five times in Luke. However, John used the word "TRUTH" 27 times in the Book of John and 20 times in 1st, 2nd and 3rd John. It is apparent that John wanted the readers of his writings to know and understand what represents "TRUTH."

In this article five areas will be explored:

1. What "truth" is ascribed to
2. The effects of knowing and walking in the "truth"
3. What we are to do with the "truth"

4. The benefits of obeying the "truth"
5. The consequences of disobeying the "truth."

1. What truth is ascribed to: (ascribe means to consider or declare as belonging to).

A. God's Laws: Psalm 119:142,(KJV) "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth." The Ten Commandments given to Moses and clearly defined in Exodus 20:1-17 are "TRUTH." They were the "TRUTH" when God gave them to Moses, they are the "TRUTH" today and they will be the "TRUTH" until the end of time. Jesus said, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle (a dot or cross of a 't') shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18). Modern man may say, "Oh, that old commandment, 'thou shalt not steal'; surely if someone is starving it is OK to steal. Or committing adultery is so common place today; you don't expect that one

should abstain from enjoying sex outside of marriage." The Laws of God represent "Kingdom Truths" and no one has the right to change their meaning to suit their situation in life. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and He expected the Israelites to obey them. God expects us to do likewise. Yes, even in 2009, and until Jesus returns to claim His bride, the Body of Christ. The Apostle Paul when considering what was happening in his world, wrote in I Corinthians 1:20 (NIV), "Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" Has the reasoning of man changed since the time of Paul? No, men continue to change God's laws to suit their purpose. However, that does not nullify God's Laws and the fact that they represent the "TRUTH"! King David wrote: "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7).

IMPORTANT DATES

North Carolina Summer Camp	July 26 - August 1, 2009
Pinelow (Spokane) Summer Camp	August 3 - 9, 2009
St. Vincent Caribbean Summer Camp	August 2 - 9, 2009
St. Vincent Caribbean Youth Camp	August 10 - 14, 2009
Hidden Acres (Ontario) Family Camp	September 4 - 7, 2009
Winkler (Manitoba) Family Camp	September 4 - 7, 2009
Park Valley Young People's Camp	September 4 - 7, 2009
Nebraska Meetings	September 25 - 27, 2009
New York/New Jersey Camp	October 2 - 4, 2009
Pinelow (Spokane) Family Camp	November 6 - 9, 2009
North Battleford Young People's Camp	Dec. 30, 2009 - Jan. 3, 2010
Indiana Young People's Camp	Dec. 27 - 31, 2009

God's "TRUTHS" are absolute. The Oxford dictionary describes the word "absolute" as follows: "an adjective meaning complete, perfect." When something is complete or perfect there is no need to change it, modify it or try to add to it. This means that God's "TRUTHS" are complete in them self!

B. Jesus Christ: The Apostle John writing about Jesus, records in John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and TRUTH." What John is trying to convey is that Jesus is "TRUTH" and everything about Jesus represents the "TRUTH"! In John 14:6, Jesus also explained in concrete terms that He was the "TRUTH" by giving this example. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus clearly states in this scripture that it is "TRUE" that there is no other way to God the Father except through Himself. You cannot earn your way; you cannot gain access to God the Father or get to heaven by being born into the right family, by going to church on Sunday, or simply by being good. You must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, repent and ask forgiveness for your sins and then walk in the "TRUTH." Then, and only then, does Jesus become the way to the Father and the way to heaven. PERIOD. This is a Kingdom "TRUTH" and it will always be the "TRUTH," for ever and ever, AMEN!

C. The Holy Spirit: John 14: 16-17, "And I will pray the

Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of TRUTH; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And in John 16:13 Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." Nothing is more comforting than to know that you can rely on the voice of the Holy Spirit to keep you in this way. There are many voices in the world saying, "Come here and listen to me. I can help you if you only send me a donation or purchase my book." If we listen to the Holy Spirit, He will help us to recognize false teachers and prophets. Jesus said: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them" (Luke 21:1, NIV).

D. God's Word: John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy TRUTH: thy word is TRUTH." As previously noted, Jesus is the Word, thus the "TRUTH," but we also have the written word, the Holy Scriptures. When we read the Bible and follow the given instructions, we know that we are walking and living in the "TRUTH". My mind goes back many years ago when Bro. Doug Whitter was ministering at a camp meeting and he began his teaching with these words from Proverbs 1:1 (Living Bible), "These are the proverbs of King Solomon of Israel, David's son.

He wrote them to teach his people how to live - how to act in every circumstance, for he wanted them to be understanding, just and fair in everything they did. 'I want to make the simple-minded wise!' he said. 'I want to warn young men about some problems they will face. I want those already wise to become the wiser and become leaders by exploring the depths of meaning in these nuggets of truth.' King David wrote in Psalms 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Reading and absorbing the Word of God helps us to know and understand "THE TRUTH." Knowing the "TRUTH" helps us to make right choices and thus to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to God and also towards our fellow man.

E. The Church: I Tim 3:15, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground (foundation) of the TRUTH." God has provided us with the pattern for the Church. If we listen, observe and obey the instructions of those who are appointed by God, (the apostolic elders and deacons, our local elders and deacons and our parents) then we will hear and know what constitutes the "TRUTH." Knowing and living in the "TRUTH" enables us to continue on into perfection which will lead to claiming our inheritance; the inheritance of becoming Sons of God. Ephesians 4:11-15, (NKJV) "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping

of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”

2. The effects of knowing and walking in the “truth”

A. Knowing the truth sets us free: John 8: 31-32, “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH shall make you free.” Free from what? Anything that binds us, such as sin in all its forms: anger, oppression, drug and alcohol abuse, pornography, gambling, etc.

B. Truth purifies and makes us clean within: I Peter 1:22, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the TRUTH through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.” When you accept Christ into your heart, He cleanses your heart from sin and makes it whiter than the driven snow. Psalm 51: 6-7, “Behold, thou desirest TRUTH in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

C. Truth sanctifies, sets apart, makes one holy: John

17:17-19, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is TRUTH.” Vs. 19, “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the TRUTH.”

D. Truth exposes one to the light of God: John 3:21, (Amplified) “But he who practices TRUTH (who does what is right) comes out into the Light; so that his works may be plainly shown to be what they are wrought with God (divinely prompted, done with God’s help, in dependence upon Him).”

3. What we are to do with the “truth.”

A. Come to the “truth”: I Tim. 2:1-4, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the TRUTH.”

B. Be established and walk in the “truth”: II Peter 1:12 (NIV), “So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the TRUTH you now have.” III John 4: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in TRUTH.”

C. Obey the “truth”: I Peter 1:22, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the TRUTH through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”

D. Speak the “truth”: Eph 4.25, “Wherefore putting away

lying, speak every man TRUTH with his neighbour.”

E. Declare the truth”: Acts 26:25, “But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of TRUTH and soberness.”

4. The benefits of obeying the “truth.”

A. Obeying God’s laws and statutes: Deuteronomy 6:1-6, (NKJ) “Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’”

B. Peace is a direct benefit of walking in the “truth”: John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Since Jesus is the “TRUTH,” if we walk in the “TRUTH,” then Jesus will give us peace; the one thing the whole world is seeking after!

C. Joy and happiness: Isaiah 51:11, “Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy.” The redeemed of the

Lord are those who have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior and being He is the "TRUTH," you can know a joy and happiness in your heart that the world does not offer or know.

D. Promise to watch over our children: Matthew 18:10, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." The Bible says that Jesus is sitting at the right hand of His Father, God Almighty. Jesus being present, will also be listening to your children's angels pleading for their safety. Since this is recorded in the Word of God, which is the "TRUTH," we know it is TRUE that our children's angels are being heard. Therefore, we can rest assured that God will hear our prayers on behalf of our children.

E. Eternal life: John 3:16 (NKJV), "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." We know without a doubt that because Jesus represents the "TRUTH," when we accepted Jesus as our personal Savior, He has delivered us from our past sins and guilt and has granted us everlasting life.

F. Answers our prayers: John 15:7 (NKJV), "If you abide in Me, and My words (the "TRUTH") abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

G. God promises to bless those that tithe: Malachi 3:10, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me

now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." At a recent Elders and Deacons meeting, Bro. Merv Sundbo mentioned that this is the only area he is aware of where we are allowed to test God. If you have not been tithing, begin right now to follow God's teaching and bring ten percent of your increase to your local Church. God will bless you for being obedient to this "KINGDOM TRUTH."

5. Consequences of not obeying the "truth."

Here are just a few examples:

A. Exodus 20:13, "Thou shalt not kill." The penalty, in old scripture times and even today in some countries, is capital punishment or a very long time in jail.

B. Exodus 20:14, "Thou shalt not commit Adultery." Sex outside of marriage can result in regrets, guilt, shame and possibly sexually transmitted diseases.

C. Romans 1:18 (New Living Translation), "But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness."

D. Romans 6:23, "For the wages (consequences) of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

E. II Corinthians 6:13-18 (New Living Translation), **being unequally yoked with unbelievers**, (marrying an unbeliever). "Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can

light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: 'I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.'"

Young people, don't be fooled. If you marry an unbeliever, there will be consequences. You may think that you will bring your partner into the Church after you marry but it is not likely to happen. Why? Because it is not the right way. It is not the way your elders and your parents instructed you! You say, "Oh he's such a nice guy with such curly red hair." "She's such a fine specimen and she can cook like a chef and loves babies!" It doesn't count as far as God is concerned. He or she has to be born again, filled with the Holy Spirit and become a functioning member of the Body of Christ before rings are exchanged.

Too many times we have had young people, who married an unbeliever, come to us with broken hearts after their spouse ran off with another man or woman. Let this warning be strong and let it be loud and clear. If you marry someone who is not in this way, he/she is likely

to take you out! You may be broken hearted! You may regret your choice. The consequences of not obeying the "TRUTH" could be disastrous.

SUMMARY

"TRUTH" may be considered to be a concept, a law (spiritual or physical), a precept, a statute that corresponds to reality but it is more than that. The "TRUTHS" of God are an all-encompassing way to live our lives that is God driven, Christ empowered and made alive by the Holy Spirit.

In addition, God's "TRUTHS" are timeless. GOD'S "TRUTHS" simply do not change with time. They are complete, perfect and they are absolute.

Dear Saints, let us endeavor, with the help of the Holy Spirit to conduct our lives in accordance with all the "KINGDOM TRUTHS" that God has revealed since the beginning of this precious move of the Holy Spirit. If we do, then we shall qualify to inherit the Kingdom of God that is being prepared for His elect,

the Bride of Christ. 2 Peter 1: 10-12, Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth."

A Testimony

By Byron Price

Taken from a tape at the Young People's May Long Weekend 2006.

Dear Heavenly Father, You know the needs that are here this morning. You know the message that we need to receive. Father, guide us and give us the words for this time and give us ears to hear. We pray in Jesus Name, Amen.

To begin with, I would like to share with you some of my background. Perhaps there are things that experience has taught me in my youth that would be of value to young people today. I was born and raised on a farm about 40 miles south east of North Battleford. I count myself very privileged to have been born into a loving Christian family.

My parents told me that a couple by the name of Mr. & Mrs. Mansel came to our area in the

1920s. Mr. Mansel was hired to operate the ferry on the nearby river. He was also a Salvation Army minister. He and his wife started a church by holding meetings in the local schoolhouse. As a result of their ministry, several families gave their hearts and lives to the Lord. My mother told me about one of the meetings that was a turning point in her life. A defining moment, we might call it, when she heard the salvation message and accepted the Lord. My dad had stayed at home that evening with the younger children. When Mother came home, she was very happy and excited about the experience that she had. She said to Dad, "I want to tell you what has happened to me." And he said, "Yes, I know what's happened to you." Soon after that, he went to one of the meetings and also

gave his heart to the Lord, so all seven of their children had the privilege of being raised in a Christian family.

I had two older brothers and four sisters. I was several years younger than the others and by the time I came along, there was a church established in Sonningdale, the little town closest to our farm. It was a Pentecostal Church and we attended regularly. I recall my Sunday School teacher, Don Cantelon, teaching us the scripture from John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Then, after explaining the way of salvation to us, he asked us if we would like to kneel down and accept the Lord as our Saviour. That we did and it was a defining moment

in my life.

A few years later, they had a baptismal service at a nearby lake, where I was baptized in water. When we are baptized, as we enter the water, we give up our old life and when we come out of the water, we are a new creation. Certainly, the Lord empowers us to walk with Him but there is a responsibility on our part to not yield ourselves to sinful acts.

1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." We can all take comfort from the following promise: 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Even though we are forgiven, inappropriate actions can leave scars. Our minds work similar to computers in that they store the information that they receive. Sometimes it is hard to get rid of unwanted words and images from our brains. As with the computer, we should have a good antivirus program to keep those things out in the first place. One way to do that is to choose our friends carefully and make sure we stand up for what we know to be right. There are times when even a Christian friend may be struggling with worldly temptations. We should be ready to speak up and encourage each other to walk according to the way we have been taught. I had, and still have, some good friends who attended the Pentecostal

Church in Sonningdale, as I was growing up and I certainly appreciated the teaching I received and the commitment of the leaders of that assembly.

In July of 1949 my two older brothers, who had moved to British Columbia to work, came to our farm and said there is something special going on at North Battleford and they were going there to the Camp meeting, so we joined them. I remember the meetings and the beautiful singing very clearly. A young child may not understand all that takes place at the time, but the memory can certainly make a lasting impression.

The things that stick in my memory most were the messages that were coming forth, the excitement of the moving of the Spirit and the songs that were being sung, *Sweep over my soul, sweet Spirit, sweep over my soul*. We could feel the Spirit of God sweeping over us. God is as real today as He was then and we should expect that when we sing these songs of worship, we will receive even more of a blessing today than we did then. It is up to us to determine to move with Him and to allow Him to complete the good work that He has started in us. Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

The room that we are meeting in this morning is known as the Cloud Room, because of the clouds and horizons painted on the walls. This building was at the Airport at the time of the early Camp meetings. It was originally used for training pilots during the second world war.

The instructors were teaching pilots about cloud formations. This building was one of the first of the airport buildings that was moved to the Sharon Camp grounds as we know it. The local Church at North Battleford has met in this room for many years, and this is where my mother and I came from our farm to Sunday services.

In the summer of 1949 and the following years, there seemed to be a new message coming forth. One thing that seemed to be special and new at the time is illustrated by the sign on the wall at the front of this room, which says, "God is Eternally Progressive." I clearly remember one of the brethren teaching and referring to this sign on the wall which indicates that God is eternally progressive and that he lives within us and He is working in us to bring us to maturity. The scriptures tell us that the Kingdom of God is at hand. In other words, it's within our reach. This provided a new focus and new goals for our lives as we learned of the possibility that we could become a part of the Kingdom of God. It was a very exciting time.

Being farmers, we had cows to be milked. They were supposed to be milked every twelve hours, at 6 o'clock in the morning and 6 o'clock at night. They get kind of mixed up if you don't stick to the schedule. We would milk the cows in the morning, come here for the morning meeting and stay for the afternoon and evening meetings. By the time we got home at 10-11 o'clock, the cows had come home from the pasture to be milked and since no one was at home, they returned to

the pasture again. So we were out in the dark, listening for the cowbell to try and locate the cows to get them back to the barn for milking. There seemed to be an urgency to attend every meeting so as not to miss anything. Yes, it was a very exciting time.

When I turned 16 and obtained my driver's license, my mother and I would drive to North Battleford and attend the Sunday meeting of the local church here in this building. Often we would be talking on the way to the service about the things of the Spirit and things that we didn't understand. The teaching was that if there is something that you didn't understand, just set it on the shelf until the Lord reveals it to you. In other words, don't reject it. Just set it aside and the Lord will clarify it at a later time. Many times, we would be driving home and we'd realize that the questions we had on the way to the meeting were answered in the service. We were amazed at how the Lord blessed us in that way. Even though it wasn't anything that we asked specifically, the Lord answered our questions in the service and He did that over and over again. I'm sure he does the same today, if we expect him to.

As we all know, there are challenges to be faced and decisions to be made when we start to work away from home. If we are not prepared to make the right decisions we can get into trouble. In the work place, we will find people that we admire. People that are competent at their jobs, good people and we are tempted to try to emulate them and do what they do. We must realize that we can't please everybody.

We should make up our minds ahead of time and ask ourselves, "How we are going to answer those who want us to do things that we know we shouldn't do?" What will we say when someone says, "Let's go for a drink.?" Some of those good people that we admire will be in the habit of going for a drink on a Friday night before they go home from work. Or there's a month-end party or a Christmas party and there's alcohol involved. If we are not ready with what we're going to say, we could make a serious mistake. The temptation is there wherever we go. Whether we are young or old, the pressure is there to drink alcohol with others. We need to make the right decision ahead of time and stick with it.

So what do we say when someone says, "Here, have a drink"?' I'd like to think that we would say, "No thank you, I don't drink alcohol." Now at first it's hard to say because we wonder, "What's this person going to think of me since I'm not going along with the crowd?" But what really happens is that they will think you are a strong person.

We should take pride in the fact that we are different from those who are not Christians. II Corinthians 6:17&18, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The Scripture tells us we are a chosen generation: 1 Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show

forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

We are called and chosen of the Lord and that makes us different. We are not above others but God has given us special gifts. If we've been prayed and prophesied over, we have received gifts from God that enable us to be an example and minister to others. We often find that when we say, "No thank you, I don't drink alcohol," there may be one or two people there who will think, "I shouldn't be drinking either," and will say, "No thank you," as well. We'll be surprised to find that there are others who would prefer not to drink, but don't have the courage to say no, until they see us take a stand. I would like all of us to determine that we will know what to say when that time comes. "No thank you, I don't drink alcohol." Get used to the sound of it. "No thank you, I don't drink alcohol." It's not that hard to say, is it? If we have the words in our minds and are ready, we can say them right away and then we've established what side of the fence we are on. It's not only alcohol; there are other things that we must learn to say no to, such as drugs and immorality. So we need to be prepared. We should keep in touch with our families and friends who are strong and desire to walk with the Lord. We are so privileged to have the group of friends that we have here. Let's respect and encourage one another. These are our long-term friends.

God, in the scripture, has good reason for warning against the use of alcohol. Proverbs says, "Wine is a mocker, beer is a brawler; whoever is led astray (deceived) by them is not wise". There are other scriptures that express the same thing. Alcohol IS a deceiver. It robs you of your reason and judgment. It can cause your death. The social aspect of drinking is widely accepted in our society but that doesn't mean it is a good thing. It causes great hardship in families, and suffering and anguish when someone is hurt or killed.

You have the power of choice. Be courageous and stand up for what is right. Choose wisely for yourself and others. If a friend suggests doing something wrong, don't be afraid to tell them that it is wrong. Suggest something

better. Choose another activity. Make a difference! You could be saving someone's life.

You may think that because you believe in Christ you're safe from disastrous consequences when you choose things that are sinful and dangerous. God will forgive you when you ask Him, yes, but there are always consequences, scars that you carry with you the rest of your life or, worse, the results can be fatal.

Whether you believe it or not, you are cherished and important to many people. It matters what happens to you. We love you, our church family, and want you to walk with God. Learn to love Him. Be filled with the Spirit. He has a life-plan for you. Live in obedience to Him. It is by far the best way.

Let us all say those words again together and really mean it. "No thank you, I don't drink alcohol." Amen.

Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

Where Two or Three are Gathered

By Trevor Sundbo

(Taken from tape, 2008) I would like to talk about Matthew 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

It's a very familiar verse to us. As I was waiting on the Lord this week and He led me to share a little bit of my perspective on growing up in a small, local as-

sembly. By small, I don't mean in spiritual contribution, I mean small in numbers. I think many of us have spent some time in a small, local assembly at some

point in our lives, and I hope you will be able to relate to a little of what I will be sharing.

Looking back on my life, I spent my first 17 or 18 years in a small assembly in Weldon, Saskatchewan. As I look into the crowd, there are many people here today from that assembly. My desire is to share some thoughts that I feel are important.

I grew up in Birch Hills (Saskatchewan) and the Weldon assembly was about a half-hour away. We met at the farm, in the home of Julia and Reuben (Amundson). We had on any given Sunday, eleven to maybe fifteen people.

Sunday after Sunday, month after month, year after year our family went and worshiped in a home, at a farm north of Weldon. When you're a kid growing up, you normally do what you are told; follow your parents and everything seems normal. There would have been a time, as we were growing up, when we would have asked our parents, "Why are we going out to Weldon. It's half an hour away and there are plenty of churches here? All my friends go to the Baptist, or the Lutheran church (or wherever it happened to be in town). And, there are a lot more young people there." So, do you think it fell on deaf ears? Yes, it did fall on deaf ears. I'm sure at the time that my parents sat the three of us down and explained why. I don't remember, but it probably happened.

When I look back on it now, I'm sure thankful for the stand that my parents had taken at that time, when they said, "No, we go as a family to the local assembly."

I didn't understand it at the time, and I didn't understand the importance of it at the time. I didn't understand that the spiritual contribution the assembly made was necessary and it was eternal. What that small Weldon assembly was doing all those years was making an eternal contribution in the heavenly realm that will not pass away. Not only was it eternal, but it was necessary. In God's plan and purpose it was necessary. By the Spirit, the rest of the body of Christ needed the contribution of the Weldon Assembly. Again, I didn't understand it at the time, but I'm sure the Spirit of God was speaking to my heart saying, "Trevor, it is more important that you be in obedience to your parents, than for me to give you the understanding." I also didn't realize it at the time, but my contribution was necessary. For example, as children, our parents gave us a scripture to learn each week and we were expected to quote it from memory in the Sunday service. This was our responsibility. I remember saying to my mom years later, "You know, all those scriptures you made me learn as a child. I can quote many of them today." Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119: 11, KJV). However seemingly small, as a four year old, six year old, or eight year old – it was necessary. My contribution at all those different ages was important. It was important for me, for the local assembly and for the body of Christ, because I was a member of the body of Christ. I'm looking back on it now, and I am sharing it, but at the time, I didn't understand it. My brothers and I were simply being obedient

to our parents, which perhaps was the thing that God wanted to teach us at the time.

What you see now is a very ordinary, 37 year old guy standing before you. No real special talent, except that I can add up a column of numbers, and I can beat my dad at crokinole. In the natural, I am nothing special and very average (although God has provided me with a wonderful wife and two wonderful children). But in the spiritual realm, it's totally different. Not just for me, but for every one of you. In the spiritual realm, one of God's chosen vessels stands before the congregation of the righteous. This chosen vessel is learning to walk with God, is learning to be led by the Spirit, and is learning to be a better husband and a better father. This chosen vessel is learning to operate his gifts and ministries, is learning to take his place in the body of Christ, and to function in the role that God has for him to function in. Because, I believe, the spiritual foundation for my walk was established, Sunday after Sunday, month after month, year after year at that small local assembly in Weldon.

Here is the critical point that I want to make: it had to happen. In God's plan and purpose, it was necessary that it happened in an assembly with twelve people. I don't know why, but in those Sunday meetings, God needed to create in me what was necessary, so that I would be prepared to take my role in the body of Christ, and to function the way that He needed me to function.

I know that many of you were in a small, local assembly and I know that at times it can be dis-

couraging because there aren't many people. I think that if we had an opportunity to ask God, he would probably say that there is exactly the number of people he wants in your local assembly. It may not always stay that way. People may come and people may go, but for the time being, that's what God wants. And don't think that your contribution is nominal, because I would say that the

spiritual contribution of a local assembly with 3 or 4 people is just as significant as a congregation with 80 or 90 people. I believe the same thing applies if you are a member of a larger assembly; you are there for a reason and God is grooming you there for a purpose.

One last thing I will say, if you happen to be on a vacation or business trip, and you have an

opportunity to drop into a small assembly, do it; especially if it is a small, local assembly. My wife Candace and I had an opportunity to be in Victoria last year because I was attending a conference, and it was such a thrill to be there. The assembly loves to see people, because they don't have many, so they love to see some visitors. But more than that, it was a blessing to us!

Why do we have “Elders” and not “Pastors?”

By Andy Snoke

Before we begin our brief study on elders, let's set one thing straight. This article is by no means intended to diminish what the Christian world terms “pastors,” though this is probably the most misunderstood and misused word in modern church practice. It is not our place to judge those who use this term as their title. God ultimately looks beyond man's “titles” and looks to the ministry that He has placed within these vessels of clay.

But what do the scriptures teach, and what has been revealed in this new Kingdom order?

In its most basic terms, the Divine order for administration in the Church, as prescribed throughout the New Testament, is this:

1. God speaks to and through the Apostolic ministry (Eph 2:20).

2. Apostolic truth is ministered to the local church elders (Acts 15: 23-28).

3. The local elders minister

to the congregation (Acts 20:28).

4. The fathers in the congregation minister to their own families (Deut. 6:6-9).

This procedure is outlined in Acts 14: 21- 23 (speaking of Paul and Barnabas), “And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.” (ASV)

The Divine order that was implemented in the New Testament church was for the Apostolic ministry to proclaim the good news to the universal church at large. Their territory was the world. Acts 1:8, “ But ye shall

receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (ASV)

Then, in each local church, there were local elders appointed to shepherd the local flock of souls. Their territory is the local church, and the local area. They are appointed by the Apostolic ministry. Titus 1:5, “For this cause I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed you.”

Never, on any occasion, was a church governed by elected, or paid pastors. Today's practice of training, hiring, and paying a man as a pastor was never a part of the Church that was established by the teachings and practice of the New Testament. The modern and common system of today's “pastors” does not exist in scripture. This is not saying that God has not used

or blessed this unscriptural practice, but it is not the highest or Divine order of God.

Appointing "kings" in the Old Testament was not God's highest order, but He still blessed it. I Sa 8:4-7, "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah; and they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee. but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them."

The true meaning of the word "pastor" is shepherd. The Greek word is *poimen*, which literally and figuratively means "shepherd." It is used only 16 times

in the New Testament, and only once is it translated "pastor" (Eph 4: 11).

So a "pastor" really refers to the ministry of a shepherd. A local elder as well as an Apostolic ministry can have a shepherding, or pastoring ministry, just as well as a teaching ministry. Peter wrote, "The elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready

mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. " (I Peter 5:1-4 ASV).

In addition to this charge that was spoken by the Apostle Peter, Paul also gives the following charge to the local elders. Act 20: 17, "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church." Act 20:28, " Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God

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Please state date and time of arrival and numbers of children including ages. I will confirm your reservation so you will know that you have been registered.

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May the Lord bless you all.

Daryl Martz

which He purchased with His own blood.” (ASV)

I find it interesting that in preparation for entering the Promised Land, the Lord first instituted the order of elders. He shared the mantle of authority and anointing of Moses with the elders.

Num 11: 16-17, “And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.” (KJV)

Once again, in preparation to enter the promised coming Kingdom of God, the Lord is establishing the order of elders.

The qualifications for an elder are outlined as follows (1 Timothy 3:1-10 ASV):

“Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach; no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the

faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless.”

Let us follow God’s Divine order into His coming Kingdom.

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Seek the Lord

By Steven Levson

In the Garden of Eden, we hear God's words to Adam. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16, 17). As we know, Adam and Eve did not obey and were therefore cursed and thrown out of the Garden of Eden. The Tree of Life was also in the Garden for Adam and Eve to partake of but they did not seek after the Tree of Life but rather the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in disobedience to God.

Today, we are much like Adam and Eve. The Lord has given us many good things in Him, who is Life, but we partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil instead. In other words, we seek knowledge more than we seek God. Knowledge gives us a sense of self-dependence because it makes us feel we know how to deal with our affairs. The Life of God puts us in dependence upon God because it requires us to live through Christ and not of ourselves. Jesus exhorts us to seek the Kingdom of God and depend upon God in order to have our daily needs met. He tells us in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." He doesn't stop on

the subject there. But we read later, in Matthew 7:7-11, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" We need to have the right focus and God will give us what is right.

I have been reflecting on my life and I have realized that I have often thought more about my problems or the possible

solutions to my problems, than I have thought about the source of my help, which is the Lord. That is not right. We need to seek God first and foremost in our lives. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3).

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David understood the correct order of priorities. He struggled like the rest of us, but God called him a man after his own heart. "And when he had removed him (Saul), he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will" (Acts 13:22). David's heart can be seen in many places, but in relation to seeking God, there are several verses in Psalms. "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4). "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

Since David was a man after God's own heart, it is important that we understand God's heart. There are many places in the Bible that refer to God's intentions, but two that make it clear are in Proverbs 8:17 & 8:35 respectively. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." "For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord."

When God is talking about seeking Him, I don't believe he is talking about taking this lightly. He wants us to seek Him with all that is within us. He wants us to be sincere and not just seek Him out of obligation. This is illustrated in God's words to the Israelites. "But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou

art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them" (Deuteronomy 4:29-31).

We are given the same choice that Adam and Eve had and the Israelites had. We can seek after God and partake of and depend on His life or we can pursue our human reasoning and efforts to deal with our affairs. God lamented in Jeremiah 2:13: "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water" (NKJV).

I pray that God will help us make the right choice. I pray that God will help us seek Him, who is life. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

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