

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

Chapter 8 - Mystery of the Bride

Here Comes the Bride!

She hesitates. All eyes are upon her. We wonder why as we watch her. Her father looks his question lovingly. The groom waits patiently at the altar, dressed in his finest, expectant love in his eyes. The music for her royal progression up the aisle is playing, and yet, she stands there as if fearing and not hearing the promises of glory awaiting her. The question rises further in our hearts, "Why?" Does she love another? From the perspective of my seat, it seems that she herself is imponderably lost in that question and so I offer these words of encouragement and admonition.

The Bride is the spiritual Church of Jesus Christ. I do not refer to any particular denomination or sect. I refer to the mystical Body of Christ, the promised Bride of Jesus, dressed in white by His own bloody sacrifice from the dark pollutions of her nature and deeds. My comments refer to no specific organization or spiritual leader. Since even Hollywood loves a wedding, why does the Bride of Messiah hesitate to meet her Savior? Is she also infected with the serialized and storied disease of this age, an incapability of making a commitment?

Of course, I cannot mean any one person in this observation, but I do mean just about any particular congregation of Christians by self acclamation. I have found that those ready and waiting for their Lord see the hesitancy of others. Perhaps they err at times in judging another's heart too closely, so grant them probable grace. Let genuine concern for one's brothers and sisters in Christ predominate motives and hope that they hear the music of the times we live in. It should be enough to lead them stumbling along the aisle of mortal life towards the paradise of God's promise to His Church -

...the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2. All quotes New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.)

Do you linger at this wedding? Do you know for sure? Self-examination is always wise, and we are given the Word as our mirror for this purpose.

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

The Bible is full of warnings to continue in well doing from one's day of turning towards God in order to inherit the promises reserved for us from the beginning. From Lot's wife who looked back to Sodom to the Apostle John's warnings about not loving the world or the things of the world, the Bible tells sad stories of hardship and loss for those who, having been freed, were lost to self-selected bondage. Yet, God ever holds out to us the Father's embrace and joy at the return of His prodigal sons and daughters.

As long as the music still plays, it is not too late to start down that aisle and meet the Lord of Glory, stand at His side and rejoice in exceeding joy for ever more by receiving the special closeness, the special love He has reserved for His adorned Bride dressed in the whiteness of Jesus' own righteousness. Like the brides of ancient Israel, we have been purchased at great price out of love in expectant hopes to receive our love for Him in return. We show our love for Him by walking in faith with our eyes upon Him alone, who Himself is waiting to come for us.

But time grows short. The music may stop, and the bridal procession may begin Her descent down

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

the aisle of the universe's dimensions to earth. Are you walking in faith to meet our Lord? Or, do you hesitate between lovers? Now as never before our eyes must be single, be focused and filled with the Light of our Savior, or we will never arrive as His Bride.

PLEASE NOTE: I am absolutely sure only of the scriptures quoted. My interpretations are guaranteed to be fallible and incomplete, though they come from watching, meditating and praying about them for a middle aged lifetime. My motivation is to spare others from, or to encourage them through, the trials to come even as I pray to be worthy to escape them myself. My personal bias is to err on the side of material well being in order to advance the spiritual reality to come knowing that in fact any one of us could face death any day of our lives.

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. (2Timothy 3:1-5)

But I am convinced that the Last Days, which started with Jesus' earthly ministry are upon us today for their culmination. The organized churches are in decline or deceived into accepting a substitute material spirituality for the real power of God, having a form of Godliness but denying the power there of. Fulfilling Bible prophecy will not be just words on a page but anguished suffering in the flesh and souls of billions. The memories of these good times will fade quickly. The surfeit and liberties of the present good times will be quickly exchanged for the want and wanton misery of spiritual oppression. Any power other than God's true power will vaporize in the face of the dark kingdom of the devil materializing in our real experience of space-time. Satan and his demons are being forced out of the higher reaches of the heavenly dimensions by the coming of the heavenly host who precede the Bride's descent. This great consuming evil seeks to destroy all humanity – both body and soul – in the last vortex of a gasp on their descent to the dimensional abyss of burning oblivion.

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

"For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." (Revelation 12:7-12)

The Day Approaches

Anyone who has read the New Testament knows that the disciples and the early church believed that Jesus (Yeshua in Hebrew) would return to them soon, in their lifetimes, in order to establish His Kingdom over Israel. Former Zealots who openly rebelled against Rome are numbered in the twelve. There was a general air of expectancy due to the time frame of Daniel's prophecies about the temple, messiah and the prince.

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-11)

The best theories even propose that Judas betrayed his Lord because he felt that it would force Him to fight, to call on His legions of angels in order to instigate the prophesied kingdom restoration. Paul counseled celibacy due to the nearness of the end, and several wrote about the falling away as if it was an expected precursor to Jesus return. Revelation concludes with Jesus saying,

Yes, I am coming quickly. (Revelation 22:20)

Since then, Christians thought the end would come with the turning of the first millennium of church history. Other movements arose regularly throughout documented history before and since then, the last being the Y2K excitement of the late 1990's.

"You can fool me once..." the old saying goes, "but not again!" Popular culture, news media, and the entertainment industry have taken this tune up to cast doubt and derision upon Bible-based Christian faith. And so following the path of least resistance, we have fallen into the Deceiver's dream trap that all things continue as they have since the start of time. Moreover, we have set back the start of time to "billions upon billions of years ago..."

There is no scientific reason that the earth and the universe as we know it should not continue for many, many more years. At least as long as we manage this environment thing! Politically, we have the United Nations claiming to promote peace and economic wellbeing through global commerce and increased education worldwide. The UN was supposedly formed to promote the rational resolution of these regional political problems that we see flashed on the TV news.

What's there to get excited about? Democratic tolerance is growing around the globe, isn't it? "I believe in Christ," you might say. "No one knows the day or the hour any way, so what's wrong with just going about our daily lives as best we can doing the decent thing as good citizens and members of our community?" Nothing. There is nothing wrong with that decision, but there is little right with it either. The question is, "What does God want to do with your life? Have you released it into his care? Do you choose fellowship with God instead of the world?"

"Nothing" is not enough to please God because nothing sourced from our mortal power as persons or united as a people impresses God. Going about our daily lives is not the issue. The crux of the Bible concerns **HOW** we go about our daily lives. This is what makes a human life eternally valuable. In parable after parable, Jesus notes that externally there is no difference between those counted righteous and those who fall short, being those who aren't known by Him. (Matthew 7:21-223) Yes, believers must have a personal relationship with Him, but the only relationship that counts is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which occurs on His terms and not any human's. Proof of the Spirit's presence is best witnessed by the spiritual fruit borne by Him and for Him to His glory. True is for His name sake and not what is done in His name. Those who don't bear fruit have no evidence of their spiritual condition and may be self-deceived. At best they may barely make it into the Kingdom of Heaven by God's grace alone. Entrance selfishly gained comes with no reward.

In God's Image and Likeness

Christians should go to church to encounter the Creator God of Israel. They are more likely to go some place where they encounter a God of their own choosing and creation. If people really thought they would come face-to-face with God, then I think that the most common reactions to meeting God would be variations on fight or flee. Very few would submit and embrace. I unscientifically organize the social group experience of church into four broad categories:

(1-30-2008) Chapter 8, Page 3 of 15

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

1. Power seeking ego trippers: the charismatic guru evangelist and his/her followers who feel and know themselves to be better than the rest, purer than the pure. Visit among them and you will meet many who are miracles in their own minds as if they were the holier than the Holy ONE. Some fringe sects and cults fit here, too.
2. Seeker Friendly/Psycho-Social Congregations appeal to recognized human needs such as a good environment for developing young persons' morality and socialization. It includes, of course, adult socialization along interests, hobby ministries or support needs, find a mate, music ministry, mission-focused entertainment and intellectual exercise. Some of these churches are issue or social class driven: they organize to do good deeds and make a difference in society from a humanitarian or social problem perspective.
3. Traditional denominations based on family, community or ethnic ties including many independent churches and some sects with historical roots.
4. Free associations of sincere people, humbly motivated and relationship/fellowship driven. The levels of formality and professional training vary greatly. This category includes both independent and voluntarily affiliated cross-denominational fellowships, independent congregations, and a wide variety of Bible societies and Bible study groups that are more applied Christian living oriented than academically theological.

One's likelihood of encountering the true God probably increases as you go down the list. When it comes to Bible schools, colleges and seminaries do your own independent research and get to know recent graduates, present students and faculty. I observe the broad paradox that one is less likely to meet God in learning environments more thoroughly infused with advanced theological experts. Again, I draw on my fairly broad, but still limited, experience along with reading what others have written. None of my descriptions are intentionally directed at any one person, group, denomination or clergy member – public or private.

Why Worship?

People also go to church to worship the Deity. But why worship? The answer should be more than just because it is right, or it feels good. Spiritual potential and curiosity lie within our basic nature as created material beings destined to be born of the Spirit. Man and woman were created in the image (the internal structure of being) and after the likeness (the external form) of God. Going to church should be a spiritual return to our source.

Even if one wishes to debate the question of creation, it would be hard to deny humanity's godlike dominion of the earth. The human race has proven its unique position within the natural realm of our global ecosystem by the very threat it currently poses for global destruction and environmental upheaval. More than one method exists to possibly obliterate all life as we currently know it; therefore, even the skeptic concerned with his own life, the survival of the human species or the survival of any other species, must come back to questions of human nature: why we are the way we are. Any answer to that question intrudes into the realms of philosophy and theology.

The Bible provides keys to understanding human nature. Out of that understanding, it is possible to discern God's purpose. Along with the questions concerning immortality, the process involves the comparison of human nature with God's, for people are similar but different from God - both in spirit and in bodily form or likeness.

Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'. . . And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)

Jesus stated that there is no sex in the resurrection, which is to say that there is no gender in the spiritual dimension. (Matthew 22:23-32) All men and women are alike in that each gender was created in the "image" of God: like God, both genders have a spirit aspect of being. Males and

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

females receive the same spiritual potential at birth, the same spirit of man, which is their natural heritage as descendants of Adam.

The spirit of man is the spirit of the freely chosen knowledge of good and evil - unlike God's Spirit which (or Who) is holy and only good. God is cognizant of and hates evil, but He does not know it from personal experience or choice. Man does. He is by nature of his being, personally acquainted with good and evil. Without God, they naturally mix in humankind with no escape from either aspect: every good has its evil and every evil its good.

Out of this spiritual stew, man chooses the steps of his life. Even if we don't choose, even if we just "do what comes naturally," we have made a choice. This spirit of material and intellectual creativity derived from free choice is how man (as a species, both male and female) was created in the "image" of God as opposed to "likeness" which refers to exterior form.

Males and females are different in the flesh, both from each other and from God. In our "likeness" each individual male or female is sexually incomplete, being incapable of generating life on our own. God, however, is perfectly complete in one, without sexual dimorphism. This is why the verses seem to repeat themselves concerning the creation of man after God's image, yet note a difference by contrasting man's sexual dissimilarity from God in likeness. By design humans come in two gender variations of general likeness to God. God is neither gender since He is the source of both: God encompasses both sexes.

The English language has several built-in sexual biases as well as the inherent conceptual limitations found in any human tongue. In attempting to describe God's sexual nature, English has communicated its male bias in that God has come to us in the traditionally exclusive likeness of Father. Most languages lack adequate terms or grammatical structures to clearly describe God's inclusive and encompassing sexual nature from a natural perspective as revealed in the physical type. Adequate communication is all the more difficult because God's nature is essentially supernatural and alien to the naturally materialistic world with its native, self-descriptive languages. About the best I can express it is to say that God is both male and female and yet is neither, both sexes but neither. God is in essence the source of all, being Light, Life and Love, and Source is the philosophical sense of "Father."

In most cultures, the traditional biologically rooted male role is one of works. Men perform functional tasks for the purpose of physical survival. A male works to survive. This bias is manifested in the belief that a man has a professional (job task) calling which comes first in his life priorities. A male's biological urges drive him to procreate in the extension of his ego: it is another form of self-preservation even as it equally contributes toward the survival of the species.

Competition in the market place and the acquisition of social and/or economic power are culturally ingrained methods towards obtaining necessary access to desirable females for the purpose of procreation and the continuance of the ego or name. Childrearing usually comes in as poor second to a man's job: it being the necessary aftermath following the success of the acts of procreation and birth.

The biologically rooted, traditional female role is that of mother. She creates the nurturing environment of the home, bears the children, and is first, and principally, responsible for their care. Her skill, her calling, her work or profession, revolves around the home and care of the children until they "leave the nest." This is her contribution to the survival of the species and the preservation and extension of her personal ego-identity. These are her works.

But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity. (I Timothy 2:15)

Such a limited image of God as either male or female does Him disservice because His very nature is one of being, of grace. His priorities are inverted from all mortal values exhibited in the traditional sexual roles. God is unconcerned with self-preservation and survival because He is immortal and total. God exists independent of the universe and mankind, both of which were

(1-30-2008) Chapter 8, Page 5 of 15

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

created by Him and so are therefore less than Him. Because He exists the way He does, God works through the agency of His Spirit. Those works are described in part by the natural and supernatural laws of the universe. There is no division of spiritual truth from physical science.

Heaven is real, but it is the realm beyond the speed of light. Light is the border between the phenomenal universe (or dimension) and the metaphysical one; therefore, God is described as being Light. From Einstein's observations to the present visions of quantum mechanics, we know that an existence beyond the speed of light is eternal and omnipresent as well as being of incredible power beyond calculation.

Man grows spiritually towards the maturity of God, who is both sexes but neither, in the performance of alternating roles identified symbolically with either sex's biological and/or social function in the human experience. This multiplicity of spiritual roles to express God's love is expounded in Paul's writings about the mysteries of the Church and the Body.

Our Mother, the Church

The Church's most important role in God's order of things is to provide a social environment protective of and conducive to spiritual growth. The Congregation or Church in the Wilderness was created as the nation of Israel by the Covenant given at Mount Sinai. (Acts 7:38) The New Testament Assembly was created in Jerusalem with the Father's acceptance of Jesus' (Yeshua's) sacrifice. Thus, Mount Zion and Jerusalem poetically refer to the Church even as Mount Sinai, or Horeb, poetically refers to the mortal nation of Israel. The organizing purpose of both was to conform or reform human beings towards the maturely complete image and likeness of God through submission to His will together with the indwelling of His Spirit.

...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the Body. (Ephesians 5:21-22 Capitalization is mine.)

Jesus/Yeshua is the Head of each family of believers (who truly experience His indwelling Spirit) in the same manner as a biblical husband is to his bride, his wife. This is the proper role for the One who has revealed the Father to us: only the Son is qualified to be our father, husband, head. (See John 14:6-9.) Therefore, we have no "fathers" or priests other than Jesus, to Whom we are organically joined as ONE by faith in His life, death and resurrection, which removes the obstacles that human nature and willful sin impose between us and God.

The Holy Spirit cannot and will not dwell within an unholy, sinful temple nonconforming to the definition of righteous grace, the joyful love of God. The temple of the human body must first be purified, purged of sin spiritually, before the Spirit indwells the believer. An honest spiritual purging of sin automatically generates a change in physical behavior as well. More changes in thought and behavior come when we make more room in our lives for the Spirit to dwell. The Spirit of Christ, the Creator God of Israel, only comes through faith in His atoning sacrifice and power to impart eternal life in an eternal, metaphysical body. They are inseparably ONE – including the Father, and the believer becomes ONE with them. Collectively, the ONES indwelt of the Spirit make up the ONE Body of the spiritual Church, the Mother of us all.

Yet the number of the sons of Israel
Will be like the sand of the sea,
Which cannot be measured or numbered;

And in the place
Where it is said to them,
"You are not My people,"
It will be said to them,
"You are the sons of the living God." (Hosea 1:10)

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. (Matthew 23:9)

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (I Timothy 2:5)

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. (Galatians 4:26)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:21-27)

Faithful pastors and prophets who preach and teach the hard correction of the Father's Word or law. The Church as Bride completes the "family" dimension to this analogy, but she teaches with a different approach and manner that is more than simple instruction and correction. (Revelation 19:7; Proverbs 1:8) As submissive Wife, she is our Spiritual Mother, and the bosom of fellowship in local assembly is meant to reveal the "feminine" or "motherly" attributes of God's great loving nature, as well as being a forum for teaching and correction. True fellowship protects and cares for all of God's children until they reach the full maturity of the Resurrected Son of God.

...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:12-13)

...concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 1:3-4)

Each converted person (regardless of sex, race, or age) is a spiritual son, as sons we also have the other potential male roles to play as husbands and fathers. The traditional male functions of provision and protection are important aspects of nurture, but they are arm's length expressions of vital care.

Feminine nurturing involves close contact in the mother's loving embrace and tender nourishment, the provider of all our infant needs even as God provides all as El Shaddai, which to some extent means literally the "God of my Breasts." Our submission to this more engaged and intimate bond of nurturing love is expressed in the husband's sacrifice, his giving up of himself, the old ego, in sacrifice.

This is what we are called to do for each other: to lay our lives down for our friends, our fellow man, and our neighbor. This can only be done effectively one at a time, for a specific person, according to his/her real needs. It is not a vain publicity act of martyrdom for the real or imagined needs of a nondescript mass of humanity. This particularization of true, Godly sacrifice - person by person, situation by situation - is the door, the way for each of us to submit.

Our sacrifices must be Godly: they must be of acceptable substance and manner. We cannot determine by our own will what is effectual and proper, as did the biblical examples of wrong religious leadership practice: Cain (Genesis 4:4-7), Korah (Numbers 16), and Aaron's sons (Nadab and Abihu, Leviticus 10).

Human nature will try to look good to itself without true sacrifice of substance. It does this by choosing how and in what form a sacrifice will be made in order to outwardly show to one's

(1-30-2008) Chapter 8, Page 7 of 15

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

self its seeming goodness to others, or at least communicate that it is not as bad as "others." This was the error of the Pharisees: though their form was correct, their substance was hollow, being vain human blowings of the wind instead of the still hovering of God's creating Spirit.

"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:20-24)

Therefore, Jesus taught that God is served "in spirit" (Godly substance, by holy power) and in "truth" (biblical form). We sacrifice the sacrifices that God allows or puts in our paths of life, in the manner His teaching commands. Only in this way is love spread. God calls us to a living sacrifice and not to an actual surrender of biological life. It is our time and the commitment of heart, which are at stake, rather than our blood. In humbly helping one another, true disciples of Jesus sacrifice pride. In facing the certainty of making mistakes and in exposing our own weaknesses and imperfections, the believer more completely sacrifices his or her pride. He risks exposing the not quite dead enough old man even as we give opportunity for the new to manifest itself in living action.

It is only by dying to the old ego - the ego we have always known, the one you and I grew up with, and yes the one we tend to fall back on when times get rough - that the new man of the Spirit can live. The old man quickens when we fear instead of waiting in patient faith for God. It is in faith that the living God is more real than the old dying ego that is silenced. It is in the humble dependence of waiting for God to act in the birth or work of the new man, the received Holy Spirit that we submit.

This is the mechanism of submission, the mode of conforming to God's will. We do not and cannot in essence change ourselves. Certain externals may be modified and psychological problems can be alleviated, but our human nature cannot be eradicated. Our identities can be modified, but in some manner they continue, extended from the past into the now. Instead, we must mortify our egos, the identities we have known so that the ego, which each has considered "I", is buried in the sacrificial silence of humbled emptiness. It is only out of the quiet of a deathlike rest that God may be born in a human heart, in human consciousness. Subsequently, we yield our mortal members so that He may act presently in this world through them.

This is the manner of our journey toward the perfection of God's fullness. We grow in God by serving others, and by being used of Him. Thereby, to others we become His face of mercy, His hands of kindness and power. In so doing, it seems that we become more like God, but in reality, what happens is that God is simply more present within us. We do not change the old ego: we sacrifice it in the baptism of repentance. Then, God replaces it with His own: the Holy Spirit is our new ego-identity, and Who is the Holy Spirit but the One God? And so in God we discover our true eternal selves, the same but different.

This is the only way because only God is capable and desirous of supplying completely our every need. He fulfills each sex's symbolic functions spiritually as ONE even though these functions appear differentiated and separated in the human population. He manifests Himself to us as if through many persons of both genders, each performing various spiritual functions typically associated with male and female.

Herein lies the flexible beauty of God's spiritual adaptability. Within the community of faith, each member will perform any number of various roles in supplying the changing needs of another

(1-30-2008) Chapter 8, Page 8 of 15

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

person or of the group. He or she is God's instrument in so doing. As each individual grows in unity with the community, we together grow corporately towards the ultimate unity of God. However, this spiritual growth is not only fostered by the retention of the sexual differentiation in the flesh, it is perfected in doing so.

Likewise, each individual retains his or her distinct and unique personal identity. God granted man the freedom to choose and the capacity to create that we might be uniquely creative in our expression of love, joy, and every good thing. Each of us is one of a kind even as we are one in God. The clear retention and practice of sexual differentiation in mortal life is part of maintaining the natural balance necessary for biological existence. This coherent, life giving and sustaining balance in the natural realm also preserves a clear purity of spiritual symbol in the sacred sexual teaching mystery.

God is life, and Godly unity yields life. In the broadest and most elemental sense, God is the source of all power as He is the source of all life. Satan is the consumption of all material power – both physical and spiritual. The physical power may be chemical, electromagnetic or nuclear. The material spiritual power is that spiritual force that underpins the physical universe, merged with light speed as the fifth dimensional boundary-no man's land between the physical and metaphysical realms of the universe. It is the yin-yang breath of life with parallel analogs actual and symbolic in oxygen-breath-blood-water and in electromagnetic energy found in living nervous systems as well as the bendingly malleable digital light energy dynamic that forms the web of space-time as more fully discussed in my book, **digital spirituality**.

Any power seemingly granted by Satan is a deception. Satan is a spiritual black hole. He is an empty, multidimensional conduit that must steal its energy from others. He Often he does this by manipulating the victim's own life force through an accelerated consumption of what was his birthright gift from God – the breath of life mind image. Animals are also infused with the breath of life, which is why they have served as acceptable sacrifices since the dawn of time. Without mind, animals are innocent, pure from sin and therefore acceptable. Human sin short-circuits our natural life force. With Satan's deceptive power schemes involved, it is easy for a person to burn his life force at both ends and implode.

Two symptoms evidence this process of implosion: the loss of individual identity or radical psychospiritual change to the dark and a combination of unnatural physical strength in the hidden presence of lost health. The devotees of darkness are left starving for life, so they become ravenous in their spiritual feeding – off their own bodies or those of others. Satan's servants burn their natural lifespan in a few years unless they can find victims willing and unwilling to use as spiritual life force batteries to feed their metaphysical habit. In order to stave off their demise, the slaves of darkness seek victims to their life force through various rituals of sacrifice that they can throw into the yawning chasm of Satan's consuming vacuum vortex.

As God grants spiritual life through His covenant of grace, He binds us to Himself (as Husband to Wife). By parallel analogy, sexual union binds husband and wife within the human covenant bond of marriage. Both covenant unions yield life: the former through the supernatural spiritual operation of God's covenant promises of salvation and the latter by the natural biological functions of conception, gestation and birth. Furthermore, spiritual life is enhanced by living in an environment inclined towards physical life and goodness, repellant of negativism, egotism, greed, pride, fear, hate, vengeance, sickness and death.

These principles do not necessitate stagnation or fixation in culturally perceived gender roles because they find their foundation in biological sex. Neither do they enter literally into the issues of homosexuality, abortion and/or birth control; however, the "God is Life" principle operates logically within the context of those issues.

Every act and every relationship that we enter into will trend more towards life or death.

It is not so much whether a particular thought, act or relationship is white or black in itself. Each thought and deed are forces with spiritual orientation because force is power with direction. The

(1-30-2008) Chapter 8, Page 9 of 15

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

source of power determines the direction of its ultimate purpose or fruit as bent by the vector of human will or power of decision. Humanly generated, natural power – physical, mental, psychological, borrowed or spiritual – will only end in the oblivion of death, the null cancellation of light and dark, good and evil of the life force. How life is experienced in the material interim is another matter.

Because life as really lived is a messy affair, any one aspect of it will exhibit some gradual degree of gray between the two extremes. More important than the particular is the net whole and its direction of movement: where it leads to and what. Something is good if it trends to life, learning, and growth towards God. Something is evil if it trends toward death, stagnation, and withering away from God. The deception is that a withering from the God greater than all, usually masquerades as a growth towards the perfection of an idolatrous image of god or ideal, created by man. Most idolatry is self-created and self-imposed in accordance with the creative capacity of human imagination, being the exercise of how people are made in God's image.

Therefore, the key to lasting success in life is to know the source of your power. If it is the Holy Spirit gift and indwelling presence of God, then the ultimate fruits are eternally good, congruent with God's love and purpose and abound towards life mortal and immortal. If it is a consciously chosen, decent life based on balancing the natural spiritual and socio-psychological forces of temporal reality, then one may have a successful career and family life but be absent from eternity in God's presence.

In summary then, these biblical mysteries of the Church or Body declare:

THE FOUNDATIONAL PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP IS TO PROVIDE A NURTURING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE FAITHFUL TO GROW IN GOD'S TRUE LOVE REVEALED IN THE COLLECTIVE FORGIVENESS AND ACCEPTANCE OF EACH INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT COMMUNITY.

Consciously structuring the assembly to fulfill the role of being each and everyone's spiritual mother as well as father facilitate this purpose. Opportunity must be given for the symbolic and (spiritually) real feminine roles to do their nurturing work. At any one moment there are numerous needs and multiple suppliers of those needs. Both must have occasion, a time and place, to operate as God's instruments.

Individually we are each adopted sons (the biblical parlance for "children") of the collective mother, who is made up of a community of sons, so we are each a part of the corporate mother even as we are singly a whole person who is heir to God. Even as the wife is one with her husband biblically, so the fellowship we receive through our association with others in the Holy Spirit is in fact a relationship with the Father and the Son.

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1John 1:3)

For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother. (Matthew 12:50)

The "us" mentioned in the above quote compose the Spiritual Body of Christ/Messiah. It is through the medium of fellowship that God cares for and nurtures His children. The fellowship we experience in the assembly comes from our personal contact with the converted members of a local congregation.

All doctrinal teaching - the various aspects of spiritual and religious knowledge - should be founded on and subordinate to love and mercy, which are grace, because love edifies and heals while knowledge lifts up in pride to divide. The fractured state of the Christian religion is evidence of doctrine's long history of precedence and predominance over an active love founded on actively functional forgiveness. It is through forgiving fellowship that we experience the truth of God's grace

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

and the wonders of His love. It is in the fellowship of assembly that we learn to rejoice, to praise, and to grow in the knowledge of the written Word so as to grow into conformity with God's will. Ideally, it is through the loving fellowship with many saints, with many members of His Body that we approach a fuller knowledge of the Father and the Son.

Contrary to the revelations of these mysteries, most religious groups are structured to promulgate their particular doctrine or version of the gospel. They seek to sustain themselves through growth in membership, management of financial and real property assets and monetary gifts. Membership is defined and identified by a person's acceptance of a doctrinal creed, statement or declaration of faith. Too few dedicated Christians (those serious about biblical teaching) give anything other than lip service to the concept of a spiritual unity of all believers. American culture puts tolerance on the altar of public acceptance, but it does so at the expense of one's individual life commitment to the lordship of God.

Our economic system also encourages this ethic because it is a profitable one. Prosperity from trade in goods and services is popularly accepted as the solution to most social problems. This lie from the enemies of God is given more than lip service by most Christians: their actions are predicated on its accepted truth. Forgetting Scripture, they accept an inversion of truth as truth. Prosperity does not cause righteousness: righteousness leads to blessings that may include prosperity. Righteous living by one person, by one family can ignite a virtuous chain reaction of blessed society, which includes an increase in material abundance. This living law of life is expressed covenantally to Israel as they are about to become a settled society:

"In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'

"But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. " (Deuteronomy 8:16-18)

A biblically enlightened look at history plainly shows that democratic capitalism or western civilization is the sociocultural descendant of Babylonian economics and Roman law with an overlay of "Judeo-Christian" ethics. Consequently, our society sustains itself by straddling the fence between God and Mammon: between a paying of superficial tribute to spiritual values in order to facilitate social stability and a self-reliant striving to survive by perpetuating mortal life through material exchange. Under the best conditions, true spirituality is honored and tolerated in a secular society. Usually, society feels threatened by the living presence of true spiritual power and seeks to suppress it because humanity loves darkness rather than light, their deeds being evil. (John 3:19)

Socioculturally, western civilization has embraced much from Christian morality and ethics. The consequences have been relative liberty, tolerance of other faiths, economic growth and political stability. But our secular world is embarrassed by Jesus and His gospel truth as well as being disenchanted with the various churches and their corrupt leaders. Admittedly, the world overlooks most of the honest servants of Christ and puts the failures on center stage to undermine Godly faith, truth, justice and the power of divine love. Eternal life related to spiritual values is not a value sought after sufficiently in western thinking to inspire humble repentance and change of spiritual power source. The mythical lie so popular around the globe is that humans already possess eternal life through an immortal soul or reincarnation. This is a broadly accepted possibility that one should not rule out. The breadth of these lying dogmas gives room for one to do as he or she wishes in the meantime. To anyone who has honestly and totally dedicated himself to Jesus/Yeshua as his personal Savior, this American solution is dangerously inadequate. The Bible warns against loving the "world" or trying to hold both God and Mammon in one heart.

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (1John 2:15)

(1-30-2008) Chapter 8, Page 11 of 15

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24).

The principles of private property and economic freedom must subordinate to the gospel. The only answer that will permanently work in solving the world's problem is the inward birth of Jesus Christ and the outward conquest of Yeshua the Messiah. The birth of the new man identity powered by the Holy Spirit accepts Jesus as ONE's personal ruler Savior. The soon coming conquering King Yeshua will not only restore Israel but destroy the institutional evils of this age and the powers behind it – Satan's kingdom of darkness.

Our King has overcome the world, and the survival of humanity is in His hands - whether it come from massive worldwide revival or from His literal return and political intervention in human affairs as King of Kings, sword in hand and an army of fiery angels at His side. The eventuality is certain for each of us as well as for the world system as a whole. One's daily decisions exercised in faith determine whether he or she meets Jesus the Righteous Judge or Jesus the Loving Husband. Would you rather be overcome by His sword or overcome by His Grace?

How Bias Limits Understanding

In religious organizations, an unbalanced male bias reveals itself in projecting the primary purpose of a church as being a "work for God" – preaching the gospel or doing good deeds in His name. In this vision, there is a stated or unstated separation between a dominant ministry and a passive lay membership in which the lay members exist to support the ministry's evangelistic effort. The congregation is used as a narrowly functioning tool: it is a means to the end of magnifying a single agency (usually a personality) of evangelism rather than to multiply evangelists.

Under such an administration, lay people conceive of and act as if their primary purpose in life is to fulfill some "Great Commission" by preaching the gospel to the world through the professional efforts of another, their spiritual leader, hero or star. Generally, they just supply the money and/or prayers - money being the most critical from the organization's survival perspective. Even most prayers are for financial or other material support.

In this view, Jesus' command to Peter to "feed my sheep" - the spiritual growth of the membership - is subordinated to the militant conquest of the secular world of non-believers. Such an approach is unscriptural and self-limiting – even when it comes to spreading the gospel. The Church is a Mother (hardly male) with hundreds of thousands of spiritual "sons" to care for. This Mother's primary purpose is to see that each of Her "sons" grows towards the maturity of Christ. As each one grows closer in his walk of discipleship to the Great Teacher, (s)he in turn will become a Light to the non-believers. It is to this Light of Love that people are drawn by their mortal needs. It is the very demonstrable certainty of death and/or the pains and sorrows of daily life that motivate men to turn to the Light.

Death is contrasted with Life. Life is equated with peace and productive rest in this dimension as the precursors of eternity. The gospel is that eternity can be entered through the door of faith in the one and true Savior. Collectively, each assembly of believers should be a Mother, yet this is but one of our shared roles in the Body. When we (as individual males or females) become the "sons" of God through faith in Jesus/Yeshua, we become sons of the Church. We are also disciples of the Teacher. A disciple is a student who learns by teaching others.

In this manner we answer our personal calling from Messiah and so do God's Work as He places us in the Body. Through the individual practice of faith in collective fellowship, we cease to be just individuals but become members, parts, of a much larger and more complex whole.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons... For even as the Body (cap. mine throughout) is

(1-30-2008) Chapter 8, Page 12 of 15

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

one and yet has many members, and all the members of the Body though they are many, are one Body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the Body is not one member, but many." (1Corinthians 12:4-14 Read the whole chapter.)

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory..." (Hebrews 2:10).

God produces fruit from the work of the entire Body – not from just a few of her honored parts. No one of us knows all, nor does (s)he fully by himself or herself provide all of the spiritual needs of another, much less answer meaningfully the many pleas for help and love that cry out from a lonely, painfully dying world. God is bigger than any human is, vaster than any religious organization, and grander than all of humankind.

Fortunately, spiritual "sons" of the Church may be male or female. Regardless of whether sexuality and/or gender differences come about by divine plan or by genetic and social development, men and women are spiritually equal in calling and responsibility to God. Physical differences are valid considerations in determining marital roles, but women and men, are equally answerable to the spiritual calling of active discipleship.

The New Testament Church owed much to the active discipleship of its women believers. They may not have publicly spoken in church meetings, but I get the impression that many, if not most, of the early church's members were recruited by female believers. Because of fleshly limitations, no one gender can fully express the unlimited capacity of God's Love.

The natural human family provides a safe environment where children can survive as they learn what life is all about. The family is a social structure that teaches by its normal day-to-day existence and function, a portion of God's plan for mankind - His special spiritual relationship with each person. Of course, if children don't survive physically, they won't get the chance in this life to grow spiritually either.

Greater Works than These

Life is full of suffering. Jesus learned by suffering. (Hebrews 2:9, 18; 5:8) We should also learn, for we do suffer. No matter the sin or problem, self-inflicted or victim of another's sin. Regardless of cause, we all need aid sometime.

There is a lesson here for the congregations of God. If we cannot help our fellow brothers in the Faith as we travel on this Path of Love and Light, we have no business calling ourselves "of God." We are called to be willing servants, spiritually enabled to help others at God's beckoning. True, discernment is required because needy humans and insatiable fallen angels also beckon; actually, they beg from us so loudly that the voice of God is often drowned out. When the opportunity is not from God, the believer is drained of life force because the spiritual power is sucked out of him instead of coming from God through the Holy Spirit.

Being the ever ready Good Samaritan is an unreachable ideal, I know, but realistically we are presented with many occasions where humble acceptance of the opportunity to be used by God in assisting another is declined. We are not called to provide for others out of our own abundance but out of God's: if He has provided the means to respond and the spiritual dynamic is favorable, then it is our joyful duty to serve as His face and hands, His agency of grace and blessing. A mystic sort of helplessness occurs when God is at work through us, through the fellowship: we feel as if we did nothing, which is true. God acted through us.

For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me...

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

Truly, I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me. (Matthew 25:35-36, 40)

The Mother Church should and can be a helpful, supportive source for necessary aid. Often, the kind support needed is not indoctrination, punishment or a lesson, but the pure support of merciful love - the practical things one gets at home as a child: food, shelter, clothes and understanding.

There is always the chance that if one particular church doesn't help someone in need, that soul may not come to conversion or mature to active discipleship. A stumbling block was placed in his path, for without the nurturing love of the Mother Church, God's sons are slow to effectively answer their Father's call to service. Thankfully, God is quite adept at working around human failings.

One likely consequence of any particular church's lack of "mothering" is that the person who needs help will find it elsewhere. A person's unmet need will often drive him or her to search for satisfaction from another group such as provided by street gangs. If your church or religious organization is not providing a safe, nurturing spiritual home for its members, prospective members and strangers, then its effectiveness will ever be limited. Remember, the "Body of God" operates through many "churches."

A congregation is limited only by itself as a result of its philosophy and actions. God is unlimited, promising unlimited power to those who live in His Will to perform His Will. If the fellowship of a church does not support and comfort in loving forgiveness each of those whom God brings to it, then it has limited for itself the number of opportunities to serve Him. It became limited because its lack of concern has reduced both the number of workers and the number of opportunities to serve.

The result is a restriction of Messiah through the restriction of His Body. His chosen way to work is through the imperfect, mortal members in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells. This is the execution of His promise to do greater works after His death. (See John 14 & 15; especially 14:12.)

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (Luke 10:2)

Don't be personally lulled into complacency. Don't limit or place a hedge about the Holy Spirit at Work. Don't limit yourself by opting to be a "Gospel Employer" - one who hires others to fulfill his personal responsibility to and calling from God. Each alone will be judged by THE Judge; therefore, be careful to follow the Bible's advice of not judging others - including yourself. There are different qualities of works. There are even different kinds of works, each with a different way of measuring its quality:

...each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. (1Corinthians 3:13-14; read 1-17)

The general assembly of all believers, our Spiritual Mother, is ideally big enough to care for all because there are no limits to who may become a member. The success of any one group of people organized as a church will be measured by how close it can come to reflecting the spiritual, nurturing love of the Mother Church in its structure and practice, in its bones and heart.

If the bones and heart of a church are right, God will cause the masses of muscles by which He works to grow. Each muscle grows and/or changes one cell at a time. Through exercise, each divides and then divides again unendingly in the geometric growth cycle of multiplication instead of arithmetic addition.

Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6)

The Body of the LORD, His Wife, is to be the Mother of MANY WORKS done by MANY "SONS." This is the secret of discipleship, the true fulfillment of Matthew 28:18-20:

(1-30-2008) Chapter 8, Page 14 of 15

Mission of ONE

Unleashing the Power of God in the Twenty-first Century

Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.