

The Church Age to the Bride's Age

A Time of Transition

By Michael Clark and George Davis

There is something new in the wind of the Spirit. We have a sense that what God is doing is so different that even the model found in the book of Acts pales by comparison. He is the God that makes all things new and says that the old things are passing away. He has always done something new in each age of His creation and man has never been able to out-guess Him.

Here lies the trouble. Man is not willing to wait in God's rest for the Lord to do the work. He looks at what God has done in ages past and says along with David, "The Philistines brought in the ark into Israel miraculously with an old ox cart drawn by two milk cows, leaving their calves behind. That is it! We will build a NEW ox cart!" So off he goes with hammer and nails and gets some beasts of burden and hires priests to make it all work. Everything is fine until somebody puts out their carnal hand to steady the thing he has built and something dies. Oxen, no matter how strong they are and how well tended, always stumble. As it was with Elisha, God would rather we use the wood of the old cart to offer sacrifice of the oxen to Him than use them to try and make something happen in our own strength. Eventually, if God has not planted the tree, it all dies anyway. All that is left is another empty and meaningless denomination, built of wood, hay and stubble. Movements come and movements go, but like an old dead snag, denominations seem to last forever.

In 1994, I, Michael, heard the Spirit say that we are leaving the church age and entering the Bride's age. I have been prayerfully waiting for the last nine years for the Lord to show me what that means. Now, George and I are finding others that have heard the same thing. What is a bride? What does she do? She makes herself ready for the Bridegroom (see Revelation 19:7).

Once a young girl was telling a friend of ours what a wonderful pastor she had in the church she got saved in. With great insight this brother asked her a simple question, "When you get married are you going to leave the altar and go on your honeymoon with the best man or your new husband?" So many are like that young girl. They fall in love with Jesus and then another man, or even a group of people, comes along and takes their attention away from the Bridegroom. This is why we have so many beat-up and

hurting Christians in Christendom today. His sheep hardly know His voice, because they are following men who come into the sheepfold by another way (Jesus is the door) to make disciples after themselves (see Acts 20:29-31). We see the damage all around us. The fancier their buildings get and the bigger their organizations, the more damage they do to His bride in His name.

A true bride has her whole heart set on one person, her bridegroom, and nothing else. He is her first awaking thought and the last one when she falls asleep. He becomes her whole life and the more they live together the more they become like one another. She is transformed into His very essence as she beholds him. Have you ever noticed that folks who have been married a long time even start to look alike? The two actually become one flesh. This is what Paul was trying to teach in his letter to the Ephesians.

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:23-32, NKJV).

Notice the last verse. Paul is speaking about Christ and the church, using marriage as a parable. Now, starting back at the top with verse twenty-three: the ONE who is the head of the Church is Jesus, not another member of His body. He is her Savior. I have never seen a minister in the church with the scars of crucifixion in his body. Jesus bought each one of us to Himself with a terrible price. No mere man has ever paid such a price as this Spotless Lamb of God.

Paul goes on to say that the Lamb's wife should be subject to her own Husband, not some other woman's husband. Since women so often leave off obeying their OWN

husbands to be under the covering of a pastor in the name of religion, and that is one of the main reasons why men in the world hate what we call "church." Their brides have been stolen away by another

The church, Jesus' bride, is to be subject to Him alone in everything, not some hireling. What we have seen in the natural is also true in the spiritual. Instead of "the Head of every man is Christ," we have men seeking the covering and headship of a mere man and giving the obedience that belongs to HIS husband over to another man or woman. It is all perverse and upside-down.

So what kind of a Husband do we, the church, have? He loves us and gives Himself totally to us. Jesus cleanses and washes us by His rhema (personally spoken) words, not just the words in the Bible. His speaking to her is recorded from the first words in Genesis to the last words in Revelation, and HE *is still speaking*, for He is the Word, not the history. He has begged her to listen to His voice over and over, "[Let him who has ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.](#)" It is in listening to His voice and obeying that we are washed clean of the filth of the world, yet how many of us hear His voice when He calls to us as His sheep? How many of us are told not to rely on that Voice, but submit to our church leaders in all things? Like it was with Hosea, so it is today. Jesus' bride has many suitors.

Jesus' goal is to make the bride holy and blameless in His own image. He has held nothing back to accomplish this task, giving up even His own life and blood and sending forth His Spirit to draw her totally to Himself. Why? So she could run off with another and be ruled over by her idolatrous lovers? So she could be drawn away from her devotion to Him by doctrines of demons (see Revelation chapters two and three)? No, we are called to be members of His body, His flesh, and His bone with Him as our rightful Head, but the church of today is just as far from that as Israel was 2000 years ago. We have lots of denominations, sects and church buildings, lots of devotees to religion in a "body" that has heads multiplying like a mythical Hydra, but finding a bride lovingly devoted to Him is a rare thing.

We are to look unto Jesus who is not only the author, but the finisher of our faith (see Hebrews 12:2-3). We are called to be in love with Him alone. This is why He said, "Call no man Father, Rabbi (pastor) or Teacher." This is why He said that those who do the will of His Father are His mother, brother and sister. Yes, body life is important, but it

only works when men and women are totally given over to following the ONE Head in the Spirit as true members of His body. It is in this that scripture is fulfilled, "[Behold, the bride has made herself ready.](#)"

Ezekiel Chapter Thirty-seven and Body Life

Body life is the form which God uses to do the work within each of the members. The joint is where the supply comes from. Paul wrote, "...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16, NKJV). The body of Christ is a vessel that He uses to mature each member in His love. Body life is NOT the goal. Its members being made into the image of Jesus, his fellow sons of the Father. That is what the bride is all about.

As a young boy, I, Michael, can remember sitting in my grandfather's living room with my parents, aunts, uncles and cousins singing the old campfire songs while my dad's younger brother played the guitar. One of the songs was "Dem Bones." It was an old "negro spiritual" and I liked it because of the anatomy lesson in it, "da toe bone connected to da foot bone. Da foot bone connected to da ankle bone. . ." Most Christians have read this chapter in Ezekiel about the valley of dry bones, but how did they get that way? It is preceded by Ezekiel chapters 34-36. In chapter thirty-four we read:

[Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock. Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. And they were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill, and My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth; and there was no one to search or seek for them.'](#)" (Ezekiel 34:2-6, NASB).

Jeremiah also saw it:

For thus says the LORD: "Your affliction is incurable, Your wound is severe. There is no one to plead your cause, That you may be bound up; You have no healing medicines. All your lovers have forgotten you; They do not seek you; For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, With the chastisement of a cruel one, For the multitude of your iniquities, Because your sins have increased. Why do you cry about your affliction? Your sorrow is incurable. Because of the multitude of your iniquities, Because your sins have increased, I have done these things to you. Therefore all those who devour you shall be devoured; And all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; Those who plunder you shall become plunder, And all who prey upon you I will make a prey. (Jeremiah 30:12-16, NKJV).

Because of the fallen and cold state of the church, many members are lying about in a terrible wilderness, cut off from the other members and drying up. Even in churches they are not connected to one another the way the members of a body are. Instead they are ravaged by their "shepherds" and kept from any intimate connected-ness.

In our own physical bodies, our members do not come together once or twice a week for just two hours for nourishment and support. If they did they would die in short order and start to stink. Soon gangrene would set in and kill the whole body. We have found that there are members of the Body of Christ all over this spiritual wilderness we know as the world system. They write to us daily seeking a connection, even if it is only through a letter or email for a brief time. Just as Ezekiel saw the valley of dry bones dismembered and scattered about in disarray, we wait for the Spirit to blow upon us and for God to bring us together, bone to his bone, in His time and in His order.

God has placed George and I together and the supply of the Spirit in this season has been wonderful. But there are many whose bones have not yet found that kind of connection that brings the flow of heavenly life. We are praying that others will be joined together to the Head with us in the coming days ahead, but WE are not trying to build anything. We wait on the Master Builder in all things. It seems that as it was with Solomon's temple, the stones and timbers are being cut and shaped away from Mount Zion, the place of their final assembly.

Assembling Together

Just coming together and living together is not all it takes, either. Our life source must be the Spirit of Christ. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse." (1 Corinthians 11:17, NKJV). The Corinthians fell behind none of the other churches when it came to having the manifestation of spiritual gifts, but that is not enough. Carnal man can use the spiritual gifts given him for his own gain that he might exalt HIS member over the other members. This is what all of First Corinthians was written to address

It takes bones that are very dry (see Ezekiel 47:2) to come together without any agenda of their own to make this work. A bone may be dry to the touch, but the marrow in the bone must also be dry for the life is in the blood and the blood is made in the marrow. We must be dead to ourselves, all our own agendas and our former life source. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12, NKJV).

The body that the Spirit is calling together only has ONE agenda and that is the purpose of its Head, Jesus Christ, motivated by His great agape love. We are called to be one new man in Him, neither Jew nor Gentile, bond man nor free, male nor female. As long as we think in the carnal, "What is in it for me?", mindset of the world, the body will never be one. In the Spirit we are all on a common plane, but in the flesh there is always hierarchy, posturing over one another and strife.

Conclusion

Being part of a body that God has joined together is a wonderful thing. George and I got a taste of it in the early 70's and it has ruined us for playing church, i.e., Sunday religion. I, Michael, lived, ate, worshipped, worked, ministered and served with my whole heart as we lived in close proximity with a group of Jesus' People in the Pacific Northwest. We ministered (served) together full time for six years. It started off as a move of God and an outpouring of the Spirit. It was such a blessing and time of growth for me. I ate the Bible day and night. I just could not get enough of Jesus or His bride. It was the same for George in another fellowship about that same time. We know that God can make it happen in a real way, but we also know that we are in love with the Head of the body more than the body itself. As a result, we obey His voice and will not

follow another or try to replicate what He did back then, knowing that our God makes all things new (Revelation 21:5).

We have shared with you the distilling of 33 years of walking after Jesus and seeking His truth in ourselves and in His body. We hope you can receive what we have shared here from our hearts. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and not men. Obey the Spirit as He leads you. Remember, it is they who wait upon the Lord who mount up with wings as eagles.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31, NKJV).

As we wait on the Son, He will make us ready for His "second coming" first as a bride that has made herself ready within that she may be all glorious without.