

TIME TO AWAKE

CALLING THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST TO WATCH & BE ALERT

Spring 2023

—
"GOD SAVE
THE KING"

—
WHEN
PREACHERS
FAIL TO
WARN

—
OUR
GATHERING
TOGETHER



Christian
Ministerial
Fellowship
International

TIME TO AWAKE is the official
magazine of Christian Ministerial
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CMFI exists to advance the
Christian faith by establishing
a fellowship for the furtherance
and propagation and practice
of the gospel of the Lord Jesus
Christ through associated
Biblical churches and ministries.

*"And do this, knowing the
time, that now it is high time to
awake out of sleep; for now our
salvation is nearer than when we
first believed."* Rom. 13:11

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FROM THE EDITOR

Paul Sherbird
Secretary, CMFI



Fellowship is an essential part of the Christian life, and is very precious and special. The world has nothing to compare with the genuine Spirit-led fellowship of those who name Jesus as Lord. Such fellowship is to be characterised by unity and godly love between the brethren. It is to be an expression of the love Jesus showed us, and testimony to the world that Jesus is real: "By this will all know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:34,35). Jesus' words, and the many exhortations found in the New Testament epistles, make regular fellowship normal and essential for a healthy spiritual life, and something not be neglected

This edition focuses much on fellowship and the part it plays in our lives. CMFI seeks to be a help, enabling and fostering relationships and fellowship by linking up those of like-mind. We should all be keenly aware of the importance of assembling together in these last days (Heb. 10:24,25).

Are you looking for fellowship? Would you like to host a meeting and invite a speaker from CMFI? Please contact us.

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
Amen. ■

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CMFI MEMBERSHIP:

CMFI offers various categories of membership. Based in UK and Ireland, CMFI operates internationally, and is represented by its members in several countries around the world. Email Paul Sherbird (Secretary) on admin@cmfi.org.uk for more information.

FELLOWSHIP



John Angliss
Chairman, CMFI

Dear Friends,

Firstly, may I thank all those who have sent get well greetings during my recent operation. These were much appreciated and obviously for recovery reasons, this contribution will be shorter than normal. I am glad to report increasing recovery. I have so greatly appreciated visits from so many local friends during this period, and have come to appreciate fellowship so much more. Koinonia (the Greek word translated fellowship) is participation and identification with fellow believers, and was the hallmark of the early church (Acts 2:42 = 4 continuing activities after proper Biblical initiation). Following

covid lockdown, we had a whole row of speakers stating that the Holy Spirit was now saying we should be meeting face to face, and no longer hiding behind Zoom. Hebrews 10:25 was the clarion call! Sadly, some decided they had a different view of church.

Fellowship starts with 1 Corinthians 1:9, an invitation to humanity to share the fellowship of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. This then extends to the church and the Bible pattern which makes for ever increasing life is found in Acts 2:42; 46-47; and 5:42.

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**OUR DUTY IS NOT TO SEE
THROUGH ONE ANOTHER, BUT
TO SEE ONE ANOTHER THROUGH.
IT NEVER MATTERS HOW FAR
APART WE ARE - WHAT MATTERS
IS HOW CLOSE WE STAY.**
”

This reality is so well expressed in 2 John v.12, “having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.” The heart of this fellowship is so well described in Acts 20:36-38 which is the finale of Paul’s last words from Miletus to a model church, “And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him. Sorrowing most of all, for the words which he spoke, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship” (I will unpack the whole of his message in a later article). However, try to capture the reality and emotion of these precious moments and how much all these saints meant to each other. In contrast, note how much Paul longed for fellowship when awaiting his home call (2Tim. 4:6,7). Examine 2Tim. 4:9-18 and you begin to see how much Paul valued fellowship and friendship in the gospel,

verse 16 is particularly potent “but all men forsook me.” By contrast, all of Paul’s epistles with the long list of names show how much he valued people and their fellowship.


Remember, there is a u and an i in unity. Spurgeon said that fellowship is, “The willingness to know and be known.” Our duty is not to see through one another, but to see one another through. It never matters how far apart we are - what matters is how close we stay.

John 3:16 is great when we first come to the Lord. 1 John 3:16 is a requirement when we truly understand what the New Testament church is, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” In these difficult days, may we work hard at fellowship and relationships and value other saints as never before (Malachi 3:16).

The Lord bless you all richly. ■



THE TASK AHEAD


Pastor Joshua Ernest Tay
Ghana

Greetings in the name of the Lord and hope we are all well by Christ's precious grace. It's been a long absence of not meeting ourselves through the annual CMFI Conference due to the global Covid19 pandemic. Added to that is the ongoing Russian Ukraine war that has brought extreme economic difficulties to the world. The shortage of, and increase in food and oil prices is evident with us everywhere. As the scriptures has said, there shall be rumours

of wars, droughts, there shall be climatic changes etc. (Matt. 24:6-13), and that is what we are witnessing.

As we see all these signs of the end times, not forgetting the surge in LGBTQ+ legalizations and advocacy around the world, one thing strikes my heart consistently and am sure it is same for you. It is the question of what is the state of the unsaved man if Christ the Messiah returns now. Would you and I be able to say to our Lord, "Lord



we reached out in your name evangelizing these lost souls”? In this our end time and its matters relating to the second coming of Christ, I have observed two groups of believers over the years. There are those who are saved and have their salvation secured. Such believe that we are in a fallen world and that God’s judgment shall come upon all children of disobedience. Hence any evil that befalls individuals, people, communities, and nations are God’s judgment against the ungodly, but they are without any

speck of the Father’s heart to go after the lost coin, sheep, or son (Luke 15). God didn’t give us our salvation that we would fold our hands and wait for His second coming with the ‘joy’ that we have secured our place in heaven already, and to care less about dying souls and communities, condemning them for evils that befall such. Then, there are those believers who understand that God has given us Christ’s salvation freely that we may hasten his second coming by reaching out to the lost sheep of Israel (fallen

believers) and Samaritans (all sinners of the world) (Acts 1:8, Matt. 24:14). If we preach the gospel to sinners, we are hastening His second coming.

Are we doing that? We are called to be witnesses of the gospel but nothing else. Are we hasteners of His second coming or idle condemners (Luke 18:10-13)? Sometimes the reason why negative things happen to people is not because they have sinned, but so that God’s glory will be revealed, and Christ’s salvation to the lost is no exception (John 9:1-7).



CHURCH PLANTING TRAINING PROGRAMME, DEC. 2022



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I HAVE OBSERVED TWO GROUPS OF BELIEVERS OVER THE YEARS. THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE SAVED AND HAVE THEIR SALVATION SECURED. THEN, THERE ARE THOSE BELIEVERS WHO UNDERSTAND THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US CHRIST'S SALVATION FREELY THAT WE MAY HASTEN HIS SECOND COMING BY REACHING OUT TO THE LOST SHEEP.



The task ahead of us as individuals, a people, and a community of believers is to reach out to both the lost sheep of Israel

and the fallen world with the Father's heart (Luke 15:20b), not our human and self-justifying hearts. By adopting the Father's heart approach to souls in evangelism, we would win and bring in the divine abundance of souls into his Kingdom in this 2023. The task ahead of us in this end time is that instead of condemnation of the lost sheep and sinners, let us rather reach to such in love and commend or recommend Christ's love and salvation to them.

PRAYER REQUEST

Our church, Glorious Harvest Ministries, has been doing its little widow's mite to contribute to the global workforce of Kingdom increase and abundance of souls through reaching

out to the lost. We do this as we disciple and train believers to reach out in God's love to evangelize. As a church, we would request your prayers and intercessions that the Lord would be honoured as we disciple believers and train them in the holistic ministry of church planting. It is time for us to pray and receive his power made available as in Acts 1:8 and 2:4 for the great harvest of souls. Also, do remember in prayers that, our long awaited plan to carry out a CMFI West African Regional Conference in Ghana would come on in this 2023, or in His right time. May the good Lord use us according to His will in the task ahead of us in the years left for His second coming in Jesus' name! Amen! ■

A group of children, mostly of African descent, are running along a dirt path in a rural, hilly area. They are smiling and looking towards the camera. The children are wearing simple, everyday clothing. The background shows lush green vegetation and a few buildings in the distance.

ORPHANAGE SCHOOL



Ian Huxham

Some years ago, whilst undertaking a missions trip throughout Central East Africa, I was authorized by the Council of CMFI to attend a Pastor's conference in Bungoma in the Western Province of Kenya, as the Council's representative. Whilst there, I spent some time with a number of ministers, one of whom was Pastor Peter Nyongesa.

The following is a report from Pastor Peter detailing the many and severe needs of the orphanage school he has established. It is not the intention of the Council that CMFI membership be used as a vehicle to advertise for financial support, though it is accepted that the needs of our membership are great and many. In publishing this report, or others like it from across the world, the Council would not wish to infer favouritism toward one ministry over the other or

imply that the needs of one member should be prioritized over another. This, however, does not preclude the Council from reporting on the work of CMFI members and highlighting the many challenges our members face on a daily basis. As such, similar reports are welcome and it is right to acknowledge and pray for the work of our brothers and fellow members, wherever God has placed them.

Having visited this school personally and seen first hand the work that is being done there, I can vouch for Pastor Peter. Please pray for him and our many overseas members across the world who face incredible challenges in fulfilling their ministries. Having read the article, should anyone feel led to offer any practical support in whatever form that may take, please do contact the Council.

ST. PETER'S ORPHANGE SCHOOL

 Pastor Peter Nyongesa, Kenya



James 1:27 exhorts care for widows and orphans; in Kenya, India and DR Congo, CMFI pastors are doing so with similar challenges as those highlighted by Pastor Peter. Do remember them in your prayers.

Dear Brethren and fellow members of CMFI,

I am Pastor Peter Nabiswa Nyongesa of Bukembe, a small place in Bungoma County in the Western province of Kenya and I send Christian greetings in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am pleased to be a member of CMFI and visited the annual conference in 2015.

As you may imagine, life in rural Kenya can be challenging at the best of times and this is never truer than for the many orphans. With higher rates of poverty

than urban areas and less access to healthcare, the mortality rate in the countryside is higher than in the cities. The result of this, is that there are numerous orphaned children here, unable to take care of themselves. By the grace of God and with the support only of the small church that I pastor, I take care of 360 orphans at St. Peter's Orphanage School, Bukembe, a school which has been visited by Pastor Ian of the Council of Elders, who has seen the work for himself.

Due to the ever growing number of orphans, the

school is continually expanding and is currently situated on two plots, both populated by temporary buildings in which the children eat, sleep and learn. Therefore, we are in the process of building a new dormitory, this is most necessary as due to current congestion arising from many children in small rooms, outbreaks of disease are common and become widespread. This results in mounting unpaid hospital bills. The knock-on effect of this is, that whilst money is being diverted to meet the cost of the treatment and health care of the children, the dormitory cannot be completed. This creates a vicious circle as the lack of the dormitory is in itself a significant factor in the spread of disease. The completion





of the dormitory is even more urgent as the rainy season approaches.

The growing number of orphans attending St. Peter's Orphanage School also puts much strain on other areas. Being that the members of our rural church are themselves poor, the weekly offerings, mainly of food and some little finance, are no longer adequate to meet the needs of the children. This has resulted in large unpaid food bills, and the salaries of the 14 teachers and 6 support staff at the school are largely unpaid also, and there is a shortage of educational materials, books and equipment.



In worldly terms our situation and that of the 360 orphans is dire, but we know that our God is a God of miracles. He can move on the hearts of men to help us in this work to which He has called us, and He is well able to save the lives of these dear children we have been given to take care of.



PRAYER POINTS

Please pray for us that:

- ▶ We shall be able to complete the dormitory.
- ▶ We shall be able to clear our outstanding bills for food, medical care, staff wages, educational equipment, etc.
- ▶ That God will provide for us and protect us from further illness and disease.

Thank you and God bless you. ■



Pastor Tim McIlwrath
New Testament
Pentecostal
Church,
Ballynahinch

" GOD SAVE THE KING!"



We are witnessing in our day the alignment of the world's political and economic systems, along with the ever strengthening worldwide ecumenical movement. The rise of the spirit of antichrist has been rapid. It is always essential we look to the Word of God for times similar to ours and see the providential and eternal purposes of God. As the Bible says, "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Rev. 17:17).

ATHALIAH

In the book of 2 Kings chapter 11 Queen Athaliah rose to the throne in Judah after realising her son King Ahaziah had been killed in battle. She was the daughter of the infamous King Ahab and Queen Jezebel of the Northern kingdom. Athaliah had married Jehoram, King Jehoshaphat's son. In 2 Kings it tells us of Jehoram, "Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a light, and to his children" (2Kings 8:17-19). Later in the chapter we are told, "And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab" (2 Kings 8:27).

Sadly like her mother, Athaliah was part of the ever merging alliances that occurred with the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and with the heathen kingdoms around them. Jezebel was of the Zidonians bringing with her wicked practices and satanic heathen worship. Athaliah, like her mother, was extremely wicked, manipulative, and would seek power at any cost including the shedding of innocent blood.

When Jehu was raised up to destroy the house of Ahab and Jezebel, King Ahaziah died in that battle. It was a case of the wrong place at the wrong time with wrong people. He had been under the manipulative control of his mother who instructed him in how he should reign. Once Athaliah realised her son was dead the Bible says, "she arose and destroyed all the seed royal" (2Kings 11:1). Here we see the relentless works of the enemy, *destruction!* Jesus said, "The thief has come but for to steal, kill and destroy" (Jn. 10:10). That is the spirit unleashed across the world: Wicked, manipulative, anti-Christ and always with murder and the shedding of innocent blood. The abortion mills are in full flow across the western world. This is the spirit of antichrist.

Think of the time when Moses was born. The slaughter of the Hebrew boys, but a woman by faith hid her boy in the bulrushes from the oppressive regime. In that boy was the purposes of the Eternal. Think of the birth of Christ, a young couple being warned by God to flee, because Herod would unleash his power

to slaughter the newborn Christ. Again the shedding of the innocent fulfilling the word of the Lord, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, 'In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not' " (Matt. 2:17,18). In that child Jesus was the only hope of all humanity!

Think of the day we are in, the same spirit at work through governmental agencies to murder the innocent. Tragic! Have mercy upon us O God!

Here's Athaliah, rising up to destroy all the royal seed. It is simple, the same spirit throughout the ages that has sought to destroy the purpose and plan of God has risen in strength and power today, to destroy the royal seed. That's all those born of an incorruptible word, saved by grace, a royal priesthood a holy nation a peculiar people!

There will be times that God's purposes are not fully disclosed. Moses was hidden. That does not mean that God was not working, or that he did not hear the cry of his people under the weight of the oppressive taskmasters in Egypt. His purpose was not seen, yet He had a plan for a mighty deliverance!

THE PURPOSES OF GOD

In 2 Kings chapter 11 verse 2 onwards we read of two people, who understood the purposes of God. This understanding does not come by intellect, it comes through revelation of the Spirit. Paul writes, "For this cause we also, since the

day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9). A husband and wife had spiritual understanding as Athaliah unleashed her plan to take the throne. A God fearing woman called Jehosheba, "took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; *and they hid him*, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land" (2 Kings 11:2,3).

God's ways are not our ways. Sometimes His purposes are hidden for a season. Never for a minute think that God is not working His purpose in our lives and our nation. Even when darkness seems to veil His face I then must trust in His unchanging grace!

Jehosheba hid the child Joash. Her husband whose name is Jehoiada which means God Knows. What a type of the Holy Spirit. He knows! In verse 4 we see after a period of seven (significant) years, Jehoiada makes a call to the rulers, captain's and guards: There's a call today for God's people scattered, to assemble! Gather together unto Him! This is the call of the Holy Spirit, for the saints of God to gather. It seems for certain, in the British Isles that the body is fragmented. The rule of the spirit and tyranny of antichrist is rampant. However the spiritually enlightened will hear the voice of the Spirit of God, it's time to gather! Why? There's a King in the House of God. His name is Jesus!



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REVELATION OF THE KING

2 Kings 11:4, “And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king’s son” (2Kings 11:4). What a glorious revelation! The King was there all the time! As they respond to that call, Jehoiada equips the gathering guard.

2 Kings 11:10, “And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David’s spears and shields, that were in the temple of the LORD” (2 Kings 11:10). The gathering are equipped - how important it is for the saints to gather! And then the wonderful revelation of the King - crowned!

2 Kings 11:12, “And he brought forth the king’s son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.”

The hymn writer pens, “The Head that once was crowned with thorns, is crowned with glory now! A royal diadem affords, the mighty Victors brow! Crown Him with many Crowns the lamb upon His throne!”

They made him king! King of my life I crown thee now! When the King is enthroned in our hearts, His praises fill the House of God and the saints clap their hands. 2 Chronicles describes the moment, “Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the LORD: And she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing praise” (2 Chron. 23:12,13).

What a time - the people gathered. We gather in these times not to an earthly king, although we will witness the crowning of a king this year, a man who needs much prayer, his crowning is the indication of the how far we have sunk as a nation. But we lift our eyes to the King of all Kings, JESUS.

Athaliah came to the house and cried treason! treason! Rend her clothes! When we gather unto Jesus, the power of the enemy is rent! Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty! Let us gather unto the King of all Kings, Jesus! ■

WHEN PREACHERS FAIL TO WARN



Howard Green
USA

“ ARE WE SO
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A high school in my area sent an email out a few days ago about a student who was involved in a single-car accident on the way to school. He passed away today. Our lives are fleeting vapors. This life is fraught with constant uncertainty. Even in the midst of good times, heartache and tragedy may be a phone call or door-knock away. Bad things happen and we all understand that they are just part of living. We take precautions and try as best we know how to insulate ourselves and loved ones from harm. The reality is that traffic accidents, natural disasters, crime, sickness, and other life-altering events are an eventuality if we live long enough.

Some things happen because of the evil intent of others while many events are accidental or natural. Regardless of the source, most of these tragedies are out of our control. Occasionally, someone does come along with a warning to prepare us for the inevitable. A skilled physician sees an anomaly during an exam, through treatment, they are able to prevent the further spread of disease. But can you imagine the outrage if the physician failed to adequately warn the people they're supposed to protect because they didn't want to scare or offend patients? That is exactly what is happening as many preachers fail to warn people and the consequences are eternally tragic.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

Dear Christian friend, I'm writing this article with a sense of humility and love for the church and fellow preachers. The issue at hand is so critical, if my admonishment makes you uncomfortable, that's a start because what I'm aiming for is a holy sense of urgency. Roughly 175,000 people die and go into eternity every day. People's souls are literally hanging in the balance between heaven and hell. We don't have a moment to waste.

As ministers, we have one primary job and that is to preach the gospel. Unfortunately, in many churches and ministries, that isn't happening. Instead, we have a growing number of preachers who distort the grace of God. Numerous pastors, teachers, and evangelists are consumed with selfish ambition and envy (Phil. 1:15,16). Counting members, upward mobility, and getting the surrounding community to like us causes many preachers to compromise the truth of the gospel. The message becomes so distorted that many people who hear it will assume they are saved when they're not. A number of years ago during a Sunday morning service, I heard a young preacher tell a large gathering essentially that they were okay and God was basically pleased with them. No repentance, no brokenness, and no warning (Gal 1:9,10).

This type of preaching has no place in a Christian church. Are we so consumed with people-pleasing that we would neglect to tell people that God is an holy all-consuming fire, and that apart from repentance and faith in Jesus, they will

die in their sins? God forbid! You might say, "Howard, isn't that a bit harsh?" No friend, what's harsh is not telling people the truth about the danger they are in. Imagine knowing about the Titanic, September 11th, or the Indian Ocean Tsunami a few days before it happened. Wouldn't you do everything in your power to warn people? You wouldn't spend months trying to get them to know and trust you first so they see how loving you are. You would risk your dignity, reputation, and possibly even your life to warn people. It is the most Christ-like thing we can do.

The Bible is replete with examples of shepherds who fail to warn people. In fact, God is so concerned with preachers and prophets who don't warn people to repent and turn to Him that He rebukes them (Ezk. 3:18-21). Moreover, He says, "My anger is kindled against the shepherds." This is because they mislead people, telling them everything is okay, God is pleased with them, and judgment won't come. Jeremiah 14:14,15, Lamentations 2:14, and Micah 3:11 all attest to the fact that God holds ministers accountable for failure to warn people.

Don't believe the lie that you have to first earn the right to share the gospel. This is simply a worldly method to ingratiate ourselves to the community via a spiritual bait and switch with no biblical precedent. One preacher gives the following example:

"On my plane flight tomorrow, how am I supposed to earn the right to witness to that person? Am I supposed to pour his drinks for him? I have the right

“

DON'T BELIEVE THE LIE THAT YOU HAVE TO FIRST EARN THE RIGHT TO SHARE THE GOSPEL. THIS IS SIMPLY A WORLDLY METHOD TO INGRATiate OURSELVES TO THE COMMUNITY VIA A SPIRITUAL BAIT AND SWITCH WITH NO BIBLICAL PRECEDENT.

”



commanded to me by Almighty God to witness to him or her and you can be assured I will pray for that opportunity and I will take advantage of that opportunity” (Evangelist Mark Cahill). Amid the tepid, seeker-sensitive approach to reaching the lost, Leonard Ravenhill asked preachers timely questions, “Is soul-hot preaching a lost art? Have we conceded to impatient snack-bar sermons, spiced with humor to edge jaded spiritual appetites?”

Dear ministry friends, Let’s put aside all human craftiness, cunning, and marketing campaigns in our misguided effort to win public opinion. Instead, let’s rely on the power of the Holy Spirit through faithful gospel preaching to save souls (Eph. 4:14).

Look at the current state of our world and the cesspool of sin people are drowning in. Evil is called good, truth is supposedly relative, and society is imploding on itself. Wars rage, lawlessness increases, and love is waxing cold. Please discern the times we live in and know that our redemption draws near. As we wait for redemption, lost people blindly race toward the judgment and wrath of a holy God (Heb. 10:26,27). As His disciples, we have no excuse for failing to warn people. We must preach the whole truth of the gospel and warn people about the coming judgment, repentance, and faith in Jesus. It is a loving thing to warn people. Jesus loves everyone and desires that all people come to Him (Mt. 9:36).

God bless you as you make Him known. ■

GO FURTHER:

** See page 30 for Howard’s review of the two books mentioned in his article.*



“ BEHOLD HOW GOOD AND
PLEASANT IT IS FOR BRETHREN
TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY. ”



OUR GATHERING TOGETHER



Pastor Ian Huxham

Evangel Church, Sidmouth

Praise the Lord! Even as I sit here at my desk, the very thought of us being gathered together at the coming of the Lord Jesus, is enough to cause my heart to sing His praises in sheer delight. My joy overflows from that great certainty of hope and the wonderful prospect of that which lies ahead. That not only shall I see at last, my Lord and Saviour and gaze upon His beauty, but also that I should, by His grace, take my place in such distinguished company. That I should join together with saints innumerable from down the ages and see again my believing loved ones who have gone on before. What a prospect it is we look forward to. And how we shall rejoice when it comes to pass.

However, as much as I shall indeed rejoice when it does come to pass, there is no reason why I should not be rejoicing now. Rejoicing in hope and the full assurance of it. In fact, I can even

enjoy a foretaste of that experience here on earth. I call it church. Church, or more specifically church meetings, when the saints of God assemble and gather together, should be a wonderful time, a joyous occasion. Church gatherings are something to be enjoyed rather than endured. They should be a time of great unity, of purpose and of power. A time of great encouragement and of edification. A time of praising and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord, for where two or three are gathered together in His name, He is there in the midst of them. And yet, how little some appear to value the experience and even neglect the assembling of ourselves together.

Of course, I understand full well that in our frailty, in many ways we have conspired to lessen the joy of our gathering together. Whether by dead religion and stale liturgical ritual, or by rigid adherence to well-practiced plans

and programmes, the routine of our gathering together can at times dampen our enthusiasm for it. But should that mean we remove ourselves from it? When we do so, we not only remove ourselves from all the benefits associated with gathering together, (of which there are many), but the assembly we shun is impoverished and all the worse for it

BLESSED FELLOWSHIP

Today we live in a consumer society and thus there are those who go to church only for that which they can get from it. Indeed, many is the time as a pastor that I have been told by a dear brother or sister, that they have stopped attending church because they are “not getting anything from it.” How sad that their experience of gathering together has not been a joyous and edifying one. And how sad that their preconception of gathering together was that it was exclusively for their own personal benefit. That it was to get for themselves rather than to give of themselves. How sad that they did not realise that the more they give of themselves, the more they would receive from the experience of being gathered together.

The church is an organism rather than an organisation and that organism, or body, is made up of many members. When we neglect to assemble and gather together, we rob the body of that which we should bring to it as a vital member of the body. We thank God that many are the gifts and abilities He has given His body and we each have received gifts from Him as a result of His grace. Having received such gifts, the New Testament makes numerous references to the fact that

we are to use them: “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given us, let us use them” (Rom. 12:6); And also, with whom we are to use them, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1Pet. 4:10); Therefore, when we gather together, we are all in some ways, according to the gifts we have been given, ministers. Thus, when we gather together, we should be ready to minister, “How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification” (1 Cor. 14:26).

When we gather together we bring our gifts, and play our part in the building up and strengthening of the body. Moreover, when we gather together in this way, we are unified in Christ with tremendous result. Here are just a few examples:

- ▶ There is great blessing in dwelling together in unity, “Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Ps. 133).
- ▶ There is great purpose and power in gathering together in such unity, “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1).
- ▶ There is great encouragement in these last days in gathering together, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:25).

“

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”



- ▶ The presence of Christ in the midst is experienced when we gather together, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).
- ▶ We learn more of God when we gather together, “Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God” (Deut. 31:12).
- ▶ We are able to use our gifts when we gather together, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them” (Rom. 12:6).
- ▶ We are ministered to and minister to others when we gather together, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1Pet. 4:10).
- ▶ Jesus has a heart to gather, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!” (Matt. 23:37).
- ▶ Those who are for Him must share this heart, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad” (Matt. 12:30).



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I AM SO VERY MUCH LOOKING FORWARD TO THE ULTIMATE GATHERING BUT UNTIL THEN TAKE GREAT JOY AND PLEASURE AND AM MUCH ENCOURAGED IN MEETING WITH MY BRETHREN HERE.

”

ETERNITY IN VIEW

The Lord is coming and will soon gather us together. It brings us great comfort and joy to know this. True believers will then be with Him throughout eternity to come. Safe in the hope of this, being that we now belong to Him, should we not be gathering together here on earth whilst we yet wait? Should we not already be enjoying sweet fellowship and unity together, praising the Lord, ministering to one another and encouraging each other? Should we not be a fully functioning body together in the earth for the purpose He has given us until His return? And should not this foretaste of being gathered together be a cause for rejoicing? Assembling together need not be chore, it could, and it should be a joy and a pleasure.

In Psalm 122, David writes, “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’” In doing so, he demonstrates that his gladness extended beyond the condition of self. Indeed, he wrote “I was glad” [referring to his own personal/individual state] when they said

[‘they’ representing community] ‘Let us [all together] go into the house of the Lord.’” David’s gladness was not confined to the prospect of his going into the house of the Lord. David understood that he was a part of a group, of a community that would go into the house of the Lord together. The personal invitation and the acceptance of it, of being gathered together and becoming part of a group that would go in together, made him glad.

And that is how we must be. We must be glad that the Lord has told us in His word that He will gather us together. Until then, let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but let us exhort *one another*, and so much the more as we see the Day approaching. I am so very much looking forward to the ultimate gathering but until then take great joy and pleasure and am much encouraged in meeting with my brethren here. I trust you do to.

Until we are all together. God bless. ■



MALACHI 3:16

THOSE WHO FEARED THE LORD SPOKE ONE TO ANOTHER



Paul Sherbird
Secretary, CMFI

Here in the UK we continue to be shocked and disappointed at compromises being made by elements of the church over various moral, ethical and doctrinal standards. In a recent case, it has been announced that the Church of England will allow the blessing of same-sex marriages; it will also begin a debate on the gender of God, and consider whether it is time to address God in “gender-neutral” terms. A spokesman for the CofE is quoted as saying:

“This is nothing new, because Christians have long acknowledged God is neither male nor female – something recognised in scripture but not always in our worship.”

Such statements are not pleasing to Bible-believing Christians, and not only because of the doctrinal ignorance they show, but also because of the testimony it gives to the world who see a church that is willing to adopt its belief systems according to the whims of society, and

believe it to be representative of the church as a whole. Those who refuse to follow are then presented as being out of step, and enemies of society. (Of course, millions of believers over the centuries have never acknowledged that God is neither male nor female; Jesus called Him Father, and taught that prayer should be addressed to "Our Father" which settles the matter for us beyond all doubt, as it should for all believers). In this climate Bible-believing Christians are marginalised, despised and attacked from all quarters. Our beliefs are presented as out-dated, out of step, not in keeping with the times, we are accused of religious intolerance and hate crimes, and of being hostile and discriminatory.

We do recognise that there is nothing new under the sun, and the testimony of the Lord's people throughout history, has often been one of rejection and persecution, both by the secular world and by religious authorities. The prophets of the Old Testament had little popularity (Heb. 11:36-38), and Jesus warned His disciples that the world would hate them as it hated Him (Jn. 17:14). The true church of the living God takes very seriously its call to be the "pillar and ground of truth" (1Tim. 3:15), and will, often at great cost, resist all efforts to compromise with worldly standards that are in contradiction to those contained in the Word of God. At such times as these, there is a need for those of us who love the Lord and keep His commandments to be ready and available to encourage and support each other as need arises.

MALACHI

There is much in the prophecy of Malachi which can be applied to our own times.

As Malachi observed the people of Israel in his day, he saw a people with all the outward signs of religion and worship of God, but the Lord showed Him they were a people who were far from God, and whose conduct was not pleasing to God. This was a people who counted themselves immune from God's judgments, and seem to have not understood that their actions dishonoured the Lord and profaned His holy name. The priests, the spiritual leaders of the people who should have been teaching truth, justice, and the right ways of the Lord, and turning wandering souls away from iniquity, were themselves corrupt and stood in danger of cursing and judgment (Mal. 2:1-9). They taught evil as being good, and even that the Lord delighted in, and blessed, those who did evil! (Mal. 2:17; 3:15) - and oh, how that relates to the times we are in now when churches promote same-sex marriage, false doctrines, and other evils, while teaching that a God of love welcomes such moves.

In the midst of such apostasy, Malachi was called to take a message of rebuke. Though the Lord was angry, still His hand of mercy continued to be held out, and Malachi pleaded with them, "But now entreat God's favour, that He may be gracious to us" (Mal. 1:9), warning that if they would not hear, the Lord would send a curse (Mal. 2:2), promising that if they returned to the Lord He would return to them (Mal. 3:7). Hearts, however were hard and blind to the truth, each of Malachi's eight rebukes was answered with a question that shows the prevailing ignorance of their true condition, and their unwillingness to take heed to the

prophets message (1:2; 1:6; 1:7; 2:13,14; 2:17; 3:7; 3:8; 3:13). So the Lord promises the Messiah will come to purify and purge, and of course we see some 400 years later, when Jesus came, that the spiritual leaders in Israel remained proud, arrogant, and in a sinful state, and were subjected to the harshest words of judgment from Jesus (see Mt. 23:1-36; Mal. 3:2,3; 4:1). Most refused to hear Him, their rejection of the Messiah meaning the kingdom would be taken from them, and given to others (Mt. 21:43; Acts 13:46).

Much of Malachi's prophecy serves as instruction and warning to the spiritual leaders of the Lord's people throughout the ages, and relevant to today. The New Testament epistles of 2Peter and Jude warn false teachers of the harshest of judgments as just reward for teaching their destructive heresies and leading others astray (2Pet. 2:1-3); as there were false prophets then, so there are false teachers today (2Pet. 2:1). Those who lead in the church are clearly warned that their lives must exhibit godly conduct, and that their teaching must be in accord with the Scriptures.

THOSE WHO FEARED THE LORD SPOKE TOGETHER

In Psalm 11 David wrote, "If the foundations are destroyed what can the righteous do?" There he comforted himself with the thought that the Lord is on His throne watching, and that the Lord would pour out His judgments on the wicked, while giving blessing to the righteous who put their trust in Him. Foundational Biblical truths are being destroyed in our time, and we too look to the Lord to bring His justice to bear.



“

FELLOWSHIP IS SUCH A VITAL AND IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. MALACHI SHOWS US THAT THE LORD HIMSELF IS PLEASED WHEN FAITHFUL BRETHREN COME TOGETHER.

”

Malachi surrounded by the apostasies of the people of His day notes that fellowship was shared among those, “who feared the the Lord,” as they spoke with one another the Lord took note and promised to remember them (Mal.3:16). We too, living in times when foundations are being destroyed and much of the church succumbs to unholy compromise, can look to the Lord, and wait patiently for His righteous judgments on those who profane His holy name. While David encourages to wait patiently and expectantly on the Lord, Malachi reminds us that there is something very practical and helpful we can do in the present: Those of us who fear the Lord should be speaking to one another, supporting and encouraging each other as we make our way through this life, eagerly awaiting the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus.

**■ THE LORD WHO PAID
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FELLOWSHIP. ■**

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship is such a vital and important aspect of the Christian life. Malachi shows us that the Lord Himself is pleased when faithful brethren come together: He listens and hears them, He remembers them, He calls them "Mine," He considers them "My jewels," He treats them as His own (Mal. 3:16,17). A similar thought occurs in Psalm 133 where David tells how the Lord commands the blessing when brethren dwell together in unity.

In the midst of difficult times fellowship is a vital source of spiritual strength. The writer of Hebrews exhorts us, "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together" for it is there in our gatherings together that we stir one another up to love and good works (Heb. 10:24,25). Paul gave thanks for those churches where loving fellowship between the saints gave evidence of healthy spiritual life (Col. 1:4; 2Thess. 1:3). John likewise when he wrote, "that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren" (1Jn. 3:14), saw that loving relationships give evidence of genuine salvation and faith; he went on to exhort practical application of love in words and deed, no doubt remembering the words of Jesus, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I

have loved you, that you also love one another" (Jn. 13:34).

Genuine Christian fellowship is made possible by the Holy Spirit's ministry in the hearts of the redeemed, He confirms to our hearts that we are indeed children of God and members of God's great family (Rom. 8:16), and He enables the manifestation of the love of God in and through our relationships one with another. The fruits of the Holy Spirit enhancing, enriching and enabling relationships that are glorifying to our Lord, the gifts of the Holy Spirit enabling supernatural ministry one to another, all of which edifies the church and brings glory to the Lord.

At the heart and source of fellowship is the Lord Jesus, for it is His death on the cross that brought reconciliation with our heavenly Father, and through which we are made members of the household of God, and enjoy all the privileges and blessings He gives to His children. And so the Lord who paid the price which made possible our fellowship one with another is pleased to see His redeemed children seeking and taking every opportunity for fellowship, blessing them in doing so, satisfied in seeing this fruit as a consequence of His death.

Yes, we live in difficult times, the Scriptures give us the help and guidance we need. Like Malachi, like David, and Paul, and John, and the Lord Himself, we must understand the huge benefit and blessing that fellowship with like-minded brethren is for us. It is God's provision for His people, and not to be neglected. He is pleased, and gives blessing when those who fear Him speak often one with another. ■



Sodom Had No Bible

Author: Leonard Ravenhill

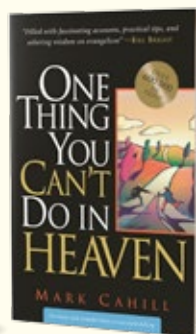


One Thing You Can't Do In Heaven

Author: Mark Cahill



Reviews by Howard Green



After reading these books, I felt like I was reading the same book from two authors.

In one way, I was because both are a clarion call from Spirit-filled men with the same message: In light of eternity, this is no time for business as usual. Beloved evangelist Leonard Ravenhill's words in *Sodom Had No Bible* are as poignant now as they were four decades ago because Jesus' return is much closer. Upon reading the book, I realized it wasn't a 'how to' guide on reaching lost souls, but a book about the 'One' who reaches them through His followers. Ravenhill builds upon the stark contrast between ancient Sodom and modern

'Christianized Western culture' when he writes:

"Sodom had no churches. We have thousands."

"Sodom had no Bible. We have millions."

"Sodom had no gospel broadcasts. We have many hundreds."

This book is a call to action. Ravenhill reminds us, "We move along in the light of the lostness of men and their certainty of eternal destruction unless they hear and believe."

In his book *One Thing You Can't Do In Heaven*, Mark Cahill asks, "Over 150,000 people will die today; where will they spend eternity?" He gives

numerous real-world examples of sharing the gospel. In fact, Ray Comfort said, "Mark is the only person on earth who makes me feel lukewarm." This book challenged me as I was reminded that a trip to the store, bank, or other places is anything but routine in the life of a disciple. It's an opportunity to witness. Mark consistently reminds us the Holy Spirit does the work; we only need to be sensitive to His leading.

Both books will ignite a biblical sense of urgency to live out the great commission. I wholeheartedly recommend them with a personal sense of conviction and a renewed love for lost souls. ■

RECOMMENDED AUTHORS

Other authors whom we recommend are as follows:

“Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1Tim 4:13).

These suggestions will help you to do that.

- ▶ The Bonar brothers
- ▶ EM Bounds
- ▶ John Bunyan
- ▶ David Baron
- ▶ Ray Comfort
- ▶ Jim and Elizabeth Elliot
- ▶ Arnold Fruchtenbaum
- ▶ Sam Gordon
- ▶ Ada Habershon
- ▶ Mark Hitchcock
- ▶ H Wayne House
- ▶ Harry Ironside
- ▶ David Jeremiah
- ▶ Tim La Haye
- ▶ Lance Lambert
- ▶ Martin Lloyd Jones
- ▶ CH Mackintosh
- ▶ FE Marsh
- ▶ FB Meyer
- ▶ G Campbell Morgan
- ▶ Andrew Murray
- ▶ Watchman Nee
- ▶ Stephen Olford
- ▶ J Edwin Orr
- ▶ Jessie Penn Lewis
- ▶ AJ Pollock
- ▶ Derek Prince
- ▶ JC Ryle
- ▶ Adolph Saphir
- ▶ Erich Sauer
- ▶ WG Scroggie
- ▶ CW Slemming
- ▶ CH Spurgeon
- ▶ FA Tatford
- ▶ RA Torrey
- ▶ AW Tozer
- ▶ WE Vine
- ▶ John Walvoord
- ▶ Warren Wiersbe
- ▶ David Wilkerson
- ▶ Herbert Lockyer - The ALL THE series plus others
- ▶ Rose Publishing - guides and pamphlets



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Southwest of England

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

While no conference is currently planned for England in 2023, we plan to host a conference in N.Ireland in Spring 2024.



**Christian
Ministerial
Fellowship
International**

Other one-day and weekend events are held throughout the year in various locations in both the UK and Ireland.

A West Africa Conference to be held in Ghana is in the planning stages for 2023.

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- Be informed of upcoming events
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