

We Were Brethren

By George Davis and Michael Clark

Without a return to true servanthood we will never see the true dynamic power of God return to Christ's ekklesia. Moreover, we shall never see true servanthood until we are saved -- made whole -- healed of the madness caused by the false logic of ecclesiastical hierarchies and replace it with the therapy of the cross.

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"Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus." (John 12:20-22, RSV).

Notice that they did not say, We would see apostle Philip, apostle Andrew or even Apostle Peter! No, the plea was so simple, yet full of light and truth for those who truly seek the Truth "WE WOULD SEE JESUS!"

Upon hearing this, Jesus, perhaps turning His eyes upon the ripening fields, said, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."

What does this have to do with so earnest of a plea from a handful of lowly Gentiles? Jesus knew that the Gentile world could never truly "see" him until, like the grain of wheat, He should die to bring "many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10). Without the cross, the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret since the world began would remain hidden from the Gentile world (Romans 16:25). The world is still crying out today, "We would see JESUS!" The question is, how many of are willing to pay the price so that they can?

Then Jesus turned His attention to His disciples, who had thus far followed faithfully but had no concept of the path before them. As yet they had no understanding of how the grain of wheat principle of life and fruitfulness applied to them.

Jesus continued, "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor."

What did He mean by saying, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me"? What did He mean when He said, "where I am, there My servant will be also"? Follow Him where? Where was Jesus asking His disciples to go? He was going to the Father via the cross and the grave, and he who would follow must first deny himself and take up his cross. (Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23) Yes, it is at the cross where His servants gather. For where He is, there His servants will be also. And of those who walk this path Jesus said, "...him My Father will honor." Once again we see that God grants to His servants (Acts 4:29-30).

"And where I am, there My servants will be also." Where is Jesus? Yes, He is sitting at the right hand of the Father, but where IS He in Spirit? Jesus is the Chief of all Servants, the bottom of the pile if you will. He lives even now making intercession before the Father for us. To be great in His kingdom is to seek the lowest place and to serve all with a heart filled with love. He spoke of this to His disciples that they might be where He was, "whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Then, as He so often did, Jesus turned his attention heavenward to the Father, acknowledging the purpose for which He had come. "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." (See John 12:23-28)

As we follow Jesus, keeping the light in our eyes, sooner or later the cross will loom larger on the horizon. It is then that the temptation to cry "Father, save me from this hour" is ever present. It is then that the dissuading voices crying, "Come back! Come back!" (Song of Songs 6:13), crescendo in our ears in thunderous and enticing tones. Like those tempting voices at the foot of Christ's cross saying, "save yourself." (Matthew 27:40) May we, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, cover our ears and run

toward the light, shouting, "Life! Eternal life," casting our eyes heavenward with hearts impassioned for the Father's glory, refusing to sidestep the cross. May we say with the Holy servant Jesus "But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name."

If we don't embrace the Father's purpose in the cross we will take up fleeing, not following, saving ourselves instead of serving, avoiding any inconvenience rather than obedience.

For the most part, Christianity today has become a system for the comfort of men rather than a company of servants who exists for the glory of God. The honest observer must admit that, typically, today's church system is a place of ease and entertainment, and in many cases is not much different than the local theatrical troop. In terms of progress it more resembles the children of Israel trekking around Mt. Sinai. It was only an eleven-day journey from the Red Sea to Kadesh-barnea, but it took them forty years.

Now before you start giggling under your breath, let me remind you that in the last thousand years the "church" has made far less progress. We will either follow Jesus as servants or mill around bullying one another. We will journey with Him as true servants or take another lap around the mountain. Only the cross-bearing servant, following Jesus, will the Father honor.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:5-8, NKJV).

As this mind departed the early Church, so went the power. So much so that in time the Father could rarely find those vessels through which He could express His heart. And certainly not a company of believers, through which He might, as "the body of Christ," fill all things. No! With the rise of hierarchism, so went the servant. The life of God departed, to the degree that men positioned themselves over one another, as rulers, rather than among, as brothers and servants. It is not an understatement to say that for there to be any true and lasting reformation there

must be a large-scale return to servanthood and that cannot happen without repentance, i.e., a turning away from ecclesiastical hierarchies and returning to our right mind, the mind of Christ.

Please hear us! When we speak of servanthood, we are not talking about cleaning the church toilets. We are not talking about being someone's "armor bearer," where you prove your worthiness of promotion, thinking, "If I am faithful and keep the toilets clean long enough, and wash Pastor Wonderful's car every Saturday, I might get to be an elder." This is not the mind of Christ (Remember, Jesus said that what we have done to the LEAST of these His brethren we have done unto Him). This is nothing more than curtsying for coronation, groveling for government, suffering the momentary shame of bowing for the compensation of the crown. So corrupt is this mentality that it has made even servanthood a posturing tool and brings to bear the destructive influences of competition, providing an unending source of ecclesiastical slave labor. These slaves are bound to an institution instead of Christ. This is typical of the Levites ministering to the house, which was a punishment for their iniquity. It is in dire contrast to the sons of Zadok of which God said; ["They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge."](#) (See Ezekiel 44:10-16)

Service to the institution that many call "the church" is not the servanthood of the cross! This is not the heart and mind of the Holy Servant Jesus who served with no thought of personal advantage. Suffice it to say that the contemporary concept of deacon is alien to true Jesus-servanthood as well. Jesus did not come to sweep the temple floor, or clean temple toilets. He was not an ecclesiastical errand boy. He did not come to advance the pharisaic institutions of the day. He did not come submitting to the whims and wishes of the Pharisees so all would go well in His religious career, not even for a moment. He did not come to advance Himself at all. He came to do the will of the Father. He came to lay down His life, His will, His physical safety and well being, all for the love of God and others.

As this servant-mentality departed the church so went the power, until all that was left was powerless form. Paul foresaw this and warned Timothy of its eventual effect. He said that many would deny the power of the true faith and fall away assuming only a ["form of godliness"](#) (2Timothy 3:5) They would abandon true cross-bearing servanthood for a powerless form.

The logic of the cross = The power of God

"For the word (*logos*) of the cross is foolishness to those who are dying, but to us who are saved it is the power (*dunamis*) of God." (1Corinthians 1:18 WEB)

The reasoning or logic of the cross is foolishness to those who are lost, but to us who are being saved, healed and restored it is the strength, power and ability of God. His blessing and power rest upon the lived-out logic of the cross. So much so that Paul could say that the word of the cross "is the power of God." Not to everyone mind you, but to those who are being saved (sozo 4982 "being made well, healed, restored to health, rescued from danger or destruction); those who are being restored to a sound mind.

The reasoning of the cross releases the *dunamis* power of God. It is through servants walking the path of the cross that this power flows. When we pray, "grant to your servants," things begin to happen. What did happen after the brethren prayed that day? Did they simply dismiss and go home, hoping that God would answer their prayers in time? No! "When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31) God answered immediately - perhaps while they were yet praying. Why? God is quick to grant to His servants. The Father will honor them.

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Any true Spirit outpouring must be preceded by such a stripping or repentance. We believe that this was happening in each of the saints of God in the upper room as the day of Pentecost first came upon the church (See our article "[Critical Mass](#)").

Such was the case at the Azusa Street assembly in 1906 in Los Angeles, California. There is much to be learned from the events that led up to what was undoubtedly the greatest Spirit awakening in America to date. We should also pay close attention to what marked its demise. Below are some excerpts taken from "Another Wave Rolls In," written by an eyewitness by the name of Frank Bartleman. Mr. Bartleman experienced firsthand the glorious freedom and power that follows such a stripping.

"We had no pope or hierarchy. **We were brethren.** We had no human program; the Lord Himself was leading. We had no priest class, nor priest craft. These things have come in later, with the apostatizing of the movement. We did not even have a platform or pulpit in the beginning. All were on a level. The ministers were servants, according to the true meaning of the word. We did not honor men for their advantage in means or education, but rather for their God-given gifts. He set the members in the Body.

The services ran almost continuously. Seeking souls could be found under the power almost any hour of the night or day. The place was never closed nor empty. The people came to meet God...He was always there. Hence a continuous meeting. The meeting did not depend on the human leader. God's presence became more and more wonderful. In that old building, with its low rafters and bare floors, God took strong men and women to pieces, and put them together again, for His glory. It was a tremendous overhauling process. Pride and self-assertion, self-importance and self-esteem could not survive there. The religious ego preached its own funeral sermon quickly.

No subjects or sermons were announced ahead of time, and no special speakers for such an hour. No one knew what might be coming, what God would do. All was spontaneous, ordered of the Spirit. We wanted to hear from God, through whomever He might speak. We had no respect of persons. The rich and educated were the same as the poor and ignorant, and found a much harder death to die. We only recognized God. All were equal. No flesh might glory in His presence. He could not use the self-opinionated. Those were Holy Ghost meetings, led of the Lord. It had to start in poor surroundings, to keep out the selfish, human element. All came down in humility together at His feet. They all looked alike and had all things in common, in that sense at

least. The rafters were low, the tall must come down. By the time they got to Azusa they were humbled, ready for the blessing. The fodder was thus placed for the lambs, not for giraffes. All could reach it.

We were delivered right there from ecclesiastical hierarchism and abuse. We wanted God. When we first reached the meeting, we avoided as much as possible human contact and greeting. We wanted to meet God first. We got our head under some bench in the corner in prayer, and met men only in the Spirit, knowing them 'after the flesh' no more.

All obeyed God, in meekness and humility. In honor we preferred one another. The Lord was liable to burst through anyone. We prayed for this continually. Someone would finally get up anointed for the message. It might be from the back seat or from the front. It made no difference..." (Emphasis ours)

You will note here that Mr. Bartleman saw the resurgence of the "priest class/priest craft /hierarchy" to be responsible for the "apostatizing of the movement." Considering the glory of their former state he said, "We were brethren" who "had no human program; the Lord Himself was leading." Can you here the tones of grief and longing in his voice - a longing for family? "We were brethren!" The power came when they were stripped of hierarchy and were ALL brought to the same level, humbled at the foot of the cross. However, they were left with powerless form when someone thought to institute once again the errors of the past.

A careful study of history will reveal that wherever God finds such a company of servants and brethren He grants to them. When they obeyed our Lord's teaching "It shall NOT be so among you," they were blessed.

They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever

desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all." (Mark 10:39-44, NKJV).

Dear fellow Christian, "we were brethren!" O that we could be so again!

(Includes excerpts from the article "Arch-Madness" by George Davis)

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