

*Then they will **rebuild** the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations, And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.*
(Isaiah 61:4)

The Purpose of *Rebuild*

I am deeply troubled about the state of the Church. It troubles me that we have **the** Message of Life, but sometimes act only as if we have a moral code. My prayer is that we would once again realize we have the Pearl of Great Price, and in gratitude, zealously love God and one another as in the Early Church.

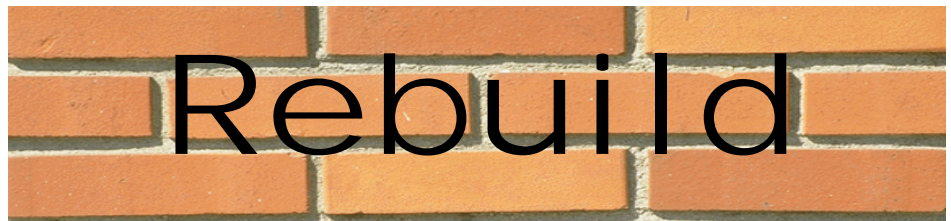
Let me give you a little personal background to better understand my heart behind all of this.

Before I came to the Lord, I was a decent, moral guy. I did not "do drugs." I did not hustle women. I even prayed once in a while. But when I finally understood that being a Christian was more than going to church, or just acknowledging God's existence, but demanded the dedication of my entire life, my life changed. Radically changed! I never knew God could be *that* loving, *that* forgiving, or *that* personal. It was, and still is, amazing. My life was dipped in Life, and God soaked me to the soul.

I just had to tell others about Christ! I became involved in a campus ministry outreach, and began sharing Christ with university students. "This is what life is all about", I told them. Numbers gave their lives to Christ. Both they and I were thrilled!

But there was disappointment too. Few of those who came to Christ went on to maturity. Most fizzled out by the end of the semester. What was wrong? Why weren't people moving ahead? Maybe I was not accurately presenting the Gospel. Where was the discipleship, the compassion and willingness to sacrifice for Christ?

Months later I was introduced to "the baptism of the Spirit." I was told that



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God's Intent with the Church

by opening myself to the Spirit I could more effectively proclaim the Gospel. Doors were definitely opened for ministry, but overall, there was no significant difference in the long term effect of people who "received" Christ. There were many who cried, laughed, and had



other powerful "spiritual" experiences, but when day to day living went up against these experiences, the experiences gave way. Most settled for a "pay and pray" Church existence rather than go against the grain of society's pressures.

The years passed, and I later joined a para-church Christian

community. I was given a new perspective about the Gospel and living for Christ. These people made practical, daily, and concrete commitments to love God and one another. It was in that environment I began to learn that the Gospel was not only words about God's love, but loving words framed by a loving people.

I then began to see something. If Christian People would yield to the Spirit, and take steps to entwine their lives with other believers, as this Christian community did, God would draw people to Christ. This certainly was the experience of the first Christian Community, the Church (Acts 2:47). And like that community, if the Church today would regain this Biblical vision, new believers would once again choose to live lives that would impact lifestyle, values, and life purpose; lives where all were "continually *devoting* themselves" to Biblical teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42).

In the upcoming years and months, I saw young men and women from a nearby state university come to the Lord because of the loving lives of this Christian community. By and large, when these new believers made a commitment to follow Christ, they did not just "fit in" more religious activities, but made bold choices that reconfigured the core and center of their lives. They knew they had not just found "religion," but that they had found The Incomparable Treasure of heaven.

Questions

I began to wonder, "Why isn't the Church like this?" And then as I read the Bible, I began to ask, "Why are there no para-church organizations mentioned in the

All we need is a hunger for God's will, and a commitment to obey what he reveals.

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Scriptures?" As I began to think out this question, another question soon followed, "Why do para-churches exist now, if they did not exist then? I answered this question, with two more, "Could it be that the Church of today has forgotten its original mission and identity? Could it be that the para-church exists because the American Church does not see discipleship as a requirement, whereas most visionary, para-church organizations demand it?" I did not need to ask any more questions.

After receiving seminary training, my wife and I went to Colorado with a vision to build a Church reminiscent of the Church the New Testament presents us. In a nutshell, this is what we are about today.

Our small Church Community is far from the ideal. We find ourselves surrounded with American challenges, with 20% of the population moving every year, time demands at work challenging time spent in ministry, service, or relational intimacy, temptations for material success, etc. The still quiet voice of God is often drowned out by a society which screams at us to give our attention to lesser things.

Why even bother to confront these difficulties? Because the Gospel deserves to be proclaimed the way it was in the early Church, in Pentecostal power, in love, and community. Because Jesus Christ is worthy of a Bride that is willing to give herself to

Him in such undistracted devotion and commitment.

The New Testament Church teaches us about what it means to be a Christian. One could not be a part of the Jerusalem Church and just attend services; to be a part of that Church demanded a change in the way you lived your life. This people laid down their lives for one another in love, and devoted themselves to live apostolic teaching. It was obvious to all that their relationship with Jesus was not a tack on. He *defined* their lives. It is no wonder that the Lord added daily to their number.

It is this kind of Church that the People of God should dedicate their lives. To rebuild this kind of Church is more than possible. All we need is a hunger for God's will, and a commitment to obey what He reveals.

Jordan Bajis

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