

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

BACK TO THE BOOK OF ACTS (BBA)

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PART 2: THE VISION CONTINUED

In order to achieve continuity, I am repeating a portion from the previous outline. The vision given to me was a mixture of teaching and pictures of events to come in the future. I have not had such a revelation before and I now understand the difficulty the Apostle John must have had when he was told to write down Jesus' Revelation. I am not claiming that my vision is in the same class as the Book of Revelation, rather, it is a personal message to me as a pastor of what can happen if we line up with the Word of God. **2 Chronicles 7:12-15**

THE VISION

After I had gone to sleep that night, God woke me up around one in the morning. My sleep was gone from me and my mind was clear as the Holy Spirit began speaking to me. I realized that my prayer had been heard in heaven and God was ready to give me an answer. Here is the vision I received while I was awake for some hours before I went back to sleep:

The Christian Church in general is being deceived and taken down the wrong path. Other distraught pastors and I have lamented over this and exposed the errors. Our effort has not been able to stop this juggernaut created by the Devil; it is like firing BB guns at an alligator. The exposing had to be done and continues, but God has a counter plan. **Matthew 13:10-15**

BACK TO THE BOOK OF ACTS came flashing into my mind over and over again. Jesus came to save mankind, He set up His church, and the Holy Ghost was the power building the church at the time of the Book of Acts. **Matthew 13:16-23, Acts 1:4-8**

THE APOSTLES DID NOT BUILD THE CHURCH

- After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples had to wait until the Holy Ghost came down. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost saved 3,000 men through one sermon. The apostles were the *facilitators* but it was Jesus who was the supreme head of the church represented by the Holy Spirit. **Acts 2:1-22, 37-43**
- Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:47***
- God wants to repeat the same thing again, and is looking for people who are willing to be a facilitator, but not looking to build their own kingdom. **1 Corinthians 3:1-11**



- ❑ All I have to do is to prepare a place, lead our people into total obedience to God, and He will take it from there. *When God shows up* all we have to do is to process the harvest and teach the newborn babes how to walk with God. **Acts 10:1-8, 23-48**
- ❑ God's plan for us is simple; preserve the Word of God as we have it in the King James Bible, preach and teach it, soak it in prayer and fasting, and God will be ready to show up. **Matthew 5:17-19; Isaiah 55:8-11**
- ❑ Instead of trying to encounter the movement of the false gospel, God wants to build a saving vessel, like a spiritual ark, and give people a choice, to come to Him or to stay with the Devil. **1 John 3:8**

THE CENTER

- ❑ God showed me some kind of a center, where there was a huge arena like building, where God was moving among his people 24/7.
- ❑ Just like God had temple workers in Jerusalem working in shifts, so revival workers will work in shifts. On the floor of the building there was a station for people to be saved, taken to a pool of water to be baptized, and then prayed for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There was a station for healing and another for casting out demons. There was no central person leading all these events, but the Holy Ghost using a team of Christian workers.
- ❑ People were sitting in the bleachers praying, singing, worshipping God, led by musicians and singers on the floor. People could stay as long as they wanted, and when they left, new people waiting outside were let in. Thus, there was a constant flow of people.
- ❑ All this was taking place on a large piece of land outside Sacramento. I saw chartered airplanes coming in with people hungry for God, shuttle busses going from hotels to the conference ground. I also saw buildings for training people in solid Bible doctrine, counseling, deliverance and smaller buildings for people to lodge in for those who could not afford the hotels.
- ❑ Cameras were constantly rolling in the big building and broadcast live via the Internet to people around the world. No personal cameras, video equipment, cell phones and recording devices were allowed into the big arena.
- ❑ This work was not being done like the ministries of Kathryn Kuhlman, Benny Hinn and others. There was no central leadership; the work was led by the Holy Spirit and facilitated by pastors, teachers, prophets, evangelists working as a team.
- ❑ No person would be able to hijack this move of God, if people tried to duplicate it in other places and control it themselves, God would simply not show up. Any person willing to duplicate this ministry and meet God's criteria would be blessed by God as He showed up with His glory.
- ❑ This is a big vision and will need to be built in stages. It is too big for man to handle and has to be built by the Holy Spirit. All we need to do is obediently

follow all instructions as they are given, and **make sure that all the glory is given to God, so that people are constantly told, “This is a sovereign work of God that no man can claim as his own.”**

COMMENT

God is the one who will assemble the workers and cause men and women to have a hunger for more of Him. He will cause some people to move to Sacramento while others will be prepared for satellite works where they live. Others will have a strong burden to finance this work, but it will all be done by the Holy Spirit and not by fundraising or gimmicks. **Zechariah 4:6**

THE KEYS

Holiness – **1 Peter 1:13-17**

Unity – **James 3:13-18**

Love – **John 15:7-17**

DO YOU HAVE A DESIRE TO BE PART OF THIS MOVE OF GOD?

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?

Fire In My Bones

by J. Lee Grady



The Deadly Virus of Celebrity Christianity

Some bigheaded preachers demand rock star treatment. If the apostle Paul were around today he might throw rocks at them.

Just when I thought we charismatics had finally taken enough abuse from the egomaniac ministers in our midst, I've learned that some of our leaders are taking things to a new extreme. We've moved beyond the red carpets, limousines and entourages of the 1990s. A new strain of the celebrity virus is spreading in large segments of the church.

"What is this sickness spreading in the body of Christ? All I know is that God is grieved by all of this shameful carnality."

One friend of mine in Texas recently inquired to see if a prominent preacher could speak at her conference. The minister's assistant faxed back a list of requirements that had to be met in order to book a speaking engagement. The demands included:

- a five-figure honorarium
- a \$10,000 gasoline deposit for the private plane
- a manicurist and hairstylist for the speaker
- a suite in a five-star hotel
- a luxury car from the airport to the hotel (2004 model or newer)
- room-temperature Perrier

This really makes me wonder how the apostle Paul, Timothy or Priscilla managed ministering to so many people in Ephesus, Corinth and Thessalonica. How did they survive without a manicurist if they broke a nail while laying hands on the sick?

I was relieved to know that this celebrity preacher's requirements in 2007 did not include a set of armed bodyguards—because I just might want to jump uninvited into her Rolls-Royce and say a few words.

It gets worse, if you can believe it. At a charismatic conference in an East Coast city recently, a pastor stood on a stage in front of a large crowd and smugly announced that the guest speaker was "more than an apostle." Then the host asked everyone to bow down to the person, claiming that this posture was necessary to release God's power.

"This is the only way you can receive this kind of anointing!" the host declared, bowing in front of the speaker. Immediately, about 80 percent of the audience fell prostrate on the floor. The few who were uncomfortable with the weird spiritual control in the room either walked out or stood in silent protest.

So today, I guess it's not enough to feed a celebrity preacher's ego by treating them like a rock star. We also are required to worship him.

And apparently in some places you even have to pay big bucks to speak with him. In a city in the South, a well-known preacher is known to ask for money in order to secure a five- or 10-minute counseling session. The minister uses Proverbs 18:16, "A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men" (NASB), to support this bizarre practice. Some people are known to give more than \$1,000 for a short meeting.

People on fixed incomes need not apply. (That would include lepers, blind beggars, Samaritan women or any other social outcasts who were welcomed and healed by Jesus without payment.)

What has become of the American church? What is this sickness spreading in the body of Christ? I don't know whom to blame more for it: The narcissistic minister who craves the attention, or the spiritually naive crowds who place these arrogant people on their shaky pedestals. All I know is that God is grieved by all of this shameful carnality.

How far we have fallen from authentic New Testament faith. Paul, who carried the anointing of an apostle but often described himself as a bond slave, told the Thessalonians, "Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives" (1 Thess. 2:8).

New Testament Christianity is humble, selfless and authentic. And those who carry the truth don't preach for selfish gain or to meet an emotional need for attention. May God help us root out the false apostles and false teachers who are making the American church sick with their man-centered, money-focused heresies.

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It's Time to Blow the Whistle on Corruption

We've created a toxic religious culture that requires people to be quiet when they should be confronting sin and challenging injustice.

When I started my job at *Charisma* in 1992, one of my first assignments was to sort through dozens of files of disturbing allegations made against one of the largest charismatic churches in the country. A group of women had contacted our magazine with shocking claims that Bishop Earl Paulk Jr. and other staff pastors at the 15,000-member Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Atlanta had sexually abused them. These frustrated women came to the Christian media because no pastors in our movement would listen to their horror stories.

Despite the fact that several women had the same experience with Paulk or other men on his staff, he insisted he was innocent and even brought legal action against a group of the women after they staged a press conference to make their grievances public. He also put a guilt trip on his followers, warning them that anyone who accused him of wrongdoing was "touching the Lord's anointed."

"We should try to imagine how grieved God is that such blatant immorality was allowed to thrive unchallenged for so long in a church that dared to call itself 'Spirit-filled.' "

Today, people are finally admitting that Paulk was a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing. He was the liar and we were the naive dupes who fell for his act.

This became obvious last year when former Cathedral staff member Mona Brewer filed a lawsuit claiming that Paulk coerced her into a sexual relationship that lasted for years. Her suit forced Paulk, other staff members and numerous Paulk relatives to give depositions in court—and the ugly truth began to unfold. The church quickly shrank to a few hundred people, and today the congregation can't afford to maintain their 7,000-seat gothic building.

The most revolting side of the Paulk scandal hit the fan last Sunday. The Cathedral's current senior pastor, Donnie Earl Paulk—who has been known his entire life as Earl Paulk's nephew—admitted to his congregation that he is actually Earl Paulk's son. A DNA test required by the court has proved that Donnie Earl is not the son of Earl's brother, Don. He is actually the product of a relationship between his mother, worship pastor Clariece Paulk, and his "Uncle Earl."

I know it's beyond outrageous. But as repulsive as the Paulk scandal is to us, we should try to imagine how grieved God is that such blatant immorality was allowed to thrive unchallenged for so long in a church that dared to call itself "Spirit-filled." Why have some staff members remained at the Cathedral to this day when they know the truth?

Why didn't national charismatic leaders listen to the countless people who left the Cathedral years ago when they learned about the wife-swapping and debauchery? We should be ashamed that our spiritual fathers ignored the whistle-blowers, withheld biblical discipline and allowed Paulk to ruin the lives of countless people.

When the apostle Paul learned that incest was occurring among Corinthian believers ("immorality of such a kind that does not exist even among the Gentiles," he said), he rebuked the church for refusing to bring correction and gave them a clear directive: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves" (1 Cor. 5:1-2,13, NASB).

Paulk and his cohorts at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit created a bizarre environment full of mind control and emotional manipulation. We charismatics, who claim to have the gift of discernment, should have smelled this cultic deception a mile away. But instead, even though the list of allegations grew year by year, leaders in our movement continued to allow Paulk to air his broadcasts on national television.

We are now reaping the consequences of this sloppy grace and misdirected mercy. Throughout our movement today, ministries and marriages are imploding because we built our spiritual houses on the shifting sands of "anointing" rather than on the solid rock of character and integrity. The embarrassing scandals of 2007—from the high-profile divorces to the parking lot wife-beatings to the Oral Roberts University fiasco—should prompt us to cry out to God for a biblical reformation that will restore genuine holiness in a wayward church.

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Strange Fire on Defiled Altars

Many who claim to be voices for God today are on dangerous ground.

We don't talk much today about Nadab and Abihu. They were obscure Bible characters who failed miserably. Certainly their tragic story doesn't work well as an illustration in the typical seeker-friendly sermon about wealth or success. So we tend to ignore these guys, even though they are mentioned in the Old Testament nine times.

Both sons of Aaron the priest, Nadab and Abihu were suddenly struck dead in the tabernacle because they offered "strange fire" (Lev. 10:1 NASB). We aren't told exactly what they did wrong—that is left to our imagination. All we know is that they did not follow God's specific instructions when offering incense. They were careless with His glory. Their mistake proved to be fatal.

"I wonder why the ground has not opened up and swallowed some of the careless spiritual clowns who are masquerading as bishops, apostles and prophets."

What I deduce from their story is that God's altar is a holy place. When God struck them, He told their father: "'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored'" (v. 3). God made it clear that He isn't playing games. He sent fire from His presence to slay Nadab and Abihu so we would understand that we can't mess around with His laws, His name or His presence. We can't rewrite His instructions or be slipshod or slapdash about worship.

That's why I fear for many of the men and women who claim to be God's mouthpieces today, particularly in the charismatic/Pentecostal movement that I serve. When I read Leviticus 10, I wonder why the ground has not opened up and swallowed some of the careless spiritual clowns who are masquerading as bishops, apostles and prophets.

A case in point: Bishop Thomas Wesley Weeks III, who is now facing charges of assaulting his wife, recently stood in his pulpit in Atlanta during a marriage conference and proceeded to teach married couples how to use profanity during sex.

Yes, the man who allegedly kicked and punched Juanita Bynum in a hotel parking lot last month told attendees at a "Teach Me How to Love You" event that they should get over their hang-ups about cussing. The bedroom, he said, is the place to get down and dirty.

"Don't bring your salvation into the bedroom," he said in a sermon segment that has been posted on YouTube. "All those special words that you can't say no more because you're saved ... save that for the bedroom!"

It is bad enough that Weeks told his followers that it's OK to use filthy language with your wife during lovemaking. It's worse that he said these things as a minister speaking from a pulpit during a church service. Thankfully he didn't bring a bed on stage and give a demonstration—but now that he has taken pulpit crudity to a new level, someone else is sure to introduce Pentecostal porn to an audience somewhere.

Weeks' comments didn't surprise me. There are so many crazy things happening in pulpits in this country that I've become numb to their impact. It seems that in many segments of the church today, false prophets and backslidden preachers can introduce the most bizarre doctrines imaginable and still get shouts from the crowd and plenty of donations in the offering plate.

Meanwhile, a growing number of television preachers are resorting to the most inane tactics to raise money. A popular trend this year is the "Day of Atonement Offering"—in which Old Testament scriptures are strained to the breaking point to make a case for buying special blessings from God. Thanks to this "revelation," you can click on a Web site icon and give your Day of Atonement Offering to win divine favor. (And of course every dime of that money goes to an evangelist who uses it to purchase houses, cars, plastic surgeries and more airtime so they can spread this nonsense to more naive people.)

I have no personal vendetta against these spiritual hoodlums, but lately I find myself praying: "Lord, when will You clean up Your church? When will you send Your holy fire into the sanctuary? When will You turn over the tables of the moneychangers and drive the charlatans out of Your house?"

I have a sense that the answer is coming soon enough. The question is: How close to the modern Nadabs and Abihus will you be when the fire of heaven comes to purge them from the sanctuary? If you are anywhere near a defiled altar, my advice is simple: Run for the nearest exit.

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