

Transform

Magazine

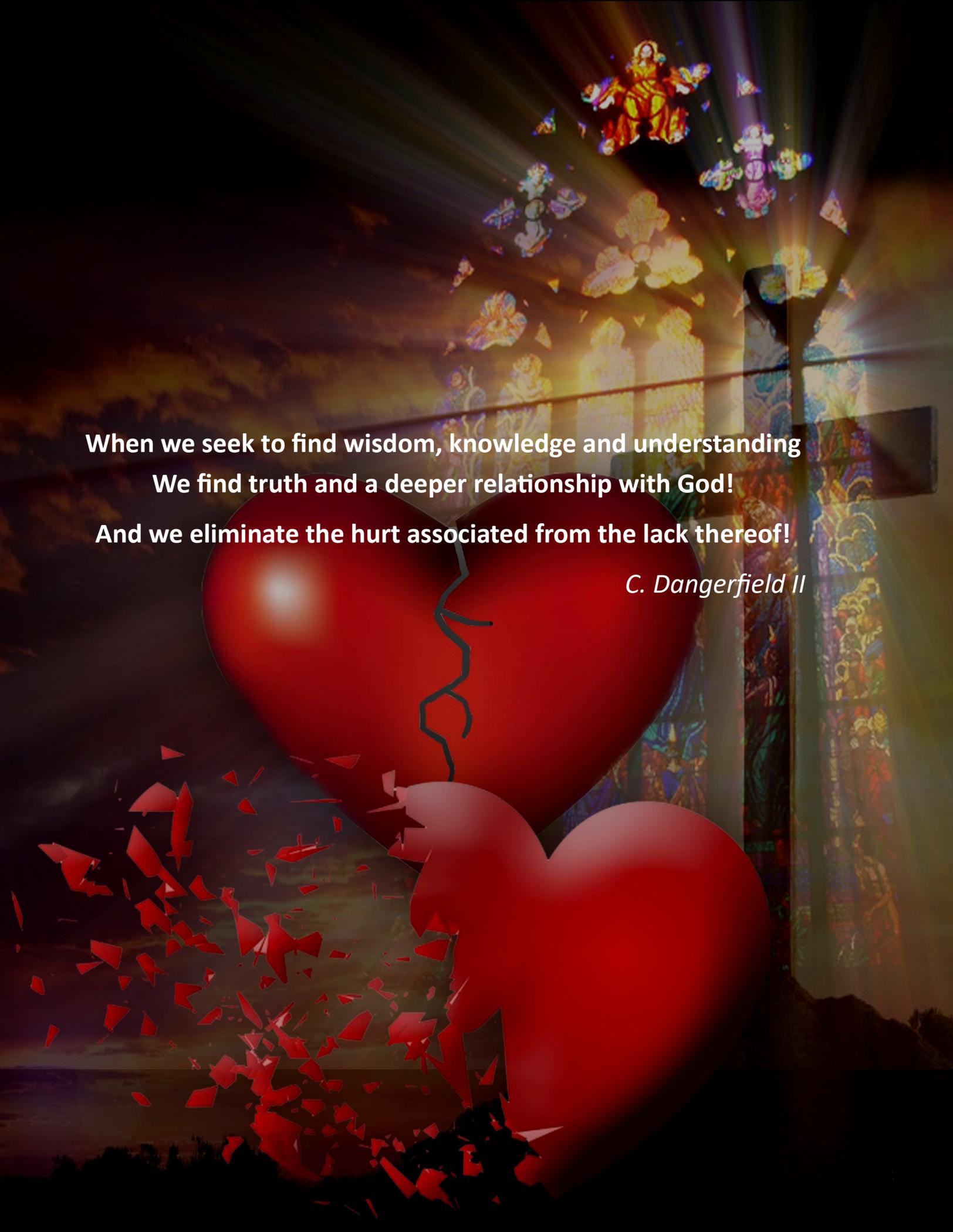
October 2019

Volume 2 Issue 10



“CHURCH HURT”

Dealing with, understanding and overcoming!



**When we seek to find wisdom, knowledge and understanding
We find truth and a deeper relationship with God!
And we eliminate the hurt associated from the lack thereof!**

C. Dangerfield II

Transform Magazine

October 2019
Volume 2 Issue 10



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Thank you for your interest!

Join us every Monday and
Friday as we come together to
fortify one another through the
Word of God!

Victorious Living Faith Ministry 6am Fortification



Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the
countenance of his friend. Proverbs 27:17

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Pastoral Appreciation Month!

Dr. Claude A. Dangerfield II



October is a month that has been set aside to honor the men and women who have dedicated their lives to serve others in the capacity of Ministry. This is truly a sacrifice given unto God to set aside their desires to answer the call. The average person sometimes really doesn't understand all that goes into this walk. For it is truly a sacrifice not only for the individual but it sometimes can consume their families due to the absences of their presence, where they go lacking those interactions that are common in most families.

They have answered the call which comes with the unexpected and what would be considered inconveniences in order to serve the needs of others. They have to be flexible and adaptable to rapid change. They have to be thick-skinned at times not to be affected by the criticism and ridicule by people who are hurting and even transitioning from one way of life to another having the patience, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom along with endurance to help another to walk on the path that leads them back to God.

It may appear to some from the spectator's seat that it glammers to be able to speak to a room full of people and see the excitement and response from a Sunday morning service. But it's deeper than that, we don't always get to see these dedicated people after the message is preached and they have given out all of their strength and the congregation leaves the building, goes out to dinner or rushes home to watch the game. When they are in the confinement of their office trying to recover from the exhaustion of laboring in prayer to pray of controlling spirits. When no one if checks to see if they could use a glass of water or a glass orange juice for a quick boost. They are isolated in an empty building with an empty parking lot. Don't get me wrong we are all not selfish by nature and some will make sure that their needs are meant. God will always bless those who will.

When we are snuggled all comfortable in our beds on cold nights and they have to get up to go see about someone rushed to the hospital, locked up in jail, a family member who has passed away, or a domestic intervention. They answer the call. So this month and always consider their sacrifices, think about their tears and disappointments. Think about how they have to change their plans in order to accommodate other's needs. Let's tell them how much we appreciate them and let's show them by being obedient to the things God has given them to share with us so that we may live out our purpose.

To all of the Pastors who may be reading this, I pray that God will continue to bless you with good health, strength and increased knowledge, understanding, wisdom, endurance and most of all continued patience for this journey!

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Bringing Healing to His House

Donna Richardson Jones

On the 2nd Sunday of each month the pastor allows a visiting minister to come and share. This Sunday it was Pastor Enoch's turn. He had never been to the church before and knew very little about anyone. He was a very devout man of God and sought after God always.

He greeted and honored everyone, gave much praise to God and said I have been told by My Lord to say very little but to ask very much of you today.

First of all, I will ask you to take out a pen and paper.....and now we will begin. I ask you to simply write at the top of your paper as the title: Build a Friend. After that I want you to think of some wrong things that have been done to you and how it made you feel, now after that I want you to write down a description of how you would build a friend that would never intentionally hurt you. You know, how kind, understanding, giving..... that you would want them to be. Make the list as long as you like.

You could hear whispers all over the sanctuary because little did Pastor Enoch know was that the church was about to split because of those well-known words "church hurts"!

People wrote and wrote and then wrote some more, many even begun to weep. After a period of time, they were asked to take a good long look at their list. And then the unthinkable took place, he asked them to revisit the list but this time to see if THEY had ever in their lives, done any of those hurts to anyone else, BOOOOOM SILENCE!!!! THEY WERE SHOCKED, SOME ANGRY!!!!!! SELF EX-AM!!!! .Pastor's Enoch then said, all that Holy Spirit has shown you, repent for hurting others.... take another piece of paper and more sincerely again describe the kind of friend you want in this church and BECOME THAT FRIEND TO OTHERS. IT STARTS IN YOUR HEART, SO BE THAT PERSON BEFORE YOU EXPECT IT FROM OTHERS.

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FRIDAY-DINNER &

OVERCOMING CHURCH HURT, LEARNING TO FOCUS ON CHRIST

BY Elder Diane Harvell

“I’m not going to nobody’s church anymore!” These were words I spoke years ago after I left my “church home” at that time because I had been hurt.

The church that I thought I would always be a part of and would always be a part of me, I ran away from it. It’s typical that many people believe the church is a safe haven or at least should be, yet to me it can be one of the most life altering experiences one could have.

This concerns me because many people, who have never had the church experience, or who didn’t grow up in church, or who have never ever been to church at all, are unprepared to see, hear or to receive beyond what they expect, which is love and acceptance. And although it’s true that a lot of people do not go to church unless they feel they have to. To attend a funeral, a christening or because of an “Easter” holiday, they still expect to feel and receive at the least, God’s loving kindness inside the house of God when they come.

When visitors are among God’s people at church or beyond, it’s important that God’s people should represent the love of God well. But if we haven’t fully experienced the love of God, it’s impossible to represent that we are well loved by God.

John 3:16~For God **so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

So God loved us so much that He gave all that he had.

I’m not sure about anyone else, but when God saved me, I became happier, and I wanted to share with the whole world who had made me that way. His joy emanated from me and it was and I should hope, still is just as inviting.

Yet as a new convert, I was naïve and believed all people who said they were “saved” were loving and kind and cared about God’s word. Many times,

unfortunately, this was not the case in my church experiences or among the “people of God.” But God is all knowing and all wise and I believe this is why Jesus said to his disciples in;

Matthew 13:30~”Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”

You see, God is still Master of both wheat and tare, and He knows who we really are in Him.

One of my favorite preachers in the person of Rev. Niki Brown preached a sermon may I never forget. Speaking on the wheat and the tare, she explained that both the wheat and the tare were planted into the same soil. So they had to grow together. But if it wasn't for the tare, the wheat would have died and not grown because they were still connected to each other until the master separated them! After I heard this, my healing process began!

To overcome all of my hurt, I began to embrace every pain, every scar and every bad experience I've ever had because they are the experiences that caused me to “grow!”

Now, I've learned to focus on Christ and not the pain that people or circumstances will sometimes cause. My trust is in the Lord and Him only. Do I trust others? I trust that they mean well, but they may fall short of what I expect, so no matter friend or foe, I've learned to trust and depend on God to do just what he says He will do.

He will renew you, he will comfort you, and He will heal you! This is what I want others to know about me so that I will have the opportunity to tell them how to overcome hurt of any kind.

Embrace your life and all that it has offered you good and bad. If you let Him, God will divide it and with it, He will make you whole! This is my legacy.

God Bless You All,
Elder Diane Harvell

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“WHEN MEN CRY OUT TO GOD.
WHAT A ENCOUNTER!”

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. John 4:23



October 18 at 7:30pm
Bishop Steven Ward
Pavilion of Hope
International Ministries
Farmville NC



October 19 at 10am
Apostle Mark Dickens
Holy Ghost Power of Deliverance
and Restoration Ministries
Whitakers NC.



October 20 at 4pm
Overseer T. D. Barrett
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Overseer JD Williams Host

Friday October 18, 2019 at 7:30 pm
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Overcoming Church Hurt

Learning to Focus on Christ

By Eunice A. Christian

October 9, 2019

Matthew 26:20-23 (KJV)*: ²⁰ Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. ²¹ And as they did eat, He said, ***Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*** ²² And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, *Lord, is it I?* ²³ And He answered and said, ***He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray Me.***

* * *

Luke 23:22-31(KJV): ²² And he said unto them the third time, *Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.* ²³ And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. ²⁴ And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. ²⁵ And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will. ²⁶ And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. ²⁷ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. ²⁸ But Jesus turning unto them said, ***Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*** ²⁹ ***For, behold, the days are coming, which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.*** ³⁰ ***Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.*** ³¹ ***For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?***

Points of reference:

- Opening Scriptures
- Foreword – Defining *Church Hurt*
- Jesus Betrayed and Crucified
- Who Did You Hurt / Who Hurt You?
- Deliverance from a Sick Situation
- The Story of the Student
- Combatting the Hurt
- Let the Healing Begin With You ... *Us!*
- Praise Away the Pain
- Stay Encouraged

FOREWORD

This article is focused upon the theme: *Overcoming Church Hurt; learning to focus on Christ.* What is *church hurt*? My definition of *church hurt*: (1) An act associated with church engagement that resulted in hurt or ill-feelings caused by one or more individuals who profess Christianity; (2) *Having difficulty assembling with fellow believers in a congregation, or difficulty fellowshiping with those who profess to do God's Will due to harmful experiences induced by those who professed to have a Christ-like walk; usually during visits or fellowship;* (3) *Church hurt is a painful state felt by one who has been hurt by one or more members of a congregation that he or she trusted.* I would further extend my definition to include the following:

Church hurt is felt when a visitor or member of a church has been emotionally harmed, offended, and hurt, and in extreme cases, physically violated, due to offenses or perceived offenses by those who profess Christianity; so much so, that the offended is discouraged from fellowship. In extreme cases, it can lead one to doubt the love or presence of God.

Church hurt is not to be taken lightly. It is a painful experience; it can be isolating if the offenses were caused by a member of a ministry with strong influence. It could be the result of a combination of ills: betrayal, deceit, smear tactics, and worse—sexual misconduct by those who was in a position of trust. What is important to understand that while *church hurt* is real, because we are blessed to experience another day, there can be healing.

When a person suffers *church hurt*, it is usually evident by acts of withdrawal from fellowship when it is needed the most with those who are in a position to help with the healing process. I do not know anyone who cannot identify with church hurt—whether on the receiving end of the hurt—or knowing someone who has endured *church hurt*. Just like any pain suffered, a person suffering from *church hurt* should seek help from a person who can be trusted. Do not become angry with God, or clump all Believers together in a negative light. We are saved, yet at different levels of deliverance. We all have various levels of strengths in our walk in Christ Jesus. We all also have various levels of weaknesses in Christ Jesus. We all are in need of deliverance; for as we believe, and it is written, *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). Look to those in leadership for a resolution. Also, if you suspect someone is suffering from *church hurt*, see how you can make a positive difference—just being an ear to someone who is hurting, or just reaching out to let him or her know that someone cares can make a huge difference.

Jesus Betrayed and Crucified

When Jesus was close to facing the cross, He prayed to our Father in heaven. He separated Himself from His disciples to pray. In The Book of Luke, Chapter 22, Verse 44, Jesus prayed so hard, that it appeared He sweated large drops of blood. During His praying, He checked His disciples; they were sleeping. His response to their sleeping was disappointment. *Could you not watch for one hour?* Even the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords was hurt due to the lack of support from those He gave His life for, yet He still died on the cross for the world. He suffered in ways that we have not—nor will ever. That should help place things in perspective when it comes to our *church hurt*.

As we receive and believe, Jesus was betrayed and crucified. According to scriptures, Jesus was hung on a tree. He had thick, enormous metal driven through his wrists and feet. He was given vinegar to drink instead of water while He hung thirsty on the cross. Jesus was pierced in His side; it is written that water and blood flowed from His wound..

Our Father God allowed the darkness to cover the sky while His Son, His only begotten Son died so that we might have right to everlasting life. Those who reviled against, and those who cried for Jesus, witnessed what has to be one of the most torturous ways to kill someone, and yet, through it all, Jesus said to His Father before taking His last breath, ***Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*** (Luke 23:34).

Isaiah 53:1-9 (KJV): ¹Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ²For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness, and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. ³He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. ⁸He was taken from prison and from

judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people He was stricken. ⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.

Who Did You Hurt / Who Hurt You?

As long as you focus on who you hurt without repentance, the longer it will be for you to attain peace of mind—that is if you have the mind of Christ Jesus. Alternatively, as the victim, the longer you hold on to bouts of anger and disappointment, the longer it will take time to heal. ***Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*** (Romans 12:19). The Lord will make the crooked strait. Continue to trust Him and obey. *To add, focusing on those who hurt you constantly will just give them power over you that they do not deserve.*

Matthew 7:13-23 (KJV): ¹³ *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:* ¹⁴ *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* ¹⁵ *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* ¹⁶ *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* ¹⁷ *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.* ¹⁸ *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* ¹⁹ *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* ²⁰ *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* ²¹ *Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* ²² *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* ²³ *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Deliverance from a Sick Situation

If you are suffering from *church hurt*, and find your healing process difficult, please find a person or group who can help you on the path to healing. It is better sometimes to separate from those who cause the hurt, than to continue to be subjected to it. Ask The Holy Spirit for clarity of mind and heart.

There are many churches or ministries; not all are Holy Ghost filled or follow the teachings of Christ. However, there are amazing ministries doing the will of God; yet, it only takes one—just one person—to taint a ministry's reputation, or to make newcomers or members uncomfortable to the point of creating divisiveness and emotional pain. *Where two or three are gathered, touching and agreeing, God is in the midst* (Matthew 18:20). Yet, a fourth person can come along, and with a contrary spirit, cause division.

In an attempt to paraphrase a pastor's favorite statement: *The moment you find the perfect church, the moment you arrive, it's perfect no more.* We are made perfect only in Christ Jesus. As it is written, ***Many are called, few are chosen*** (Matthew 22:14), so learn to focus upon you; knowing you have an expected end in Christ Jesus.. Remember the scripture: Jesus came for the sick, so don't be surprised if there are those who profess to be followers of Christ, but their actions support otherwise. There will always be someone around who will disapprove of someone, looking to find fault. It is practically unavoidable. It may be easier said than done at times, but look for the positive in a situation and take it from there. Identify what the problem is, and focus on how to best respond to it.

Mark 2:15-17 (KJV): ¹⁵ *And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.* ¹⁶ *And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?* ¹⁷ *When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, **They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.***

The Story of the Student

There was a high school student who studied hard, attendance was excellent, was on an internship, and was focused upon graduating, and starting college. During the final term of the senior year, this student was called into the guidance counselor's office for a meeting. The student was informed that an elective course was required. What the guidance counselor could not figure out was how this student was either allowed to, or able to, take all of the required courses that set up for an early departure from high school. So, instead of allowing this student to increase internship hours, the student was forced-into taking another class; an elective.

Thinking about what to take for an elective was not taken lightly; this student took a course based upon an emotional connection to a family member; it pertained to a field that was unchartered, but was one that this student respected—it was an accounting course. There was much enthusiasm at first; however, an unexpected issue arose. On the first day of this class, the setting was different from the others during this senior year. This elective course contained a classroom filled with freshmen students who were very playful and quite jovial in class. Perhaps they were excited about their first year in a new school, and were having a great time with new acquaintances and a new teacher. Unfortunately, there was a strong disconnect between the senior and teacher—and unfortunately, with the freshmen students. The freshmen in this class were just starting on their high school journey; this student was about to complete high school. There was a seriousness about this student who wanted to graduate; the younger schoolmates were not so. To make matters worse, the teacher encouraged the jokes and storytelling during the class.

As you can figure, this senior student could not get pass the lack of focus during the class. The end result was graduating with a less than desirable final grade which resulted in a significant hit on the GPA.

In hindsight, and many years later, this student was able to see the error of the decisions made. The comical class setting should not have hindered this student's ability to get the desired grade. Being aggravated that too much time was on storytelling and jokes, albeit distracting and a loss of quality time, was not the total cause of the low grade achieved. Had this student focused more so upon the prize (graduating with a desired grade) instead of the obstacles towards the prize (comical teacher and playful freshmen), this student may have maintained the GPA earned during the years. There were also other options—asking for assistance independent of the class. *If this senior student was offered \$1Million to pass the class with an A, I bet that student would have found a way to get that A grade!*

What's the point in the story? The point is that if we focus upon the prize—our salvation—our relationship with Jesus—knowing how precious it is to call on His Holy Name, knowing that He loves us and cares for us, we will not ever give up, or settle for less, than giving Him our best—that means not allowing anyone's ill will against us to be our focus. We will not allow ourselves to dwell on others and the negative impact their relationship causes. We would know to seek out options that will improve our situation, because the alternative is not an option. *To sink into depression, or to lose faith and trust in fellowship with the body of Christ is not an option.*

Combatting the Hurt

Galatians 6: 1-5 (KJV): ¹ Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. ⁵ For each one shall bear his own load.

To believe in God, is to believe in His Holy Word. The scriptures teach that we are to be like Christ. We are not only to be forgiven as we confess our faults one to another, but also forgiving, too. That is taught in the prayer Jesus presented as an example to us all.

James 5:9 (KJV): ⁹ Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

James 5:13-16 (KJV): ¹³ Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. ¹⁴ Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. ¹⁶ Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

As it is written, we are to give God the praise for who He is and what He is to us. We are to also pray and ask for strength and protection from day to day—and that includes praying for the Will of the Father be done, praying for protection, and also praying for forgiveness of our sins, as we pray for the ability to forgive others, too. Even if we do not know what to pray for, God knows in advance—He knows all.

Matthew 6:6-15 (KJV): ⁶ But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. ⁷ But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. ⁸ Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. ⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. ¹⁴ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Let the Healing Begin With You ... Us!

So to heal from *church hurt*, we should not negate to pray before the Father in the name of His beloved Son, Jesus for the strength to be like Christ. If Jesus can request that God forgive His accusers while dying on the cross, we, too, need to know how to heal past *church hurt*. If it means to separate for a season, I believe that is best sometimes. Sometimes separation is good for reflection and rejuvenation, which is to continue one's focus upon the Will of God and His Holy Word. It is important while healing from *church hurt*, not to forget what is important. The adversary seeks to steal, kill, and destroy. The adversary looks to cause confusion. The best way to fight such negativity is to stay in the Word of God and fellowship with others who love the Lord who can touch and agree with you for strength for today.

Matthew 18:21-22 (KJV): ²¹ Then came Peter to him, and said, *Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?* ²² Jesus saith unto him, ***I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.***

Praise Away the Pain

In addition to staying in the Word, reading inspirational scriptures from the Book of Psalms, for example, a way to heal from *church hurt* is to engulf oneself in the spirit of praise and worship. Praise and worship God for your victory in getting free from the bondage of *church hurt*. Praise God for complete deliverance from those who would seek your demise. Alternatively, pray to the Father of Lights that you do not cause anyone to stumble or fall. Pray for strength for today and tomorrow for yourself and others; *regardless as to whether he or she is friend or foe*. Pray for the power to forgive—or be forgiven. Pray even if you do not believe the person will ever hear your request seeking or desiring forgiveness. If you're the victim, pray and claim to be set free from *church hurt*.

What helps in times of difficulty are songs of praise. Seek out songs that provide inspiration and joy. Before you know it, you may find yourself dancing through your hurt. *Now thank God for deliverance from your church hurt...praise God because He is worthy in season and out of season!* Praise God because of who He is and what He is to you. When you think of His goodness and all that He's

done, shout *Hallelujah! I thank God for saving me!* Now you can understand the lesson learned by the senior student—don't take your eyes off the prize. In spite of the distractions, the cliques, and gossipers, you will reap the reward if you faint not. For those who are going through this situation: *Don't let church hurt hinder you anymore. Reinforce yourself in God. Ask the Holy Spirit, your Comforter for direction. Get back on course and stay strong. Stay focused on what matters. You're more than a conqueror! You are too blessed to be stressed!*

* * *

Stay Encouraged

We cannot truly fathom how great our Lord and God is, but what we can identify with is our Lord and our God's mercies towards us. Knowing that there are recorded accounts of how Jesus walked this earth—and knowing how He lived and died for us—should cause us to serve Him with an abundance of gratitude and humility. We know that we could never repay Him for what He has done, and continues to do for us, by the power of the Holy Spirit—we know this—but the way we can honor Him is to love and obey Him.

We should, therefore, be willing to spread the gospel so that the Holy Word may be received by all who will believe—and for those who truly believe, may we rejoice together, and be continually encouraged in knowing that we have a glorious expected end in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:14-16 ¹⁴Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

* * *

There is no greater gift than the power of God's redemption.

So, if you've have not done so already, give your heart to Jesus while you still have time.

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*All biblical references are from the Kings James Version (KJV) - Public Domain.

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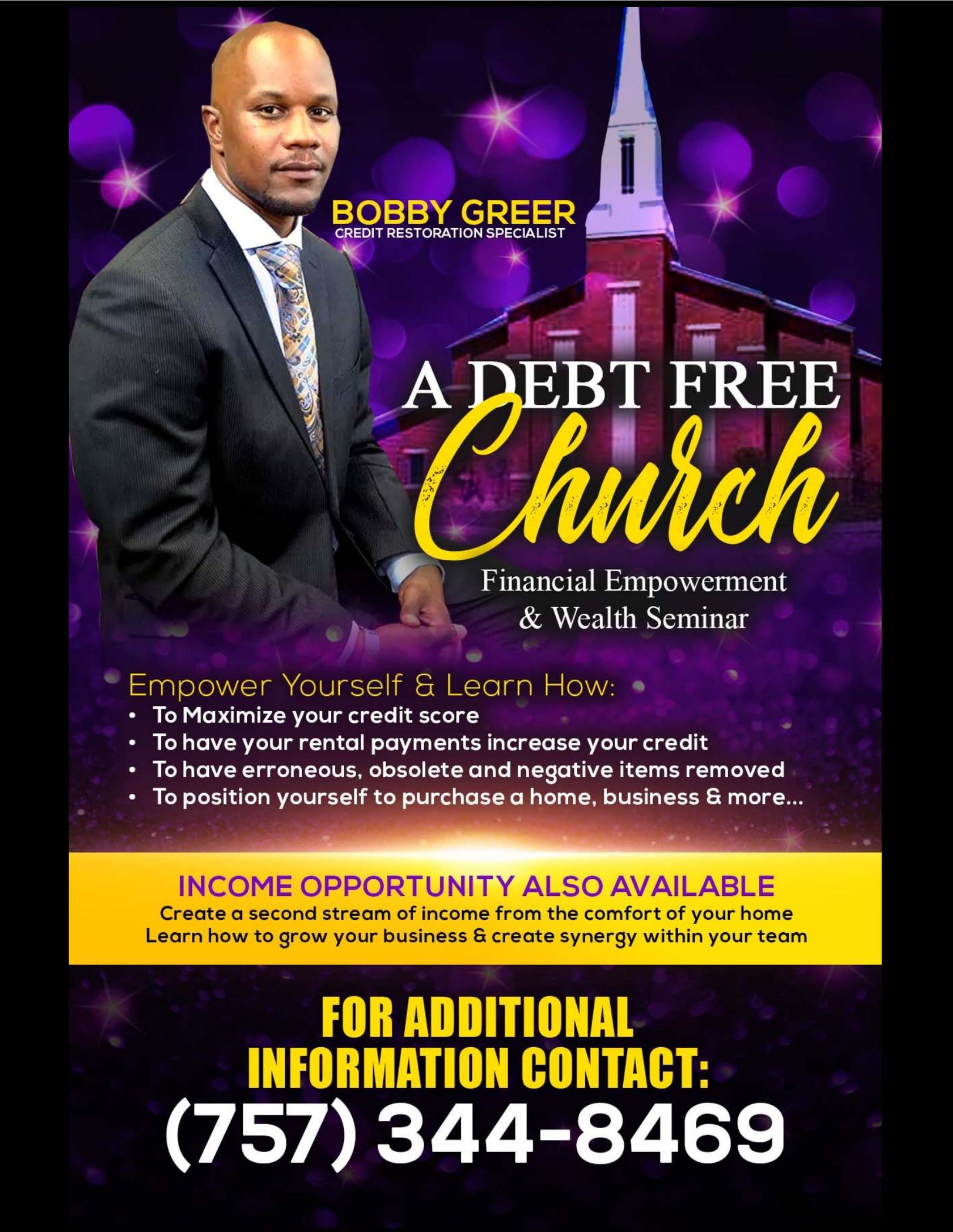
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First Look Inward

Dr. Claude Dangerfield II

This month we are focused on what seems to be a common conversation this day regarding Church Hurt. It is not a common cause that brings it to life, but many factors. Some have expressed the cause of the afflictions are imposed by other members and some even by pastors and ministers. But that just surface and not really the root cause of what is deemed a problem.

So let's explore what is evident in most cases and that's resistance to growth, knowledge, and understanding. Some became unhappy because they are not yet ready to abandon certain lifestyle practices for a complete transformation. So it is easier to say that others are too judgmental because one is not ready to completely yield to the changes they know they themselves have to make to have a successful path to their purpose. It has come do to strongholds, pride and sometimes outright defiance.

Journeys in life are not always perfect by any stretch of the imagination. However, it is imperative that we are first honest with ourselves in order to truly gain the desired outcome. It's very easy to murmur and complain until such time that we allow ourselves to grow up in the faith and get off a milk diet which always seems to be warm fuzzy and grab a seat at the grown-up table and begin to feast on meat, the meat of the Word of God.

When we make that decision we will not always like what we see or hear because it will bring conviction and that requires change. The reason why change is required is that knowledge has been unveiled and accountability stands in waiting. Is it comfortable? Absolutely not because it requires one to respond to life in truth. Not running away like a child who has had their feelings hurt. It requires growth that will provide one knowledge and as we advance forward, to provide a greater understanding, which develops into much-needed wisdom for now and in the days ahead.

The funny thing is that we all will go through this in one form or another at various stages throughout our life. The main thing we must come to understand and remember is nothing occurs unless God allows. The circumstances which we encounter on this journey depend solely on how we react or respond. Reactions usually come with consequences and responses come with a quicker and mostly favorable understanding with the gain being growth.

As you continue on this journey it is important that we pay attention to the details which surround us and learn to look inward first to understand the motive of our emotions, rather than outward truly when we know it begins with us. Be bless as we continue to look at this broad topic.

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Understanding Some of the Shortcomings

Dr. Claude Dangerfield II

In today's society, there are many churches' popping up everywhere yet we see little changes occurring within the communities in which they are housed. One city that I will not name on one street there is eight churches within ten blocks on that one street. But there is no change in the condition of the immediate neighborhoods. Crime, violence, and intimidation remain supreme. When you have a conversation with those within the neighborhood they sometimes complain of no real contact with the churches because the membership just comes in has services and leaves the area. There is no real touch on the neighborhood and they feel abandoned.

Has the church become desensitized to the community and withdrawn. Has fear overwhelmed the churches that they just come in, lock the doors have their service and go home? Why is it difficult to leave an imprint of Christ's compassion that will compel people to come? People are seeking hope and what better place to find and establish it in one's life than the household of Faith. Have we lost sight that the Bible says come as you are? That when one does come in the church we quickly judge them based on their appearance and the atmosphere shifts to one that makes them feel unwelcome, judge or even looked down upon.

Are we as a church putting more emphasis on the outfit's in which we wear which sometimes looks like walking down the red carpet at the Gala or Awards show? So, those seeking Christ, they won't come in because they feel they can't measure up to the standard. Are we sending the wrong message? Are we now becoming untouchable or unreachable? Because of our weekly fashion show of high fashion sometimes more extravagant than that of Hollywood. What has become our focus? Have we allowed this to overshadow what should be our true mission? Leading the lost to repentance and redemption. Has our initial motive change from salvation to disobedience. Have we become so engrossed with our appearance that it takes center stage before the salvation message? Has Satan so shuttle to consume us with vanity and idolatry practices that we have lost sight of Christ and our purpose in Him?

I used the term shuttle because it is a way of being drawn into and getting caught up unaware that we have actually changed our nature. We really think we are in the right frame of mind. Let us remember what Paul says in Romans 12:1-2 "I beseech ye (you) brethren by the mercies of God, that ye (you) present your bodies a living sacrifice, (sacrifice as the meaning of the surrender of something for the sake of something else) holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Reasonable meaning not extreme or excessive but, possessing sound judgment). And be not conformed (to be in agreement or harmony) to this world: but be ye transformed (to change in character or condition, to convert) by the renewing (to make like new: restore, to freshness, vigor or perfection, regenerate, revive, rebuild) of your mind (intention, desire, one's personal control center), that ye (you) may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (good being bountiful in God, acceptable meaning capable or worthy being accepted of God, perfect meaning satisfying all requirements to represent Him).

We have to consistently examine ourselves that we maintain the true benchmarks outlined in the Word of God that we can continue to be a great and effective ambassador for God. So that our daily practices don't hinder others from their quest in finding God by creating more shuttle harm which will lead to greater hurt because we ourselves have lost focus on what should be our intended mission and purpose in God.

We have to always continue in refreshing our knowledge, which provides us greater understanding and wisdom of Him that we may also be effective in our witness as well as our teaching. The scriptures tell us in 2 Timothy 2:14-15, 14) Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. 15) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. In 2 Timothy 3:14-17 it further describes who we are as well as what we are capable of becoming 14) But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15) And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16) All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good words

which harms our progress. I pray that we all on a regular basis take an inward honest assessment and when we question our actions and motives. Take the necessary steps to consistently realign ourselves back to Him, being consistent in our renewal in order to be diligent in our walk.

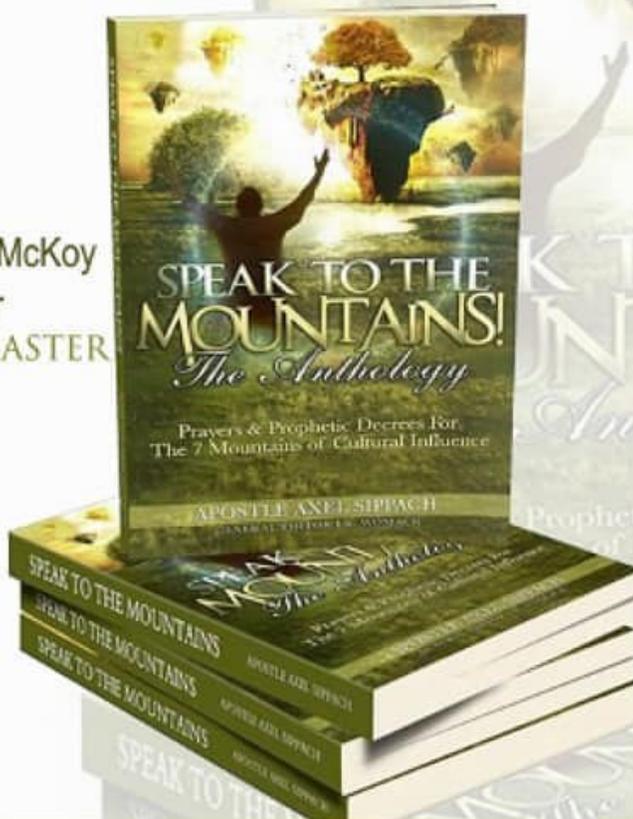
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CHURCH HURT

The Leaders and The Injured within the Hospital

by Evang. Ella J. Alexander

It is said that the church is the hospital of God, a place where sick people come in and get the help that they need. Although today that saying is still ringing in the ears of many, there is a problem with within the walls of the hospitals. There is a flow of souls that comes to the church for many different things and different reasons. They come looking for comfort and a place to get peace or restoration. Many come in and get their membership card and everything seems fine in the beginning but something happens. Within the church, the hospital, people are being hurt and wounded. They are mishandled and mistreated so badly that they leave. Others end up dying right in the church on the very seat that they sit. We, the leaders in the church are supposed to be the righteousness of God doing things in the right manner. Just as we were drawn by God to God, we are to draw people in the same manner. The word of God says in Jeremiah 31:3, *The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.* We must draw the people with lovingkindness. We were instructed to pray one for another (James 5:16; Galatians 6:2) and to love one another as Christ has loved us.

John 15:12 – *“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.”*

When one is sick they should be able to call on the elders of the church that they may be healed.

James 5:14-15 – *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”*

Not everyone in the church is bad there are others who are trying to assist people back to good health.

One of the main problems within the place that is known as the hospital is church hurt. It is deadly. It causes the people to be wounded not just spiritually, but emotionally and physically. Others in the eyes of people are broken beyond repair. It is a sad thing and something must be done. There are so many doctors which are the Pastors, Bishops, Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, Deacons, and

Missionaries giving the people the wrong medication and it is killing them slowly. So many of the leaders have sat and talked with the injured or sick people that came into the church only to come to pulpit to make the people their Sunday sermon. If they are not the topic of the Sunday sermon then the leaders or supposed to be teachers and encouragers are spewing out venom from the pulpit at the people instead of going to the person and getting things straightened out.

Matthew 5:23-24 – *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”*

Mark 11:25 – *“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if you have ought against any: that your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”*

Church hurt goes as far as the East is from the West. It could be something that two people had an issue with and took it to one of the leaders that it may be dealt with and it was ignored. Something like that could destroy the bond between two people forever. It could also be a person who is pursuing God, and one of the leaders hindered him/her due to a sexual or perverse act which took place and the result was one's walk with God that was interrupted. No one knew what was in that person's heart but the Lord God.

From slander to cruelty, mistreatment and abandonment, spiritually cutting off the people's limbs is well known in the place called THE HOSPITAL OF GOD. Why is there so much church hurt? Matter of fact, why is there any church hurt at all? Especially when we have the injured coming into a place for help and we are doing more damage than good. There are so many questions and I believe one of the main questions is what makes a leader hurt other people or try to destroy the character and reputation of someone? There are many scriptures that come to mind. The first one being Romans 7:5 – “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth death” and Romans 7:19 – *“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.”* According to the scripture the flesh will lead us to do many things that we ought not do. So we still have a right to choose. Leaders must choose whether to live in the spirit or live in the flesh. Decisions must be taken into consideration very carefully. Thoughts are processed every millisecond of the second. If we, the leaders are in our flesh, then our actions, words, and character will be sinful and start killing those who are trying to live. Although we have a choice to do good, we being in the flesh would do wrong. Galatians 6:8 says, *“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”* We cannot choose to sow to the flesh and expect to reap everlasting life. NO WAY!

The Bible speaks of our mind being renewed and transformed. The three familiar scriptures that many love to quote but fail to live by is Romans 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*” Philippians 2:5 – *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”* The third one is Philippians 3:15 – *“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect be thus minded: and if in any thing reveal even this unto you.”* All of those scriptures are dealing with our minds. How we should think, but due to our own way of thinking it will produce a negative action. If our minds are not renewed, how could anyone expect our character to change? It won’t change knowing this *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”, Ephesians 6:12.*

Some of the things that leaders deal with are not new. The Bible lets us know that there is nothing new under the sun. Many will never admit to such things, but if they are in the flesh the works of the flesh will make itself known.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” – Galatians 5:19-21

Many leaders are dealing with past issues and or current issues that they refuse to talk about or deal with; therefore it is like a cycle of killing. They will kill any and every one that is in their path. The innocent are caught up in their spree of killing. They will hurt other people because they have been hurt, let down, rejected or disappointed. They will do unto others as others have done unto them. There is a saying that hurt people, hurt people. It is true to a point because some hurt people do not strive to hurt others. They rather keep their hurt to themselves and try to hide it. However as leaders, if we don’t deal with our issues how can we help others? Not saying that God can’t step in and intercede because he can, he has and will because he loves us. That does not remove our responsibility to do what is right. Some leaders are carrying things from their childhood while others are dealing with things in the spirit realm because of generational curses or things they have dipped and dabbled in. Whatever the reason is, there is a core, the source of the problem. If we don’t deal with the main problem we will soon have a church full of dead souls that should have been made alive, but do to the leaders being in the flesh, those souls never stood a chance being under their supposed to be watchful eye.

Words have cut, bruised, severed, and even killed many in the house of God. It took their faith from great to almost no faith at all. So many are yet dealing or facing church hurt within the very walls that they worship. It's not only words that have hurt people but there is physical abuse going on as well that has been ignored. People have shut their eyes and turned their heads away from the thing that should have been corrected.

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Obtaining a True Understanding

Dr. Claude Dangerfield II

As we continue to look at Church Hurt we want to look at it from a different narrative and that is from the area of growth which causes people to go from ministry to ministry. As we explore this, let us start at birth. We are born then we are carried as we develop towards being more independent in nature. In the church, we repent and confess the sinner prayer invite God to come into our lives so now we are born again we too are carried at the beginning of our conversion so that we become accustomed to the new environment that we have become a part of. Just as a baby we are started out on milk, the milk of the Word in that we gain a basic understanding of who we are and what we are to become. Then we go from the infant to the toddler stage and we grow in our walk we go from the formula to toddler foods, fruits, and vegetables we are introduced to more types of foods that will help build us up.

Through this process, we learn boundaries which are designed to keep us safe from harm and away from things we are not mature enough by nature to handle at this time. We glean certain behavior traits from those around us, but with good parenting, we learn which ones are acceptable and not acceptable for building up our character as well as our outlook on life. Love is provided within our atmosphere that creates a bond of trust. The more we trust the greater our understanding becomes. As far as our nutrients we are introduced to certain foods that help us to grow into what would be consider a healthy individual. So we go from the exclusive diet of milk and formula which is provided for the formative year to more a nutritious diet which includes meats, vegetables, fish, bread, and various beverages.

So we as Children of God following these stages with our growth, and as our appetite changes we seek out more nutrients within the Word of God. Milk just won't satisfy the hunger pains we have for more knowledge understanding and wisdom. We thirst and crave and seek out to savor that fulfillment. As we continue in this quest we maintain the momentum which leads us on the true path to our purpose and destiny in Christ.

Where does the hurt come in when someone's aim is to control or stunt your growth by trying to block the pathway because their desire is not as great as yours for the knowledge and truth. On life's journey, there are many destinations and many transfer points where we are required to change vehicles to continue to the ultimate destination of our life path. If the first vehicle is not equipped to take you all the way because of a difference in terrain on your journey it is imperative that a change be made in order not to get stuck or hindered. The driver of the first vehicle should be wise enough to say I have taken you as far as I am capable of going, so now you have to journey forward within the right equipment that can further provide you transit to your destination.

God has given His children this same opportunity in Him. When we thirst we seek for more to quench our thirst, it's not that we don't like the ministries that we are in, but if they can only teach me to an elementary level which is the fundamentals because that is within their capacity I will seek out a high level of understanding. As my appetite increase, I will continue to seek until I reach the place of contentment in Him. I will, however, treasure the relationships and shared experiences along this journey. But, I too must fulfill my purpose in Christ. It is sometimes difficult for leadership to grasp this because of the bonds established. But each person has a purpose in Christ that must be fulfilled to meet the objective of a much bigger picture and understanding. Keeping in mind there is no limitation to our growth in Christ it comes down to our desire. Just as in school we have the capacity to graduate up to a different level of knowledge and understanding and that is our freedom in Him.

For I know the thoughts I think towards you sayeth the Lord. Thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end. *Jeremiah 29:11*.

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
Ephesians 5:17

To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;
Proverbs 1:2

Through wisdom is a house built; and by understanding it is established:
Proverbs 24:3

Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. *Proverbs 4:5*

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. *Proverbs 4: 7*

Throughout the Word of God, He lets us know that He desires us to have knowledge but most importantly He wants us to process an understanding. Therefore we have to set aside time to study the Word of God to really understand the benefits of a life and relationship with God.

Church Hurt: Christ is not to Blame

Dr. Claude A. Dangerfield II

Church Hurt outcomes for some can be very devastating, to say the least. To the point, I have even heard some go as far as to say "They just need to get over it". Well, that might be easy for some to say who are not wise enough or concerning enough to care. We can't just take a casual approach to the situation because there is a soul at stake. For a person any person especially those who are transitioning into the Christian way of life. It is not so easy for most because you truly have to give up your will for God's will. For anyone to have such a lack of compassion and understanding they truly need to do an inward search of themselves and think about the words in which we permit ourselves to utter.

We cannot be so much removed from our own actions that we are not able to see the harm in which we can render to another. We also should not be so prideful that we cannot truthfully admit and face our own transgressions. Our harmful behavior can create circumstances and situations that could become devastating and even irreversible. In its wake, it can push people back in the midst of their forward progress, to the point that they desire not to continue. We are the first encounter sometimes that people have with Christianity. When they make a decision to turn and walk away from their walk with Christ which is the greatest choice they made in their life. They tend to blame Christ for our actions. But it was our mistake that drives them back to the wolves.

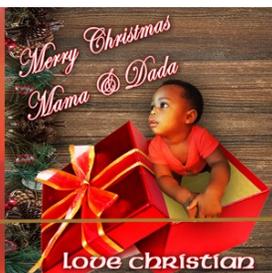
We have to recognize that we all grow at different paces. As we draw nigh to Christ we establish a relationship with him that grows stronger with each encounter and life experience. But, for someone in the faith to throw a somewhat devastating blow, for some it will change their desire for the things of God because it looks too much like the world which they had retreated from. Which is some case that causes them to say "Well at least in the world I know what to expect and even know how to deal with it." In the Church, their expectation of our behavior is that of one that is more caring. They would have never believed at any time they would encounter such treatment from the saints of God. We always hear from the pulpit "With loving kindness have I drawn thee", well they are thinking where's this so-called love and kindness?

The Church can be viewed as a spiritual hospital with patients with many ailments some more noticeable than others while some hidden until the symptoms are discovered. All and all it is not the perfect place it is the treatment center for operations and medication for what ails you. God is the Chief of Staff and Jesus is the ultimate attending physician, therefore we are the patients seeking a cure. But, within this process, we must make every effort not to cross-contaminate the other patients with our sickness and issue. We also must be diligent about obtaining our healing by following the instruction prescribed by our physician and reframing from the behaviors that placed in this unwanted predicament lest we lose the battle become deeper contaminated and die from complications.

There is always a cure with Christ however when we choose or neglect to follow through on the treatment we in fact set the outcome. We have to learn to bridle our tongue, carefully think out our thoughts before we release them. Once they are launched they are activated in the atmosphere and create a cause and effect. We also must put pride underfoot because it can become a blocker to forgiveness. Render one incapable of an earnest apology which makes them ineffective in a lot of areas especially their witness because you have this illuminating cloud over your head and your sincerity is not fully present to others.

We all must take a frequent assessment of ourselves and hold ourselves accountable for our actions, with the understanding that we desire each day to more like Christ in every aspect of our life. He is not to blame for our shortcomings and He is accessible to all who seek at any time. He is the author and finisher of our fate.

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: *Isaiah 55:6*



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