

Articles and Sermons :: The Church Birthed by Prayer & Holy Ghost Fire! by brother Mark

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There is a phenomenon occurring in America and around the world today, that is very sad to watch—Christians are leaving the organized church at an alarming rate! I don't just mean they are not going to church anymore, but they are no longer engaged in meaningful, life giving fellowship as the body of Christ. They may show up to a Sunday gathering every now and again, but that is about it. Today I don't want to focus on the reasons why this is bad or even what this means to the organized church but on what God might be up to as a result of this shift. Is God doing a new thing? Is He behind the deep hunger stirring in many for a new expression of the early church, which has been called, "Organic Church"???

Many have physically left organized religion per se, but many more have already left in their hearts. Some are genuinely seeking out this new "organic form" but the truth is that these "expressions" or rather groups are very hard to find here in the West—it's a little like searching for hens teeth:)

So what happens to a lot of people is that we begin looking forward to this misty, imaginative future where we meet in organic churches and it has even become for some a deep pining in their heart. There is a profound longing, an abiding hope for something better. And this is a good thing, there is nothing wrong with being dissatisfied with the status quo! But "hope deferred makes the heart sick". And it is this issue I want to try to address today because "desire fulfilled is a tree of life". What many are asking here in the West is, "when will our desire be fulfilled"?

Can it be that if we just hope hard and long enough and do a few things here and there, that an organic church will materialize? Just being honest here:) And because it doesn't, what happens? We oftentimes feel that we just need to be doing "something more" that will in fact make such an expression of the body of Christ materialize.

Let me just stop for a moment and explain carefully what I am NOT talking about. I am not talking about starting a traditional church, either in a home or a rented building. You know what I mean: creating a team, raising money, building a website, mailing flyers and having an official launch. And then plowing forward with hard work and lots of perseverance (been there, done that). In fact these kinds of churches can "thrive" (in earthly terms) without even the slightest bit of help from God:)

No, that's not what this article is about. I am talking about a return to what Jesus birthed as described in the book of Acts!

On the day of Pentecost, the first body of Christ was formed in all its splendor, glory and power to be a pure, undefiled expression of Christ. It was a group of individuals who had become captured by Christ, found in Him and then dynamically connected to Him as their head. There was a seamless, symbiotic connection between each of them and Christ Himself, much like the way our individual body parts move and live in perfect harmony with each other because they are all connected to each other via the brain (the Head)

The result is what we call the "early church"—a group of people who love and live as Christ lived, with no break down in expressing Christ in their actions, thoughts and speech. In essence, they were the embodiment and continuation of Jesus when He was on earth and what that looked like was a simple and peaceful walk with the Father, expressed by their simple devotion to Christ—but all of them together working towards the same goal—one heart and one mind to bring glory and honor to Jesus.

Now that sounds like something a whole lot more than we have today in traditional church life doesn't it?

But how we get there is the 64 million dollar question!!!!

I think it is a lot simpler than we make it out to be. Just ask yourself how the original "pure expression of the body of Christ" was formed and how it was multiplied? Ask yourself how God "did it again" at other times of darkness and declension throughout church history? Did a bunch of people just sit down and pontificate what it is that they could do to "make it happen"? Was it really that simple as cobbling together really good biblical ideas and then just putting t

hem into practice? Just shake and bake and “HEY PRESTO” magically a new expression of the body of Christ will eventually appear?

Well I think you already know the answer to that question!

I am arriving at the understanding that nothing was written down in the new testament, from the perspective of the apostles and disciples looking forward into the future for something that they felt they needed to do! I know, I know I am really slow; most of you already know this stuff.

I mean, I don’t think they sat around discussing what course of action they needed to follow in order to start a church or a fellowship! They didn’t spend their lives researching books and websites and the latest “church in a box” kit. They were not looking for some form that was “out there” that needed to be grasped! They were not reading someone else’s history and telling each other, “guys, this is it, look at what they did” this is what we need to be striving for too!!!

No, that’s not what happened at all. It was the Lord who birthed and built His church and there were a few fortunate souls who went along for the ride and were able to write down what they saw. The new testament is not a book that says, “this is what we need to do” but rather an account from early believers telling us today, “this is what we did”!

It is very important that we understand the difference, because what we tend to do when we read and study the new testament is treat it like a book of “formulas” and then what do we do? We do the unthinkable “WE TRY TO CREATE AN ORGANIC CHURCH out of those formulas!

I have good and bad news for you! The bad news is that you cannot create what ONLY God can build. But the good news is that the way in which God built the early church, He can do it again with us today!

Lets just get down to brass tacks. Read the book of Acts and it is clear what went down! The early disciples and apostles were recipients of the outpouring of the third member of the Godhead up on them – the mighty Holy Spirit!!! Why is this so overlooked today? Are we just so blinded by our stupid little paradigms? This outpouring was no doubt sovereign, of course, but it was in response to a group of people who prayed!!! Tarry and wait until you are endued with power from on high! That’s what Jesus told them. He also told them all through His time with them to ask, seek and knock and then keep on asking! So what do you think they all did in the upper room? Play tiddly-winks? No, they prayed!!! I don’t know if they started out praying but I am fairly sure that’s what they got down to after a few days! You see, they had to come to the end of themselves. They had to come to the end of being sick and tired of being powerless, and scared and worried for their lives and being satisfied with the status quo!

They had to come to the point of breakthrough whereby they had nowhere else to turn - but to God - in prayer!

And on the day of Pentecost, God answered their prayers and the fire fell from heaven, the mighty Holy Spirit fell on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and with His power and His boldness. They became “new men” as it were! They were literally baptized, immersed and overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit and God’s fire!

Dear friend, that is how Jesus birthed His church!!!

It was a praying church that received from heaven all that they needed to be the body of Christ! Sounds too simple and uncomplicated I know, but that is really what happened

I have seen this in action only one time in my life, back in Australia when we were involved with a ministry amongst youth called “Revolution Youth”. For 18 months, a group of young people prayed in the hills overlooking Perth and one day God poured out His Spirit on us and all heaven broke loose! We honestly didn’t know what we were doing and we certainly didn’t turn to books or techniques to figure out what we HAD TO DO in order to form a “pure expression of the body of Christ”. For it was Christ Himself who did this work amongst us all, and it was Christ Himself who led us each step of the way, there was no manual and if there was it would not have done us any good.

All these years later I can share a little about this, not so that I can write down formulas that can be copied for others to follow, but to simply say, “this is what we did”. This is what God did through and in us, just like He did in the book of Acts and just like did in every great work of the Spirit down through church history. And He really, really, really wants to do it again!

So where does that leave us now? Well, we have a choice to make, my fellow lovers of truth. Keep on telling ourselves that we can birth something via following the formulas of men, or become convinced that the only way is for us to turn to God in Prayer!

May God birth new bodies of Christ today, in Houston, American and all over the world, not with our formulas but through the prayers of His saints!