



January 2000

It's here!

That date we've been making all the fuss about has arrived. Was it worth all the wait and excitement? Let's hope so! After all, this is the day that the Lord hath made- I know what to do with that!

Well, since I'm typing this in mid December I can't tell you what's going to happen in January, aside from the usual SNAC's and prayer meetings, that is. But good things. For one thing, this is the first January newsletter we've had in a lot of years. Ponder that, it bodes well for the whole group. We done got organized at last!

Last month we were looking at the twentieth century and my proposition was that we weren't actually starting a new millennium this year but putting the capstone on the last one. A great deal of what I shared was negative, for it has been a time of turmoil and upheaval.

But that's only half the picture. On New Year's night, 1899 a group meeting in Topeka, Kansas dared to ask God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by the sign of speaking in unknown tongues. One woman was so bold as to ask that hands be laid on her just as she had read about in the Book of Acts. That was the culmination of a huge hunger and cry during the nineteenth century, for she received her request almost precisely on the stroke of the clock.

The revival smoldered a few years and then burst into flame at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, from there going round the world and launching many ministries and movements. A further move in 1948 ignited more activity and controversy. Then in the sixties and seventies God began to unite and blend this new power in amongst the whole body of Christ. All of Christendom began to take on more and more of the supernatural.

City Bible Church, then known as Bible Temple, began to find itself raised up in a quiet role of leadership and training during these years. As books and tapes and Bible college students

began to circulate throughout the world, she found herself with an increasing voice and arm to help other churches enter into the blessings she had once struggled to enter into herself.

Many other ministries have appeared during the past hundred years. There have been great healing movements and revivals, new methods of evangelism and new technology. For the first time missiologists can look at the great commission and say, We can really do this!

If one looks back to the first century AD and the times immediately before and after it one marvels at the preparation God worked within the whole world to make ready the coming of our Messiah. Order was maintained through Roman troops, a common language was in effect, and roads had been built for the express purpose of carrying the good news to the ends of the earth. It was indeed *the fullness of time* (Gal 4:4).

In similar fashion our world has been made ready to see a day like no other day in God. Man has been liberated from subsistence living for one purpose- so that he can attend to the Kingdom of God like no other generation in history. That's why you have a computer on your desk and a car in your driveway! God sees them as tools.

If one looks back only a hundred years we see a far different picture. Take a woman's week for example. Two days were reserved for washing and ironing, one for baking, one for house cleaning, and one for longer term food preparation.

This was in addition to daily chores and whatever could be fitted in for shopping. Saturday nights were reserved for bathing because that was the only time one could get the manpower together to heat that much water on a wood range. There wasn't much time for personal activities, it was all pretty much planned out. Today we have time!

Some years back I walked into a Christian bookstore and found a table devoted to a close-out on Oxford Bibles. At the start of our present millennium God's Word could only be owned by the very wealthy or powerful. Now, here it was not only available, but the price had been

reduced—it was on sale! I paused a moment to let the impact sink in, then purchased a couple, each of which gave me years of good service. What a time to live in!

Hebrew 11 champions the heroes of the faith in olden days, then ends with the word, *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect (complete)*. Wow! God saved His best for last.

Because of this I have a limited amount of pessimism for the future. I do expect to see some hardship and disruption. I do not expect to see us thrown back into the stone age at a moment's notice.

After all, if the computer is on my desk to promote the kingdom of God, then God knows how to keep power in the socket to make it light up. If money from my pocket is sending supplies to world missions, then God has a vested interest in that pocket. If my car is part of God's divine fleet, then He knows where the petroleum to make it go is hidden.

Of course, if God isn't really getting His money's worth out of me and my stuff, that's another matter. After all, everyone is consumed with important activity- to hear them tell the story. But how do things really look from Heaven?

Am I giving it a good effort, or am I just trying to buy God off? Because if I really am seeking first the Kingdom, then I qualify for some solid promises.

I think there has to be some chastisement in our day. There was in the first century. God blessed the church at Jerusalem so much they never wanted to go anywhere else. Then He allowed persecution to erupt and presto- world missions was born. We can expect some wake up calls. Actually, there are some poignant ones for those who can see. Politically, economically, spiritually, times have changed.

My biggest concern, however is that I will be able to meet the challenge of whatever God brings my way. Intercessors were born for tough

times. People with a servant's heart shine when trouble comes. I want to be ready.

Those who speak fear in our time usually miss the very biggest one of all. There is one thing I do fear. I fear it so much I search my heart and try to be ready and make preparation and hang out with those who will help me be ready. What is my fear? The fear of Hebrews 4:1- *Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it*. My fear is that I will miss something important that God wanted me to have. I fear that!

Notice that I said nothing about missing the rapture (whatever *that* may mean). Neither do I have any fears over whether I'm saved or not. (Pastor Frank's current series on spiritual health and victory highly recommended for this one). No, the fear is solely the fear of evaluation and inventory. Am I really where I want to be, doing what I should be doing? I think so- but that will be one of my prayer matters during our solemn assembly time this month. And here's to a great year in God!

Events:

Looks like three SNAC events since we have a five Sunday month. Buster's Barbeque really knows how to feed a person, so we're going back there. Spaghetti Factory on MacAdam seems to be a hit with our ladies, but be prepared for a wait of at least a half hour getting in. It's worthwhile, for the fellowship is good but if you have small children that can't wait it's something to consider. McMennamin's, Kennedy School always takes good care of us too so we'll go there on the 30th.

Promise Keepers Men keep marching through our book. Right now we are in chapter 4, a man and his family. While this may sound irrelevant to a single, it really isn't. I'm a married man who has not yet *met* his wife. How I live and act right now can be a life of faithfulness or infidelity. I can pray for my wife, even though I don't know who she is. I can treat all women with the courtesy and restraint proper for a married man. And when moral temptation knocks on my door, I can say, *Sorry, I'm spoken for*.

Speaking of knocking on my door, I slipped a movie night into our month on the 21st. Don't know what we'll be showing yet, but we'll have a good time. Bring a snack or two and a few friends or a child or two or whatever works out.

May the new year be a time of growth and blessing for all of us!

GAH

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