



August 1998

August can be a bittersweet month. Summer is still at its height but its days are numbered. Daylight is counting down, and we're beginning to get the feeling that not everything we'd hoped for this year will get done. It's a good time to evaluate and make sure that we're really on track with where we want to go and how we'll get there.

It's also a good time to look at our goals and see if they're high enough, or achievable, or if we even have any. That's especially appropriate after all the words and challenges and blessings of the revival conference last month. The words of Hebrews chapter 2 speak very plainly to us, *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

God doesn't speak promiscuously, just to hear the sound of His own voice. *The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver is tried in a furnace of earth seven times.* (Psalm 12:6) If He's that serious about what He says, shouldn't we pay close attention to it? So, what did He say, and what do we do about it?

To begin with, we saw the beginnings of a restoration of gifts to the church, specifically miracles and healing. Part of that involved coming to an understanding of why they were lost and asking God's forgiveness for how they were handled in the past. All the other truths we've come to respect, the unity of the body of Christ, the need for every member, God's call for holiness, a heart cry for the unsaved, our utter dependence on the anointing, all these have been given fresh emphasis.

God's purposes were reaffirmed. The miracle gifts are principally given to break open the hearts of the unsaved and quickly confront and confound those bound by false gods and religions. They're God's provision reaching directly toward the point of man's desperate need, and provide an unchallengeable platform for preaching Jesus Christ to the world. They're the New Testament pattern for achieving New Testament results, and make the evangelization of the world a possibility for our day.

They also demand a higher standard of personal holiness than we've seen before. It was during the times of great outpouring and blessing that people died, not one time in the Bible but many. The more closely we deal with God, the more we must respect Him as God. The difference would be like assembling an electrical substation, then going back for repairs after the power was turned on. What was once safe and friendly could now kill you for one careless act!

Let us not forget our old friend, the devil, either. The more God raises the stakes, the more desperate he becomes. The closer you get to the power of God, the more Satan wants to take you out. His power is limited, his repertoire is finite, but don't underestimate him! Fortunately, however, the more we press into the things of God as a church, the more power, protection, blessing, and understanding we have for dealing with the old boy. I've been on both sides of revival and I like it this way!

As mature singles, we're still praying and seeking the Lord over our part in this move. Several things are becoming clear. One is that there's not the same need for weekly activities as for the younger singles. By the time most of us are TORCH age we're plugged into all kinds of responsibilities, *things which God has called us to*. Whether we're dealing with job situations, children, or ministry within the church, we're busy people. It would be wrong to pull people out of too many responsibilities just to 'build a group'.

There are needs, however, that are related to the single life and we'll try to address those. The sphere of our ministry would include:

- 1) Foundational relationship with Jesus Christ,
- 2) Personal spiritual growth, and
- 3) Placement and involvement within City Bible Church.

If we can give others assistance in all three of those areas we'll be doing a good work.

The challenge, of course will be relating those three areas to the needs of those we encounter—the wounded divorcee, the grieving widow(er), those whose single status is, for them, a badge of all their personal failures, or the one unexpectedly confronting middle age and wondering when life is really going to start.

So far as who to minister to, there are many possibilities. There are the unsaved and unreached in our society, a wide open field and such a current emphasis in the church right now. As we work within our cell groups we can keep an eye out for those with needs related to our age bracket.

There are those younger, who sometimes really need the wisdom and stability we've attained to over the years. There can be older individuals to whom our strength would be a blessing. There are many our own age trapped into some kind of mental dungeon and needing a few friends with kingdom keys to let them out. Are we asking God to open our eyes? We should be.

Tip of the Month- One of the most painful things a single can struggle with is coming up with a fun vacation. Have you considered one of the church STORM Teams (Short Term OutReach Mission)? Why go to boring, overpriced places like Palm Springs or Hawaii when instead you can risk arrest smuggling Bibles into China, carry bricks to build a church in Mexico, or preach the gospel on the streets of Rwanda? While vacation season and budget is winding up for most of us this year, did we get our money's worth? It's not too early to be thinking about next year, and remember, 'Seek ye first...and all these things will be **added**...

Activities

As usual, our most constant activity is the Sunday afternoon SNAC's. Since we are all busy people they serve as great times to just touch base in a very low-key sort of way. Come when you can and just belong with us for a bit.

Promise Keepers still meets on the first Friday of each month for the men. T- and M- put a lot into just loving those who come, including an exceptional dinner each time, so just come and be blessed.

Ladies, those of you who've been asking *What about us?* when hearing about the men's group, wait no more. M- is hosting a ladies night on Friday the 21st. Among the other fun things she is planning to show some videos by Christian comedienne Chonda Pierce. Bring some snackin's or a drink and come for a great time.

Last month we had a real breakthrough at the prayer meeting. You see, the problem with most of these activities is that people do not treat them as a department/ministry prayer time, but instead bring all their little needs that they should be praying about personally but aren't. Last month we prayed specifically for TORCH as a group, asked guidance and direction on the group as a whole, lifted up specific individuals not only for the present needs in their life, but asked God to direct them and set them into the area of His gifting.

It is prayer like this that will cause TORCH to come into its real place of power and anointing within City Bible Church. Come prayed up already and get ready for some battling. I'm not saying that we would not pray for the urgent need of a friend or relative, but it isn't the main emphasis of the monthly prayer time. The focus is to lead, guide, and empower the group as a whole. We pray over the calendar, ask God to anoint the activities, and pray towards the planning meetings, to give us wisdom. We pray for Brother B-, lest the real estate market gobble him up and all his time with him. We pray for those within the group who we know that God is calling and ask that the call can be made sure.

Our monthly group meeting will again be on the last Friday evening, the 28th. Bring some ice cream and toppings for a nice messy time of fellowship afterwards. Also at the meeting we will be making plans to help J- and M- do some moving the next day. It's too early to know their exact plans right now, but it looks like a move is in the works and help would certainly make a difference for them. As they have blessed us, we would like to be a blessing to them.

Looks like that's about it. Let's just remember to keep one another lifted up in prayer.

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