

(Continued from Part 3)

I'm dreaming...is there someone out there who is gifted in research, and you've got a good tape recorder, and you've got two or three or four years, and you don't have anything else to do? Would you at least go around and interview all these people and put it on tape so that men in the next generation can hear it? Why? For the sake, if the Lord does not come back, and I'm not going to make that statement anymore, for the sake of young men, maybe not yet born, who need to hear and to see and to know the work that God uniquely did in those men, the refining that they went through, the heart they had, the sacrifice that they went through, their understanding, comprehension, and living out of the cross of Jesus Christ. They had a testimony of Jesus. When I was a young kid, I used to read these things, and it did something to me. I have to believe that somewhere out there, it will do something again to someone.

I had lunch with Stephen today, and Mike asked him this question. "Is it just going to be the body, or will God in the future raise up a group of men?" And brother Stephen said, and he is absolutely correct, "It seems as though they come in bunches, and not one, but a whole bunch of them all at once, and then there's nothing. Nothing. And then it starts again." Well, I don't know where that next group is. If the Lord tarries, and I said it again, didn't I; if the Lord tarries. I don't know where they are, but I want them to know that I had the privilege of hearing it orally, which affected my life. I don't want to see it lost for that blank page not yet written on.

Now, to go any further, I'm going to be personal for a few minutes to make a point. I am of this land, and I care about this country. We see the passion in our Chinese brothers. We hear them speak. One of them once said to me, "If God opened the doors of China, tomorrow I'd leave, and I'd be back there, and you'd never see me again. They had it right; that's the way it ought to be. They have such a passion for that place. They grew up there; they are of that soil. You look at brother Lance Lambert. He's a little different. Here, brothers and sisters, we have the true British Israel. You heard it. It seeps out of every pore of his being. His burden for Israel. Say amen. You can feel it. You can hear it. You don't even have to hear it. You can sense it. He's of that land and of those people.

You know, you've heard about being born in a log cabin. That's Americans saying, "Boy, I come from a log cabin." I wonder if you ever heard of a dugout; that's one rung lower than a log cabin. It's a room dug out of the side of the hill. People put a pipe in it so air can get out, and they live in it because they own nothing. I doubt that anyone in this room has ever heard of anyone growing up in a storm cellar. They were about 6 ft. by 8 ft. My mother came from the... and this is a term, a social term; this is not a word of derision. You'll find it in books on sociology. It's a group of people just above the slaves. My mother was born poor white trash. My mother grew up in a storm cellar with two brothers and a sister. I saw a picture of my mother standing outside a cellar. Had a pipe on it. She was barefoot. She was dirty. She had on a dress. She had on absolutely nothing else. She was like a wild animal. My mother grew up in the most poverty-stricken strata of free men in America, in unmentionable, unbelievable conditions. My father was an illiterate Cajun. He

was born and raised in the poorest county in America. It's called Wind Parish, Louisiana. There was only one road in that entire county. It was right in front of the courthouse, a few feet long.

By the way, talking of long, that's where Huey Long came from. My father did not speak French. My father did not speak English. Heaven knows what my father spoke. Till this day, I cannot be assured when I speak a word, if I'm going to pronounce it correctly. I really mean that, because my father had four ways to pronounce every word ever written. Some of my earliest memories are of living in a room, a home. It was our home. It was 8 ft. by 10 ft. My mother and daddy slept on a sofa. Over in the corner was an army cot. I'm sure you've seen them. You unfold them, and my brother and I slept together on that army cot. When he turned over, I turned over. When I turned over, he turned over. You didn't get to sleep flat on your back. You slept on your side.

When I was 12 years old, my mother and daddy divorced. I was sent off to school. My mother went one way; my father, the other. I lived a year and a half after being in the military school for a year. I lived alone in a house for that year and a half. There was a four-room house with a zinc bathtub, and I doubt any of you know what I'm talking about. It had a sink and a bathtub. Do you know what I'm talking about? You don't know, do you? From the time I was 15 years old to the day I married Helen, twelve months out of the year, I lived in a dormitory. But that's not what I want to tell you. I want to tell you that my father was a roughneck, and I only remember one woman in my entire life, and that was my mother. Everybody else was 6'6, weighed 300 lb., and they were roughnecks. They are..., and if you've never lived in that, I don't know anything to compare them to, unless it would be a coal miner from Wales.

The first time I ever stepped on an oil field platform, a 4x12 fell out of the top of the derrick and landed on a man's head. We lived in that kind of danger every minute of our lives. I started working as a roughneck in the East Texas oil fields when I was 14. I've seen my helmet crushed over my head with no more than a quarter of an inch to spare. Steel shooting past our heads, sometimes when something would break, within inches of our eyes, our heads, our ears, our necks. We lived in that kind of danger. I can't explain to you what it's like to live constantly around steel and men who are illiterate, tough, crude, unruly, uncool, unkempt, nonsocial creatures. I worked in mud all day long up to my waist. I've come home and had to have my clothes taken off me by someone else. I lived in the toughest, roughest, meanest world a human being could grow up in.

When my mother and father divorced, I didn't have anybody to tell me what the social amenities of life were. I remember, on the few occasions I walked into someone's living room, how strange it felt in a house. I worked in oil fields during the summer to work my way through college. I know you're saying, "Oh, what an interesting culture to explore." That was the entire planet as I understood it. I remember when my mother used to get so angry; sometimes she would cry because we were always breaking things around the house. We had the mentality that everything was made out of steel, and it was always breaking because it wasn't. I never understood anything but straight talk from tough men who probably average getting in one good fight every day like us. I married Helen. God love her. She's known me for 37 years, she's been married to me for 33. She's one of

the most socially correct human beings who has ever lived. God knows that woman has tried. I have never understood you as surely as you cannot understand me. I always think of Mel Trotter, the man who was on the Bowery, who went to England to speak after he had been saved to give his testimony. The British people got up and walked out because his language was so bad that it was butchering the king's English. He said to the people, "Folks, please don't get up and walk out. Please understand that when I got saved, I had to give up 90% of my vocabulary.

Well, strangely enough, I never cussed, and I never drank the beer. I never did a lot of those...I don't know why I didn't...because God chose me, that's why. But that was the world I grew up in. I'm telling you for two reasons, and you've already figured out one of them. Now I'm going to tell you the other one.

This is my country, and I care about it deeply, deeply, and this page is blank. We don't know what's going to be written on it, but I can tell you this: you young men sitting down here and all of you, there has never been a deep work of God that originated, had its roots and beginnings, in the United States of America. It has always had to be imported from some other land, for we seem to be totally incapable of handling those things. I don't believe that has to go on forever. I believe this country can give expression to an organic work of God that begins here among young men as it did in Foochow, with young men who gathered around Watchmen Nee. That just can't be. Somewhere in this country, men and women are going to have to learn experientially what the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ means in its deepest and bloodiest expression. Somewhere within this land has come a deep revelation of Jesus Christ, and a burning for his purpose, his house, and for things invisible in the heavens.

Back in the 1920s, I suppose it was, I'm not exactly sure the dates when this happened, a missionary left Kentucky and went to China under the Methodists, a single woman, who remained single till she died at the age of 76, I think, in the city of Los Angeles. She left the Methodist mission, very much like Sister Barbara left the CMS. She left the Methodists and joined the work where brother Nee was, becoming part of a group of sisters from the Caucasian world, the Western world. I didn't have a sister Barbara, but I had the help of a saint. Her name was Beta Sheirich. No one seems to know her very well. I knew her well.

Somewhere God took from Beta the ability to sleep when she returned to America, and she could not sleep; this was her testimony. So, she began to pray, learned to pray, and became a living prayer. She's a kind of human being...you only meet one or two of these in your lifetime...that if she were standing on the other side of a 12-foot brick wall, you could feel her presence. She was a hidden vessel. I sat one day on the steps watching her swing a little child. It was the greatest presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ I have ever beheld in my life. I sat there on the steps for an hour, awed by God and that woman. From the time she returned to the United States till the day she died, she always prayed that the Lord might raise workers: American workers in this country. She died. The brother she was living with said she'd walk around the house muttering to herself,

"Lord, where are the workers?" She prayed so long. One day, the Lord took her, and she was still asking, "Where are the workers?"

That woman did me a great disservice. She met me in my wild youth. I was 31, and she began praying for me. I don't know why in the world that woman started picking on me. I was told later that she picked up the names of three brothers. This is one of my legends. I don't even know if it's true, but I do know who the other two brothers are. And you know, one ended up in a messed-up life, and the other one is somewhere doing something, I don't know what, but I felt like that woman's prayers have dogged me and protected me all of my life. But before I had ever met her, before I had ever met the brothers and sisters who were to affect my life so profoundly, when I was 29 years old, the Lord showed me what to me was something that had to come if ever we were to see the next step in restoration, recovery.

And now I'm getting old. I'm only 55, but the fact is I'm 103. And this is spontaneous. There's nothing subconscious to this whatsoever. I literally find myself walking around the house spontaneously saying, "Lord, where are they called? Lord, where are they called? And every once in a while, I meet one, and he's going off to Bible school. And every once in a while, I meet one. He's at my front door, and he stays for six weeks, and he didn't like the way someone in the fellowship parted their hair or sneezed into their handkerchief. I ask myself, where is the mettle? Where is the fiber that makes the kind of men who recover the ways of God? I pray, and I ask, and I talk to myself, and I find myself in the uncomfortable place of that dear sister from Kentucky who died some years ago. I don't want to be in her place. I don't want to die saying, "Lord, where are the called?" And the next page of church history is blank, and it has not yet been written on.

Now, I'm going to tell you one other simple little thing I think we really need. I think it's one of those paramount things that's got to come. It's got to come. How it's going to come, I don't know. By some work and the amazing mercy and grace of God. Okay. I was trying to trace the origins of seminaries and became one of the world's leading living scholars of the history of Western education, seeking to find where they originated. I think I know everything there is to know about the history of Western education, including religious education, and I never found a single sentence about where seminaries came from. I wanted to know, and I had one of those lucky strikes here just a few weeks ago. I was at Southwestern Seminary, met one of my professors in the hall, and we were talking, and I asked him, and he said, "Oh, they began in 1545 at the Council of Trent." Man, I went to the library and started looking for the Council of Trent.

I could tell you, and take a week to do it. Show you the history of how ministers are trained and how workers are raised up throughout all of the last 1700 years, and where the whole blooming mess came from, and why it won't work, and why it's not proper, and why we are in seminaries. It's another thing that the Western Christian mind can look straight at the Bible and find the seminary. Now, that's a trick. When God came out of heaven... when God came to this earth in human flesh, He knew what He wanted to do to raise up some workers. Now, can you agree with that? He didn't get that from Judaism. He got that from Himself. And He chose a way.

Now, why in the world the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ has never been fought to be restored in the raising up of workers, I do not know. Well, I remember being taught in the seminary that I never preach on anything...my professor said that doctrines are like a curry comb; oh, my cow, you're not from Texas. A Curry comb; you clean horses with them. The big teeth are on this side, and the little teeth are on this side. We do this. He said it's like a curry comb. Always preach on the things where the big teeth are, never the little teeth. And if we had the Lord Jesus ministry alone to present to us, we would have very little.

Now I have tried to saturate myself with an understanding of how the Lord Jesus Christ raised up those 12 men. I've read books written on the subject. I've looked it up in the Scripture, and it just drenches me how God raised up workers for recovery. But if it were only one example, we might say it was a happenstance, but boy, when you get two witnesses, you don't ever go start seminary or a Bible school. You don't ever start anything. You go back and become faithful to the word of God.

And brothers and sisters, there were two times that God distinctly and clearly raised up workers in exactly the same way. One was in the life of our Lord on this earth with 12 men, all Jewish men, being raised up by the Lord Jesus Christ for the building of His church upon this earth. I'm going to say a few things. First of all, those men lived in the presence of God. That's where they lived. Would you disagree with that? They lived in the presence of God. They learned from Him. Not just His teachings, and I'm sure they got those, but those teachings were lost on those men until He came inside of them.

But I tell you what they did, do they? They watched Him fellowship with the Father, and they watched Him like a hawk day and night because they knew something was going on inside, and He made it evident to them. Then, when He was inside of them, they set up those same wondrous lines of communication, but He's not here anymore, so what shall we do? Well, then, we shall look to the ministry of Paul of Tarsus, and we will be very, very careful as we do. We'll try to stay as unemotional as we can, and we will realize that he was a young man who had the privilege of sitting under Barnabas, who sat under the 12 who sat under the Lord. I'm going to give you apostolic succession here. Okay, here it comes. He also learned from his Lord, whom he met in heavenly realms. Then he went out under the tutorship of one Barnabas in the planting of churches, and then he got on his own and went out and planted some others with Silas, who was also a balance to him. Then, on his third journey, an older man who had been through everything. The Revelation speaks of having gone through blood up to the horse's bed. Well, he had gone through blood up to the horse's bed. He now leaves, taking a young man named Timothy with him.

Now, please mark this. He is not young. He is old, and he has never tried to bring forth gentile workers when he was young or middle-aged. In fact, he is going to be raising up some Gentiles in what he believes to be the last days of his life. All the prophecies and everything are indicating this is it, Paul. I want to show you the greatest genius that I have ever found in the New Testament, and a witness to the ways of the work of God to which we must return. But I want you to look at

those young men more than you look at Paul. Please look at Timothy. Let's say he came from the town of Lystra. He gets saved, watches the birth of the church in his hometown, lives there, and grows up a brother in that church. He's been through every experience of that church. He's under the elders, is in church life and background, and he's learning about the Lord Jesus.

Down here in Berea, where they go to the Hebrew synagogue and read the scripture, is Sopater, who gets saved, and he is at the beginning of a church, and he watches it grow, and he's part of it, and he's a young kid, and he grows up there. There's Aristarchus, and the second child of somebody, named Secundus. Both of these men, pagans living in the town of Thessalonica when Paul came through preaching the gospel, got saved. They watch the birth of the church and the maturing of the church, and they grow up there, and they see all of its needs and all of its problems, and they are not looking for heaven on earth. They have a gut-level view of what the church really is.

Gaius was converted in Derbe, grew up in the church there, and has been there for many, many years. Well, we got Timothy from Lystra and Gaius from the church in Derbe. We've got Secundus and Aristarchus from Thessalonica. These are in different countries with different languages. We've got Sopater over in the little elite little town of Berea. And on top of that, we've got Titus who got saved in Antioch and has watched that church grow into great fruitage. Paul is an old man, and he's never tried to build a seminary or start a movement. And frankly, brother, he has never gotten a whole lot done. But here is genius, if there ever was Christian genius.

Each one of these men had been converted in and lived in church life as a local brother. Just as the 12 apostles had lived with Jesus Christ for three and a half years in an embryonic experience of church life. Don't press that too hard, but just consider it a moment. They were living together in common with the Lord for three and a half years, bumping heads with one another and learning a great deal. Each of these men has grown up in a gentile church. Each of them has his own history, his different language, and his different culture. Each is rich in what he's been through and where he's been. And this old man must feel now he has something to say to someone else. This old man does something so similar to the Lord Jesus Christ that it is earthshaking. I guess he does it by letter. Let's pretend he does.

Gaius, come from your church. Titus, come from your church. Aristarchus and Secundus, come over with me from Thessalonica. Sopater, come with me from Berea. Tychicus and Trophimus are not part of this party; they'll probably get converted just a little bit later. Priscilla and Aquila, get over there to the town I'm headed for ahead of me, and make preparations, get a tent business started. He walks down the road, and one of them joins him from one church, one language, one culture; another joins him from another church, another background, another language, and another culture; and two more join him from yet another town, another language, and another culture. By the time he gets to the city he is determined to go to, he has eight young men who know what the church is, who know their Lord, who grew up in the church of God, and who grew up in a spiritual

atmosphere. And they are not idealists. They are hardheaded young realists who know what they're getting into, and they have been called.

Out of each of the churches, it seems one or maybe two have been called, and the fruitage of Paul's life is here in front of him, finally bursting forth. He walks into this city, an old wise man, and he says, "Now, watch me." They don't even get into the city, and they meet 12...and they're all going there to watch the church born, to live with Paul of Tarsus. They will live with him for four years, and there will be added to their little group later a man, oh boy, the name just slipped me. I'll get back to it. Epaphroditus, my favorite of all of them. Anyway, they walk into this town. They're getting close to it. They find some followers of John the Baptist. They don't know how that church will start—followers of John the Baptist. Paul baptizes them. They get the Holy Spirit in whatever context that is meant, and Paul turns around to them, eight men standing there with their mouths wide open. He says, "See how easy it is?" They get 12 converts before they get inside the city limits, or 10 or 12, I've forgotten.

Anyway, he comes into this town and begins preaching the gospel, and they watch. They're watching the birth of the church for the second time in their lives, each of them, and they live with that man through everything he does. They watch him through his sleepless nights. They watch him crying, his tears. They watch him in his loneliness. They watch him nurture the young, be patient with the slow. They watch him go to the cross again and again. They watch him being persecuted. They see what those professional Judaizers are doing in following him about. They watch an incredible and godly man raise up the house of the living God. And somewhere before those three or four years, he begins sending them out into some of the small towns around to preach the Gospel and try their hand at it while he nurtures them and advises them on how it's done. They go out in the little towns, with names nobody had ever heard of, like Colossae and Laodicea.

The way that Jesus Christ raised up disciples...by the way, it's been given a name: peripatetic. Chew on that. The way the Lord Jesus Christ raised up men lives again in the Gentile city of Ephesus. And when Paul of Tarsus dies, there is a witness and a testimony. There are workers to go on and take the Gospel. If you and I were to trace our lineage back, when we first really hit it, we wouldn't hit Jerusalem, we wouldn't hit Antioch, and we wouldn't hit Ephesus. We wouldn't hit Paul; we would find these men, for they are the ones who took the Gospel to the gentile world. I don't know what that means to you, but brothers, sisters, would to God we'd give up our movements. Would to God that there were on this earth again, men who planted churches, holy men who understood the ways of God, who knew what headship meant.

When I saw the headship of Jesus Christ, I was in Phoenix, Arizona. I didn't sleep for seven days, sitting in a motel room, jumping up in the middle of the night, turning on the lights, and writing like crazy. Men possessed with the desire to make Jesus Christ seen visible on this earth again, in the church, men who will not stop. Not for hell, they will not stop. Not for anything, they will not stop. Not for persecution, not for nothing, they won't stop. Those men who would please wait until they get old, when they have finally learned, if I may say this, they finally learn their trade, gather

unto them a few men, and raise those few men to take on the work, and then die in peace believing that if it is gold and silver it will go on, and if not, it won't.

Now, to the young men who sat down here on this front row, and you are Americans, and for one moment I'm going to address you as Americans. This one down here is a little darker than an American. Where did you say you're from, brother? California. That's the worst of all places. For timber to come, it's the worst timber of all.

I have watched men called of God blow it on the first press of the cross in their lives. I watched men get neurotic and wring their hands at the first trouble. Brother, forget it. I've watched young men go out for a weekend, say, "I've got to go back home. I got to go be with my wife." I watched men make it a whole week and say, "I can't take it any longer. I have to go home." Brother, I want you to know something. You'd better be prepared to spend at least half of your lifetime separated from your wife and your family if you're going to talk "worker" in the house of God.

We don't have a very good reputation on the mission field or anywhere else, for either being people who can tough it out or for having any concept or understanding of the depths of Jesus Christ. But if the call of God burns in your insides, if His grace prepares you, and you can't do this, and later He'll break you if you even try, but you have to start off. You've got to believe you'll pay any price to follow Him and obey Him, and you'll find out you can't. He'll break you, and then He'll give you His grace to operate on, but you've got to go believing you'll pay any price.

Young man, I ask you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, don't waste your life in a seminary or a Bible school. Go get where you belong. Go get in the life of the church. That's where you be a hawk. Can you not humble yourself, give up God's work and God's calling, and become a simple brother in the house of God? And wait, and learn, the simple things of the church of Christ, and the life of Jesus in you. Then, you know what I'd do? I'd find me an old man who has played some part in the raising up of the church, or two or five or ten. Maybe an old man with a rich heritage, a rich heritage who has paid that price again and again and again. I would forget the calendar; I would forget time. It doesn't matter, brother. If it takes you till you're 60, and you put in four good years, that'll be better than anything anybody else has done in a long, long time. Somebody say amen.

I'd find myself an old man outside the religious system, with a deep and rich heritage, who has maybe preached the Gospel in several continents and has some experience with several cultures. I'd go to him, and even if he said to me, "Oh no, no, brother, not me. Not me, brother. Not me. No, go. No." I would ignore that man. I would look at that as hurdle number one to get past. I would sit under that at that brother's feet until Jesus Christ sent me somewhere, or until I had to take him out and bury him. Brother, sister, do it. And if you can't do that, go somewhere on this planet where you can. If you have to go to China, if you have to go to India, if you have to go to Nepal, if you have to go to Africa, go there. Learn where the church is right now, and how well she is right now, and where she's headed right now. And when you get to be 70 or 75 years old, and you have walked through all the blood and hell that Satan can throw at you, and you have gained a little bit of Jesus

Christ, and you have had just a small privilege of seeing the church, then pass it on to a few young men called of God who might take the work of God on.

Yes, we need a depth, and yes, we need a purity, and oh God, we need integrity in the Lord's work. And we need men who experience the church of Jesus Christ and encounter the Lord in a practical, daily living experience. And we need some old men. You need those who will teach you and show you. Then, brother, in God's sovereign time and way and will, go take the torch, take it to this country, take it to my people and yours. You saints of the living God, find yourself in the same place all generations have found themselves when they come to the blank page. Pray that the Lord will thrust forth harvesters, workers into this vineyard.

May Jesus Christ take us from here. I got to say it one more time, brother. If you're called to the Lord and that call is so big that you've got to go serve Him, rather than sit and learn the rudimentary things a Christian ought to do, and that starts with Jesus Christ and church life; if you're too proud to do that, you're too proud. We start where the apostles did, at the feet of Jesus. We start with what these men did, in simple body life. That's where our call begins. Brothers, if you do that, you will receive a greater training than anything else this earth affords, and it matches your call.

*God, our Lord, write another page. Raise up again, men of the quality and the statute of a... Lord, more than a Luther, more than a Wesley, as much as a Zinzendorf; a band of men. God be so merciful as to raise them up right, and give them to our land, and give them to this work. Take us on, our dear Lord Jesus. Restore, restore, restore. Amen.*