

What is the church? Get your notes out real quick and start reading them. It's divine. What else? Organic. Real. A place where Christ feels at home. It's a place where Christ feels perfectly relaxed and at home. Living...and sometimes she's beautiful. She's a girl. I don't think we wrote that down. Put that in your notes. She's a girl. She's a "she." She's an organism, not an organization, and you shouldn't organize her. She has her own natural expression.

I said something else about what she is by nature. She's a colony from heaven and the one heavenly thing on this earth, the other-realm thing on this earth. She should reflect that. For you and for me, she is our civilization. She is, in fact, our habitat. She is where we live. As many of you have heard me say it before, what school is to fish, what flock is to sheep, what a covey is to quails, what a herd is to cattle, and what civilization is to fallen man, ecclesia is to the redeemed. Therefore, something in me gets really rebellious when I think that everything Christians do today that's fun is outside the church, and everything that's boring is in the church. Therefore, something's wrong with our concept of church. That's what we've been handling and doing all week.

What's the expression of the church? We talked about that, didn't we? The expression and purpose of gathering. To display the bride of Christ for the angels. Okay, we meet before angels. Every time we gather, we gather before angels. I never think about that: showing the beauty of the Lord's wife, or at least His girlfriend, His fiancée, His bride. Okay? To make Jesus Christ visible. We are His body, making Him visible.

Okay, did we say anything else about the purpose? It's to shame the principalities and powers, to prove that Jesus Christ Himself can come invisibly upon this earth and guide His people. What the Father is to the Son, the Son is to the church. Jesus lived on this earth, heard His Father speak, listened to Him, obeyed Him, followed Him, and made Him visible. When the church gathers, when all the pieces and parts, the body parts, are assembled, we are doing what Christ did in His relationship to the Father; it's passed on to us. We ensure He can be heard, responded to, loved, and made visible on this earth, and that, as the Father was the head of Jesus Christ, and was His Lord and His King, and, if you please, His dictator, and the one who told Him what to do and what to say.

When the church gathers, she does the same thing. He is her Lord. He speaks; she obeys. A meeting demonstrates Jesus Christ's headship. No human leaders should lead the meeting. Fred and I share some background, so I'll say something Fred will appreciate. A meeting isn't a place where a bunch of people walk in with briefcases, sit in the front row, and start the meeting. And, of course, in the religious system, none of that. You've got your bulletin; the pastor has decided it, but at the beginning, at the birth of a church, the one who leads, builds, and lays the foundation ought not to be present. In meetings where you're seeking to tear down old ways, no one considered a leader should be present. Let the strong say they are weak, not the weak say they are strong. Let the aggressive sit back, and let the timid be the ones who lead.

Well, we have responsibilities in meetings that I cannot possibly touch upon this weekend, so I'm going to say a couple of things that will be very disappointing to you. I'm going to tell you a few problems with meetings where you seek no leadership, human leadership, and following the Lord. One problem is that most of us still know how to follow the Lord in the meeting. At best, we stumble around with one foot in the goo pot. It takes a long time to get sensitive to the Lord. It will take years, literally, but it is a wonderful thing when you do. There is always, and this is my point, someone who never catches on. You can be in the middle of a glorious meeting when you really sense the Lord is at the head; He's not only being magnified, but He is leading that meeting. I have likened it unto... could you imagine you're standing in the middle of the Lord's second coming? The angels have become visible; the heavenly host is gathering; all the redeemed, past and present,

are coming; and the Lord is there in His glory. It is the most magnificent moment of all time. About that time, someone walks by hollering, "Peanuts, popcorn. Peanuts, popcorn. Anybody want some peanuts? Popcorn. Anybody want a program? And you have this human being who just messes up everything royally. He or she, and it is as often a female as it is a male, doesn't seem to have any sensitivity to the Lord. Here you are all on your knees, praising the Lord. Glory is abounding. The songs all fit. Each one of them tells another story. Everything is...just going on and on, and then someone says, " Let's sing 'Do Lord.'"

I'll tell you, your first urge...your urge is to kill whoever it is, and this person will be this way all the rest of their life, now and forever, world without end. You're going to live with them. That's why I'm saying this: you'll rarely be in a meeting where the Lord has full headship from beginning to end. I'm sorry to tell you that that's true.

I will tell you that people will exert leadership in meetings when you know they shouldn't. That's another problem. And I'm going to tell you something else. If I'm at a meeting and it's not going well, I will step in and change it. You might dislike me, but I'm not there so much to be part of a meeting. Now, that's not always true, but there's a possibility that if I'm present, I'm there to train, to educate, to lead you, to show you something higher or better. You'll have to excuse me for being that way. I am extra local, and I will leave in a few days, and you'll be rid of me. I'm not like that guy who sits in the corner; you're stuck with him forever.

Songs that are out of place. Testimonies that are out of place. Everybody's having this wonderful time of sharing about the Lord, and someone says... well, I think this is the right time, or they'll often say, I'm not sure what I'm doing is great, but I'm going to do it anyway. That's a sure-shot sign you're in trouble. They decide to get up and tell the church how ugly it's treated them, and we have to sit there and bear it, and it's totally out of order, but it's there.

Another one is...I don't like you; you just gave me half the gray hairs I have. I don't know what to do with you. You don't know how to stop talking. And one person always comes to mind. I've seen dozens of them like this, but one person comes to mind: a girl who ended every sentence with "and." She did, I am telling you. The Lord showed me such and such and such and such...and. She had no idea what she'd say next. She'd do this long pause, and then she'd say something else. This girl would sometimes talk for 20, 30, or 40 minutes, and every silence ended with an "and." She could not finish. She could not quit. However, one of the most interesting things about that situation was... she had all the other problems too. She was with us for three or four years. She sold more peanuts and popcorn at the second coming than I've ever seen in the church.

The day that I finally sat down with her after years and years and years and years of chaos and trouble and pain she brought to the church. It was the first time she was ever confronted, and I was as gentle as I know how to be, and I can be very, very gentle. In fact, she did most of what was said and done that day, and she packed her bags and left. I always think of that. The church was a platform for her. Do you understand what I'm saying? It's a place for that person. We always have that kind of person in the church. Sometimes they can be very arrogant. I know you know a few of these folks. They feel the whole world centers on them. Their sharing always has a self-centered element. You'll have that forever. I made a decision early in my ministry, and that was that, at least for the first 15 or 20 years, until the young ones became older men in their 40s, I was never going to let anyone see me angry, confrontive, judgmental, critical, adjustive, rebuking, or anything negative. I was going to show them patience and force patience on them because that's much harder than confrontation.

Once you confront someone, someone, not just one person in your meeting, will use confrontation then. If I do something once, there's a saint back there somewhere who's inclined that way, and

once they see it, they have a license from that day forward to do it. I will give you a recent example out of my own life. For the first time in my ministry, from the day I was called to preach at 18 until I was 55, about four or five minutes ago, something happened that got to me. I got hurt; bad enough that I brought it to the church. Boy, some brothers waited 20 years to see me do that; they waited 20 years to have license.

On the day they saw me vulnerable and weak, all sorts of problems broke out. I don't know if you understand what I'm talking about, but I know my responsibility as a minister of the gospel is not to rebuke or confront. If I do, I will come back and find a church full of rebukers and confronters. Now, on the other hand, I envy you. That's one side. On the other hand, I envy you because I'm willing to correct and exhort people so many times, and I just haven't, and haven't, and haven't. I have to be pressed to the wall before I lean forward on somebody and say, "thou ailest" here, here, and here.

A fellow came and joined us, and we knew something was wrong, we knew something was wrong, and we knew something was wrong, and something was wrong. Finally, word came that God had sent him to lead us. God told him he would lead our group, and that thought was wrong. He was...when these strange testimonies were coming, they weren't testimonies; they were orders. Of course, he, being a very unusual person, couldn't see that. They were just declarations and rebukes, and he was actually acting as the leader. I sent two brothers around here, being the coward that I am. That's a pretty serious matter, and he was an older man, too. I'm very reluctant to speak to, I'm reluctant to correct.

I'll be happy to tell you my method. Instead, I will have the church hold a meeting. There are other ways to skin a cat besides using a rusty spoon. The church votes on who they want to blow the whistle on, and it becomes fun. This person is going to correct or stop or whatever. The church chooses someone to do that in the meeting, and that person actually does it, and it goes over really well. By the way, I recommend that. I don't recommend it for the first meeting in particular, but I recommend it because it will be there.

I think, brothers and sisters, if you're going to have meetings of such a radical nature as I have described, that I think that you have to do a lot of discussing about these meetings at other times and discuss the problems that are coming up in them and, as I said to you last night, to be aware when they start getting dead and dry and to do something about it. But that's one of the things: when someone is over-functioning, or, to illustrate, my whole body is functioning, but obviously, some part of my body has started to over-function, and that's what happens to the Lord's body. I would say that unless you've got a very sick situation in the church, which should be very rare, that shouldn't ever happen. I'm going to give you a cure for it. The cure has its problems, as all cures do. There are side effects.

For years, it's been a hallmark of my own ministry...and I'm not telling you to do this, but I wouldn't know how to do what I do without it. I wouldn't know how to function without this. We never have Sunday morning meetings; I mean, we have had, and they're always horrible. There's something cursed about that, and there's a little truth to it. It's just...I don't know... You can meet any day of the week, except Sunday morning, and something will happen. We don't have Sunday morning meetings; I won't have Sunday morning meetings. We've tried it before, for two or three months, even recently. I just won't be part of it. I won't put up with it. I'm not going to live in that kind of atmosphere. I can't stand it, but instead we have brothers' meetings every Sunday, and we dump it all out there. But to deal with a situation like that, you've got to have someone who feels very secure about what he's doing. Not everybody is that secure. And, I mean, we have it. There's

no time for murmuring mid-week; we want to meet on Sundays. That's one of the things we do: talk about our meetings, where they are, and what they're doing.

Now, there are times, but I have to admit, murmuring can happen outside, even if you have brothers' meetings every Sunday; but when you get that, you have major problems in the church. I mean, you've got major problems. You're probably facing a split. One of the problems with having brothers' meetings, and that's with all the brothers present, is that the sisters are left out. Brothers and sisters don't act the same way. The sisters are left out; they kill the brothers' meeting just like that. So, you have sisters' meetings. Well, the sisters could not care less. Sisters, y'all get together and talk about your problems. The sisters will get together, worship the Lord, pray, cry, and go home. I'm not going to have to get the sisters to do that. Do the sisters get together and discuss some of the problems in the church? No, but being a woman is a wonderful gift. In my case, I have been asked, therefore, if the sisters won't be present because we live in a different day.

I have memories dating back to the 60s. There are always one or two sisters who went to those brothers' meetings. They were liberated. So one of the things we've done is we've had to back away from decision-making and go to meetings and just air problems and not do anything about them. The other thing is, I try to meet with the sisters once a month, tell them everything I can remember that's going on, and let them talk with me. No, Gene's not always there; that's true. How do you do it? And the answer is someone else needs to do that. About once a month, there needs to be a time.

We have brothers' meetings, sisters' meetings, and sometimes we have "persons" meetings. A person's meeting- I'm surprised you didn't catch that. There's a salesman, and then they become a salesperson. We have person meetings, and brothers and sisters are both there. We have brothers do, but generally speaking, sisters don't split churches. Sisters don't split churches. Brothers have testosterone, which makes us more aggressive. Sisters don't have this particular hormone.

Another problem with brothers' meetings is that some brothers start to think they're an elders' meeting. I don't know what the deal is with guys; they're just naturally hostile. They don't want leadership in the church. They're terrified when elders are appointed because they're afraid they'll suddenly have to submit to someone. I would say this to you. I'm going to tell you two brothers from Atlanta and all the rest of you, if you show up here. There'll be brothers' meetings, but those brothers' meetings are grace-given. They're not scriptural. It's a privilege, not a scriptural right. It's not a right; it's a privilege granted. Again, there are times when you have to ask some brother to stay out of the meeting. I've never had to do it yet, but I've come awfully close because he's so antagonistic about everything. It's a privilege, not a right. Nonetheless, it is my own style, and I enjoy it. Well, that's not all we do. Most of what we do is worship the Lord. I'd rather do it in a brothers' meeting than in any meeting on this earth.

Some people absolutely refuse to have a church planter. They'll let God do it, but God doesn't work that way. Let me tell you something about your Lord: He is, by nature, hidden. You Pentecostals, you have a God who's everywhere. He's in the room, the trees, and the cigarette smoke. He's in the water, He's in a sound, and He's in a vision. He's in this; He's there. You've got a God that shows up anywhere. God told me this, and God told us that, and we've got a vision of this and that, and everybody's got a vision. You've got a God that springs up everywhere.

I want you to look at your God, stand back, and look at your God for a moment. Your God created this universe and left absolutely no proof that He exists. Now I want you, Christian, to put this into your pipe and smoke it: there is no proof for the existence of God. There isn't. There is no proof. Nobody has found a single shred of evidence for God's existence.

This week, there will probably be somewhere between 50 and 500 and 1,000 experiences of church life. This week, 50 to 100 groups will probably begin meeting, out of a wonderful experience with the Lord, and every one of them will say, "We'll make it; others didn't, but we will, because God wouldn't let us down, bring us this far, give us all this, and leave us. Man, you have overestimated your God. He'll leave you high and dry. He'll just walk off and leave you, flapping in the breeze. He will walk off and leave you. No, He leaves no proof of His existence, and He doesn't show up very often. Don't you realize your name is "believer"? Those who believe in the presence of no evidence. We are believers.

I can't help it that God-ordained church planters. If you can't handle one, fine, but say goodbye to any permanent experience of church life, and I am still standing here, 56 years old. I've said this before; I'll say it now; I'll say it till the day I die: I've never seen an exception, and I never will. Those groups die. They die. They dissolve, and they die. I made that statement in this building a year and a half ago to a group of people who don't exist today. They were very irate that it wouldn't happen to them. In fact, I vividly remember three people springing up immediately: "Our situation is different." Maybe it was, but they don't meet anymore.

Yes, we all know how to meet. Yes, we won't take responsibility. Yes, we're scared. Yes, we're bringing our past experience into it. And yes, those are some of the things that kill us. They wouldn't have to die if there were someone to help.

Let me go back to these meetings and look at them per minute. Perhaps the most serious problem you face... after the initial time of experiencing the Lord, when all things are equal and running well... is that without a ritual, people keep coming later and later and later and later until there is no meeting. You know, now it's at 7:30, people are coming at 8, or 8:15. You start getting past 8:15, and people stop coming. That is a responsibility you've got, and it is a problem I have never found a cure for. And that's, again, why you need an extra-local worker now and forever, world without end. You need somebody from the outside to come in and turn things upside down, around, and backward.

Do you want to hear my method? I'm giving you so many trade secrets this week. I will make an announcement that you better be there at 7 p.m., and if most of the church isn't there by then, I'll dismiss the meeting and send everybody home. That's one. Now, you better not do this, but I can. I can do this because this is... that's just the way it is. Two. I come in at 7 p.m., walk to the front of the meeting, get my Bible out, read a text, and start preaching. People come in; they're absolutely dumbfounded. I'm halfway through the message, and they just got there. There's been no singing or praying or anything else. And number three, and this one is drastic. The meeting is at 7 p.m., but we will lock the doors at 6:55, and no one can come in after that. And by the way, I'm looking for suggestions. Those are the three things I do, but I'll take any ideas you've got.

I'll tell you something: about every six months to a year, the church has to be put back together all over again when she is not following ritual and form, and when she has no people who lead her in the meetings; she has to be put back together again about every six months to a year. It's got to be done. *That is not scripture, and that is not New Testament*; why can we not awaken to this? I don't know if it totally falls apart; it's like a piece of clay that begins to melt. You've made this beautiful pot. You look at it about a year later, and about half the pot has eased out over the table, and maybe one of the handles has fallen off, and it's not holding water much longer. To me, this is a joy. This is a wonderful thing there, a good, wonderful, glorious resurrection and change of direction about every year, but it sure is hard on people who are set in their ways. A home is constantly undergoing revision, isn't it?

Now, sometimes brothers and sisters try to pump up a meeting. Well, I think when we start pumping the meeting up, and I'm not opposed to seeing that happen from time to time, but when it becomes what you're doing every week, it's time to change the way you meet. You've got to do something different. You've got to stop whatever you're doing. Generally speaking, we shouldn't pump up a meeting; that is usually a sign problems are coming.

Every meeting has an element of leadership, and all I can say is that it's there, and it's probably natural; there's not much you can do about it. But the church will reach a point where it becomes- and I'm using this word, it's not a good word, but I'm using it in a positive sense- addicted to its meetings without human leaders, and will fight to keep that privilege.

Community tends to make us dependent on the community, and we can lose our individual relationship to the Lord. We don't lose our individual relationship to the Lord; we stop taking responsibility for our lives and start looking to someone else. All I can tell you is that I fight that tooth and nail, constantly; I bring it up, I remind people of it, but I haven't ever found a solution. When people get so attached to one another that their friendship is more important than the Lord and His house...We have a saying down in Texas: If a dog ever starts stealing eggs, you can't break him. You can shoot him, and that's true. You cannot break a dog from stealing eggs. Once he does, you'll have to move him to the city where there aren't any eggs. I don't even know what to do with Christians when they reach that point other than to tell them to go have their friendship the rest of their life.

I try to avoid encouraging the church to have church-wide prayer meetings. That's strange, isn't it? We tend to pick up one another's vocabularies. I always encourage you to have your own prayer life. I encourage you to meet with one or two people and keep your own way of speaking. Watch language in the church. This isn't the church's fault; it isn't a leader's fault. I watch people come in, and their attitude is, "I want to be one with you. Show me what your vocabulary is. What do we believe? What's our vision? What's our goal? And I will become a fanatic at it. Just fill me in on the details, and I'm ready to go."

There are really needy people in this world who want to abdicate their responsibility to life and turn it over to someone else. I think one of my responsibilities, and everybody else's, is not giving a whole lot of advice and not directing people...and I have a problem there. Do you want to hear about Gene Edwards' problem? Well, I'm a very enthusiastic person. You come up to me and start talking to me about something, and man, I'm going to really encourage you. Five years later, you come back and say, "You told me to do that."

I ask everybody...I'm going to be asking; I haven't had the privilege of doing this since I decided to ask. I would ask everybody to take one to two months a year away from the church, a sabbatical. Now, I don't take a sabbatical. I wait until seven years; I think four is much better. Just don't come. Attend the Baptist church for a year. Don't get so involved that you literally lose your mind to the larger mind of the community. I don't want to see people give up their individuality. I fight hard for it. It's one of the things I stand for, and I can't stand this business of courting little groups. I can't stand this business of picking up a certain vocabulary, having visions and goals, and a movement orientation. I can't stand head covering or authoritarianism. It's just vocabulary meant to ensnare. I didn't think the people who do it knew it, but it's headed there anyway.

You suffered, and you lost everything. My first emotion is that this is too terrifying. There are too many risks; let's just not do anything. I have another feeling, and I'm going to share it with you. You had something; you lost it. You lost it because of men. They're powerless over you; that's true. Behind men is Satan...and behind Satan is God. Ultimately, it was His will. Now, you have something to give of the kingdom of God. Let's say testimony. Don't lose your individual

responsibility. You see that a lot more clearly than most of us do, even more than others who've lost it. The body of Christ needs that. Maybe not now; maybe you're not ready. You still need more time, but don't ever forget that behind the cross, the agony, and the pain is purpose. It doesn't always get fulfilled, but everything has purpose. As far as I'm concerned, you are a jewel of protection for the church. Alright, you've suffered; you've seen something, something most of us are missing. Will we suffer as a body and continue having this lack? I hope not. I'm aware that your testimony would be valid for a people.

During the Jesus Movement, the young sisters often asked me what their place in the church is. My answer was, "When you are 40, you will tell me. You're going to grow up in church, and when you're 40, you will tell me what the sister's place is in the church." Understand that we're kind of worthless anyway until we get to be 40; the first 20 years of your Christian life are for growing up. Those of us who are older will tell you we left adolescence at 30 and grew up at 40, and you don't know that, and you never will. I used to hate old people who talked that way. *Get out of my way*, and they did; they moved out of the way, and I have no regrets, but I had a lot to learn from Jesus Christ that is spiritual, that was deep and profound, and that cannot be learned in your 20s. It cannot be learned in your 20s. You're never going to know the cross in your 20s; it can't be done. The cross doesn't stick in your 20s. You may need it, but it doesn't stick in your 20s. It begins to stick a little in your 30s.

I was nice to you, wasn't I? I have something to say to all of you who are getting older. Are you really still nursing all these pains you got from church life? Why not let it turn to gold, brother? Gold, not hyssop. Nothing's worse than having some old sourpuss walk into a group of people. We started in Portland, and we had to stop because some people came in. They were so terrified because of their background that they stopped every meeting and corrected everybody, because every time we met, we made errors that would get us in trouble. They would grind every meeting to a halt with corrections. One day, I just stopped, walked out, and left. It was impossible to meet. All of them were older than me. Believe it or not, I still respect people older than me; only five or ten remain. If you can let that then turn to gold, it becomes a wonderful vessel for God.

Alright, if those of you listening to this video and those of you sitting in this room don't get anything else, having a meeting where you seek to put that meeting under the headship of Jesus Christ has problems, friends. I wish somebody had explained to me how to get commitment to Christ out of the people of God. We will commit ourselves to anything but Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to a ..., to a movement. The only reason you can get hurt is that you have a commitment that's misplaced. You made a ferocious commitment to the church, and it should be local, but it also has to be universal.

There is no excuse for thousands of people leaving a movement destroyed unless you have been stabbed with hot pokers and physically abused. Now that you've got excuses for it. You take five or ten years off from that. I'm reminded of one who has been physically abused, and he hasn't stopped yet. Nothing stopped that brother. He spent over half of his Christian life in prison; from the day he was saved to this moment, he's a real reminder. Half of his life has been spent in prison; he's never stopped. He wouldn't stop in prison. He didn't stop anywhere.

I'll tell you something else about him: he was around when the Christian faith was outlawed; in fact, he was the first Christian who was saved in his nation. He went to prison; they finally quit throwing him in prison, and now he has the right to nurture his own. The missionaries are not allowed in there, and every time he's sent to prison, Christian missionaries are going after his followers. He comes out with no followers left. If any man on this earth has the right to be bitter,

it's him. He has spent a week in my home, and I consider him the bravest man of this century. You might not have even heard of him, and probably never will.

He spent fifteen or twenty years in prison at the hands of the government, and I'm asking a question I've asked myself and other men who had been persecuted for the faith. I said, "Which hurts the most? Being put in prison... he was even put in mental institutions. Can you imagine what it would be like to be in prison in Nepal? Which hurts more: being put in prison, or what Christians have done to you? His eyes flashed, and he said, " There's no comparison. It's what Christians do to you." When he walked out of prison, all of his Christians, all of his followers, people who were led to the Lord by him, were bought off by Christian missionaries who turned them against him. He grabbed his worn-out tools and started from zero again. Hallelujah. Now there is a man after God's own heart. I sat and listened to that brother talk, and I cried like a baby. I felt so ashamed. Shoot. I haven't suffered for my Lord yet. Nobody has mistreated me. I have not been abused, not when I compare my life with his. Why don't you recognize that these things are from the hand of God? They're all from God's hand.

Don't ask me about commitment; I don't understand. I don't know. I'm nervous that most people between the ages of 17 and 24 are not committed to Christ; they are running on youthful enthusiasm, even though they committed their lives to the Lord. For people ages 24 to 28, it is hard to tell, but whatever you did from 17 to 28 is up for evaluation between 28 and 32. It is at that point that we lose most Christians; though they are saved, today they are making money. Materialism excites them more than Christ does. Then once you get up to people 40 or older, they're bitter and fickle and sad and corrective and all that stuff - what in the world? Where are you, the committed? I don't mean to sound pessimistic, but that's what I've observed. Why can't you stay long? Why can't you be enthusiastic and bright-eyed and breathing and not be so glum and fearful?

The little songbook that I've got here, I break choruses in.... I'm going to tell a little bit about this songbook. The songbook has some songs in the front called Greetings. They don't have any numbers in them. It's to greet people. Then there are the Psalms, and each Psalm is listed by its number. Then we start on page 200, and I think it goes up to about 225; I'm not sure. Page 300 starts with a different kind of hymn. 300 goes up to about 350; I'm not sure, then we start again at page 400. Now, do you know why you do all this? So we can keep sticking different kinds of songs in the place where they belong.

When we get to 500, we have choruses. Actually, starting with page 400, we have Chorus Section One, and then Chorus Section Two. I want you to see this. Chorus Section One: worship and adoration. Chorus Section Two: joy and delight. I am saying we spend almost all our time in Chorus Section Two, not in hymns, not in Psalms, not in worship and adoration, but in joy and delight. We're going to do that this weekend, without apology. I love this as much as you do. Our last section was about 600. They're popular Christian tunes. As far as I'm concerned, these are the best songs in the book.

This (artificially pumping up every meeting) is the mistake of the super churches and the glory churches: you can't be up all the time. In fact, the church ought to stop and suffer sometimes. A church needs dry spells. Do you know that the Christian life needs dry spells? Do you know the Christian life needs the cross? Are you aware that you need to be lost? I don't mean from salvation, but lost in relation to the Lord's direction in your life. Do you know that if you don't have dry spells, you're in big trouble? It's not the dry spells; it's your reaction to them. Jeanne Guyon made a powerful statement: *Our reaction to a dry spell or a time of glory should be the same.*

Now, those of you who are outward, joyful, optimistic people: God love you; I envy you. Everything is always optimistic to you, and you love sunsets and see God in them. I envy you. You

love to sing; David danced before the Lord, and you like to get out here and dance, and you love the tambourine and all that. That's great. Watching you, you're not really happy in the meeting until that stuff starts; anything else, you're just sitting there, waiting for some kind of glory. We all enjoy it, but some of us enjoy it too much. You can't build the kingdom of God on "up tunes." There's a lot nearer to the kingdom of God than a tambourine and an accordion and a piano and castanets and drums and guitars.

They are trying to bring worship into meetings today; all I have seen of it seems terribly inadequate. It's beautiful songs; you're supposed to be raising your hands now. Now am I being unfair? Some of you are much more acquainted with this than I am. Can't you help me at all? I don't want to be unfair here. Was that right? The worship movement gives people a chance to praise, raise their hands, or... A lot of it is terribly inadequate.

I'm going to address the subject, but it never gets addressed: the means of worship. We're talking about worship; we're not talking about.... That's the hardest kind of meeting there is. I don't think most of us have ever seen one. I've seen a few, and I'm hungry to see a bunch more. Sometimes I like to pick all the people I like to ask to stay home. If you've been in one, you have to be prepared for that kind of meeting. If you've been in one, you know you have to be prepared. That is my personal experience.

I'm going to talk to you about it. You've got to have it to balance the other kind of meetings. No, I retract that. You need meetings of worship and adoration to counteract meetings of joy and delight, which will always, always cancel out a meeting of adoration. Have you had a meeting of adoration? Somebody gets bored with it and breaks in with... Do Lord. No, you've never been to a meeting like that. Bless you. We have one person in this room who says no. I'd like to see other people who you can say yes to that. We've had singing this weekend. We've had two different kinds of singing. We get really happy and excited, and we've had songs like Majesty; I always mix them together. Try not to separate them entirely. If you're going to have your hoedown, then have your hoedown. Well, why not announce a meeting of adoration in which you come to worship? You've got to have both kinds, or you're in trouble.

Sometimes it is good that they mix, but sometimes you have to separate the two to recognize that and know when to transition from one to the other. I almost missed that; we need meetings of adoration to balance the meetings of joy and delight. We can have both in one meeting, but we need to distinguish between the two, talk about it, and know the difference.

My next point is we also need some meetings that most of us have never seen in our lives, and that's meetings of true, profound worship. I'm going to take a stab at telling you how, but you can't go do this. Don't even try; it'll be a bust. Now maybe you can; maybe I'm not. We're going to do it next summer right here. We're going to have one meeting of adoration. If we fail, fine. At least we'll know we tried. I'm not sure I'm right, but this is all I know.

First, you've got to announce that's what it's going to be. You've got to work at it like crazy for weeks. What is it going to take? The one thing it takes is preaching on the glory of Christ until you see Him, and everything in you aches to worship Him. Secondly, I recommend a room that is darkened. Third, I recommend a room with very few chairs, only for people over 56 years old. Place chairs along the edge of the room for people who need to sit and can no longer kneel. I would clear the floor and leave space for brothers and sisters who can kneel. You're going to be kneeling, and then I will share that this meeting is for worship, to do something few will ever do: truly worship.

I would ask that the meeting begin with a very long time of quiet, with hearts full of the glory of Christ, and now from this point on, you will not understand what I mean or say. I would take that meeting off the earth, remove it from space, and remove it from time. That meeting needs to be, from my viewpoint, how it has to be...has to take place somewhere other than this planet. You cannot do it on the earth. I recommend that you join that multitude that man can't number. Go through the open door that John said existed, that was recorded in Revelation, and join another age, another period of time, another realm, another world, and worship Christ with all the host of the redeemed.

Now, we need songs that reflect that profound glory. That's why I'm not afraid, and why I'm always concerned about losing our heritage. I still like "Crown Him with Many Crowns." I still like "Holy, Holy, Holy," and I love "Worthy is the Lamb," and we have written a second stanza for it. We don't sing it the way it's usually sung, but I've noticed others have done this too. When it comes to the end, we have...and I've seen others too...come to that point and sing, "Thou art worthy," and then they don't sing the rest. Then they sing, "Thou art worthy," and then sing it again, "Thou art worthy." And then again, "Thou art worthy." Then end with a crescendo, "Oh Lord."

I rewrote the second stanza of it. I like it even better than the first one. I like that; I love it. We sang "All Hail the Power of Jesus" last night to a classical tune. Many of you have never heard it. Brothers and sisters, it's rapturous when people put their hearts, souls, and bodies into it. Another one is...I read it to you, "The New Jerusalem" will lift the roof. But there is none to compare to that one which was written in a trance. Are you familiar with the story? If you are not familiar with the story, I will tell you. I assume that Handel was a believer. He ran into the room, sat down at his organ, and stayed there for seven days. He did not eat a single bite. I believe that is correct. Is that correct? Is anybody more familiar with this story than I am?

He wrote down "The Hallelujah Chorus" and didn't remember writing it. People were afraid for his life. He was in there playing that thing at the organ, and he'd growl if anybody came to the door. Food at the door, water at the door...he didn't eat. During the night, he did not sleep; he did not eat; he sat there at that organ, and he wrote that. The last part was the Hallelujah Chorus, which, to me, is the greatest and best part; in fact, I don't remember much of the rest.

I don't think angels can improve on the Hallelujah Chorus. It is a glorious expression of praise, and I think the church of Jesus Christ should be able to sing that thing. Why do we think these things have to be relegated to choirs? The same goes for "The Lord's Prayer," and it absolutely should be a solo. I watched 2,000 Baptist preachers sing "The Lord's Prayer" in one day, and I still haven't recovered. I love that; it beats "Arky, Arky."

I'm telling brothers and sisters, lift your hands in praise and adoration and all of that stuff, but I'm addressing something that has not been addressed. I'm talking about worshipping our Lord in another realm. I'm talking about worshipping Him with our bodies, our souls, and our spirits. I want to explore that. Twice in my life, I've tried to do something more radical than that, and you won't understand what I'm saying. I'm going to do it again one of these days. I went, and both times someone sold peanuts and popcorn right in the middle of it. I got this dream; I got this hope of holding a meeting outside of time and space. A full-blown meeting outside of time and space with nobody present but the Father and the Son... wholly in the Godhead.

We're going to do every kind of innovative new thing that you and I can think of. I may even send you letters and ask for suggestions for things we can do here. We have not yet begun. For instance, we could take a cursive reading of 1 Corinthians...why not have a whole meeting in which the only thing that can be done is that each of us brings a song? That's in the New Testament. Why not have another meeting...that's what we'll do that weekend, but why not have a meeting where nothing is

brought except a melody and a song you wrote, making melody in our hearts? How about setting aside a meeting for one sole purpose: encouragement. One meeting where you can do nothing but come and bring encouragement. Why not? That's also the New Testament. In fact, everything I've said to you comes from the New Testament.

Why not have a meeting where, wow, what a meeting this would be, it could be nothing but exhortation? Now, not everybody can exhort; almost all of us can encourage, but we'd have to have a meeting where only the exhorters would speak. I would love it; I have been in those kinds of meetings. They are a gully washer when the entire meeting was given over to exhortation.

Let me tell you some other things I have seen on occasion; we can learn from the past. The Moravians had meetings this way. One person would come to the front and say, "Here is my testimony in song." And he would announce a series of songs. He would not tell you one thing about his life. They had so many songs; he would tell the whole story of his Christian life, announcing songs, and people would sing them with him.

And that comes back to this business of birthdays. We will have meetings around birthday parties; we could have birthday party meetings. We could have baby shower meetings. We could have anniversary meetings. And of course, the best of all meetings, non-meeting meetings. We've got oceans to sail that haven't been sailed.