

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0936

The Ecclesia Within The Church

March 4, 2009

Sometimes I refer to the church as **the so-called church** or **the church-at-large**, implying that what people call the church may, in fact, not be the church, at least the church that speaks to the heart of God. The challenge that we face when we use the word *church* is that it has come to mean so many things that its true meaning has been lost or distorted. So, when one person hears the word they think one way and when another hears the word they think another way. Consequently, the word *church* has come to mean many things to many people. Of course, we need to realize that the word is simply the English translation of the transliterated Greek word *ekklesia* (*ecclesia* [Anglicized]).

The premise of what follows is my belief that what many Christians, and most definitely the unbelieving world, call the church is not the true church that is in the heart of God. If everyone understood God's heart on this matter and used the word only in light of His heart, then it would be a most acceptable word. Unfortunately, we live in a day when many words have lost their meaning or have been redefined. We live in the day of babel, which means confusion, and it is my desire to clear up some of this confusion.

For this reason, I generally avoid using the word *church* and prefer to use the phrase **the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ**. The ecclesia is an expression of Christ and His life, and, when His life is manifested, we discover the ecclesia. The ecclesia is **the complement of Christ**, which means it reflects His very character, especially His love, grace, mercy, righteousness, justice, and peace. Further, the ecclesia is intimately connected to its Head. Just as a human body is not alive without a head, the ecclesia is not alive without its Head, the Lord Jesus.

It is not my purpose to explain what you just read since I have already done so in other issues. My purpose is to add some further thoughts to what I have already written. Please see issues #02-0806, January 18, 2008, *Ekklesia – "Out-Called" Body*; #02-08110-111, September 2008, *The Complement of the One*; #03-0911, February 2, 2009, *Head Up All in the Christ*.

At this point, I would like to introduce the concept of **the ecclesia within the church**. Some call this the remnant church. Frank Bartleman of Azusa Street fame called it "the Church within the Church." Let us be clear that God has only one church; this is true and undeniable. After all, God has one work that He is doing, and He is working on one line, and this line is in, through, by, and for His Son. However, the ecclesia within a church is likened to the germination of a seed, which Bartleman called "the living seed of the true Church." This seed was planted in what Christendom sees as the church. However, what many have come to accept as the church is not the seed; they see an outward shell that does not have the life and call this the church.

This "seed" is the ecclesia that is in the heart of God. Another way to look at it is that the ecclesia within the church speaks of the heart of God hidden within what outwardly many see and call the church. However, the reality is not in what many see with their physical and carnal eyes but only in what is seen with the spiritual eye. Another way to state this is that it is in the very life of His Son, and anything that is not of His life is not the ecclesia. Simply, if it is not the body of Christ with Christ as the Head, then it is not the ecclesia. Yet, another way to look at it is that the ecclesia is **the holy temple in the Lord, the dwelling of God in spirit** (Ephesians 2:21-22).

People can construct a building (paid for with a usurious mortgage that is against God's divine law) and call it their church; they can put a name on it and call it the So-and-So Church; they can qualify the emphasis or nature of their church as an emerging church, a post-modern church, a radical church, a Pentecostal church, a denominational church, a home church, or a myriad of other ways; they can

elevate a man and his wife as the head of their church and give them exalted titles and special parking places; they can become rich and successful with a very large membership roll, even with many satellite churches; they can have a successful internet ministry; they can declare that they are doing kingdom business and hold very successful conferences to tell people how to do it; and they can proclaim that they preach the word and only the word, **without ever being the ecclesia of God that is born out of heaven**. In other words, they can be the church without ever being the ecclesia. They are not the ecclesia but simply the church as manifested outwardly within Christendom.

Many people acknowledge that the so-called church is a made up of believers and is not a building. But what about the ecclesia, is it simply made up of believers, no matter how carnal or worldly they might be? I say no. The ecclesia that is in the heart of God and that will reign with Christ in the oncoming eon is **the ecclesia of the overcomers** or what I call **the conquerors**. If you do not think this is true, then read Revelation 2 and 3 with an ear to hear what the spirit of Christ is saying.

The ecclesia, which is the body of Christ, can be described in many ways to include **the ecclesia of overcomers or conquerors, the firstfruit anointed, the barley company, the remnant, the male child, the pioneers, David's mighty men, Gideon's band, the 144,000, or the called, chosen, and faithful**. They are the ones that will lead the church-at-large into the kingdom. They, like their Master, are like the grain of wheat that falls into the ground. See issue #02-0869, May 12, 2008, *Unless A Grain of Wheat Falls*, and Article #14, October 2008, *The Pioneer*.

As I have considered the state of the church-at-large, it seems to me that one sign that it is not the ecclesia, as I have explained it, is that it does not realize that it is living in **the days of Noah**. I do not mean that the church is merely living in the period of time called the days of Noah, but it is living as if it were joined at the hip, so to speak, to the multitudes that are living as if the world is not about to dramatically change, except perhaps they think things will get better with prosperity and good times returning when the current global recession resolves itself. Don't be fooled, our 120 years are about up; it is time to wake up. See the series on *The Days of Noah* posted during January 2009.

Perhaps I am wrong, but it seems to me that there is not much urgency coming forth from most of the pulpits of the church. The church seems to be going on in its often hyped-up frenzy as if it is business as usual, except, perhaps, for a stepped-up push for tithing because the church and ministry bank accounts are not being replenished as they were in good times. Pastors and preachers continue to push their emphasis based on their strategy and vision for the now while living in this present wicked eon (Paul's description, not mine) that is so close to its end that, personally, I can almost taste the coming kingdom of our Lord, figuratively speaking. I recognize that there are many who focus heavily on end-time prophecy, but much of this emphasis misses the very heart of **God is love** and who **loves the world and wills that all mankind be saved**, not annihilated or tortured in hell. If you are the least bit curious why I state this then please read my other writings, such as the books *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons* and *That God May Be All in All*, as well as numerous issues of *The Upward Call*, along with special articles.

The problem is that the church has been taught by every wind of doctrine and has been systematically deceived (Ephesians 4:14) by the so-called five-fold ministry that is charged to teach the ecclesia to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head (Ephesians 4:15). We have been so effectively trained and influenced by the Babylonian mind while in captivity that a great deal of what is being taught from the pulpits, in books, and over the internet and broadcast media could, collectively, be called babel or confusion. Wherever the Babylonian mind is in operation there will be confusion.

The challenge is that many do not see that the church is in a state of confusion and make no distinction between what they see and what God sees. This is where the ecclesia of conquerors comes in. We have all been blinded to our Babylonian captivity, but the Lord has been opening the eyes of those who are destined to reign with Him and who will be charged to lead the church-at-large into His kingdom. The church will not remain in its condition and be cast aside. Quite the contrary, it is destined to enter the kingdom of our Lord in the next eon, but it will take the conquerors, the manifested sons of God that experience Tabernacles, to do it. I realize that this might be a radical concept to some so I encourage you to seek the Lord on the matter and seek for the ecclesia within the church. Be a conqueror!