

## The Church Has Missed The Source Of Her Power

By Bob Shuler

Said a London preacher recently: "There would have been no Nazism, no Fascism, no Communism, if only the Christian Church had remained true to her mission." The fact is, the Church missed the meaning of her mission. She missed her commission. She has failed in that she has not understood the truth upon which she is effective.

We can lay the plight of the world at the door of the Christian Church because she deserted her supernatural mandate, her supernatural promise, her supernatural purpose, and her supernatural power. The Church was never meant to be a natural organization. For that reason, the salt has lost its savor. Organize the Church upon a human level, and she is done. She may remain in architecture, in form, in ceremony, in ecclesiasticism, in pious platitudes, and even in doctrine and orthodox pronouncements; but she cannot remain a living, revolutionary entity. The reason is, she has deserted her Source.

As well expect a river to flow on, when all the fountains are dried up. Pentecost was not man's doing. There was nothing in Peter, in his preparation, in his personality, in his education, in his eloquence, in his understanding of the situation, in his organization, or in his ecclesiastical position that produced Pentecost or the results which attended. The fact is, Pentecost produced Peter!

Pentecost produced the spectacular and humanly unbelievable things that followed. Pentecost was upon a supernatural level. Pentecost was the Holy Ghost in action. The disciples went forth after Pentecost to do what all the humanly contrived organizations on earth have never done and could never do. Suddenly the world began to be "turned upside down." It was Pentecost!

Today, the Church has all but forgotten Pentecost in her haste to organize, educate, promote, revolutionize and otherwise take over the rebuilding of a world that has undoubtedly reached bottom. Our great leaders are proceeding upon a mammoth undertaking, that of making one church [organization] into a mighty leverage for the lifting of one world out of her chaos and despair. All we have to do to understand how miserably she has failed and how miserably she is failing, is to look about us.

See what has happened within the past half-century. See how near destruction the world has come, and is, at this moment. See how powerless the Christian Church has become! The Bible speaks of the condition of the salt that has lost its savor. "It is thenceforth good for nothing," says the Book.

I am not saying that the Christian Church is not advancing. She is advancing. She has the best church buildings and equipment in the history of mankind. She is better organized than ever before. She has printing presses, publishing houses, libraries, universities and colleges without comparison. She has the best trained leadership since the days of Christ. She is rich and increased with goods, and lacketh nothing! As the world judges success, she is a tremendous success. \* \* \* she is advancing, winning, achieving. What could she ask more?

But the cold, harsh summing up of history pronounces the Christian Church a failure! There is a "little flock" to whom Christ has

promised the "Kingdom," and that little, despised minority is working miracles in the strength and power of that same Pentecost, from which the early Church went forth to conquer. But the church itself is so busy re-making a world that has collapsed within her very hands that her efforts appear tragic. Her world has lost all steadying elements of moral character. Men no longer trust the word of one another; world leaders are looked upon as low liars; thievery is everywhere. The world's most popular characters are confessed to be harlots and libertines. Everything that makes for Christianity has slipped. Even Christian [?] leaders are abetting atheist plotters. Such is the world that is being produced by the influence of the Christian Church on the human level.

The Church has decided upon human channels, the use of human power, and the reconstruction of human direction. She has entered the field of economics, industry, government, human relations and world betterment. Her tools are human tools, her implementation is the same, and her source of power are the human dynamos about her. The sorry result is that the Church has been pulled down to the level of the world, rather than the lifting of mankind to the divine level.

All this tragic plight of the Christian Church is but the result of the abandonment of her supernatural character. Her failure stems from her own folly.

Christ sent His disciples to Pentecost for POWER that would cause the Roman Empire to tremble. A strange thing followed Pentecost. Men who had been but humble toilers, fishermen, despised among their fellows, suddenly became invincible. They had no worldly education or preparation for their task, no personal qualification that stood out—and yet they literally turned the world upside down!

Kings trembled before them! Why was there a Hitler? The answer is, there were no Pentecost-filled men to prevent it? Why a Mussolini? No Peter! Why a Stalin? No. St. Paul! Why a world all tangled, wrecked, and leaping toward chaos? The answer is certain: The Christian Church has lost her Pentecost!

We are depending upon horses and chariots, upon science and scholarship, upon atomic bombs and cold war strategy, upon the wisdom of men. We are frantically organizing the West against the East. We are rushing hither and thither to "contain" Communism. We are resorting to strikes and fomenting revolutions. Many are holding investigations. Many are defying the government under which they live. It is all a mad-house process of man's devising, and the Church has stooped to its level. We, who were sent to the Upper Room for our supplies and promised the resources of the eternal God, now join the mad rush to hold back the forces of hell by sand-bagging manipulations.

The floods are coming! The dikes are breaking! The land is being inundated, while the Church of Jesus Christ shovels sand!

The world is failing because the Church has failed!—The Methodist Challenge.

"Merely reading the Bible is not enough. We must open our hearts to its influence."

## WHEN BLESSINGS BECOME CURSES

Is it not a pity we are so depraved that what God intended to be a blessing often becomes a curse? Notice a few instances:

Jacob's ability to "get ahead" makes him covetous and tricky.

Absalom's beautiful hair leads to his untimely death.

Judas being a financier prepares the way for selling his Lord.

Yes, friends, your gifts become curses when, because of them, you feel your importance.

When your sociability leads you to talk too much.

When your beauty and changeable suits make you vain and self-conscious.

When a nice automobile takes you away from the humble place of worship.

When a large circle of friends robs you of time for devotion.

When the gift of children adds so many home cares that you neglect calling upon and helping your neighbours.

When you have learned how to pray and testify in your own strength, without much help from God.

When your ability to sermonize causes you to weep and wrestle less over your messages than formerly.

What is the remedy? Proclaim a fast and weep before the Lord until you are broken up afresh and the Word and secret prayer become a real relish to the soul.—E. E. Shelhamer.

## GEORGE MULLER ON FAITH

Faith is confidence that God will act according to what He has declared in His Holy Word. It is reliance on God's Word through the assurance that He will act truthfully. It is based altogether on His character.

Welcome the trials of faith. It grows by the exercise trials give. But if we do not welcome the discipline, we get little from it but suffering. To repine at affliction is to miss the most ennobling joy, to incur the most needless distress, and to lose faith besides.

Seek acquaintance with God as He is revealed in the Bible. Trust will be spontaneous if we really know Him. The notions of God which the world, and even many in the church, entertain, are not true. God is the most lovable Being. Is not this the language of your inmost soul? If not, you are not acquainted with God as He is revealed in Scripture. Seek above all to know God, so that you shall from your inmost soul say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him." See also Psalm 9:10. If one is really acquainted with the God of the Bible, he is so satisfied that he will not complain of anything but will rejoice in all things.—"Medical Missionary Record!"

## SIGNS OF A SANCTIFIED HEART

Here are some signs of a sanctified heart:

A spiritual wide-awakeness.

A warmness of spirit towards all people and to the means of grace.

A simple honesty in testimony.

A relating of the goodness of God instead of aches and pains.

A sweet disposition, not a disgruntled one.

Always looking up, out, and forward.

A gentle spirit, quick to encourage, slow to condemn.

A readiness to put the best construction upon all things.—Selected.