

# the clear word

a publication to encourage a clearer understanding of God's word.

AUGUST 2010

The church of Jesus Christ burst onto the Jerusalem scene with tremendous zeal and an overwhelming infusion of spiritual power. Starting with a small band of Christ-followers, the Holy Spirit literally pushed these first disciples out onto the streets where they could begin telling others the good news of Jesus Christ. Eyewitnesses to this event said that people came running from everywhere to see what was going on. Clearly, the demonstration of God's Spirit was so powerful – so astonishing – that literally “three thousand were added” to the number of believers that day (see Acts 2:41, NIV).

Today, many people tend to look back on those events and think that the church as it began on the Day of Pentecost represents the “high-water mark” of its life and power. Instead of seeing that day in Jerusalem as just the begin-

ning of what was yet to come, many often find themselves saying, “If only we could have the same power they had, things would be different.” The reality of course, is that *we do have the power they had!* The Holy Spirit has not changed – His power has not diminished! What changed over time was the church, for even by the end of the first century there was a clear movement away from “faith to a type of Christianity in which ethical interests and concern for law and order predominate.”<sup>1</sup>

Sadly, after such a powerful and dynamic beginning in the first-century, the next 600 years of history show that the church went into a period of decline. Biblical patterns of church leadership changed to a system of priests, popes and bishops. Water baptism gave way to the “christen-

## God's Plan of Restoration

By Bill Clark

ing” of infants, and the warmth of community life in the Holy Spirit was replaced with a sterile liturgy in so-called “church buildings.” While one could always find pockets of renewal amongst “believers whose corporate life was consciously based upon New Testament teaching,”<sup>2</sup> much of the church moved away from the biblical principles of life to a rigid institutional form of religious expression.



Today, we believe God is working to restore His church! As Acts 3:21 says, Jesus “must remain out of sight in heaven *until everything is restored to order again* (MSG, italics added).

This restoration will not only include

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experiencing the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit as He appeared on the Day of Pentecost, but it will also lead us onward to experience everything that God intends His church to be. This means that restoration is more than simply knowing what is to be restored. It is more than gathering a checklist of biblical truth. In reality, restoration is about taking what we have learned from the Scriptures and living it from day to day. This is why restoration is only *restoration when what is learned is put into practice.*

As we read the New Testament, a picture begins to emerge of a *redeemed community* that had a tremendous impact upon the world around it. This impact was not based so much on the activities or structured programs of the church, but upon *the quality of life amongst its members.* This life comes as an answer to the cry of the human heart which says, "Show me a life that really works!" People today, as they did nearly two thousand years ago, are still saying, "Show me a marriage that really works, and I'll listen." Or, "Show me a man or

woman who really demonstrates inner peace and joy, and I'll consider accepting the good news of Jesus Christ." Clearly, people need to see an example in us of Jesus, who makes life worth living. This is why we are looking to demonstrate to the world an experience of life that is so bold – so beautiful – so extraordinary, that it will literally take the breath away of those who see it. As a result, the common response of people will be: *"This is what I have been looking for all my life!"*



As we consider God's plan of restoration over the past one hundred years, we have seen the Holy Spirit highlighting the following truths:

- *The plurality of eldership in the local church.*
  - *An emphasis on personal holiness and righteous living.*
  - *The authority of the Scriptures over ecclesiastical authority.*
  - *An understanding that all believers are priests before the Lord.*
  - *The baptism in the Holy Spirit.*
  - *Water baptism.*
  - *The emergence of Ephesians 4:11 ministries such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.*
  - *The recapturing of the biblical teachings on the kingdom of God and covenant relationship.*
  - *A commitment to freedom in thanksgiving, praise and worship.*
- *The relevance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit for today.*



As we look ahead to the future, we know that there is so much more that the Lord wants to do. The restoration process will not end until the Lord is ready to return. This is why we must ask the Lord to give us “an extra measure of grace to take us beyond the Acts experience right into all that was in the heart of God for his church from the beginning.”<sup>3</sup> Today, we are looking for *fullness* – the fullness of Christ in His church, and the fullness of His eternal purpose. As modern-day Restorers, we seek to make ourselves ready for the coming of the Lord, believing that this generation will capture the heart, mind and will of God like never before. In doing so,

we will rightly be able to say with the Holy Spirit, “Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20, NIV).

<sup>1</sup>Cyril C. Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers* (New York: Collier Books, 1970), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>David Matthew, “Part I: Swift Decline – The First 600 Years,” in *Restoration*, March/April 1983, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>David Matthew, “Part 9: Aiming for God’s Ideal,” in *Restoration*, July/August 1984, p. 11.

## Voices on Restoration

**Keri Jones** - “Christians have always come out of something old into something new in order to move on in the purposes of God.”

**Arthur Wallis** - “You cannot be whole-hearted towards Christ and only half-hearted towards His body.” >

The Clear Word newsletter is a publication of New Life Church in Peterborough. The focus of this publication is to encourage a clearer understanding of God’s Word and to challenge Christians to press on towards maturity in faith and practice.



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**J. Edwin Orr** - "The telling and retelling of the wonderful works of God have rekindled the expectation of faithful intercessors and prepared the way for new awakenings."

**Jay Adams** - The notable saints of Hebrews 11 all gained their power to act meaningfully in the present precisely because of their orientation toward the future."

**Jim Graham** - "We need a church which is going to be extrovert rather than introvert. God cannot turn the world upside down until he has turned the church inside out."



# NLC Coming Events for August 2010



- Aug 8 - Sunday Morning Meeting at 10:30 am TASS
- Aug 11 - Ladies and Children  
Mid Summers Day - Garden Party & Swim  
Dessert Contest  
1- 3:30 pm at Muriel & Julia Orr's  
1411 Old Youngs Point Road- Lakefield  
For more details call - 705-652-6097
- Aug 15 - Sunday Morning Meeting at 10:30 am TASS
- Aug 16 - Life Groups this week! Please contact some one in your Life Group for times and location.
- Aug 22 - Sunday Morning Meeting at 10:30 am TASS
- Aug 25 - Annual NLC Corn Roast at Murray and Joanne Fallaise home at 6:30 pm  
306 Mount Nebo Road, Omemee ON  
For more details call - 705-799-7884
- Aug 29 - Sunday Morning Meeting at 10:30 am TASS



Currently meeting at  
Thomas A Stewart Secondary School  
on Armour Road every Sunday  
10:30 am in the cafeteria

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Design & Layout: Muriel Orr

