

SPECIAL REPORT

PART THREE: GOD'S PLAN & CAUSES THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT

SERIOUS SYMPTOMATIC PROBLEMS IN TODAY'S CHURCHES BASED ON FOUR MAJOR CAUSES WITH THEIR IMPACTS AND INDICATED SOLUTIONS

by

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12-14-2006**

Christ-Centered



Biblical Training

John 2:6

***the one who says he abides in Him ought himself
to walk in the same manner as He walked.***

John 5:19

***.... "the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is
something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the
Father does, these things the Son also does in like
manner.***

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Scriptures are taken from the New American Standard Bible

REPORT IMPORTANCE: There is a world-wide Church Growth Movement that is leading our churches into a massive falling away from God's best. The falling away is helping to bring the endtimes Tribulation. The Movement targets the youth to bring long-term social change. It works for numbers using a dumbed-down training without also teaching God's Whole Counsel to mature believers in Christ-likeness. Even possibly doing some good things, the Movement is falling away from God's to a human plan. It, itself, attempts to work things together for good instead of only trusting God. The problem is not with what it teaches, but instead, what it leaves out of its teachings, such as true salvation, living under Christ's Lordship, and pursuing maturity in Christ.

The movement is working (inadvertently?) to bring the world instead of all of God into the Church. It trains people to meet man's felt needs from a human love perspective. This can be good, but it generally omits sufficiently teaching God's program under Christ's Lordship needed to gain the maturity in Christ-likeness that allows us to know and relate to God toward His fullness both now, but especially in eternity. Apart this living with God, there is nothing.

This report describes this movement, its goals and impacts, and why it is happening. It presents what we should do now if we want God's best and to avoid participating unknowingly in this wrong church movement, not gaining the maturity in Christ that He wants us to have. The main report brings an overall understanding. It is a bit long, but stick with it. There are many aspects.

INFORMATION SOURCES: This report uses information taken from: (1) the many referenced publications and (2) my web site detailed reports that develop the teachings from Scripture. These references are listed at the report's end. You are encouraged to read them. We cannot be sure of all the details re the trends because we do not have complete information - such as what individual churches are doing. But observation, the literature, and the internet show clearly the trends are happening. **There are exceptions in many churches to everything we share. Many churches are not so involved, have a mixture, or not involved at all in the trends. They have greater ministry.**

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Matthew 6:33; 1 John 2:6;
2 Chronicles 16:9

**PART THREE: GOD'S PLAN & CAUSES
THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT:●1
Serious Symptomatic Problems in
Today's Churches Based on Four
Major Causes With Their Impacts
and Indicated Solutions**

**John M. Stephenson
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December 14, 2006**

GOD'S PURPOSES FOR HIS CHURCH

(Has not the Church Growth Movement departed from most of these?)

GOD'S OBJECTIVE AND METHODS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE HIS OBJECTIVE: What is God's objective for people? What are God's methods to implement His objective? God's method to implement His objective for people is they first become a Christian and, thereafter, become mature in a high-skill spiritual ability in Christ-likeness in relationship living.●2 This mature spiritual capability is needed so His objective can be achieved. ***This is that they can relate to and know God in His depth-breadth living according to His perfect ways and truth in close fellowship Him throughout eternity. Apart from this relationship there is nothing.***

We have spiritual maturity when God directs us in every thought and action and we respond by faith that He is leading us, obeying this direction, and our response is from our love of Him, so that we obey the instructions and commandments He is giving us. In this, we are not taking any independent action. Thus, when others see us, they see Him, because we, from ourselves as a source, are doing nothing. More on this later. ***God has designed us as believers in Christ's Cross that Christ would be in us, living out His life through us. Christ is our life. We can only be free from sin when our perfect God directs every aspect of our lives, working all things together for good. We are inherently unable to do so.***

Galatians 2:20 - "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

The Church Growth Movement, by their actions, has no or very little understanding of these concepts. The movement does not understand the mature Christian life and the penalties if one does not have one and live it. We can do nothing spiritually apart from Christ and God. The Church Growth Movement is going on their own. If we are to be successful and mature in God, we must cease from all independent action apart from Him.●3

1. **SUMMARY:** The **SUMMARY** of this Report is a separate document on my web site.

2. **REFERENCES FOR GAINING SPIRITUAL MATURITY:** Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 3:19; 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 6:1; 11:35; James 1:2-4.

3. **CHOICE OF A CHURCH:** One should look for a Church whose elders and pastors operate only under the authority of God and His Bible (the Lordship of Christ) and do not add their own ideas for direction. The Church
(continued...)

John 15:5 - "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

In summary (God's Purposes and Plan for us):

1. **God's Goal or Objective:** That we, as believers, in eternity can know and relate to Him in His depth-breadth. We can live holy and righteously according to His perfect Truth in His Glory. We can live by sacrificial love and by faith in close fellowship with Him and each other as He reveals more and more of Himself as eternity continues.

Phillippians 3:10 - that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

2. **God's Method to Be Able to Accomplish His Goal and Objective:** In order to be able to know and relate to God toward His fulness, we need a mature high-skill spiritual ability in Christ-likeness in relationship living patterned after Christ's walk with the Father. We are to gain this maturity now such that we live with every thought and action for direction coming from the Father. Then God will be God all in all. Thus, He works all together for good. ●4

We must live by faith that we are thinking and doing is coming from God. We will respond to keep His commandments from our love for Him, not as robots. This means that we can respond to more mature leading of God if we have a more mature love. We can gain more revelation and believe more of what God wants us to do, if we live by more mature faith. These must be developed now before we die.

There are apparently many maturity levels of living by love and of living by faith.

This means we will walk by strong faith in God to fulfill His promises. Then we will live without sin and gain needed revelation from God. It means we will live by sacrificial love keeping God's commandments to live holy (no immorality) and to know His heart. There other teachings involved.

3. **The Church's Goal and Objective:** Accomplish God's Method to be able to Accomplish His Goal and Objective.
4. **The Church's Method (Ministry to Gain Maturity):** Train believers in depth-breadth with a version of God's Whole Counsel with the academic and the practical (application) to become mature in:(1) worshiping, glorifying, obeying, pleasing, and honoring God; (2) living a godly life in unity head-subordinate relationships, patterned after our Lord's walk with His Father using faith and sacrificial love; (3) helping to evangelize complete local and foreign areas, discipling Christians to maturity in Christ, planting new churches, building godly families, and reaching out to the needy; and (4) learn, know, and stand strong on the basic and fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith including the Attributes of God. This is so we will depend upon God to lead us in every thought and action. We will do nothing apart from Him. (We are not just to work to make disciples with Christian growth and to evangelize only part of our area - it is to gain maturity and to evangelize the "entire" area.)

We are to train to walk as Christ walked. We are to be outcome, not just method or

3(...continued)

should have at her first priority in ministry to mature her own people at the highest skill levels of spiritual ability in Christ-likeness to the degree that they understand.

4. **SCRIPTURES:** 1 John 2:6 with John 5:19-20; 12:49; 14:6-11; 17:4.

procedure oriented.

1 John 2:6 - *the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.*

How did He walk? ●5

John 5:19 - "the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

(Thus, we are to live only by what comes from God the Father as a source. Today that would be only what is in the Bible and as the Holy Spirit leads us in specific ways to work toward doing the direction of the Father.)

When we live this way, people will not see us, but instead only God the Father. This is because we are doing nothing from ourselves as a source. This is how our Lord lives.

John 14:9-11 - Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves.

What is the measure of our maturity?

Or maturity is and can only be measured by God. ***Because we are to walk as our Lord walks, the degree or measure of our maturity is how we respond to God the Father (everything coming from Him as a source) in all aspects of life in comparison to how our Lord, being perfect in every aspect, would act, if He were to act in our place.*** It is how we live by faith and sacrificial love. We would regularly pursue doing all that God wants us to do and avoid doing what He does not want us to do. We would be searching the Scriptures for all that God wants us to do and we would be doing it. We would not be taken in by wrong doctrine or compromise. We would be working to rid ourselves of bad and sinful habits. This is a growth process. There are many maturity levels.

God commands us as the Church to pursue maturity in Christ with a version of God's Whole Counsel. It should not mainly teach only the basics as the Church Growth Movement is doing. To teach only the basics is disobedience to God and His Word.

Hebrews 6:1 - .Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity,

God's purpose for the Church is to mature their people to the full stature of Christ and prepare them for God's work. The apostle Paul stated we must teach God's Whole Counsel. Thus, we are to teach and train with all, not just part, of the Bible.

Ephesians 4:11-13 - And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

5. **SCRIPTURES:** 1 John 2:6 with John 5:19-20; 12:49; 14:6-11; 17:4.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Acts 20:26-27 - "Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men. "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God (God's Whole Counsel).

These Scriptures teach we are to train for maturity in Christ using much, not some, of the Bible. We are not just to remain at first-level teaching. Being mature we will not be misled and/or deceived others as is happening now in the Church Growth Movement.

Ephesians 4:14 - As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

We need to realize that if we have good teaching such as in weekly sermons, and the Sunday School, but in a reasonable time if they do not cover a major portion of God's Whole Counsel in regard to basic beliefs and Christian living, we are not maturing our people. This is particularly true if we train with the what to's (knowledge and content oriented) without also with the how to's (application with personal testimony of worship, life, and ministry in Christ orientation that the principles work.)

This limited-scope teaching of the Church Growth Movement is a form of subtracting from Scripture that our Lord warns not to do? It is not enduing sound doctrine. Our churches are departing from the God's authority to man's. We are to teach all of Scripture - a version of God's Whole Counsel. Not working to teach all of Scripture is major sin, and it brings damage to God's people. (This is what the Church Growth Movement is doing.)

Revelation 22:19 - and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

2 Timothy 4:3 - For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires;

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - .All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (So why are we not using all of it?)

Our Lord said that He glorified His Father because He accomplished all the work that His Father gave Him to do. We should do likewise, being told to walk as He walked. But we to know what that work is.

John 17:4 - "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.

1 John 2:6 - He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Should we not want to do all of His works that He gives us so we can bring much glory to God? Can we not glorify Him more if we train to and become more mature in Christ? ***We glorify God only when we obey what He has given to us to obey and/or to accomplish..***

Thus, by not maturing their people, are not leaders impeding their people from bringing more glory to God as well as keeping them in immaturity, not knowing and relating to God as much? (We must glorify God also to live holy lives without sin. We then are to focus on His will and not on our

God warns us not to be captive by and use the world's ways. But this is what our churches are doing by using the world's music, dumbing down their training, and using the world's marketing methods. Thus, the movement, although doing some good, is a departure from God's ways and His best. Is it then not a form of an apostate movement?

Colossians 2:8 - See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ (meaning according to the Bible).

Galatians 3:3 - Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

James 4:4 - You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Implementing these to some degree, the way of the Church Growth Movement is a departure from an intimate relationship with Christ. We are losing a close fellowship with Him where He, not man, directs everything. To correct things, we need to understand: (1) People come to God by His working in them as He uses the preaching of His Word in love taught without compromise; (2) We, in the Church, are to grow up with spiritual maturity in Christ-likeness based on God's Whole Counsel as the main priority of the Church, not just work for some spiritual growth and for numbers; and (3) People grow by learning and living out God's Word, not by listening to music. We are to have a personal testimony before the people. God uses His Word to bring faith, not listening to music. Although melody dominate hymns with much Bible content can draw people. We come to God when we learn of His Greatness, the benefits if we do, and the penalties if we do not. We come when we learn of His love and how we are to live by love, His love working in us. Preaching the Word is God's way. Using rock music is man's way. We are to trust God, using His Word, to draw people, not music.●7

We come to God when we see our emptiness and the life He offers us in Christ. We come to God when we see that life from ourselves does not make any sense. We come to God when we see the eternal results and consequences. We come to God to gain God's life in us that overcomes our death.

Romans 10:17 - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

John 6:44 - "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him;

By not adequately obeying the above Scriptures, those Churches in the Church Growth Movement have a major departure from the true Christian faith.●8 Our churches in time, as the current youth become the majority, as stated several times, are becoming immature with a loss of biblical intellect and with a plateau of biblical knowledge. The numbers and

6. **EXAMPLE:** The concept is like the ballerina looking to her teacher for approval of her performance before she takes her bow. Did she do sufficiently what her teacher wanted?

7. **MY TESTIMONY:** I came to God because He was drawing me. What I was doing was not working. But somehow (Romans 1:19, 20; 2:14-16), I knew the answer was with God and His Bible. So I sought out a person who could tell me the truth of life as presented in the Bible. He shared the Gospel with me.

8. **RESULT:** The above wrong practices result in not adequately maturing their people in Christ needed for eternity. It results in doing insufficient **local** area-wide evangelism, even though many individuals and churches are doing evangelism. They particularly are not adequately training and evangelizing the children and the youth.

percentages of our gung ho and very faithful are reducing. Are we there now? Are not those churches, departing from teaching most of God's Word, becoming lukewarm? Our churches need a sufficient training curriculum that is worship, godly life, ministry and doctrine oriented taken from God's Whole Counsel. How many churches have one or have access to one? Does your church have one? Does mine?

IMPORTANCE OF MATURITY DEVELOPMENT

God will bring us individually to the maturity level to which we are obedient and respond to His teaching and leading in the environment of the trials, testings, and temptations we experience. If we learn much and respond to Him in a maximum way, He will lead us to have greater maturity in Christ-likeness. **We will know more of Him in His depth-breadth throughout eternity.** But on the other hand, if we teach mostly first-level without the applications and we respond little to obey what we know, we will most likely gain but minimum maturity in the Lord. **We will know less of Him and glorify Him less.**

The Bible does not teach whether or not our maturity will or will not increase in eternity. God leaves the situation as a matter of faith. God commands us to mature. And much biblical data , presented later, leads to the potential that our maturity can be fixed forever at death. God is fair and not partial, but He does not promise equality, even though that may be a human desire.

Many people in the world have never heard the Gospel or even now if there is one. They may never hear. But those who will respond, if they should hear it, will hear it. We have children who die at an early age, some not Christians, and most as believers not reaching maximum spiritual maturity. We have different punishments in the Lake for unbelievers. They are judged for their works. There are different amounts of rewards for works given in heaven. There will be different levels in a chain of command in heaven, and most likely many maturity levels.(Parable: Some will rule over 10 cities and some over 5.)●9 **Whether or not we understand, it appears most strongly that Christians will have different maturity levels in heaven.**

<p>We do not know for sure. But what if this is correct?</p>	<p>Those who have the greater maturity in Christ-likeness will know much more about God and His truths by A MUCH LARGER amount as eternity continues than those with less maturity. Should we not then want to know as much about God as we could? This is what I think. Thus, we should we not pursue maturity as God commands and train in depth-breadth, living out what we know in life and ministry? We can be there for each other. We should learn and practice living by great faith and sacrificial love. These will be greatly needed in the Tribulation and especially in eternity.</p>
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9. **PARABLE:** Luke 19:15-19 - "And it came about that when he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him in order that he might know what business they had done. "And the first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' "And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.' "And the second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' "And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.'

Thus, by not pursuing and gaining a mature high-skill spiritual ability in Christ-likeness, we will learn less of Him throughout eternity. Apart from knowing and relating to Him in His depth-breadth, there is nothing. And He is inexhaustible in His Greatness. It appears to be a most terrible mistake not to gain the maximum maturity that God offers and commands we pursue so we can know Him to the ultimate so to speak. God commands us to pursue maturity for whatever reason He may have.

●10

NEEDED BACKGROUND APPROACH UNDERSTANDING THAT HELPS US TO SELECT (DETERMINE) AND CARRY OUT GOD'S FULL INTENDED WILL

BASIC UNDERSTANDING: We are not to be satisfied with having mainly the rudiments of a church service with good music and a good sermon, a Sunday School, and buildings free from debt. **We are in business to bring great worship to God, mature our people in Christ at the maximum level as described above, and train our people to do foreign and local AREA-WIDE evangelism. We need to know how to trust God so as to live without sin and receive more revelation from Him. We need to live by sacrificial love to know God and His heart and abide in Him. It is necessary to live holy and righteously. Many, if not most, Christians most likely have not had God use them to lead another person to Christ. Have you led a person to Christ? Many of us have.**

NEEDED APPROACH: As a young person growing up, I was taught to always work for excellence in everything. I was taught to always work to make my boss and head and those under me successful and to ensure the job specifications and objectives were being achieved. If I was accomplishing these, then I was successful. I have tried to follow this teaching through the years as a worker in industry. So I have been trained to think in these terms.

As a satellite system's design engineer, when I was given a new job, I wrote on one sheet of paper ALL the things that were associated with and were necessary to accomplish the job and implement the specifications AS DIRECTED BY MY BOSS AND OUR CUSTOMER. I asked others for their inputs. Then I selected the system elements that were needed to make the system work and implement the intended specifications. I would study all the things and operating capabilities necessary to make the engineering system work. I would choose the key tasks and place all the other items under these tasks. I ordered the tasks with schedules to allow us as workers to complete the job on schedule and to have a completed and finished, working product that meets and implements **ALL** the required specifications. This procedure allowed me to accomplish the entire job in front of me and meet the customers requirements. I, thus, worked both as a system and a project engineer. ***When working the job, I worked to make my boss (and customer) and those under me successful as we worked together to execute the job tasks. The boss got his job accomplished and the workers gained experience.*** I had the scope of the entire job in hand and in mind. When I did these, then I was successful.

CHURCHES SHOULD MAKE A WRITTEN PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE NEEDED APPROACH:
As Church leaders, we need to seek out from only the Bible ALL of God's will for the Church's direction with excellence and commitment. Thus, as a principle and an approach,

10. TODAY'S SITUATION: In today's environment and circumstances, where people will hardly respond to God and where we might have to use rock type music to draw the youth, they most likely will gain much less maturity. But under today's sinful circumstances, this may be the maximum maturity they can have in spiritual growth. It is certainly better to be a Christian going to heaven and have but limited maturity and know some of God than not to be a Christian without any maturity by which to know God and go to the Lake of Fire. Only God knows the situation and the hearts of the people. So in our present sinful environment with its worldly trends, the Church Growth Movement may have some value, but certainly far from God's best. But what if God's best is not achievable to very many now except for a very few gung ho and very faithful?

our churches should search the entire Bible and write on a piece of paper **EVERYTHING** that God (our Boss) wants accomplished and to the scope and to the degree, extent, and methods (specifications) He wants it accomplished. The plan should include tasks, schedules, and names of workers. This takes time, but it should be done. If we are to mature our people as God leads, we need to find all those things that the Bible teaches are necessary to accomplish the entire or overall job that God places before us in His Word

Churches, from God's overall direction, should establish a training curriculum founded on a version of God's Whole Counsel and make plans●11 and select tasks to implement all of His objectives and requirements with excellence and commitment. This training curriculum should include both the academic and, very importantly, the practical (how we do things). **They should use nothing else for direction.** God's method and choice of music needs to be determined. It is not contemporary rock.

Each teaching or task has a depth-breadth. We must understand the scope and intent of what He wants done. As part of the tasks and training, we need to have some form of on-the-job training. Thus, part of what we write must include how to practice and implement carrying out the teachings and principles. We can and should seek inputs and insights from others as they see the Bible teaches. We then, having the intended scope of our job defined, should develop from the Bible a written curriculum that allows us both academically and in practice to achieve the training as God works in us. We should determine how we will teach the curriculum such as in sermons, the Sunday School, and seminars. **We should determine the priority time wise (make a schedule) of when we do things. We may need to sequence ministries time wise. We should warn and inform about the soon-coming Tribulation.**

This curriculum needs to be worship, life, ministry, and Christian-Faith Doctrines oriented. Refer to the suggested curriculum presented later. We definitely need contextual knowledge for background and understanding, (but this should not be the main goal). We can perish without having knowledge (Job 36:12). But we need love with the knowledge or we are nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Our walk in love relationships with God in a close and intimate fellowship is our key objective. We need to do this to the degree that we understand. We should pray for more insight along the pathway of life, keep checking with others for inputs, and with new and greater insight, update our plans and training.

Then they should work to fulfill His objectives in obedience as He leads us (making Him as our boss successful). The Church's (our) first priority in living is to obey God as our head and boss. In doing this, they should train their people to be mature in Christ, walking with God, and helping to accomplish His work, particularly that of evangelism and discipling to maturity in Christ. This makes those under us successful with God.●12 Those under us are to be high priority, but secondary to

11. **PLANS:** We can make plans as to how we will carry out God's direction. But then we need to trust God to bring the results.

Proverbs 16:9 - The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.

12 **GOOD SERMONS:** Many times our churches have good sermons, But if, over time, they do not teach the entire or needed curriculum in the pulpit or anywhere in the Church, we will not gain the needed maturity. Some churches have good Bible surveys, but they do not teach adequately the principles for how we live the Christian life and do not train their people to do evangelism, especially including the children and youth. The Church people are inadequately being nurtured and matured. Churches, in general, work for some Christian growth, but do not mature their people. **Their goal is to make disciples, but not mature disciples. Both should be accomplished.**

(continued...)

God as our head. **The people under us can be the most successful only if we are training them with ALL THAT GOD, AS OUR HEAD, WANTS DONE.** Do we know what that is?

We are successful as we obey God to accomplish all that He wants done (He is successful using us) and we train our people to worship, live a godly life, accomplish ministry, and know, believe, and stand strong on Christian-Faith Doctrines (they are successful and gain experience).

Living out the situation is three fold. First all of the objectives and what is to be done must come **only** from God as only recorded in His Holy Bible. **Second**, we then develop tasks and plans using all the Bible's inputs for how we are to carry out these God directed tasks. These plans then activate or embrace God's objectives. Our actions activates our faith in God to bring the results. And **Third**, we must trust God, not ourselves, to work all things together for good and bring the results. We must let go and let God. We must die to self and let God work, allowing Him, not ourselves, to work all things together for good.

Becoming mature, being a growth process, can take a long time, even a lifetime. The Church can provide many or most of the teachings and training that allow maturity to occur. They can provide on-the-job training ministry opportunities. People need to do home work and studying on their own. They have to be part of the training and solution. They need to apply the teachings and trainings to their own lives and allow God to mold and change them. There can be sharing times that help express their hearts and what they discovered.

What we must keep in mind, we are not discipling mainly for spiritual growth (as method), even though that is of course involved and necessary. We are instead working for a result (or outcome) of reaching a high-skill mature spiritual ability in Christ-likeness. We are to be outcome oriented. Thus, we need to have an overall curriculum that can make and allow gaining maximum maturity to happen - to the degree that we can understand. It should include a version of God's Whole Counsel. We are not talking only about having a few courses that help our spiritual Christian growth. Instead, we are to be outcome oriented using a complete curriculum (a version of God's Whole Counsel that covers all the aspects), not method oriented, even though we use methods. As we learn more we can update and modify our curriculums.

ADEQUATE TRAINING: If I were to choose a college, I would choose one that had all four years, not just one year of training. I would choose one that had a masters and phd program. **So why choose a Church that has only first-level training? Doing so, one only impedes and plateaus one's growth, experience, and knowledge, unless one study on his own. This is what I do and have done, for a long time generally by necessity.**

I would want to attend a church that has God's best in full training of God's Whole Counsel and where people were living out that training in life and in ministry. It is a Church where her people have testimony of living out the principles, demonstrating they work. I would choose one which was using the training to have great worship of God in the Church services and where there is great evidence of the Holy Spirit in worship and ministry (we are not talking about tongues and emotional movement). We must choose to go all the way with God. This requires constant learning and application under the leading of God and as He works in us. We cannot grow apart from God working in us.

It helps to make five commitments before the Lord:

12(...continued)

So, just having good weekly sermons does not necessarily get the job done.

1. Go all the way with God even if no one else does.
2. Use only the Bible for direction and faith.
3. Restore any broken fellowships, if you can, before going to bed.
4. Present yourself daily to God as instruments of righteousness and as living sacrifices.
5. From the Bible, learn as much as one can about God, His Plan, the Christian Life, and His Word: implement the learning with excellence and commitment. One can read and study the works of others as they present their insights of the Scriptures.

**DETAILED DISCUSSION:
THE FOUR CAUSES (SOURCES) OF THE SYMPTOMS ●13
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CHURCHES
(OUR PERCEPTION)**

DISCUSSION: Today, from our observation of the Church Growth Movement, there are four major causes or sources of its major spiritual symptomatic problems in our churches. These are in addition to being short on having discernment and overall doctrinal understanding of the Scriptures. In many cases, there may not be actual salvation. Many teach love, as does the liberal unbelieving church. But it does not have salvation.

These four and other symptomatic problems deter our walk with God and the carrying out His work and will more fully. This situation is true even though our churches can be doing some good things and having some good results, but mainly at the beginning spiritual level.●14 The key is - are our churches carrying out and implementing what God has entrusted to them? Do they actually have salvation? What about your and my Church?

THE FOUR CAUSES:

● CAUSE-SOURCE # ONE: CHURCHES DO NOT APPRECIATE GOD'S GREATNESS AND HIS

13. **INTERCHANGE WITH A FRIEND:** The understanding of these four causes, as we perceived and understood them, resulted from a detailed discussion and interchange with a close friend.

14. **EXAMPLES:** Examples of inadequate objectives would be to work for spiritual growth instead of for maximum maturity and doing some evangelism instead of working to evangelize complete local areas. This is to work using simplified world methods that draw people instead of drawing people with God's Word - thus saith the Lord with using needed preaching and teaching. They are using many versions of paraphrased Bibles instead of the accurate King James and the New American Standard Bibles. They are using methods to reach people based on love (which can be good), but without teaching negatives such as about Hell, the Lake of Fire, and divine discipline. They do not teach the eternal penalties of not becoming mature in Christ. They are using contemporary rock-type music to draw the youth. They are teaching Bible knowledge without training people to live and walk by faith, sacrificial love, and to witness the Gospel. Several churches, that I know, have had but few water baptisms of new converts from the community. Are they doing effective evangelism? Congregations are growing, but mainly, in many cases, by people changing churches. Churches have a variety of different characteristics and different amounts of adopting the movement. Our churches have a variety of these characteristics.

ABSOLUTES AND TO LIVE ONLY UNDER HIS AUTHORITY; THEY ARE TRUSTING THEMSELVES INSTEAD OF GOD TO WORK ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR GOOD

(This can be our greatest problem, and it appears that our leaders may not be sufficiently mature in Christ; we can all have this problem to some extent.):

GREATNESS OF GOD: God has infinite ability and perfection and is perfectly complete in every possible correct attribute and character quality that exists. He is perfect, holy, righteous, and true. He has absolute and all knowledge, infinite power, and is completely sovereign. He has self existence, and deals with billions of people and angels all at the same time. He has created an infinite universe and things on earth with intricacy. There is no other God. Just studying His attributes shows His perfection and Greatness. (His attributes are available on my web site under Training.) He has put everything in the Bible we need now to know about and how to relate to Him. We must by necessity search out everything He has planned for our direction and life pursuit with excellence and commitment. We need not and should not make up our own direction for our churches and families.

APPRECIATION: *Our churches have lost knowing or have never known God Greatness with excellence. They do not appreciate God's Greatness and His Absolutes such that they act to search the Scriptures with serious commitment and excellence to find ALL that He wants our churches to do. (We believe that God is Great. There is no question here. But we do not demonstrate our belief to search out all that He wants done.)* They do not search out His will for the depth-breadth scope for how He wants it done and then do it. They instead do only part of what He wants done (**abandoning God's absolutes**) and add their own ideas for direction such as working mostly at the lowest common denominator and using rock music. In doing the this, they are working under their own authority and acting like the Most High God, attempting to work all things together for good themselves. This is major sin. And, as a result, the people's Bible knowledge plateaus. **They certainly do not mean or desire to do this. None of us do.** But this is what happens when one goes their own way independent of **only** God's directives. This was the sin of Satan and is the major sin of people.

(Because these are happening, are our leaders mature in Christ and/or without discernment?)

As stated many times in this report, our Lord thought and did only what came from His Father as a source. (He told Satan: "It is written.") He took no independent initiative. Thus, He could say that he who has seen Me has seen the Father. This was because, from Himself, He was doing nothing. The Father then worked all things together for good. He treated His Father as His head and authority and did everything that His Father gave Him to do. In doing so, He gloried His Father. We, as believers in Christ, are to train and live this way. We will live this way in eternity. Then we will continue glorifying God. Then it will be God all in all.

If our churches appreciated God's Greatness and the need to know and obey His absolutes, living under His authority, they would know that He would be thorough and complete to put in His Bible ALL and ONLY the required objectives He wants for our Church and Christian lives. He would put in His Holy Bible all the absolutes of His perfect Truth that must be followed. He would give us complete and thorough guidance. He would also give us what not to do.

Churches would not independently have to figure anything out for what to do for major direction. Our churches would search the entire Bible to find all of God's directives with all diligence and carry ONLY these out with excellence and great commitment. They would be committed to and do only these from the Bible as directives and then in excellence. Not doing these, our churches are departing from God's absolutes and His best to the consensus of man.

Of course knowing His direction from the Bible, we can expect specific leading for what He wants us now to do to implement that direction or as part of that direction. This can be different for different churches. For example, He may have one church evangelize a certain local area and another church a different local area. The churches can team together on this. There are maturity level concerns that may bring different leading. So we must also be under God's specific leading, as well as under His specific direction.●15

Another cause of our churches' actions when they do not do all of what God wants, they do not demonstrate or show sufficient FEAR of God. If they did, would they not search out His wisdom in all matters for direction?●16 If they appreciated God's Greatness, would they not love Him with all they have? And as a result, as stated, would they not search the Scriptures for all (everything) that He wants done and to His scope and intent, and do them with great commitment and excellence? We can only abide in God's and our Lord's love if we keep their commandments.●17 This is my view. How many commandments do our church people know?

Doing this, they would see that they need both to mature their people (first priority) and to help evangelize their complete local as well as foreign areas. They would work with new people. They would do all three in some manner, using the proper priorities. **They would seek to do this with excellence having established an in-depth-breadth training curriculum from the Bible, both academically and application oriented. They would abide by His absolutes. They would use the hymns and like music and possibly some contemporary melody dominate music with good harmony. But they would not bring world loud rock-type contemporary repetitive beat music into the churches. They would avoid immorality. We are to remember to walk as our Lord walked and train our people to do so.**

But what are we doing? We are using our own and the world's methods, abandoning God's absolutes - dumbing down without also teaching in depth-breadth. Are we not in practice acting partly like the Most High God attempting to work some all things together for good ourselves? Certainly, we do not intend or desire to do that. We are not only seeking out God's ways in the Bible with excellence and doing only these. We are most certainly seeking some of His ways. We can begin doing what we know and then search for what else He wants us to do.●18 What hurts is that we want to do God's will and then do not do it. We do not do all of what we believe. This for us is sin. Such saddens our lives.

James 4:17 - Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

15. GOD'S TOTAL WILL: We should think to live this way because we are told to walk as our Lord walked. And He did only what came from the Father as a source without taking any independent initiative. (We can of course make plans for how to carry out His directives including using the methods, if given, in the Bible. We are to trust God to bring the results. But God must be our only authority and head. We must not inadvertently act as our own head and establish direction. We must not do only part of what God wants done. If we do, we act partly as our own head. This can lead to sins of omission. If we do what He does not want done, this can be sins of commission.)

16. FEAR OF GOD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM: *Psalm 111:10; - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;; Proverbs 1:7 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;.....*

17. LOVE DEMONSTRATION: *John 15:10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.*

18. OBEY WHAT WE KNOW: If we are not obeying all or most of that we know, God may not allow us to have more insight that is needed to take us to higher maturity levels in Christ. We have to obey what we know now. We need to get on our knees and make the situation a matter of prayer. Doing so, He may show us where we fall short and some ways for greater growth. We need much prayer. We need to help each other.

So is it sin if we know to do so and we are not working to evangelize complete local areas and training our people with a version of God's Whole Counsel to become mature in Christ?

But we need to recognize that the scope and teaching working for spiritual growth and taking people to maturity in Christ is vastly different in scope and in the amount of training. The same is true for doing some evangelism versus working with other churches to evangelize complete local areas. In Silicon Valley, California about 95% of the people do not go to church anywhere. Are we doing adequate evangelism? It does not look like it, even though many are evangelizing. Half of the people to whom I witness have never heard there even is a Gospel. Of course Silicon Valley is a most difficult area because of the large concentration of engineers and Asian people who are very intellectual and have different beliefs.

Because about 85% of the people who come to Christ do so before the age of fourteen, we need a major ministry to the children, such as in after-school Bible clubs. This is true also for college students, because about 99% of people come to Christ do so by the time they leave college.

The bottom line is that we need to discover those things only from the Bible that allow us to do only what the Father is giving for direction, and do them with commitment and with excellence.

I have a document on my web site that helps us along this way. It is called *Living By God's Righteousness*. It contains Psalms by which to praise God, promises to memorize by which to trust God, commandments to read and obey that demonstrates are love for God, the attributes of God to know and love Him, the spiritual requirements for church leadership, the principles of living by love, and some prayer helps. I read several pages each day in my personal devotions. It is available on my web site under TRAINING.

● CAUSE-SOURCE # TWO: CHURCHES ARE NOT KNOWING TO GAIN SPIRITUAL MATURITY IN PREPARATION FOR ETERNITY AND ARE USING INVERTED PRIORITIES: ●19

DISCUSSION: Our churches do not realize or may have never known that God's purpose is that we must become mature in Christ in order to know and relate to God toward His fullest both now but especially in eternity. Believing somehow that things will work out for eternity, has allowed our churches to disciple for growth and not be concerned about the outcome of becoming mature. It has allowed them to train at the beginning level, if that.

Thus, our churches are working at the beginning level without much concern for maturing their people to the higher skill levels in spiritual ability in Christ-likeness in relationship living. Our churches, beyond having Justification for sin, do not work with eternity in mind. They are not outcome and sufficient doctrinally oriented. They do not realize that their maturity can be fixed forever at death.●20 They do not realize that in depth-breadth teaching

19. **MATURITY:** Only God can produce the maturity in us as we obey His Word as a result of His working in and leading us. Knowing more of His Word in knowledge and application, He can work more in us to a greater obedience level, and thus, to a greater maturity level.

20. **ALL MAY NOT AGREE:** I fully realize that Christians may not believe our spiritual ability in Christ-likeness can be or will be fixed forever at death. Most probably most have never really thought much about it. But Bible data points to this strong possibility. ***The Bible does not teach that our spiritual maturity will ever increase in heaven. We are commanded to pursue it so we should pursue it anyway to obey God regardless of whether or not we believe our maturity can or cannot increase in heaven.***

We might never have understood what mature love is all about without the love of God shown by our Lord dying on the Cross. Love is lived out in sacrificial service for the benefit of others. This could be the main reason we are here. We may only understand mature sacrificial love knowing about how it was demonstrated on the
(continued...)

of God's Whole Counsel, application oriented, is necessary to bring us to this needed maximum maturity.

MATURITY NEED: *We can only glorify God and live without sin when we do and become what He wants us to do and become.* We do nothing on our own, that which comes from us as a source.

John 17:4 - "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.

As presented earlier, we learn more of God when we walk by faith and we must walk by faith to keep from sinning. We learn more of God's heart and live holy and righteously when we live by sacrificial love, keeping God's commandments. There appears to be multiple maturity levels of living by love and living by faith.

Thus, God may only give us great things to do and become when we have a greater maturity such that we can do and become what He wants done. On earth we can grow more in Christ. In eternity we can handle greater things and thus, be used more of God, but very importantly, we can know more about Him, His Glory and Greatness. He will lead us commensurate with or spiritual ability to respond.

BIBLICAL IMPLICATION: *There is the most strong implication in the Bible that the spiritual maturity we have at death we can have forever without any increase. What if it is true?*

There is no Bible teaching that states our maturity in Christ-likeness will increase in heaven. The Bible does not teach directly whether or not our maturity is fixed forever at death. But it implies it can be fixed at death in the following ways:

1. God commands us to pursue this maturity.●21 (It is important to Him that we pursue it for whatever reason He may have. To us, it includes having the ability to know and relate to God in His Greatness and Great Glory especially in eternity. It allows us to have a greater ministry using greater love and faith. We can more greatly glorify God.)
2. The biblical events over history from Genesis to Revelation are designed to lead us to gain maturity in Christ. (See my report: *God and His Greatness Must be Central.*)
3. The current developing environment of the world, flesh, and the devil is not allowed in heaven.

20(...continued)

Cross:

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that (sacrificially) He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

This understanding is a matter of faith that our maturity can be fixed forever at death. We should obey the Lord to pursue maturity.

If we are not to pursue maturity now, why are we here? If our maturity can increase in eternity, could not God have created us with some maturity and placed us directly in eternity? He then would not have to send anyone to the Lake of Fire. (Being eternally in the Lake of Fire is most terrible. One might prefer to have never been born then to go to the Lake of Fire. The Bible, Matthew 26:24, Mark 14:21, teaches that it would have been better for Judas the one that betrayed Christ that he had not been born.)

21. GOD COMMANDS US TO PURSUE SPIRITUAL MATURITY: Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 3:19; 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 6:1; 11:35; James 1:2-4.

4. The spiritual mistakes we make in our development are sins. No sin (no spiritual mistakes) is allowed or will occur in heaven.
5. God chose to create us immature and a need for this maturity development.
6. We, in analogy, are planted in the ground as a seed that must be planted and then, die, sprout, grow to a mature plant or tree. The more it is watered and fed, the higher and stronger it will become (gaining more maturity). We cannot gain new life without dying to self.
7. *1 Timothy 4:8 - but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

What if our maturity is fixed forever at death? Not responding to God's command to become mature, then, can be a most terrible eternal mistake. As far as we understand, there is no recovery after death. *Apart from knowing and relating to God, there is nothing.* God may use our maturity in eternity in a way we cannot know now. *If we appreciated God's Greatness, would we not pursue becoming mature as He commands with great commitment and diligence so we could know and relate to God in the best that is possible - having all that He has for us? I would think so. What else is there? We should understand that we can only live a righteous and holy life with Him directing everything. Apart from Him, we can do nothing and we will sin. We have no inherent ability to keep from sin. We should by faith believe He will lead us to do what is right even if we do not know or understand all the reasons. We would know that He has all the perfect and only ways to live - the best and most perfect life that is possible.*

Please understand. We will never see God the Father visibly ever in eternity. We will live by faith that He exists and will do the promises that our Lord will teach us. We can learn more of God and be used of greater ways if we have a very mature life of living by faith. So we should pursue this with excellence whether or not my statement here is correct. We cannot please God without living by faith because He cannot reveal as much about Himself as He desires.

Hebrews 11:6 - And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Churches and family heads do not also realize that their first priority is with their own people and then specifically with their gung ho and most faithful. It is not with the watchers and new people that compose the majority of their congregations? Is it not with the youth who are unchurched? We of course need to work with all the groups.

So they do not train their people, especially their children and youth, to reach the highest mature high-skill spiritual ability in Christ-likeness in relationship living they understand. They do not involve them heavily in God's Work where they can see God using them. This maturity and skill are needed for the spiritual capability that is needed for their knowing and relating to God in eternity toward His fullest in depth-breadth and live by His perfect ways. They do work for some spiritual growth, but not to a description of an end result - maturity in Christ-likeness.

The biggest problem, as stated, can be that our churches do not know or realize they are to work to mature their people in Christ-likeness. They work for spiritual growth in method, but not to an outcome of maturity. The problem we have is that our churches may not know how or know enough to mature their people or that they believe they are doing it when they are actually not sufficiently. They may not know what maturity in Christ is ●22 and what is necessary to gain maturity in Christ.

22. MATURE CHRISTIAN APPEARANCE: What does a mature Christian look like, and how does he
(continued...)

They most likely do not have a curriculum needed to make it happen.●23 They also are not training in Bible prophecy so their people will know how the endtimes unfold.

As stated, those church leaders implementing Seeker-Friendly and Emerging churches can hardly have a maximum maturity in Christ. If they did, they, in our view, would not have the characteristics of these churches.●24

They, instead, in addition to what they are doing, would also train their people with God's Word in depth-breadth using a version of God's Whole Counsel. They would train them to help do area-wide evangelism. They would not use facilitation in their community small groups. They would work for how God sees things that meets human needs, not the felt needs as man sees them. Even if they used some contemporary music with dominate melody and good harmony, they would not use the loud syncopated repetitive-beat rock-type. They would use the hymns.●25

They do not understand that the main reason we are on this earth is to gain this maturity for the need in eternity. God wants all of Him in all of us, directing our lives.●26 They do not understand the intimate walk of Christ with the Father. God commands that we pursue this mature ability. We do not have an option but to do it. So why don't we pursue it? Our churches do not appear to have the doctrinal and curriculum training that can help to produce this maturity or know that they should pursue it. They have good (?), but mainly, first-level teaching. It is like teaching mainly at the high school level, where instead God wants us also very importantly to train to reach the master's degree level.●27 We are not only to live by love, but we are also to live as Christ lives, doing only what comes from God the Father as a source. Their love must be lived out to include sacrificially helping and serving others in their needs (as God sees them). It is taking the true Gospel to the world.

As said many times, apart from this relationship with God, there is nothing. We have spiritual maturity when we live in relationships to the Father and Christ patterned after the Lord's walk with the Father. In this walk, He did nothing from Himself as a source, but only what came from the Father as a source. We are to live this way. The Bible is what came from the Father as a source. **(We should want to know as much about God and to relate to Him, helping to do His work, as much as we can and is possible. Are our churches headed in this direction? It does not look like it.)**

22(...continued)

worship, live, believe, and do in God's work?

23. WHAT WAS YOUR TRAINING: One way to start in the selection of a curriculum by church leaders is to review what they have studied and experienced themselves to reach the current maturity they believe they now have and begin to teach at least this to their churches.

24. MATURITY AND DISCERNMENT: None of are as mature in Christ as we desire to be. But even so, we need to have the discernment of doing right or wrong. Do leaders have this discernment?

25. HEARTS: We are not referring to what is on the hearts of church leaders. We believe they want to do right. We are not so much questioning their commitment, but instead their doctrinal understanding, discernment, and direction - and what spirit they are following.

26. EXPRESSION: This is an expression of Ian Thomas.

27. PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD: Those people around the world, such as in persecuted countries, with perhaps less knowledge of God's Word, but obey what they know, can have a higher maturity level than those in America who know more of God's Word, but do not obey what they know. The problem now is that Americans are being taught less of God's Word. How much of it do they obey?

If we desire great fellowship with God, we need spiritual maturity in Christ as He commands that we pursue because it results in a holy and righteous life in love. What characteristics do we have if we are mature in Christ? We are also to be pure in heart without immorality so we can know God and His heart. We are to serve each other and God sacrificially. We do not want to have a spiritual immorality with Satan's efforts. (Only God knows how mature we actually are. The more we think we are, the less we are. The way up is down. **Those who want to be first will be last.**)

Matthew 5:8 - "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Matthew 20:16 - "Thus the last shall be first, and the first last."

In summary, but most of all, becoming highly mature is so we can relate to and know more of God and His Greatness more fully in His depth-breadth, both now, but especially throughout eternity. It is so we can have an intimate close fellowship with Him and each other as He guides and directs our lives. It is so we can live according to His perfect Truth in holiness and righteousness using sacrificial love and faith. Do you not want this? I know that I do. So what does it hurt to pursue maturity as God commands that we do? We need to help each other here. Even though we have insights, none of us have it all together. I know that I do not. Working together and helping each other, we can aim at this goal. We can pray for more insights.

And besides, as believers we are now betrothed to Christ and later in eternity, we will be living with Him as His wife. Should we not have a close and intimate relationship with Him now being betrothed to Him? How do we live when we are engaged to a future spiritual relationship husband? We should not pursue and engage ourselves in any physical and spiritual adulterous relationships.

Churches logically (or without thinking) can go mainly to first level training without also training in depth-breadth to gain high-level maturity if: (1) they are not concerned about pleasing and obeying God in this matter; (2) they believe their maturity can increase in heaven (They may have never thought about it. They must believe that they do not hurt their people by not training them to gain maximum maturity); (3) they do not need it for the Tribulation if they believe they will not go through it; (4) they are not concerned about knowing and relating to God (as head and boss) in His depth-breadth and doing everything and only what He wants done; (5) they are not concerned about bringing more glory to God by accomplishing all or much more of His work and giving back to Him what He has given to us; (6) they are not concerned about doing His work so that spiritual wealth is sent on ahead and receiving righteous heavenly rewards that God wants to give based on the works that God asked them to accomplish; and (7) they do not need it to train and bring up their families under the Lord.

Thus, our churches, not understanding or believing the need for mature high-skill level maturity in relationship living, are going their own way to train with only mostly first-level training.●28 Then, church people, not studying and working on their own, are only gaining a limited growth and will give less glory to God. Our churches do not appear to have a written and prepared curriculum of both the academic and the application that is adequately needed to mature their people.●29 They

28. TEACHING MOSTLY CONTENT: We have churches that teach content and doctrine. But often some can be short on teaching how we live the Christian life and training their people to carry out ministry, particularly evangelism in the community. They believe that God will save people whether or not they do evangelism. They can be more doctrine than life oriented.

29. COMPREHENSIVE AND MORE DETAILED STUDY: There are a some churches that have a new Christian course, special Bible courses, a Bible school, and a seminary. It would be our hope that they would include or
(continued...)

are working to reach numbers and draw them into the churches. Where this is good, by itself, it does not get the needed job done of maturing their people in Christ-likeness. They are working for people to become “connected” for friendship and Bible study. These are good things, but by themselves, it does not get the needed and required job done. What training curriculum do we need? ●30 **We can always update it and use special subject training as God leads.**

What is needed is a multi-level curriculum. For example, we need one level for new Christians, another level that is an overview of most things for the new people and the watchers, a more advanced level in depth-breadth that is great detail for the gung ho and the faithful, and additional specialty levels for prophecy, witnessing etc. Some of these can be combined. They can be taught from the pulpit, in the Sunday School, evening courses, seminars, etc. One can use a Discipleship Training Center concept. Some churches have a Bible school and a seminary.

Because our church leaders most likely will not change to sufficiently help mature us, we need to go on our own with excellence and great commitment. This is what I am doing in personal study and devotions, taking as much from them and my friends as I can and from many books I am reading. I am practicing living by faith and sacrificial love, plus other things. This allows us to receive more revelation from God and with less sin and to live more holy and righteously. Of course these need work. You can do this also. We can ask each other and help each other. None of are as mature as we should be, can be, and ought to be. None of know enough. We all can use more insight. And we must pursue it to obey God’s command. We can help each other.

Key is how do we learn, practice, and live out that below in excellence, with great commitment, and maturity before the Lord?

Our training, as previously introduced, needs to include at least the following taught in depth-breadth both academically and practically (Repeated for emphasis):

1. **WORSHIP:** Worship, glorify, please, obey, honor, and love God.
2. **LIVE GODLY:** Live godly lives patterned after Christ’s walk with the Father in head-subordinate relationship living with sacrificial love and faith - leading to close fellowship.
3. **ACCOMPLISH GOD’S WORK:** Help accomplish God’s work of evangelizing “total” foreign and local areas, discipling believers to maturity in Christ, building godly families, planting new churches, and reaching out to the needy.
4. **KNOW AND STAND ON DOCTRINE:** Learn and stand strong with great commitment on the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. (We should know how the endtimes unfold and what we may experience.)

With limited training, after a few months or a few years pass, people will learn hardly anything new. What do new people, who want to become mature to know and relate more

29(...continued)

have a good course in Christian-Life Relationship Principles. The subject matter is presented elsewhere.

30. **DO WHAT WE KNOW:** We may not know sufficient of the entire needed curriculum. Probably none of us do. But we can put on paper what we know and then ask others what they think should be included. Other sources of input can include people, books, other churches, the internet, Bible colleges, and seminaries. We can pray for guidance and direction and make needed future changes.

to God, have with which to look forward?●31 In such situations, their maturity growth can be limited. Thus, they will need to go on their own or find another Church, if one can be found with the needed characteristics.

● **CAUSE-SOURCE # THREE: OUR CHURCHES, NOT UNDERSTANDING THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE, ARE IMPLEMENTING SATANIC STRATEGY:**

Churches do not understand and appreciate their environment of intense spiritual warfare in which they are living, ministering, and are warring. They do not understand Satan's tactics and strategies when they use only first-level training and rock type music that impedes and desensitizes spiritual learning.●32 They do not see that Satan wants the youth (church and unbelievers) not to be able to do critical analysis in order to determine what will be happening when world government comes. They are implementing satanic strategy by not maturing their people in Christ-likeness and not accomplishing area-wide local evangelism. Churches do not understand that the endtimes Tribulation can come most any time and their falling away is helping to bring it. They are not training their people to stand strong and not fall away under the coming persecution.●33

The churches not understanding and appreciating the environment of the intense spiritual warfare in which they are involved and are warring, implement satanic strategy most likely without their realization, intention, and desire.●34

Churches need to understand the dialectic process and diaphrax that Satan uses to accomplish his goals. These methods were presented earlier in depth. But the concept is he uses a method (anti-thesis) to take things from where they are (thesis) to where he wants them to be (synthesis). Using these, he is attempting to take the traditional church to apostasy without the Gospel using the method of the Church Growth Movement. The final one results from one compromise after another.

Using the dialectic process, Satan wars to help prevent some of the elect from believing and from accomplishing some of God's chosen work. Satan wants to rule the world and have the people worship him. He works to be equal to the Most High God. Thus, he wants Church people ignorant of God's Word and immature. He wants them to think as man thinks and to meet the needs of man as man sees them. He wants them to be indoctrinated with world government and a false world

31. AS A NEW CHRISTIAN: When I first became a Christian, I studied the Bible many hours per week. I did this because what I was doing previously was not working. Because of this study and that our pastor taught simply, after about a year, I learned but little from the pulpit. This is happening now again to some degree under the Seeker-Friendly movement. This is true even though the sermons are good and taught at the beginning level.

32. ROCK MUSIC: In our view, using rock-type contemporary music is also implementing satanic strategy. Its use is not of God. It causes people to go for emotions and feeling, instead of heart-based intellect worship. Tests and observations of people have shown that it can induce thoughts of immorality, reduce thinking capacity, and brings less sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. It, in our view, is very doubtful that it brings much worship to God. The best that can be said is that, in our view, its use may come under God's permissive will. If this approach can be God's good, in our view, it certainly is not His best. Should we not work for excellence before the Lord?

33. MY PROPHECY PAPERS: Read the prophecy papers on my web site. They teach clearly with many-many doctrines that the Church will be raptured at Christ's Second Coming after the Tribulation.

34. PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE: In my view, believing wrongly in a Rapture before the endtimes Tribulation can be satanic strategy. Where it should not do this, this view tends to put Christians to sleep and not train for going to war - the war of the Tribulation. They have the tendency to just rock along, not being concerned about gaining maturity.

religion. He must do this so God's elect might not believe and/or might not accomplish God's chosen work allowing him to win the warfare over Christ (of course this will not happen). This sin also helps or allows him to bring the endtimes Tribulation. His strategies also include gay marriages (and live-ins) and abortion (the elect might not be born), and getting the church people involved in immorality (so God cannot use them and also allow him to bring the Tribulation). ***Our churches by dumbing down and using rock music are fueling this situation now - implementing key satanic strategy.***●35 ***Is this not a leadership problem?***

As the sin of God's and the rest of the people increase, God will allow Satan to bring a calamity (method) to take us from ordered government (the way things are) to being under world government of the endtimes Tribulation under his greater control (result or the way things that he wants them to be). As the sin of the Church increases, Satan is allowed more power to bring this result. Signs now signal that world government can come at any time.●36

Another of Satan's major strategies is to dumb down public school students. This is so they know little, cannot do good clear thinking, and thus, cannot do critical analysis. ***These are happening now. In time, when the older people who can do these things die and/or when the younger people under this poor training become the vast majority, there will be but few (church and public) people who can do critical analysis and know what is really happening as the endtimes unfold.***

The church is now implementing his strategy. Then when he brings world government in the Tribulation, he indoctrinates people with world government without the Bible. Dumbed-down people, not able to do critical analysis and not knowing Bible prophecy, most likely will not know what is happening and will go along with it. The poorly spiritually equipped Christians will fall away from the faith as the persecution comes. Many of the rest of God's people will be martyred. The next step under the Mark-of-the-Beast situation, he will force people to believe his way, denying the Gospel, in order to buy or sell and live. The rest will be killed. Our churches are fueling this situation now by dumbing down their teaching and using loud contemporary music. ***(As a church leader, do you want any responsibility for this falling away and do you also want to receive possible Judgment? I know that I do not.)***

HOW TO DESTROY A CHURCH ●37: First Satan deceives. In music, he first weakens doctrine with simplistic, over personalized lyrics. **Then second** he uses repetition to put the conscious mind to sleep. **Then third**, he activates the adrenal glands through syncopated, loud rhythms (particularly drums) creating a synthetic experience. A false emotional high is thought to be an authentic religious experience. Once he has deceived a large number of the congregation, he then proceeds to divide, by putting the traditionalists against the innovator - the spiritual aware, against the spiritual naive.

35. **THE ORIENT EXPRESS:** In the movie *The Orient Express*, the villain placed many clues that had nothing to do with the murder to fool and mislead the investigators. Likewise Satan has established many false religious systems to keep and deceive the people from finding the true answer in Christ for sin's justification and only from the Holy Bible.

36. **WARN AND INFORM:** We should now warn, brief and, inform our people that signs now signal that the endtimes Tribulation can come soon. Only God knows the time. We should alert that our churches are causing the Tribulation to come. We should alert to do personal evaluation and urgently make needed changes. We should with urgency, train and mature our children and youth to become mature in Christ and be prepared for the soon coming of the endtimes. There are also other things important to do. ***These are best to do even if we get 10 or more years before the Tribulation comes. But if we don't?***

37. **DESTROYING THE CHURCH:** This info was taken from page108 of *Crisis in Christian Music* by Dr. Wheaton.

● CAUSE-SOURCE # FOUR: CHURCHES ARE NOT DOING CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

Many or most churches, from our observation (there may be exceptions) are not doing critical analysis to determine how effective they are in what they are doing and/or not doing. They are not determining the need to be mature in Christ-likeness in order to know and relate to God more fully in eternity and to live holy and righteously. They do not seem to be concerned about eternity beyond just becoming a Christian. Do they know how to share the Gospel?

They are not determining how much they know about all of that God wants done, and how well they are actually doing evangelism and discipleship (maturing their people to become like Christ). Do they know what God has entrusted to them? They show, by their actions, they do not understand Satan's objectives. Do they know how to become mature in Christ-likeness? So are they checking to see if they have a curriculum that is needed to mature their people and train them to do evangelism?

Thus, because of the trends, to us, the churches, especially elders, pastors, and teachers, most likely are doing insufficient critical analysis to determine how well they know all of what God wants done and to the degree He wants it done. They are not searching the Scriptures for all He wants done. ***Do they understand that mature people, obeying God to a greater decree, glorify God more*** Thus, our churches are not doing the needed critical analysis to determine how well they are actually maturing their people (to the level they understand) as God commands and how well they are actually doing area-wide local and foreign evangelism They can do this by examining the actions of the Church people and to what degree the church has water baptisms of new converts from the community. Do they understand whether our maturity is fixed at death? Do they have in depth-breadth training curriculums in place for this that represents a version of God's Whole Counsel? How in depth-breadth are they? Are they training with mostly knowledge or worship, life, and ministry oriented with knowledge in application? Are they teaching what happens in the Tribulation? Do they know? Are their people becoming involved in ministry and are attending key church functions? Are they having many water baptisms of new converts from the community to show they are actually doing evangelism?

Our churches, by using rock music, are not doing research to understand the bad effects that rock music has on their people. If they did, they would not use the music. They do not understand that the dumbing down will bring a great falling away from the faith under the persecution in the coming endtimes.

They do not know and recognize the existing signs that signal the endtimes, beginning with calamity and world government, can come at any time. They do not warn their people of a soon-coming Tribulation. They do not recognize their spiritual state and the need to ready themselves and their people for the soon coming calamity and Tribulation - world government. They are not analyzing the times and signs to determine whether or not the endtimes Tribulation can be soon coming. They might not even know the signs and to give warning. Many are not concerned with their prophetic view as to whether or not they will go through the endtimes Tribulation.●38 They minister as if the current times will last forever - at least for a long time. They most likely will not. As a result of the latter, the Church will not be prepared and can be caught blind-sided when the calamity comes that will bring the Tribulation. They will have less maturity at death than they otherwise could have had. The signs now all around us signal loudly the Tribulation, beginning with a world-wide calamity, can be coming at any time. Again, only God knows the timing. But our churches are

38. **COMPLEXITY OF PROPHECY:** Prophecy is complex. Because of this, and because interpreters have several views without resolution to one, many Church leaders and pastors have not determined or chosen a Church View. Because of this, they appear to pay little attention to the signs that signal the Tribulation is coming and what happens to their people, especially their children, in the Tribulation. As a result, they continue business as usual believing the current good times, without calamity and government intervention, will continue now long term. They will not. They do not provide sufficient training for their people.

oblivious to the situation. They are not doing critical analysis.

Churches need to know how well they are actually carrying out their ministries so they can make any needed and important changes.

Church leaders who are mainly dumbing down, not doing critical analysis, and/or are using rock music may not recognize that they do not know sufficient doctrine and are most likely inadequately mature in Christ.●39 If they were mature in Christ, knowing doctrine, they would not do these things or allow them to be done. They are at least lack adequate discernment. This is our view.

God said that in the endtimes, the churches will not endure sound doctrine and would have spiritual eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear. Thus, immaturity will be increasing. Are not these times here now and expanding? It sure looks like it.

2 Timothy 4:3 - For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;

Acts 28:27 - For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes; Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them. ""

Going to mainly first level training without also maturing their people, churches, in our perception by their actions or lack of them, are not enduring or even know much sound doctrine. They work for salvation, but do not see the need to mature their people with specific training that allows the maturity to occur. As a result, they have little knowledge, and only limited spiritual growth. Many believe, by what they do, is to provide Scriptural concepts for growth, but do not have a sufficient curriculum to take their people to maturity in Christ. They teach the academics, but not how to carry them out They have good and needed teachings, but only take people to a junior high school level and not to a masters degree level where God wants us to take us. They teach us to fly a Cessna 172, but not a four engine jet. But God wants us to be able to fly the jet.

Of course, as stated, none of know the entirety of what is required. But we can do what we know, help each other, search the Scriptures, read books of others, and pray for greater direction.

And when you share such things with leadership, they do not respond to make changes so they demonstrate having ears that cannot hear and eyes that cannot see all the things that God is directing us to do. Of course, this assumes we are correct. They are committed to other objectives. They demonstrate they do not know and are committed to sound and complete doctrine. Many leaders say they are too busy to do these things. But in my book, when the boss gave me instructions and a job, it was not a matter of whether or not the job would be done, but only one of how I was to get it done. We may have to delegate to other faithful people. But the job must be done.

Thus, when our Lord commands we are to mature our people in Christ and evangelize the children and youth, we must find a way to get the job done. As leaders, we cannot say we are too busy or have other priorities. One can delegate work to responsible people. One doe not have to do everything himself. If you were too busy to get the job done, would the Lord place you in leadership? Would He not trust and test you to get it done? Are you carrying out His entrustments?

39. KNOWING DOCTRINE: One must realize that going to Bible colleges and seminaries, knowing much Bible content and doctrines does not make one mature. One becomes mature when they live by faith trusting God to fulfill His promises and living by sacrificial love keeping God's commandment, serving God and others. It is living Christ-like, living as our Lord lives. It is carrying out God's program, not ours.

COMMENTS: Our churches in the Church Growth Movement are in a form of apostasy and falling away. **They may no longer have the commitment and/or may not know how to mature their people and help to do area-wide local true evangelism.**●40 Spending much time away from the depth-breadth of the Bible, new trainees or even current leaders, probably will not know how to or that they should mature their people, even if they work for some spiritual growth. They may believe they are doing it when they are not. Churches should now take urgent steps to mature their people and do area-wide local evangelism, especially to the children. They can work with Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF). Will they do it?

We must understand that in America, we now live in a free society where we can worship and minister the way we want in freedom without going to jail. But this will all change when we go under world government. The government will make war against Christians. Worship will be controlled and if we minister openly, particularly evangelizing, we can go to jail. We should train now for how we can and should live under these circumstances when the government will make war with the Church. This is one reason now to go to home groups. We still can worship according to our faith. We need to buy needed Bibles and hymn books now for this purpose.

40. MATURITY TRAINING: Churches may believe they are maturing their people when they are not. It takes some discernment. One can do self evaluation by putting on paper all those items that are needed for spiritual maturity. Then they can see if they are teaching all of them and if the people are responding obeying them.