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*From England*

**BREAD AND GAMES**  
*Reflections on the British Church*  
Tricia Tillin

**Part I**

**Overturning the Essentials**

*"How the gold has become dim! How changed the fine gold! The stones of the sanctuary are scattered at the head of every street. The precious sons of Zion, valuable as fine gold, how they are regarded as clay pots, the work of the hands of the potter!" Lam 4:1-2*

Twice already it has happened: the stones of God's precious Temple, the place of His dwelling, have been scattered and broken. The gold, so lovingly placed in the Temple by those devoted to God, has been stolen, melted, remade into jewelry and trinkets.

What a symbol of the corruption and fate of God's people! Once pure, unmixed and devoted to God alone, they shone out as something sacred and special. But when they turned their minds and hearts to other things - pagan gods, sensuality, the accession of land, and the desire for power and dominion over others - when these things corrupted the worshippers in God's Temple, it led unerringly to their downfall.

Those whom the Old Testament people of God trusted to enrich their lives became instead the plunderers of their Temple, the instruments of their exile. The stones of the Temple were torn down and scattered, and the "living stones" of the Temple were also scattered, separated, enslaved and exiled far from home.

## **The Temple Plundered.**

Now it's happening again! We are witnessing the plunder of God's Living Temple, the Church. It is not a day of revival, as some would have you believe, but a dark day of corruption and the scattering of the stones. All round the world, the cry from those who truly love God is "we are broken up, we are isolated and dry, seeking genuine fellowship but rarely finding it". The "stones" are scattered here and there, at the head of every street, no longer joined successfully into solid structures but meeting as disparate groups of individuals.

The reason this has come upon God's People is the same as before - pagan gods are being worshipped within the Temple, and the lust for excitement, adventure, sensual experiences, power and popularity has eclipsed the worship of God.

The leaders know (I believe) that sin is eating away at the foundations, but, as in the decadent Roman Empire, they keep the common people occupied with "bread and games". With the bookstalls stacked high and the entertainment non-stop, hardly anyone is asking the hard questions.

This is a perfect description of the endtimes "Laodicean" Church. Just as the Lord Jesus warned, its condition would be one of arrogance, indifference, and self-satisfaction.

*"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev 3:17)*

## **What Went Wrong?**

The sound, albeit staid, pre-1960's evangelical Church has undergone a transformation taking it from dusty formalism to bypassing revival along the way. Within the space of a breathless 30 years the condition, doctrine, practise and order of the evangelical Church has been almost completely changed, with many of the former members finding themselves totally at odds with the result.

From a declining minority, evangelicals turned into the success story of the era, taking the lion's share of converts, and becoming the only sector to enjoy sustained numerical growth. Yet the level of genuine faith and commitment amongst Christians is now abysmal, and popular fads like Toronto consume most of those growing churches. What God offered for revival in the 60's was snapped up by some who perverted it into the worst kind of bondage. How did this happen?

We Christians of another era (pre-shepherding!) recall a Church that is almost unrecognisable today. We used to think it was the "bad old days" before the Charismatic revolution in the 60's and 70's, and in some ways it was - for the traditionalism and die-hard anti-Spirit attitudes were sometimes suffocating.

Evangelicals (which in those days meant somebody who was actually born-again as opposed to a nominal Christian) were in the minority, and unpopular. When I was born again, in 1965, I encountered a Church where despised "evos" fought for existence in a world ruled by liberals. Pulpit preaching was soporific, and hardly ever contained a gospel message. What evangelistic outreach could be arranged was amateurish, and poorly attended. Worship was boring, and lacked conviction.

A few oddballs (like me) were gasping for a more relaxed style of worship, so when "Youth Praise" was published in 1966 it was eagerly seized upon. This music book for youth worship was like a breath of fresh air in a stuffy room. In those days, the height of heresy in the church was to be seen with a guitar in one hand and a copy of "Youth Praise" in the other. We really were judged for those things!

However, if we had known what consequences would follow in the wake of the Charismatic Movement, we would probably have been more satisfied with what we already had, despite the dead formalism of those days. Let me contrast the general beliefs of true evangelicals then, with supposed evangelicals in the restoration Movement today.

## **Hallmarks of the Old-Style Evangelical Christian**

### ***Priority of preaching the gospel of individual salvation at every opportunity***

To be an evangelical meant you wanted to witness to everybody about the love and salvation found in Jesus Christ. The most significant expression of an evangelical's life was to preach the gospel, because there was no hope for man without it. The "social gospel" of the liberal Church was seen to be in opposition to this, because it sought the transformation of man's nature, and society as a whole, without reference to the biblical experience of justification by faith.

### ***Absolute insistence on a born-again experience for salvation***

Nobody without a definite conscious conversion according to John Chapter Three was counted as a Christian. "Growing up" as a Christian would not do! The wishy-washy doctrine of the Anglo-Catholics and especially the do-goodism creed of Rome was anathema to a true evangelical. Nominal Christians who thought they were going to heaven because they attended services and led a blameless life were in the majority at most Anglican churches, and were the hardest to convert. What marked out an Anglican as "Evangelical" was the insistence upon true conversion.

### ***Love of, and knowledge of, God's Word***

Evangelicals took the Bible very seriously, believed it literally, and would not allow the smallest deviation from the written word. The judgement of any sermon was its "soundness" according to scripture, and this was a matter of discussion after every service. The Bible was rightly seen as the foundation of a Christian's life and existence, and the more you knew, the better off you were. The first thing that happened to me as a new Christian was enrolment in a serious Bible Study course to teach me all about the doctrines in the Word. The daily "Quiet Time" of personal prayer and Bible Study using notes provided by a sound ministry was seen as mandatory and failure to keep the daily "QT" was a sign of backsliding.

### ***Desire for doctrinal purity***

Heeding the command to "test all things", evangelicals never accepted ministries, books or sermons at face value. They were put through the fire. Flaky ministers who had come to speak in our church were often invited to an "after-meeting" and given a grilling. If they did not own up to scriptural doctrine, they were ruled out as heretics. One youth minister highly respected in his ministry and sent on recommendation by the Diocesan Youth Board admitted under questioning that he did not know who the Holy Spirit was. A shocked silence followed this revelation, and he was shortly afterwards invited to leave the premises.

### ***Abhorrence of liberal creeds and intimate knowledge of the errors of Rome***

We had no truck with Rome whatsoever! And since the Anglo-Catholics amongst us were Romans in disguise, we rejected them also. The first education we received as new converts introduced us to the stark differences between the biblical gospel of justification by faith, and the Roman creeds. Rome was the Great Harlot and the Pope was the Antichrist. No arguments. "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" was high up on our reading list, and we also knew all about the history of the Reformation - indeed, since we happened to live near Oxford we often walked over the spot where the Martyrs were burned alive, so we were well acquainted with the horrors of Rome. Of all the heresies, ecumenism was about the worst.

### ***Spiritual unity of the Saints without compromise of doctrine.***

Ecumenism aside, we did value and practise unity amongst born-again believers within various denominations. In our town, there were about four Christians in the Anglican Church, several couples in the Baptist, two in the Congregational (as it was called then) and one in the Methodist who met regularly together for prayer, bible study and fellowship. We also jointly organised evangelistic events (in which our respective churches did not participate!). However, our unity was a spiritual one, because we all knew the Lord. This I believe was a common experience amongst evangelicals in those days. (The Charismatic Revival was launched very much on the back of these informal house meetings, and was called the House Church movement for some time.)

### ***Daily walk governed by scriptural principles.***

Since evangelicals knew and loved the Word, it is hardly surprising that they were convicted to live holy lives. This meant separation from the world in the sense of avoiding carnality and excess. It was not acceptable to drink or smoke, modest dress was encouraged, covetousness was sinful and humility and a simple lifestyle were prized. Those without a conspicuously holy lifestyle were under suspicion, and if anyone strayed, the whole group would pray for and correct the offender.

### ***Recognition of the condition of backsliders, correction in the Church***

The corollary to this was of course that genuine backsliders were not allowed to get away with their fall from grace. Sin was both recognised and dealt with in the churches. Certainly, any minister who disgraced himself was ejected from office - or if not, he was ostracised by the evangelicals.

### ***Infilling of the Spirit linked to sanctification, not gifts or manifestations***

Although Baptism in the Spirit had not been "invented" in those days there were of course many who had experienced an infilling of the Spirit. However, the early teaching on fullness was centred on sanctification, not the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit. The way to a deeper life was to seek after holiness, and to submit entirely to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This meant that anyone who desired to receive the Spirit spent a long time in personal reflection, dealing with sin and stumblingblocks, and committing his or her life entirely to God.

### ***Traditional, scriptural worship without excesses***

Worship in most denominations was a hymn-prayer sandwich, which left no room for inspiration or spontaneity. This meant that there was little scope for spiritual reality in worship. However, on the plus side, the hymns by and large were solidly biblical. Many had been written by deeply committed Christians, Missionaries and Martyrs, and of course there were the songs of the Wesley brothers, too. All these contained sermons in song, far from the trite nonsense of today. So, hymns sung by believers could be a real outlet of heart-felt praise. The roof could be raised on occasion, simply through use of the organ and choir. Anyone who has listened to a Welsh male-voice choir will recognise the potential for genuine worship. Secondly, the Anglican Sunday service offered regular Bible readings, a variety of prayers, confession of sins, and time for quiet reflection in an atmosphere of reverence.

***Pre-millennial eschatology, with expectation of apostasy before the Lord's Return.***

Most evangelical doctrine was pre-millennial if not pre-tribulational. Although eschatology did not figure large in our teaching, we read the Bible literally. We expected to see a decline in standards, apostasy, and an evil world government as signs of the Lord's coming. In particular, the Brethren were very strong Dispensationalists and a distinction was made between Israel and the Church.

***Heavenly goal; rewards sought in heaven rather than on earth.***

Evangelicals felt that this life was one of toil and trial, labouring in the field, but that the heavenly rewards were outstanding. Hymns and songs reflected this: "Trials dark on every hand, and we cannot understand, all the ways that God will lead us, to the blessed Promised Land..." The very idea of taking dominion in this life, on this earth, was laughable because not only did we see the Tribulation ahead, but so few people were interested in accepting the gospel of salvation, which after all was the only method of changing men's hearts. The great goal ahead was the heavenly Kingdom, and its representation on earth during the Millennium. It was only after death, in heaven, that we would enjoy perfection and peace.

**How It All Fell Apart With The Restoration Fellowships.**

Almost as soon as the charismatic movement took hold, there was a subtle shift from God to self. This was hardly apparent at first, but biblical self-discipline, faith, holiness, gospel preaching and all the other things that had marked evangelicals out as true Christians faded day by day to be replaced by exciting worship and tongues-speaking at meetings. Many people, even then, complained about the bubble and froth of the charismatics, compared to the true grit of the old-style Christian.

As good as the renewal was in reviving dying saints, it brought with it the desire to enjoy Church at the expense of the basics. Along with the spirit of many, the flesh was also revived!

Worse was to come. Doctrine began to change, also. Little by little the Bible was sidelined, the truth eclipsed by false teachings, and a new revelation introduced. The changes can be described in contrast to the list above:

***The gospel becomes social transformation and evangelism is lost***

Preaching the gospel of individual conversion and salvation is far down the priority list of most Restoration fellowships. Indeed, it is sometimes criticised as part of the old order. The new

priority is getting everyone to join or co-operate with a local fellowship with the goal of transforming society and ultimately the world. Grandiose claims about the role of the Church as salt and light in the world cover up a change to the social gospel where welfare work, (so-called "servant evangelism") replaces genuine gospel preaching. The spiritual aspect of evangelism is now a matter of high-octane worship in which people are led to "experience Christ" no matter what their creed or situation in life.

***A biblical personal conversion is no longer needed or required for membership***

Corporate salvation is now more important than individual salvation. The rot set in when "shepherding" demanded that every saved person had also to be a disciple to be truly Christian. Church membership was the door to the Kingdom, and the leadership were the holders of the key (rather like the pope!!). This led to more emphasis on obedience to the Church than obedience to God in His Word. Leaders developed a slackness about conversion experiences and taught that, instead of crisis conversion, we are "on a spiritual journey" towards faith.

Added to this was the concept of being converted by a spiritual experience in which the person "encountered" Christ, followed swiftly of course by obligatory discipling under the local apostle.

Salvation now comes to most through spiritual experiences, by having a love-fest with the christ-spirit or simply by becoming a member of a local fellowship. This matters little in a Church where the main focus is not upon getting people saved so much as uniting and glorifying the Church. Where the goal is getting the Church ready to rule, individuals Christians are merely required to be obedient and to conform to The Plan. The Corporate Body on earth is all; the individual is nothing but a cell of the Body. So much for individual, biblical salvation!

***The Bible has almost disappeared***

The charismatic movement, from the beginning, was criticised for being worship-oriented rather than Word-oriented, but in the early days Christians still knew and valued the Bible. However, as the years went by there seems to have been a decided effort to push the Bible into the background. Young converts were not encouraged, as they once were, to study the scriptures deeply. In many Restoration meetings the Bible is hardly ever opened, let alone used for preaching. The message is not Word-based, but anecdotal, full of personal testimonies and experiences. Revelations through prophecies and visions are valued equally to the written Word and now in some cases have overtaken the Bible in importance. In addition, suspect new translations such as "The Message" are often used by the leaders, and these blur the distinctions and make expository preaching well nigh impossible.

Even in the early days of shepherding, the "disciples" were taught that the decisions of their leaders were all-important, and in some cases the leaders contradicted what the Holy Spirit was saying through the Word. But long years of obedience to their elders has stopped Restoration believers thinking for themselves. Now, those who study the Bible for doctrine are seen as religious fuddy-duddies, stuck in the old paradigm.

***Doctrine seen as divisive.***

Instead of doctrinal purity, we have doctrinal chaos where there are no absolutes, and even traditional doctrines such as eternal judgement are coming up for review. Restoration leaders not only turned a blind eye to false doctrine, but actually introduced it. Black and white became grey,

and the search for doctrinal correctness was abandoned and ultimately derided as "divisive". Thus, testing all things by the Word of God became unfashionable in Restoration circles.

***Rome became a partner in faith instead of an enemy***

The trend to ecumenism within Restoration and other new fellowships has been well documented. David Du Plessis was one of the first Pentecostals to court Rome, and the Anglican Renewal Movement in the UK soon followed suit. But even amongst the non-denominational charismatics, the guarded atmosphere against Rome was lost within ten years. Not only was the history and creed of the Roman Church swept under the carpet, but also the basis for Christian fellowship was broadened to include anyone who had been baptised in the Spirit and claimed to "love Jesus". Thus the door was thrown open for supposed charismatic Catholics to enter the arena, and for Roman doctrines to be re-introduced to Protestants. Now Restorationists are reprinting articles by Catholics in their magazines, going on pilgrimages and worshipping alongside Catholics without turning a hair.

***Organic, visible unity of all denominations is seen as vital***

Restorationists have moved from the biblical spiritual unity of believers to "unity at any price". In their understanding, full visible unity is necessary before the Church can conquer evil and bring in the kingdom of God. To achieve this, they have thrown all stumblingblocks to unity out of the window. The first casualty was, of course, sound doctrine.

***The daily walk of Restoration believers is worldly***

No sooner did Restoration gain a foothold in charismatic fellowships than the march back to the world began. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, conviction of sin was lost when the Bible no longer played a part in worship and when leniency replaced church discipline. Secondly, the Restoration ideology was that of earthly success and advancement. They sought to transform this present world and the people in it rather than make converts for the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, believers were supposed to go back into the world and influence others to "join the Church".

Separation from the world was criticised as a "gnostic" doctrine and long theological articles appeared condemning those who made a distinction between sacred and profane. The result was to force Restoration disciples back into the lifestyle they had given up for Jesus. I know of several who complained that they were forced to start drinking in pubs again. As well as this, the boundaries between sin and righteousness were blurred so that sexual sin, drug-taking, homosexuality, abortion and many more of the world's values were imported into church fellowships and accommodated there without much dissent.

***Impurity is no longer a bar to membership***

The Bible pattern is for unrepentant sinners to be challenged, and ultimately to be barred from fellowship. This no longer seems to be the case. Those who keep quiet about their lives probably get away with the way they are living. Others - more blatant troublemakers - would be dealt with sympathetically as victims of their upbringing or environment. Social work and psychology have largely replaced Biblical counselling, so problems are not dealt with at a spiritual level. Restoration leaders have created such a welcoming environment for sinners that sin is no longer

the greatest threat to their fellowships. Instead, it is dissent that is the crime. Objecting to the teaching of the elders is now almost the only reason for disfellowshipping a member.

### ***Getting the anointing has replaced true Baptism in the Spirit***

As I remarked earlier, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century amongst Holiness groups the concept of a deeper spiritual life was linked to sanctification and submission to God's will. The change brought by the charismatic movement was devastating. It linked Baptism in the Spirit more with the gifts than the Giver. People suddenly craved power and excitement and saw an easy way to get them. Righteousness was not the issue; almost anyone could have a spiritual manifestation without the need for sanctification. This meant that, over time, obtaining an "anointing" became the key to deeper living. Toronto and Brownsville traded on that error, offering spiritual experiences to the masses at no cost.

### ***Worship has become entertainment***

At first the charismatic movement used the choruses of earlier revivals for their worship, but in the search for a spiritual "high" these quickly developed into new choruses that were often trite and repetitive. Later, as new doctrines came in, they were promoted in the form of songs, so "worship-leaders" were employed to compose the new musical arrangements. The spontaneity of the old worship with simple, inspired worship songs died out.

The focus of worship shifted from the words of scripture to statements about the Church - her victory, power and importance - and promises about the coming kingdom. Praise and dedication to God was replaced with emotional love-songs to Jesus. With the focus on self, not God, worship became entertainment. The world crept in with rock, heavy metal and now Celtic and new-age styles.

The other aspect of music, the ability to manipulate people's minds and hearts, was employed to good effect in softening up the congregation to receive new doctrines. Now, it seems that no charismatic meeting can begin without two hours of loud, intensive, mind-numbing "worship". Other aspects of Christian worship such as stillness, reverence, prayer, Bible reading and expository preaching have been mostly lost.

As for the bedrock of the charismatic renewal, the every-member ministry, this has been so eroded in Restoration circles as to be almost meaningless today. The gifts of the Spirit have been perverted into opportunities for indoctrination and prophecies received by mere members have to be vetted by the elders. Although lip-service is given to body-ministry, most Restoration "worship" is stage-managed and led by the elders.

### ***Pre-millennialism has been replaced***

Although some leaders still claim to be pre-millennialists, the doctrine has been almost wiped out in the Restoration church. A major shift to a triumphalist post-millennial doctrine happened in the mid-70's, when the goal became establishing the Kingdom on earth. Doctrines about the rapture, tribulation, endtimes apostasy and a literal personal Antichrist were denounced as deceptions. Also, Israel was replaced by the Church in prophecy.

### ***The goal is now taking the nations for God***

Given the shift to post-millennialism, it was inevitable that the focus of attention would become the earth, rather than the heavenly kingdom. Taking the nations was the aim, not enjoying heavenly rewards. The Church was on a mission to win the world to Christianity and train up rulers for the millennial reign. Obviously, this represents an enormous change of interests. Christians will submit to discipleship and resign their individuality if they believe the most important thing is rulership in a restored earth. Also, with the world looking for government, the need for structure and clerical order is apparent. Without tribulation ahead, there is no need for vigilance, and in the absence of apostasy there is no need to fear deception. The desire for heavenly things has faded out, and Restoration Christians no longer "look up". They look around them and consider how to transform the world.

## **How “Renewal” became Restoration**

Clearly, a huge gulf has appeared between classic pentecostalism and the new churches. Doctrines have changed almost beyond recognition. Instead of renewing the existing Church, the Restoration wave has swept away the old and replaced it with something that looks more like a cult. It has grown exponentially, overtaking every other denomination in numbers. It has cornered the market in publishing, teaching, music, evangelism and worship. More, it has bent the national Church to its will and sent shock waves into every corner of Christendom, forcing even those who were originally anti-charismatic to become their allies.

How could this have happened? How did a God-given desire for new life become a suffocating straitjacket of dominion? The steps downward into Restorationism are studied in Part II.

(For more information regarding Tricia Tillin and Banner Ministries see her Web Site <http://www.banner.org.uk/> )

## ***From the Internet***

### **Quasi-Gnosticism**

Posted July 18, 1997

I am sorry to say that in the midst of the renewal movement we are also seeing a renewal of a quasi form of Gnosticism. Take for example, the “civil war prophecy” given by Bob Jones and reiterated by many others within the renewal movement. It basically states that there are two sides, the blues and the grays (like in the civil war) and that the grays (gray matter) are those who use their minds and it messes them up spiritually. But the blues use their “hearts” and it gets them up the spiritual ladder. Eventually there will be a great war between the blues and the grays and just as in the civil war the blues (heart led saints) will be the victors over the grays (the mind led Pharisees). This, of course, will lead to many churches and families being split, but according to the modern “prophets” it is better to have this war and get rid of all these pharisaical types.

Also, the oft repeated phrase that has become very popular in the movement, “God offends our minds to reveal our hearts”. In other words, the manifestations you see are offensive to our minds but eventually we will see how wicked our hearts are for not accepting them as a work of God, repent and embrace them. Would someone please tell me where this concept is found in the Bible? I have heard some misuse of scripture to try to justify it, but that is all it is. It is not rightly dividing the Word of God. . . .

It seems to me that the Word says, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds", yet at the renewal movement most of what is talked of as being changed is the heart, via the manifestations, etc. If our minds were truly transformed by His Word (which is not an overnight experience), then we would not be so interested in having our hearts or spirits changed by doing strange manifestations - which have no real effect on the mind being renewed.

Check II Peter to see how many times in what ways the words know, knowing and knowledge appear. Grace and peace come through the knowledge of God - not manifestations or unusual happenings. We are told to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior" not in spiritual experiences. We are told that "He has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us". Not that we need to have some strange manifestations to get the things we need from God. We could go on and on in this vein. Please don't get me wrong. I have had a few "spiritual experiences" in His kingdom, but I always judge them with great scrutiny to see if they truly line up with the Word that will never pass away. I admit, I have had some that don't and that has caused me to be even more careful in testing all things and testing the spirits to see if they are from God. When one is dealing with spiritual experiences, due to all the warnings in the Bible about deception, false teaching, false prophets and watching, it is better to err on the side of caution. Posted by Randy Richards  
rmrklr@juno.com

from CPI-EDG Listserv, Contemporary Pentecostal Issues, <http://www.pentecostal-issues.org>.

## **My Problems With Brownsville**

Posted July 25, 1997

Let me say first, that I want to neither be a critic or defender of Brownsville. I have been there. I believe that people have been saved and delivered there, and that is enough for me to accept it to be a move of God. That said, here are a couple of observations of my time there that disturbed me. I saw this because I hope for these things to be corrected.

Commercialism. T-shirts emblazoned with "the Great Pensacola Outpouring", bumper stickers, tapes & CD's of the music, books, books, books. It made me think of Jesus chasing the money changers out of the temple. It looks to me like the biggest thing flowing at Pensacola is cash.

Showmanship. When the Praise and Worship team played. I felt like I was watching a performance. Their professionalism and musical abilities were impeccable. But it seemed to me that people were more inclined to sit and listen, and applaud afterwards, than to join into praise and worship. Admittedly, this is only my observation . . . but it was my observation.

Handling of critics. This one has been amazing to me. The leadership at Brownsville has handled criticism poorly at best, atrociously at worst. False prophecy is not the way to handle a critic. Criticisms should be viewed as positive things, regardless of the purpose of the critic. Each criticism should be considered carefully, and used as a stepping stone to growth. Criticisms that are false and frivolous should be dealt with in a scriptural manner.

The "Mega" Syndrome. There is an attitude that you have to go to a "Mega-revival" to get the

"mega-Holy Spirit" and have "mega manifestations". I have heard things like, "...it's because of the numbers..." or "...come get into the presence..." or "...there is a glory here...". Everything has to be bigger, better, stronger, etc. The Holy Spirit became available to us in His fullness on the Day of Pentecost. We do not have to go to Brownsville or any other "holy place" in order to receive the Holy Spirit in His Fullness. The Bible tells us that where two or more are gathered together in His name, He will be there among them. Numbers are irrelevant. He will not be more present amongst 5000 than amongst the two. The Bible also says that Jesus will never leave me or forsake me, and He is present with me always. I don't understand why we think we have to go to a place to "...get into the presence. . ." Jesus is present with me always. His Spirit lives inside of me and His Word resides in my heart. What else do I need?

One Million Served... The sign out front that says "100,000 saved" or whatever the number is these days, really belittles the miracle of salvation that occurs when ONE person accepts Christ. The reason that McDonalds has their "1 billion served" sign is self-aggrandizement. The "100,000 saved" sign is no different. It is saying, "Look how good we are..." The Bible tells us specifically to avoid self-aggrandizement. Better that you should take the last seat at the wedding dinner, and be asked by the host to move up, than to take the first seat and be asked by the host to move down. The miracle on earth when God washes someone clean of their sin, forgives them, and comes to live in their heart. There is a tendency, not just at Brownsville, but in pentecostal/charismatic circles in general, to think that if there weren't enough people at the altar, or enough people get saved (or fall down or whatever) that God didn't move. But again I say, the angels sing when ONE person gets saved. Take down the sign, immediately.. . . . .Douglas ([doogie@teclink.net](mailto:doogie@teclink.net))

from CPI-EDG Listserv, Contemporary Pentecostal Issues, <http://www.pentecostal-issues.org>.

### **from our Readers**

*... I appreciate your work and the spirit behind it. It helps put into focus some things that are potentially more dangerous than they appear at first. Eleanor*

*... .. Thank you for writing the newsletter. I look forward to every one. God bless you! Cindy*

*... . The information in your newsletter is a good starting point for personal education. I realize you do not have space for complete detail - your efforts to be thorough and comprehensive are appreciated. It is good to have the burden of further research placed with me. This allows me to choose my own study avenue and the extent of my efforts is a good measure of my own diligence.. Conrad*