

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord and make straight his paths." Matthew 3:3

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EXCOMMUNICATION?

By Gordon F. Nelson

"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. 5:5.

Excommunication is synonymous with the death penalty. The very subject, excommunication, strikes at the very core of government. All the arguments man uses to outlaw the death penalty are applicable to excommunication. Who is man to be the judge to end one's life by death? Yet, these same forces that oppose God, are atheists and non-believers.

Cain, The First Murderer

In the antediluvian world, prior to the flood, God spared the very first murderer's life. God punished Cain, but spared his life. *"And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."* Gen. 4:10-12.

"God is no respecter of persons." Acts 10:34. Hence, the second murderer in the earth, Lamech, took up his cry for clemency to the Lord. *"If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold."* Gen. 4:24. Lamech knew he'd be punished, and more severely than was Cain, but his life would be spared.

If you want to know what a society is like without any capital punishment, look no further than in Noah's day. But the Bible says, *"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man."* Lk. 17:26.

God Repents

In Genesis 6:6, we read the strangest words, *"And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."* Can you imagine God repenting? *"It grieved him at his heart."*

Cain was the very first person ever born on earth. In this instance, God the Father was like a Grandpa. His love went overboard. Sometimes our love prevents us from doing what we know we have to do. Cain was able to talk to God on a daily basis! God knew what he had to do; enforce capital punishment upon the very first murderer. *"And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD."* Gen. 4:16. He would never hear God's voice again. To me, that would be like being forever banished in hell. *"And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own."* How could life have meaning without God's presence?

Evidence of God Repenting

"And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." If you have ever been a parent and had to administer a spanking, then you can sympathize with God. My son, Paul, now a Captain on the San Francisco police force, as a youngster went to stealing. What do you do? Do you say "naughty, naughty", and point the waving finger at him as Dr. Spock tells you? I listened instead to the wisest man that ever lived, King Solomon, who said, *"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."* Prov. 13:24. Believe me, my son knew I loved him that day! He never, ever, stole anything from that day on. Believe me, it is not something you cherish, but is something God said to do. *"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."* Prov. 19:18.

"And it repented the LORD that he had made man." That reveals something about God's character. Oftentimes, we get a distorted image of God the Father. Apostle Paul, writing to the Hebrew Christians, gave this reminder. *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities."* Heb. 4:15. Man was created in the image of God. Man does not go to God in prayer because he believes God doesn't have "the feeling of our infirmities." God raised kids in the Garden of Eden before you were ever born. Believe me, Cain was a problem child! Do you think it would have helped God out if he could have read Dr. Spock's book?

"And it repented the LORD that he had made man." God was repenting because he allowed a murderer to go free. Proof of God's repentance is recorded in Genesis 9:5. *"And surely your blood of your lives will I require."* No more clemency cries! God is laying down the new rules for the renovated earth. God has been given a second chance to start all over again. This time, if man messes up his world, God will not be an accomplice. God instructs Noah as he is coming off the ark, that there will be basically two changes:

#1 - Eat meat - without the blood (Gen. 9:3-4) *"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you...But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."*

#2 - Invoke capital punishment (Gen. 9:5-6) *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."*

God repented for His part in a society without capital punishment. Have you? The death penalty is a deterrent to crime. *"BY MAN shall his blood be shed."* God has decreed it that all murderers pay the ultimate price of their own blood for the life they have taken. This is a foundational truth for the preservation of our civil government. Only the civil government can invoke capital punishment. Only the church is called upon to invoke excommunication. One preserves society; enforcement of the other preserves the church.

Apostle Peter Invokes the Death Penalty

"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh." 1 Cor. 5:5. Who should administer such a judgment? Apostles did, and in particular Apostle Peter.

Peter asked Ananias this question, *"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things."*

Then his wife, Sapphira, three hours later, went searching for her husband at the church, *"not knowing what was done. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost...AND GREAT FEAR came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."* Acts 5:1-11.

Ananias and Sapphira made a vow to give the money from the sale of a piece of land to the church. After it was finally sold, they had second thoughts to *"keep back part of the price."* They were supposed to *"lay it all at the Apostles feet."* Acts 5:2.

"If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." Num. 30:2. Jesus expounded on this subject even further. *"But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."* Matt. 5:34-37.

I want you to remember the words of our Lord when the preacher asks for pledges on the new building fund. You are swearing you will be alive to pay! But you can't even turn one white hair black. Aren't you moving into an area totally belonging to God?

The Elders of the Church Perform Rite of Excommunication

Who else is qualified to perform the rite of excommunication, *"to deliver such an one unto Satan"*?

If the great Apostle Peter could perform such a rite, truly the Apostle Paul could. The Apostle Paul had heard about what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. It was the great Apostle Paul who wrote three-fourths of the New Testament, who carried this rite of excommunication one step further, entrusting it into the hands of the elders of the local church. Obviously, such powers are not to be exercised by the people, but to the very highest order within the local assembly.

Jesus instructed, *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican (the verdict, after telling it to the church). Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye (elders) shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and*

whatsoever ye (elders) shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you (the brotherhood of elders), That if two of you (elders) shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they (elders) shall ask, it shall be done for them (elders) of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three (elders) are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:15-20. The Jews require a minyan (10 men) to have church. Jesus requires a minimum of two or three elders.

The church uses the words, "binding and loosening", loosely, and individual Christians claim them as "their" individual power. In doing so, they become "as gods". This is what is running so rampant in the Pentecostal church of today. These scriptures deal with the power vested in a brotherhood of elders within a local assembly.

Jesus Said, "I Will Build My Church." (Matt. 16:18)

"Thou art Peter (Gk.-Petros; a piece of rock), and upon this rock (Gk.-Petra; mass of rock) I will build my church." The ROCK that Jesus was referring to was neither Peter's confession nor his ability to be the chief cornerstone upon which to build a church.

The ROCK was the government of the twelve disciples (elders) of which Apostle Peter was a part. The word "elders" in the Greek is "presbuteros", from which we get our word "presbyter" (a member of the "elderly men" celestial council – Strong's 4245). "Presbyterion" is the Greek word for "order of the elders", or presbytery (Strong's 4244). It is from this Greek word that the Presbyterians derive their name. Every elder in the Presbyterian Church is an ordained minister. Whenever a Mormon becomes a Christian, he invariably joins the Presbyterian Church, or the Church of Christ, due to his love of government.

The Presbuteros is the ROCK of which Christ said, *"and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* Matt. 16:18. As a "loner" with only a three-name religious non-profit incorporation issued by the Secretary of State, the gates of hell will prevail against you. One scandal, with one witness paid by the state to testify, can bring your house of cards down. You saw how quickly the government dismantled Jim Bakker and the PTL network of TV stations. The gates of hell prevailed!

It is to this presbuteros (body of elders – minimum of two or three) that Jesus said, *"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."* Do you know what the keys to the kingdom of heaven are? The answer follows. *"And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* Matt. 16:19. This "binding and loosening" power includes remitting of sins, and is the most awesome power given to a corporate body of men in a local assembly. It is believing God for the "presbuteros" that hastens the day for judgment to again be administered through the local assembly. *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."* 1 Pet. 4:17.

Do you think your democratically controlled "hireling" can bring judgment into the house of God? These Laodiceans are too busy with their interpretation of love to be concerned about the presbuteros, thus, *"Judge not, that ye be not judged."* Matt. 7:1. The devil is the greatest scripture quoter in the world. The devil harassed Christ in the wilderness with scripture every time he had a test for Him.

In John 20:19-23, Jesus appears unto his own disciples (except Thomas who was not present) and, *"he shewed unto them his hands and his side."* This scene is after the resurrection, and Jesus is entrusting these twelve men to carry out the work for which they have been trained for the past three years. They are now graduated from Bible College. Jesus will no longer be with them.

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Jn. 20:21-23.

Again, Christ is alluding to the "binding and loosing" powers vested, not in some man, but a presbytery of elders, called a brotherhood. This hood of brothers has the power to "remit sins", or forgive. The Sanhedrin was a presbytery of 70 elders. It is not one man forgiving sins, but a presbytery within each local assembly. Collectively they forgive or retain sins! *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* Heb. 10:31. This is what Christ had in mind in church discipline. *"Tell it unto the church."* Matt. 18:17. Whatever the decision of the body of elders is, will be bound in heaven.

Only an Apostle can remit or retain sins. The laity is instructed, *"Is any sick among you? let him"* get on a plane to see Benny Hinn. Is this what the Word says? No! *"...call for the elders (presbyters) of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* Jas. 5:14-16. The presbytery is praying for you, and empowered to forgive sins. One confesses one's sins, not in a booth to a loner, but to two or three elders one has come to for healing. Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, *"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."* Matt. 9:2. One confesses sins to the elders, but *"Confess your faults (shortcomings) one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed (in preparation for the elder's prayer)."* Jas. 5:16.

Pilgrim's First Built Church, Then the Government

The Pilgrims were remarkable people. The first thing they built when landing on Plymouth Rock, was a church. What kind of church? One like the Anglican state church of England? What type of government should this church have?

The Anglican Church of England is patterned after Romanism. I believe the Archbishop of Canterbury rules exactly as the Pope of Rome, except the priests can marry. The Episcopal Church believes in the "Apostolic succession" of their priests which commences with St. Peter.

These dictatorial state churches are what drove the Pilgrims out of Europe so they could worship God in freedom. The Pilgrims first established the proper government in the church. Then, from this pattern, the Founding Fathers devised the greatest system of government known to mankind; a republic.

In those days, "the church" was *"a city that is set on a hill"* (Matt. 5:14), giving light and understanding to those men responsible for our Constitution. Truly, America, with her republic, has been

a lighthouse to the rest of the world. Now, Islam is ready to tear it down in the name of Allah, to replace it with a dictatorship ruled by the devil's "Allah" and the Koran.

A Republic Form of Government

The word democracy is not found in our Constitution. It was never used until the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The Pilgrim's believed in "unalienable rights" as given by a Creator. To protect those rights, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and the right to bear arms were the "untouchables". Only under a republic form of government are those rights protected. In a democracy, everything is up for grabs! In a democracy, it is just plain mob rule, the half-way mark to socialism!

Today, we have just the reverse situation as was in the days of Benjamin Franklin. The church follows the type of government that the news media says we have in Washington D.C. Hence, the Assemblies of God and their "hireling" form of government. Everyone has a vote and hires a preacher. The mentality of that mindset beggars description.

The word, "Laodicea" in the Greek, means "rule of the people" or democracy. They are Laodicea *"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.

Miserable, what a description for these "tongue-talking", filled with the Spirit saints! *"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."* Rev. 3:16.

Whenever you create a democratic society within the church--every member having a vote on every issue--you have created a war zone with the different factions standing for their rights. Your response? "Well, it works in Washington D.C.!" I'm sorry, but you only vote once every four years for men or women to represent your position in politics. Your representative does the voting for you! Quit believing the lies of our news media, who follow the adage of the Nazi Joseph Goebbels, "Whenever you lie, tell a big one, repeat it often and the people will believe it."

Why Did God Choose Judas?

Jesus had the ability to choose twelve disciplined disciples. Do you believe that? *"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."* Jn. 2:24-25. Because we are not God, we can't do this! If we chose five men, perhaps two would be devils. Nonetheless, we are never to give up trying. Judas was chosen for our benefit: we mortals who can't discern the difference between a sheep and a goat! We see in Judas, what Jesus did with a goat. *"Go and do likewise!"* Lk. 10:37.

The church, through the wrong type of government, has reduced excommunication to the level of feet washing. But Jesus said, *"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."* Jn. 13:17. Even our Congress observes this ritual of expulsion, or excommunication.

God Chose the Captain to Bring Down Tom Patten

"To deliver such an one unto Satan." Who else has that authority? God is still God! He rules in the

affairs of men. By His sovereign power He can chose whomsoever He wills to bring judgment into the house of God.

I was attending a typical Dr. Bebe Patten meeting in Oakland, CA. C. (for Cash) Thomas Patten of Lyle, Tennessee began taking up his enormous offerings. Of course, we believed this Elmer Gantry-type of individual was in communion with God. The impact of this communion always came back to us in the audience. "God told me there was ten people would give \$1,000 each!" Tom Patten never failed in touching these ten pledges. That was the reason we had such faith in his powers. After receiving the ten \$1,000 gifts, then the number of \$500 gifts and on down to the \$20 bills were believed for. These were all pledges at every service, and they would pick up the fragments by passing the buckets. Believe me, friend, without any discipline or government within the local assembly, the "house of prayer" is turned into a "den of thieves". It is time to overturn the moneychanger's tables with a Roman cat-of-nine tails across their backs.

It was as if the minister, Dr. Bebe Patten, was being held hostage until this offering was taken. No money, no sermon! During one of Tom's long offerings, he would make long strides across the platform in his cowboy boots, castigating the audience with his tremendous powers with statements like, "If you have a non-profit religious incorporation, plenty of money and smart lawyers, you can do anything and get by!" He was talking like Belshazzar in the days of Daniel. *"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote...And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."* Dan. 5:5,25-27. In the same hour as the Kingfish was raving, God spoke to me, "And you're going to bring him down."

I was just a Bible student in the Patten Bible College, working as an elevator boy in the Patten kingdom to make ends meet. "But I have no money, no battery of smart lawyers. How can I bring Goliath down?" It doesn't do any good to argue with God, so I pondered these things in my heart.

After graduation from the Patten Bible College and Seminary, I went to Minnesota to minister. One night I had a dream and saw myself on a witness stand. I knew exactly what that meant. It was a call to "excommunicate" Tom Patten from the church of the living God. No one gets too big that God can't bring him down. I was simply playing the part of David with five stones, J-E-S-U-S, to excommunicate the giant.

The Patten College is a better institution today, as a result of excommunication! Tom Patten, a hulk of a man, an ex-football player, was young and strong of body. But after the "hedge" was torn down by the delivery *"into the hands of Satan for the destruction of the flesh"*, his days were numbered upon this earth. C. Thomas Patten, after serving 2-1/2 years in San Quentin, died prematurely upon his release from prison. It took Satan about three years for *"the destruction of the flesh"*.

I would never have termed this an "excommunication" if he had lived to a ripe old age like his wife, Dr. Bebe Patten, has. *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* Heb. 10:31.

Tom and Bebe Patten sold our church!
Two men sold the Worldwide Church of God!

Stanley Rader, advised evangelist in scandal

Pasadena, Calif. — July 5, 2002 — The Arizona Republic

Stanley Robert Rader, former general counsel and treasurer of the Worldwide Church of God and an adviser to the church's founder during a controversial state probe of church finances, died Tuesday. He was 71.

Rader was diagnosed with acute pancreatic cancer two weeks before his death.

Rader was an adviser to founder Herbert W. Armstrong in some of the church's most tumultuous days, including when Armstrong ousted his son, television evangelist Garner Ted Armstrong, after they had a falling out in 1978.

The following year, California Attorney General George Deukmejian began investigating allegations that the founder and Rader pilfered millions of dollars from the church, which a court temporarily placed into receivership.

Disaffected members of the church claimed in a lawsuit that the founder and Rader were living extravagantly and sold church property below market value for private profit.

The state Legislature later passed a bill that removed the attorney general's power to investigate religious organizations over allegations of misuse of funds or other fraud. The investigation was dropped.

Wife Dies Prematurely

"My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee." Prov. 3:1-2. Anyone cut off prematurely, failing to reach their promised three score and ten (70 years), must ponder. What did I do? Is this an excommunication from the Lord?

My wife died prematurely of Lou Gerhig's disease. Whenever a woman decides to marry one of God's anointed, she will be in

real trouble with God if she interferes with the call of God on his life. My advise to women is don't marry them! Let them alone! God could excommunicate you simply because you were in the way of their ministry.

Before God, I am not lying, but I told my wife, "I have a calling upon my life for the end times. I don't even know what it is, but if you are in the way of that fulfillment, God will take you out of here." Shortly after these words left my mouth, she came down with a terminal disease.

"Tell it to the Church"

"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. 5:5.

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." 1 Cor. 3:9-10. Don't you think we should ask the masterbuilder concerning building ethics? about this question of excommunication?

Excommunication is a controversial subject simply because it is foreign to our churches. However, as I have attempted to prove, it is not foreign to the scriptures, hence it rather represents an indictment of our church's governmental structure.

Jesus said relative to church discipline, *"And if he shall neglect to hear them (the witnesses), tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."* Matt. 18:17.

Just what does our Lord mean when he says, "tell it unto the church"? Does that mean like it does today--write a book? The writing of a book for profit opens every door to broadcast abuse by your spouse through all Christian television. Talk shows across America are your pulpit, simply because you wrote a book. Is that what Christ meant?

Or does "tell it unto the church" mean to publicly stand up in church and tell the congregation how your husband gave you a black eye, and show the congregation the evidence?

What does it mean "tell it unto the church"? Do you tell the "hireling" (Jn. 10:10) preacher alone in secret? Is he the church? The hireling is one hired by a democratic form of government. The hireling has problems of his own, for *"when he seeth the wolf coming"* he'll be gone. Jn. 10:12. The hireling works at his job of preaching like you do in your secular job. The prayer of the deacon board is, "Lord, You keep our pastor humble, we'll make sure he is kept broke." I'm sorry, the hireling has no time for your unfortunate marriage. It is dismissed with, "I'll pray for you."

"Tell it unto the church." Who do you tell? Do you tell one of these "prosperity" preachers? They are *"lords over God's heritage"*. 1 Pet. 5:3. The late C. Thomas Patten was one of these! It is lucky for Christendom that he was excommunicated before television came about. This "huckster" would top all the antics at fund-raising ever contrived by man if he went national on television. Don't you think God knew this?

This con openly boasted from the platform, "I can do anything!" The anything included the rape of teenage girls. He had his own kingdom, and he was the Kingfish. Someway, all con artists have one thing in common--they position themselves for control.

The question is, Do you tell it to a "lord", who acts "as god" due to his religious non-profit incorporation? The church in this instance is the pastor, his wife and a relative. These are the only legal voters that the Secretary of State recognizes. Do you tell it to his church? He is too busy putting up TV stations around the world to be concerned about your "black eye". Oh, yes, if you phone in, you'll receive the usual, "I'll pray for you", or better still, "My prayer partners will pray for you."

Do you tell it to the church? What does it mean? Jesus answered the question thus, *"For where two or three (elders) are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* Matt. 18:20. Jesus set the precedent of not doing anything alone (except to pray).

On the mount of transfiguration, where Peter, James and John went up with their Lord, He instructed His inner circle (Peter, James and John--Jesus' two or three elders), *"Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead."* Matt. 17:9. This was kept secret from the other nine disciples. Do you suppose the Founding Fathers discovered a separation of powers in Jesus' government? Jesus is the executive head. Peter, James and John His cabinet, while the remaining nine are the legislature. Judas, who carried the bags, is a type of Greenspan's Federal Reserve System.

Jesus gave His entire life to forming a "brotherhood" of ministers. I have spent my entire life trying to form a "two or three" society of elders. How difficult it is for "two to walk together" to build the kingdom of God. *"O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts."* Ezk. 13:4.

“Loners”? Should We Follow Them?

On one occasion, the disciples rebuked these "loners". *"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us."* Lk. 9:49. The disciples would never have rebuked the man casting out devils had he had a co-partner in ministry. In Jesus' organization everyone ministered "two by two". Were that man alive today, he would have his own telecast and be glorified because he cast out devils. His ministry would do nothing for promoting Christ's brotherhood. Jesus said, *"I pray for them (the twelve disciples): I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."* Jn. 17:9. Who do you pray for? Some loner out there casting out devils, or for God to create a brotherhood? Apostle Peter commands the body of Christ to "Love the brotherhood," not some "loner" on television "casting out devils".

“Love The Brotherhood” (1 Pet. 2:17)

Apostle John writes, *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."* 1 Jn. 3:14. The church is an organism, not an organization. Every church should have a "brotherhood" of elders to oversee the local assembly and be loved by them.

In truth, this body of elders, collectively rule the church and form a "brotherhood" that each congregation learns to love and appreciate. When Jesus stated, "Tell it unto the church", He was referring to the two or three (under Christ) who are entrusted with being the guide for the church. "Let the elders rule." 1 Tim. 5:17. The feeding of God's flock was never intended to be a one-man job. *"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder...feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof."* 1 Pet. 5:1-2. A plurality of elders take the oversight.

Do you know the difference between an elder and a deacon? In scripture the office of deaconess is open to women, but they are barred from the "brotherhood". Deacons are appointed by man. *"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."* Acts 6:3. Elders or ministers are appointed by the Apostles, or God. Apostle Peter claims title to being an elder, as well. 1 Pet. 5:1. No man should be called Reverend. Only God is called Reverend in scripture. Ps. 111:9. *"But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."* Matt. 23:8. These titles seem to destroy the message that we are brethren belonging to the same "brotherhood". They *"love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi (Gk.-my master)...for one is your Master, even Christ."* Matt. 23:6-8.

"To deliver such an one unto Satan", Paul was addressing the brotherhood of elders of Corinth, *"for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."* 1 Cor. 5:5. This "such an one" in Corinth was probably an elder's son. The elder's wife had died and he had married a young woman. *"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife."* 1 Cor. 5:1.

What Corinth should do is obey the instruction of the masterbuilder. *"For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already (I know what to do)...concerning him that hath so done this deed."* 1 Cor. 5:3.

The Masterbuilder Speaks Out

I'll tell you what to do, Corinth. Listen to me, the masterbuilder. We are going to have a feast with *"the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."* 1 Cor. 5:8. *"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, WHEN YE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER, and MY SPIRIT (Apostle Paul), with the power (authority of the collective body of elders to exercise the rite of excommunication) of our Lord Jesus Christ."* 1 Cor. 5:4. If he neglects to hear the church, *"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."* Matt. 18:18. We can take away his "hedge of protection" that God has provided every believer. Satan will now have access to his physical body--"the destruction of the flesh".

"Know ye not that a little leaven (sin) leaveneth the whole lump?" Leaven is always a type of sin in scripture. One bad apple, if not removed, will eventually destroy all the apples. *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened."* 1 Cor. 5:6-7. It is like a cancer in our body. It cannot go unattended or left alone. Cancer must be cut out to preserve the rest of the body.

Imagine the Masterbuilder calling such an excommunication a feast. *"Therefore let us keep the feast...neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."* 1 Cor. 5:8

"For The Time Is Come"

I am sure that this is what Peter is alluding to when he said, *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"* 1 Pet. 4:17.

"For the time is come."

I have been a Christian for over 60 years! It took a lifetime of experience in the maze of Pentecostalism to put this letter together for you. My beloved, this is the time to sound an alarm! *"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm."* Joel 2:1.

"Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD." Joel 1:13-14.

To keep the *"feast of unleavened bread of sincerity and truth"*, you must obey the following: *"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."* 1 Cor. 5:11.

Like as at any feast, it is to be a joyful event. The old leaven is cut out of the body. New vitality and joy has sprung forth in its place.