

BEING VITALIZED AS OVERCOMERS TO CO-OPERATE WITH GOD IN HIS PRESENT MOVE

Message One

God's Move on the Earth for the Accomplishment of His Eternal Economy

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:9; Eph. 1:23; Gen 3:24; 6:3a, 17; 19:24-25; 12:7; Exo. 3:8a; Num. 14; Josh. 13:1-7; Judg. 2:11-15; Matt. 21:43; John 3:16; 1 Cor. 1:9; Eph. 3:19b; Gal. 1:6; 4:9; Matt. 13:33; Col. 2:20-21; John 15:2a; Rev. 5:6; Phil. 1:19b; Eph. 4:12-13; Rev. 2:7b; 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:12a; Rev. 20:4, 6; Matt. 25:21, 23, 30; 24:51a

I. God's move on the earth for the accomplishment of His eternal economy:

- A. Through the Adamic race:
 - 1. With the tree of life as the center and the goal—Gen. 2:9.
 - 2. God's intention:
 - a. To be taken by man as life.
 - b. To be one with man in an organic union.
 - c. To have a Body in humanity as the corporate expression of the Triune God—Eph. 1:23.
 - 3. Man's failure:
 - a. Distracted from God's ordained line of life—Gen. 3:24.
 - b. Becoming flesh—6:3a.
 - 4. God's judgment:
 - a. First by water and then by fire—v. 17; 19:24-25.
 - b. To destroy the fallen race.
- B. Through the Abrahamic race:
 - 1. With the good land as the center and the goal—12:7; Exo. 3:8a.
 - 2. God's intention:
 - a. To have a people on the earth to be one with Him.
 - b. To carry out His economy that Christ might be brought into humanity through incarnation.
 - c. To take, possess, and enjoy the good land as a full type of Christ before Christ came to be a man.
 - 3. Israel's failure:
 - a. Not entering into God's goal—the good land—Num. 14.
 - b. Not taking and possessing the good land by destroying the Canaanites—Josh. 13:1-7.
 - c. Not remaining in the enjoyment of the good land by walking with God—Judg. 2:11-15.
 - 4. God's judgment:
 - a. Wandering in the wilderness.
 - b. Oppressed by the remaining Canaanites.
 - c. Captured and subdued by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans.
 - d. Scattered to the nations throughout the world.
 - e. Given up by God—Matt. 21:43.
 - f. To keep them away from the enjoyment of the good land.
- C. Through the church:
 - 1. With the unique Christ as the center and the goal—John 3:16; 1 Cor. 1:9.
 - 2. God's intention:

- a. To bring forth the church as the Body of Christ for the corporate expression of the processed Triune God—Eph. 1:23; 3:19b.
 - b. For the consummation of the New Jerusalem.
 - 3. The church's failure:
 - a. Distracted from the enjoyment of Christ—Gal. 1:6; 4:9.
 - b. Becoming mixed Christianity—Matt. 13:33; Col. 2:20-21.
 - 4. God's judgment:
 - a. Condemnation on the fallen church.
 - b. Cutting the deformed church off from the enjoyment of Christ—John 15:2a.
 - c. To let the overcomers rise up.
- D. Through the overcomers:
 - 1. With the pneumatic Christ as the center and the goal (Rev. 5:6; Phil. 1:19b) in the recovery of:
 - a. The participation in the processed Triune God.
 - b. The rich enjoyment of the all-inclusive and all-extensive Christ.
 - c. The full experience of the consummated compound Spirit.
 - d. The absolute living by the eternal life.
 - e. The building up of the Body of Christ.
 - f. The practice of the churches on the local ground.
 - g. The keeping of the oneness of the Body of Christ.
 - 2. God's intention:
 - a. To consummate the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:12-13.
 - b. To usher in the New Jerusalem—Rev. 2:7b; 3:12.
 - 3. The overcomers' success:
 - a. To be vital—living versus the deadness of Sardis and active versus the lukewarmness of Laodicea:
 - (1) In saving sinners that they may become the members of Christ.
 - (2) In feeding the newborn believers in Christ.
 - (3) In perfecting the saints.
 - (4) In building up the churches for the building up of the Body by prophesying—speaking for God.
 - b. To overcome the degradation of the church.
 - 4. God's judgment:
 - a. The reward of the full enjoyment of Christ in the kingdom:
 - (1) To reign with Christ in His glory—2 Tim. 2:12a; Rev. 20:4, 6.
 - (2) To partake of the joy of Christ in His kingdom—Matt. 25:21, 23.
 - b. The salvation of the soul from losing Christ in the age of righteousness:
 - (1) To be saved from being cast out into darkness in the age of discipline—v. 30.
 - (2) To be saved from being cut off from the full enjoyment of Christ in His glory—24:51a.
- II. To consummate the New Jerusalem for the fulfillment of God's desire.

Message Two
Being Vitalized

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:1-2, 11; Rev. 2:4, 12-15, 24, 20; 3:1-2, 15-16, 17-20; 2:7, 11, 17, 26-29; 3:5-6, 12-13, 21-22; 14:1-5; 21:1-2

I. The cause:

- A. The compassions of God—Rom. 12:1a.
- B. The degradation of the church:
 - 1. The church in general:
 - a. Having left her first love for the Lord—Rev. 2:4.
 - b. Having married herself to the world and become satanic, full of the hierarchical teaching—vv. 12-15.
 - 2. The Catholic Church:
 - a. With the “deep things of Satan”—v. 24.
 - b. Full of fornication and idolatry—v. 20.
 - 3. The Protestant churches:
 - a. Having been deadened and being dying—3:1-2a.
 - b. Not complete in anything—v. 2b.
 - 4. The Brethren:
 - a. Lukewarm, spewed out of the Lord’s mouth—vv. 15-16.
 - b. Self-contented yet wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked, and Christless—vv. 17-20.
- C. The calling of the Lord in the age of the overcomers—2:7, 11, 17, 26-29; 3:5-6, 12-13, 21-22.

II. The purpose:

- A. To respond to the Lord’s calling.
- B. For the Lord’s recovery in this age (pay attention to the seven crucial points of the major items of the Lord’s recovery today).
- C. For the building up of the Body of Christ through the proper practice of the local churches:
 - 1. On the local ground in the oneness of the unique Body of Christ.
 - 2. By:
 - a. Saving sinners to be the members of Christ.
 - b. Feeding the newborn members.
 - c. Perfecting the saints.
 - d. Prophesying to build up the local churches for the consummation of the building up of the Body of Christ.

III. The way:

- A. To be stirred up in the first love for the Lord through repenting prayers.
- B. To make a thorough confession to the Lord.
- C. To have close, intimate, and thorough fellowship with the Lord and with the seeking saints.
- D. To reconsecrate yourself to the Lord:
 - 1. In presenting your body as a living sacrifice to the Lord—Rom. 12:1.
 - 2. In being transformed by the renewing of the mind from being fashioned according to this age—v. 2.
 - 3. In not being slothful in zeal but burning in spirit to serve the Lord—v. 11.
- E. To be the overcomers in the church life:

1. In the age of the overcomers according to the Lord's calling.
2. As today's Zion in today's Jerusalem (the church life)—Rev. 14:1-5:
 - a. The high peak, the center, the uplifting, the strengthening, the enriching, and the reality of the church, the holy city.
 - b. To consummate the holy city (the church) and to bring in the consummated New Jerusalem in eternity—21:1-2.

Message Three

The Three Enemies Today

Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:1-2; Rom. 12:1-10; Rev. 3:14-18, 20; Rom. 12:11; John 15:2a; Matt. 25:24-30

I. The deadness of Sardis—Rev. 3:1-2:

- A. To be conquered in the Body life—Rom. 12:3-10.
- B. By:
 - 1. Presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God—v. 1.
 - 2. Being transformed from the fashion of this age by the renewing of our mind—v. 2.

II. The lukewarmness of Laodicea—Rev. 3:14-16:

- A. To be conquered by the seeking of the riches of Christ—vv. 17-18, 20.
- B. By:
 - 1. Not being slothful in zeal—Rom. 12:11a.
 - 2. Being burning in spirit, serving the Lord—v. 11b.

III. The barrenness of the degenerating believers:

- A. To be conquered in desperation.
- B. By:
 - 1. Fearing to be cut off from the enjoyment of Christ's supply in this age—John 15:2a.
 - 2. Caring for the discipline in the coming age—Matt. 25:24-30.

© *Living Stream Ministry*. Do not duplicate.

Some Additional Points:

IV. "We are doing okay":

- A. But are we living, even intensely living?
- B. But are we hot, burning for the Lord and His interests?
- C. But are we bearing fruit, even remaining fruit?

V. "We need to be desperate with the Lord. We all have been drugged by Christianity, thinking that it is all right for us to remain the same year after year, without learning and advancing in our function as members of the Body. When the Lord comes we will all stand before Him (Rom. 14:10b). He will ask us how many we begot, how many we fed, how many we perfected, and how much we prophesied. According to Matthew 25:14-30, all the Lord's slaves who have received one, two, or five talents from Him will have to come before Him to answer to Him. We need to live Christ; we need to be genuinely for His recovery; and we need to mean business to build up the Lord's Body. If we are like this, we will surely endeavor to carry out the four crucial items of the God-ordained way. However, if we continue in our present situation, we will delay the Lord and set up a poor pattern for the new ones.

We all need to see that God wants an organism and that this organism is produced and built up through our begetting, feeding, perfecting, and prophesying"—*The Practice of the Church Life according to the God-ordained Way*, pp. 144-145.

VI. How we need to be the overcomers!:

- A. God is calling us; this is part of His operation.
- B. When we answer His call, this is part of our cooperation.
- C. Then God continues to operate by supplying the overcomers.
- D. "...few are those who find it" – Mat. 7:14:
 - 1. The overcoming way is the narrow way; it is not 'easy street.'
 - 2. The price to pay to take this way is high, but this way "leads to life."
 - 3. The number of overcomers may not be that large (see *The Practice of the Church Life according to the God-ordained Way*, pp. 143-145) – cf. Matt. 22:14.
- E. Now is the time for the overcomers to rise up:
 - 1. Let us pay the price now not later, when the price will go up.
 - 2. The reward is glorious—Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21!
- F. It is our choice, whether we are young or older.
- G. Will you be an overcomer?
- H. Concerning all this, let us all go to the Lord and pray, pray, pray.

Message Four

The Need for a New Generation Which Is Brought out of Everything that Is Routine

Scripture Reading: Psalm 24:3-7; Rev. 14:1, 4; Romans 6:4; 7:6; Rev. 1:17-18; 21:5

VII. Our God is the living God:

- A. We should match Him—Matt. 22:32.
- B. The church is the house of the living God—1 Tim. 3:15.
- C. We must be careful not to fall away from the living God—Heb. 3:12.
- D. We need to contact Him, absorb Him, spend much time with Him, grow, and be vitalized.

VIII. The need for a new generation:

- A. Today most Christians are abnormal, including a number of us in the recovery.
- B. A “vital” (living and active) group is a group of normal Christians:
 - 1. Carrying out the vital groups is to change the generation.
 - 2. We cannot go on in a dormant situation in the recovery.
 - 3. We need to come out of the deadness of Sardis (Rev. 3:1-2), the lukewarmness of Laodicea (vv. 14-16), and the barrenness of the degenerating believers (John 15:2a, 6).
- C. We need to bring the recovery into another age with a new generation, a new people.
- D. God’s biblical (ordained) way to have the church life has four stages: begetting, feeding, teaching, and building:
 - 1. Most saints in the recovery like this God-ordained way; *but* if and when we actually begin to practice it—from the foundation and step by step—we will be a changed generation.
 - 2. We will get out of the old generation and become a new generation.
 - 3. “This is what I expect to see in the recovery—a change of generation”—*The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups*, p. 62.

IX. Being brought out of everything that is routine:

- A. “I have the burden to help us get out of all kinds of formality and routine. We hate any kind of form; we hate formal meetings; we hate rituals; we hate routine meetings, routine prayer, routine speaking, routine reading, routine sharing, and routine prophesying. Anything that is routine, we hate. We want to be vitalized overcomers in the church life who are one with the Lord to conquer deadness, lukewarmness, and barrenness.”—*The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups*, p. 59.
- B. Even if we have dropped the old way, still we have left the new way in the printed pages of the ministry:
 - 1. In the thirty-eight years since 1984, we still have not had an adequate and sustainable beginning in our practice of the new way.
 - 2. Again, in teaching, we remain very good, but not so in practice.
 - 3. What we practice is a routine church life by maintaining the Lord’s Day meetings, the prayer meeting, and the service meetings.
 - 4. To practice a routine church life does not require and “overcomer” price to pay.
 - 5. Should we not pay our full attention to the practical steps of the biblical way? This is the constricted way, that leads to life—Matt. 7:13-14.
 - 6. We should not merely *talk* about it; we need to *practice* the steps.

- C. Where can we see groups of saints *practicing* the New Testament revelation today? Who is denying himself? Who is actually being renewed, transformed, and conformed to the image of the One who has passed through death and resurrection?
1. Gradually, we may have drifted into practicing a routine church life, without that much leading of the Spirit among us.
 2. Do each of us continue to act and behave without very much adjustment, learning, and actual transformation?
 3. All this routine also causes us to lose the impact in winning the sinners.
- D. The example of Elden Hall in the late 1960s and the early 1970s:
1. Freshness, unpredictability, spontaneity, and attractiveness.
 2. Nothing routine, just the continual and mighty flow of life.
- E. "...the operation in the measure of each one part" – Eph. 4:16:
1. The joints of the rich supply in this verse are the gifted ones.
 2. Each one part refers mainly to the one-talented members; that is us.
 3. These do the 'knitting':
 - a. This is a real overcoming; no doubt, it is to beget, nourish, perfect, and prophesy.
 - b. This 'knitting' will cause "the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love."
 - c. This is the goal of God's economy in this age.
 - d. The knitting is intimate and intricate; it mainly takes place in the homes.
 - e. Since 80% of the church-life should be in the homes, these one-talented overcomers have 80% of the church life – and building work – in their hands.
- F. What shall we do now?
1. Each one should rise up and go to the Lord, to the living God, and "pray, pray, pray;" the Lord is waiting for this.
 2. Be vitalized.
 3. In cooperation with the operating God, be willing—even make a decision—to pay a price to be the overcomers, whether young, middle-aged, or old!
 4. Struggle with endurance (Col. 1:29; 4:12; 1 Thes. 1:3), not expecting a quick result in the four steps.
 5. Thus, we would truly gain the increase for the Father's glory and advance the Lord's move to build up the Body of Christ among us unto His coming back.

Message Five

Having a Heart for People and Contacting People

Scripture Reading: John 3:16; Phil. 2:5-8; 1 John 4:19; Mat. 13:3; Mark 10:45; Luke 4:42-43

X. Having a heart for people:

- A. Our God loves men—John 3:15-17.
- B. God loved men so much that He became a man to redeem, regenerate, and save man organically—Mark 10:45; Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Cor. 1:30:
 - 1. While on earth, Christ continually went out to reach men—Matt. 13:3; Mark 5:21; Luke 4:42-43.
 - 2. He had no permanent residence—Matt. 8:20.
- C. “A slave is not greater than his master”—John 13:16-17; 15:20:
 - 1. This Lord is in us; if He loved men and went out to them, we must do the same.
 - 2. “A serious problem with many who are engaged in God’s work is their total lack of love and respect for man, and their total failure to realize the value of man in God’s sight...We need to be enlarged by God; we need to see that all men are precious to God—W.N., *The Character of the Lord’s Worker*, p. 16
 - 3. Is it right for us, as did the remnant in Haggai 1, to remain at home, comfortable in our “paneled-up houses,” while God’s building is at a standstill?—Hag. 1:2-6.
 - 4. Rather, we should “go up to the mountain and bring wood” (a type for humanity) and “build the house”—vv. 7-9.
- D. Men are the building blocks for God’s spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5), the branches for the “true vine” (John 15:5).
- E. May our heart toward men be a duplication of God’s loving heart—1 John 4:19!

XI. Contacting people:

- A. By the Lord’s mercy, from now on we all have to run the race by practicing to contact people, as the Lord did while He was on earth.
- B. “We are Thy continuation”—*Hymns* 203.
- C. Contacting people is not an easy thing because we do not have the habit and practice:
 - 1. We need to pray to have a change in our natural being.
 - 2. We should not excuse ourselves by saying that we were born to be a certain way; we have been born again!
 - 3. God has made us a new creation, so we must be new persons!
 - 4. In cooperation with Him, we need to be built up with a habit to contact people, to know people, and to become interested in people.
 - 5. This is the heart and the practice of an overcomer.
- D. We should not think that by just being in the church life in the Lord’s recovery, we are overcomers:
 - 1. The overcomers are the vitalized ones who are also constituted with the truth; this is part of the high price; and they are not willing to become accustomed to meeting and serving in a routine way.
 - 2. Furthermore, regarding Satan, they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, not loving their soul-life unto the death – Rev. 12:11.

3. Regarding themselves, they overcome deadness, lukewarmness, barrenness, and the world (1 John 5:4-5).
4. Regarding God's economy, these overcomers beget, nourish, perfect, and prophesy:
 - a. But who is willing to pay the price to spend some hours, week after week, to contact people with the gospel—not only throughout the year but for the rest of their life?
 - b. We may pray that the Lord would make us vital, "but if we do not labor and struggle to gain people for the Lord, He will not vitalize us"—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1993, vol. 1, p. 260.
- E. We should do our best to build up the vital groups in order to gain people for Christ, with the intention of reaching the New Jerusalem:
 1. Again, in the vital groups, the source is the divine life, the condition is love, and the goal is to bear fruit.
 2. The best way is to use the vital groups to gain people by visiting them one by one—and bringing them in one by one.
 3. This will cost us our time, our energy, and our concern; this is part of "paying the price."
 4. But it is worthwhile for us to take this way; the blessings of the kingdom will be our reward.
- F. In the last message we spoke of the Lord's need to have a new generation; this cannot take place merely by prayer but by our contacting people—not formally or officially, but normal and living in every way, issuing out from our loving the Lord.
- G. We have read, heard, and talked much about the building up of the Body of Christ, but actually and practically where is it? May we take all these messages to the Lord and give Him our full cooperation to contact and gain men as the materials for His building.
- H. "He who has an ear, let him hear..." (Rev. 3:22).

Further Reading

Message One:

The Training and Practice of the Vital Groups (TPVG below), An Introductory Word
The Overcomers, Chapter One

Message Two:

TPVG, Message One
Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups, Chapter Twenty-Four

Message Three:

TPVG, Message Two
The Overcomers, Chapters Three and Five

Message Four:

TPVG, Message Five
CWWL 1993, Vol. 1, pp. 251-261

Message Five:

TPVG, Messages Six and Seven
CWWN, Vol. 52, pp. 15-25

Highly Recommended, Long-Term, Careful Reading (for “whosoever will”)

Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups
The Training and Practice of the Vital Groups
The Vital Groups