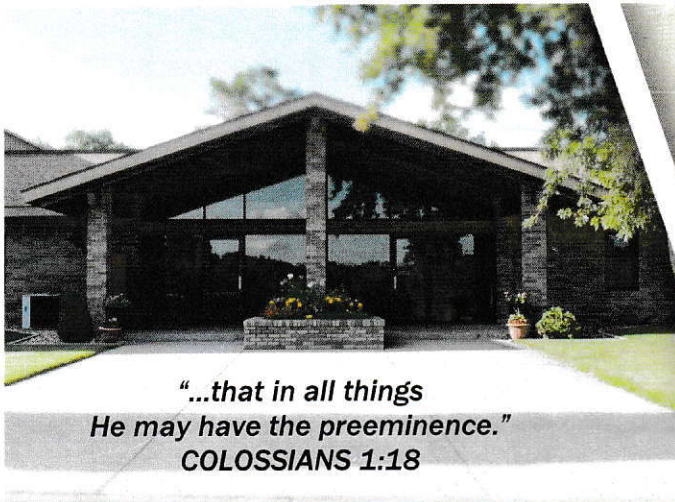


March 2023



*"...that in all things  
He may have the preeminence."  
COLOSSIANS 1:18*



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## "I" vs. "CHRIST"

"For fifty years (until 1957) the people of the "Pentecostal Movement" have been in the great spiritual contest of "I" vs. "Christ." All the powers of an earth-overflowing-hell have been pitted against those who have been "baptized" with the Holy Ghost. What for? To keep such in the view, the sight, the SEE-ing of themselves - their greatness, their power, their glory, what they "shall be." That self-sight and self-glory is the spirit-of-the-world in which is the flame of sin and of death."  
(*Meditations in the Revelation*, Chapter 14)

So wrote Rex Andrews, one of the early recipients of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1907. Now (2023), we can look back and assess the status of that "great spiritual contest" which has continued to rage for the past 115 years.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century began in Wales in 1907, overflowed at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, and streamed across America and eventually to the ends of the earth within 10 years. Many well-known denominations were formed in its wake, and many faith healers, evangelists, and preachers rose to reach international recognition.

With the help of television in the 1950's, and the additional influence of the World Wide Web in the 1990's, the "Pentecostal Movement" attained heights of popularity unimagined by its founders.

How Christ-like are the leaders of it now, in 2023? ➔

*I am crucified  
with Christ:  
nevertheless I  
live; yet not I,  
but Christ lives  
in me.*

I googled "What is the net worth of the top TV preachers today" and the answer for the first 15 ranged from \$760 million (Kenneth Copeland) to \$1 million (Louis Farrakhan). Of the 15, 12 were known Pentecostal preachers. Does this seem like "Christ" to you?

Of course Jesus will use ANYONE to reach needy souls! Even me! But how do multi-millionaire preachers see themselves? The "powers of an earth-overflowing-hell" are pitted to keep such persons in view of seeing "their greatness, their power, their glory, what they 'shall be,'" as quoted above.

How does it happen?

Briefly, if God uses a man in some unusual gifting, the enemy very quietly inserts the thought into the man's (or woman's) mind, "You are obviously special. Look at how God is using you! No one is perfect, but little indulgences won't hurt you. God is using you greatly, and His blessing on your ministry proves it. Your fame will surely spread. God is going to do great things through you,



beyond anything the world has known. The world needs what you have!"

Without a firm grip on lowliness, and an understanding of mercy, the man or woman puffs in their own eyes. Before very long, their ministry has been compromised by the evil spirit called "I Am the One." The preacher then deceives himself. Spiritual pride sets in, actual God-likeness fades, and personal failures multiply. Soon all kinds of perverted ministry take place. The knowledge of "giving all to the least of all", (i.e., lowliness) disappears from view, and "mercy" becomes a means of "getting, instead of "giving". Consider the words of Paul (I Tim. 6:5).

Some years ago, the Lord impressed me to read frequently Paul's address to the Ephesian elders, found in Acts 20:17-38. Along with the teachings to "bishops and deacons" in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, this passage sets a "gold standard" for anyone in ministry. Consider Paul's opening words to the leaders in Ephesus,

*You know. . .in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with **all humility, with many tears and trials** which happened to me. . ."*

Later on in his testimony to them, he says,

***I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.** Yes, you yourselves know that **these hands have provided for my necessities**, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, '**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**'"*

How does the status, description, and interest of today's "senior pastors" of mega-churches match those words? How easy is it for such out-sized personalities to resist the spirit of "I Am the One"?

Even before I became one of the ministers in the Zion Faith Homes, Rex Andrews strongly advised me to pray unceasingly a three-word prayer, "**Bring me down**". I'm still praying it.

John said, "He (Jesus) must increase; I must decrease."

God longs to turn the "I" into an "eye", in which "the knowledge of God is always right before your face: it is the need of human lives" (Mercy Studies, Chapter 12, p. 3). Then one realizes "I am just a pipe through which living water flows." A pipe is essentially nothing – just an opening through which something flows. It is not the pipe that gives life; it is what the pipe permits to flow through it.

The "I" always sees and wants something-for-self. "Christ" sees nothing-for-Himself, but always something for the other, at His own expense. Ask God to make you see yourself as the little "i" in Christ, reduced from, and repenting of, the big "I" in PRIDE.

Consider what a lowly saint (Martha Robinson) said many years ago.

Don't get a picture of yourself coming down; **get a picture of Jesus who is so lowly**. God Himself will show you the way down. You do not come down just to come down, but to see Jesus meek and lowly; and to want to follow Him, where He is. Learn to let yourself come down. God will say, 'Come down, my child, just come down and rest at Jesus' feet. I really want to have my way with you. Why will you not come down?'"

Galatians 2:20 is the premier and incontestable Bible statement concerning "I" vs. "Christ".

*I am **crucified** with Christ: nevertheless I live; **yet not I, but Christ** lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

As a means of entering into this kind of understanding, I highly recommend deep and worshipful study of the "Seven Steps Down" which Jesus took, as described by Paul in Philippians 2:6-8:

Though He was "equal with God," He

1. *Did not consider it 'robbery' to be equal with God, as though obtained by striving.*
2. *Made Himself of no reputation.*

3. *Took the form of a bondservant.*
4. *Was made in the likeness of men.*
5. *Humbled Himself.*
6. *Became obedient unto death.*
7. *Died as a condemned criminal, unworthy to live among us.*

Paul calls this "THE MIND OF CHRIST." Is that YOUR MIND? Whose mind will prevail, yours, or Christ's?

This is at the center of the conflict of "I vs. Christ."

I have written primarily about ministers as subject to this particular "wile of the devil" called "I Am the One," but Paul's admonitions include the congregations to whom he wrote as well.

I close this brief article with the opening verses of Ephesians 4. Please note that Ephesians 1-3

contain 50 statements of Grace that form the background of the first of more than 50 commandments which flow out of the Amazing Grace of God. Verses 1-3 describe our **First Level of Response** to that Grace.

*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all **lowliness and meekness**, with **long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace.*

As you and I come under this Manifesto of Grace, the contest between "I" and "Christ" will end in VICTORY FOR JESUS!

-Pastor Doug Detert