

Kingdom Living Today Addenda

The Spirit Of Jesus Makes It Happen!



Kingdom Living Today Addenda are the saga of two ordinary people who have loved, obeyed and served our Lord Jesus as children of our heavenly Father. Foremost, each

Addendum reveals our Lord's divine involvement in our lives – revealing His life lessons for us and our character transformations, as well as His Spirit's use of us to be His blessing to others.

May our saga encourage your confidence to live Lordship-committed.



The Spirit Of Jesus Makes It Happen!!

Glory to God alone!



Indicates our recognition of a divine stitch.

As you read these Sagas, please recognize that we are testifying to what the Spirit of our Lord did through us and around us by grace. This divine realization is wonderfully humbling for the **Lordship-committed**. That's because even as you're being guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, you are also very aware of your own weaknesses and sinful predisposition (Romans 7:7-25). The apostle Paul makes sure that we all know we're the "weaker part" of this relationship with Christ our Lord: **"We have this treasure in clay vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves"** (2Corinthians 4:7; see also Luke 17:10). The REALITY of the Spirit of our Lord dwelling within us and using us requires our ongoing awareness that it's Him and His grace that bring about our Father's will being done through us. There's no credit due us. Rather, all the glory goes to our Lord Jesus and to our heavenly Father Who gave us the Holy Spirit in consummating the New Covenant with us.

Our sheep revealed what our Lord Jesus imbues to the Lordship-committed.



There's so much that the Holy Spirit had us and those who came to the retreat center spiritually glean from our sheep. Sheep have a flock identification gland in their front hooves. When they rub against each other, this gland gives the flock members a common odor. Their strong olfactory system compels them to be close to one another — they find security and mutual support in their shared identifying odor. This is why sheep flock together. And when you shepherd sheep, you too become identified with them by their aroma!



We've noted previously that our goals and motives at the retreat center and in our materials since then are designed to help our Lord's followers **mutually cooperate in serving Him as His beloved family of slave/servants** (Greek *doulos*) — an essential quality of mutuality within homes as well as faith communities. Through our sheep flock we could convey the characteristics of the cooperative fellowship which our Lord Jesus desires and intends for all who follow Him.

If you are Lordship-committed with your life attuned to His indwelling Spirit for guidance and empowerment, **you possess the aroma of our Lord Jesus**. That spiritual aroma is something the Lordship-committed can detect in each other as it collectively unifies us as one flock in Christ. Knowing this, you can appreciate more fully the wondrous "aromatic presence" of the Holy Spirit within you which is exuded from you:

"Now thanks be to God, Who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of what it means to know Him. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one a smell of death leading to death; to the other a sweet aroma of life leading to life. Who is sufficient for these things?" (2Corinthians 2:14-16).

Notice that when you are in union with Christ you DO have an effect on those around you, either repelling those who want nothing to do with Him or attracting those who are spiritually hungry or already His own. The aroma of Christ identifies us both individually and even more so collectively as belonging to Him. Can you imagine what having no Christ-like aroma says about someone?



Several months after we arrived at the retreat center, the pastor of a large congregation told his fellow clergy at our first Friday gathering, "The back door to my congregation is as big as the front. I have as many coming through the front door as I have leaving out the back door." The clergymen's lack of personal relationship with those within his flock was an important factor as Mike got to know about people within the various congregations. From those interactions he developed a list of 40 names of individuals who moved in and out of the local congregations. Wherever these particular individuals went, **strife, gossip** and **discord** went with them (see Titus 3:10).

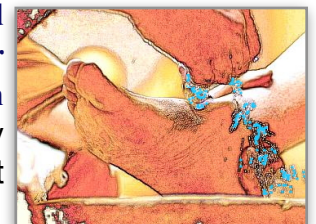
Hiding their deep-seated bitterness and rebellion behind a veneer of neediness, it was like they had a "**ministry of alienation**". Mike made copies of his list of names and handed them out at the first Friday gathering. Almost all recognized the names and mentioned that one or more of these individuals either used to be or were currently in their congregations. Mike facilitated their discussion as the clergy came to some painful realizations:



😞 As leaders they were failing to provide the necessary gatekeeping to guard the people who were in their care: "**Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the called-out ones of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know that after my departure, vicious wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock**" (Acts 20:28,29; see also John 10:2,3; 1Peter 5:1-5).



😞 They didn't check with each other about new people who had come from the congregations of the other clergy. They confessed to each other right there at the table that morning that they'd been competitive, each believing they'd do better than the other pastors to help the people on the list: "**Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus**" (Philippians 2:3-5). It was a very touching and humbling "foot washing" experience at the breakfast table that morning as the men asked forgiveness of each other.



In Saga 1 we wrote about meeting the pastors group for the first time. After the other men left, Norm took Mike aside privately, saying, "Mike, can I be Elijah to you and you be Elisha?... I want you to make Coventry House a safe place for Jesus." To us, a "**safe place for Jesus**" meant that Mike needed to exercise biblical authority at the retreat center the same way he did in our home. This included **gatekeeping and spiritual triage** in order to maintain the peace (*shalom*) of our home. We're telling you this because gatekeeping, whether in a home or faith

community, is as absent within Christianity today as it was in the congregations of the pastors who met at our center. Tolerated sin permeates all too many Christian homes in the US, and their sin accompanies them into their faith community each Sunday. (Who keeps the gate in your home?)

In Saga 6 we introduced the goal of biblical authority, which is **peace**: completeness, wholeness, harmony, well-being. To bring about and maintain biblical peace, someone must exercise authority to include or exclude, and to commend or correct. The Hebrew letters of *shalom* mean "authority that keeps chaos in check." Because our predecessors at the retreat center had allowed the rampant chaos that ended their ministry, the board told us to exercise **spiritual triage**. Mike's EMT training in preparation for the mission field had given us understanding of triage.

For further insight concerning triage and gatekeeping, please read: •Teaching E-mail 28, *Practicing Biblical Gatekeeping* (July 10, 2007), and •*Gatekeeping: Spiritual Triage* in Lesson 48 of *Discussing How To Restore The Early Church*.

Don't pass judgment before its time.



Before we moved from Massachusetts to the retreat center in Connecticut, we heard about a man whom the Holy Spirit had commanded to remain in a certain congregation and keep praying until our Father sent a pastor who would teach the truth about our Lord Jesus. The man was often mocked and ridiculed by his family and friends for attending such a liberal denomination. But after 20 years our Father sent to this congregation the pastor of His choosing. Other examples of carrying out a Spirit-directed assignment which other Christians criticized: •At our seminary the head of the Missions Department would go into mosques and pray for the Muslims around him. •As a member of the seminary's Board, Billy Graham handed Mike his seminary degree in 1982. The evangelist had just returned from conducting crusades in the USSR and had been soundly denounced by Christian leaders in the US for not criticizing the Russian government for its vicious treatment of Christians. Dr. Graham explained to the graduates and the audience that censuring the government wasn't why the Holy Spirit had sent him to the USSR, but rather to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



At the retreat center the Holy Spirit ordered us to attend an evangelical congregation that referred to themselves as "**the frozen chosen**." Their doctrinal creed had eliminated the operation of the Holy Spirit and declared that God quit providing any further revelation to humanity after the Bible was canonized. (With Mike's prophetic gift, this creed proved to be a problem.) We endured 5 very emotionally difficult years being among people who prided themselves in their Bible knowledge and doctrinal creed but ignored the Holy Spirit. And we were misunderstood and criticized by Christians who weren't of that doctrinal persuasion for remaining in that congregation.

We're relating these anecdotes because we want to help you avoid misjudging others, especially when the Spirit of our Lord has commanded them to do something you don't agree with: "Therefore **do not go on passing judgment before the time**, but wait until the Lord comes Who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God" (1Corinthians 4:5).

Mike: I'd been raised a very devout Roman Catholic. In fact I believed that all Protestants were going to hell. But after I read through the Bible for the second time, our heavenly Father told me, "Leave the Catholic Church and find where all My children are." After I became a follower of my Lord Jesus while still in the Navy, the chaplain didn't know what to do with me. So he made me both the Protestant and Catholic lay leader on my ship. There was no third option as "**a follower of our Lord Jesus**". Later at seminary I did a personal study of the history of Roman Catholicism and of most of the main Protestant denominations. It was disheartening research because **scribal theology was the satanic inroad** into

all of them: They emphasized belief in doctrinal creeds rather than resolute loving and obedient service to our Lord Jesus. (Later at the retreat center, our Lord showed a sense of humor in assigning me to serve as a counselor to Protestant clergy—the very group I’d condemned in my younger years!)



Several months before the Billy Graham Crusade took place in Hartford in 1985, some of the regional planning and coordination took place at the retreat center. Around that same time the Family Services Office of the Catholic Diocese of Norwich asked us to work with them. It seems that Billy Graham was the spiritual hero of the bishop of the diocese in which Mike grew up. One day when Mike met with the bishop he spotted a shelf in his office filled with books by Billy Graham. The bishop said he appreciated Mike's personal testimony of becoming a follower of our Lord Jesus, and that it was our heavenly Father who'd commanded Mike to "leave the Catholic Church and find where all My children are." The bishop then asked Mike to write what it meant to be *genuinely* born again in terminology a Roman Catholic could understand. Mike did this for him, and also sent copies to his own family members but got no response. During another meeting with the bishop, Mike was told that the dearest church in the diocese was the very same one most of his relatives attended. That was sad...

As the Billy Graham Crusade drew near, the bishop asked Mike and a certain nun to attend and report back to him. At the crusade were also other nuns who'd come with various Catholic youth groups. Mike told one of the nuns, "Years ago none of us would have been caught dead at a Billy Graham Crusade!" They all laughed. When Billy gave the call to go forward, almost all the Catholic youth went. The nuns sitting near Mike began to cry tears of joy. They told him they'd been praying for these kids to get past religion and put their trust in our Lord Jesus — and now it was happening.

A testimony to our Lord Jesus about Mike's Mom.



For several years after Mike became a follower of our Lord Jesus and left the Catholic Church, his Mom caused a lot of trouble for him among our family and relatives through her attitude and words. This was in spite of the bishop of the Diocese supporting him, and his Dad's blessing. Mike was so distraught over his Mom's ill treatment that he began to doubt that anything could change her. Then a friend rebuked him about his doubt: "You see your Mom like a mountain. But God is bigger than any mountain!" Mike quickly repented for doubting.

It took earnest prayer on our part, but Mom became *genuinely* born again a month after she used our [*List of Strongholds*](#) and renounced the Dowgiewicz family stronghold of rejection. The Holy Spirit didn't guide Mom out of the Catholic Church. Instead He made her a force for our Lord Jesus within it. The more she understood the biblical rudiments of our faith walk, she'd say, "Why can't the Catholic Church teach this?" Then she would go and talk to her priest about them.

Until her death in 2000 Mom was our dear sister in the Lord. She helped us with our ministry to internationals and came out often during youth retreats and acted like a spiritual grandmother sharing sage advice with the teens. After we left the retreat center and began Restoration Ministries, we would be traveling around the country doing seminars. And shortly after we'd be praying about something specific, Mom would call us and say, "I was sitting here praying and the Lord told me to tell you . . ." Time and again her message was our Lord's answer to our prayer.

More in our next Saga...

