

THE EMERGING HOUSE OF HEALING

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
FOREWORDS	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
JUSTIFICATION FOR LEAVING CHURCHES?	13
Legalism and the religious spirit	14
Hyperfaith	18
The spirit of control.....	21
Discrimination.....	25
“Boring” meetings.....	29
Fallen individuals and Church discipline	33
RESTORING THE FALLEN	37
From the first Adam to the last Adam	38
Restoring the fallen saint.....	42
Absalom and David.....	45
The prodigal son and the faithful father	48
Into the freedom of sonship.....	49
The discipline of sonship.....	51
Towards the divine nature	54
Restoration for the individual only?.....	58
HEALING FOR THE CASUALTIES OF DIVORCE	61
Life after divorce?	66
What about re-marriage?	67
Shepherding children of broken homes.....	69

TOWARDS THE RESTORED FAMILY.....	73
Introduction.....	73
Two seed lines.....	74
Crumbling family structures: some root causes	77
Christian marital roles also influenced	81
<i>Old Testament attitudes</i>	82
<i>Feminist theology</i>	83
Towards a restored Biblical partnership.....	86
<i>Before and after the Fall</i>	86
<i>Jesus and women</i>	89
<i>Neither male nor female</i>	90
Partnership in marriage	92
TOWARDS THE HEALING COMMUNITY.....	95
The signs of the times.....	96
Frustrations.....	98
Paradigm shift	101
The Third Day Church	104
A kingdom mindset.....	106
The church: a healing kingdom community.....	110
<i>A transforming experience</i>	111
<i>Now and coming</i>	114
Healing for the sons and daughters who return	117
True fathering in the house.....	120
True fellowship – the atmosphere for healing	125
The corporate anointing	130
Migrating to a new plane – together.....	138
THE BIG PICTURE.....	143
Three phases.....	147
“To this one I will look”	152
BIBLIOGRAPHY	155
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	158

ONE

INTRODUCTION

“**Y**ou are like an experienced racing driver, parked at the side of the racing track in your racing car. You are tired, and right now you are happy to watch other, inexperienced drivers (some much younger than yourself) race past you on the race track. The Lord wants you to get ready to help some of them, and complete the race you started!”

I had come to the end of my first ten years of ministry – which proved to have been primarily a season of pioneering and learning – and had my first taste of a spiritual burnout without fully understanding what it meant. We were having a few days’ ministers’ retreat in the KwaZulu-Natal

mountains where a number of church leaders from across our nation came together to receive from a seasoned apostolic team from the UK. During a break between sessions, I was pulled aside by the main speaker, and while we were taking a little walk on the mountain-side, the above words were addressed to me. This happened in the mid-eighties during one of the most traumatic transitions of my life and ministry. This (as well as other valuable lessons of which I will share in this booklet) represents a defining experience for me, which helped me through the other transitions that were to follow in my life.

Transitions have an uncanny way of producing casualties if you are not fully prepared for them. And transitions will occur at regular intervals in this third millennium, in the life of every person who believes in moving progressively forward in the unfolding purposes of God.

But there are many other factors which cause spiritual burnout. And burnout is not limited to Christians.

It is most unusual to see people, switching on to CNN news, whose faces are not depicting pain. Watching world news these days with all the casualties of wars, famine and disease, is an emotional experience. We are surrounded by a lot of pain...

The secular world uses the term burnout to describe the condition of a person who has become mentally and emotionally exhausted in his/her reach for success in his/her field.¹ Freudenberger describes the person who has experienced this burnout as “someone in a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, a way of life, or a relationship that failed to produce the expected reward.”²

From the above it is easy to see that spiritual burnout amongst Christians runs parallel to the kind of exhaustion one finds in the secular world. And it is not limited to Christian leaders.

The heart of this booklet, however, is to focus on some of the reasons why a growing number of hurting Christians – who were once active members of a local church – have dropped out of the race. And also to look at ways in which the church can become part of a healing community and see restoration for those who want to complete the race in their life-time, and one day hear the words, “Well done faithful servant! You were faithful over a little, I will appoint you over much.”³

The church in these post-modern times, therefore, is faced with the missionary challenge of reaching two needy groups in society: the never-churched, and the once-churched. With the first group we obviously

¹ M.Smith, *Spiritual Burnout* (Honor Books, USA. 1988) p.8

² Ibid

³ Lk 19:17

refer to those who have never been part of the redeemed community, in other words, reaching the lost. The second group include those who are part of this growing epidemic of drop-outs who were once active, enthusiastic, born-again members of local churches.

It is difficult enough to reach those who are not attracted to the church to begin with. There is either a lack of hunger for spiritual things due to the success in their materialistic pursuits, or they are put off from the church because of the all too frequent domestic scandals and abuses tarnishing the image of the church. Statistics in the Western world unfortunately prove that “the old clerical paradigm where ministers were held in high esteem and where Christianity became a cultural phenomenon, is on its way out”⁴.

While the Great Commission still applies to the church, i.e. to take the gospel to those who have never heard it, she can no longer turn a cold shoulder to the disillusioned, hurting, some of whom are rapidly becoming real backsliders. And this phenomenon sadly also involves our young people. Research done by Barna in the USA and Brierley in the UK, indicates that a high percentage of young people who grew up in church, are likely to drop out of church at some point of their lives: “In the United

⁴ Hendriks & Erasmus, *Interpreting the new religious landscape in post apartheid South Africa* (Journal of Theology for Southern Africa Volume 109, March 2001) p.60

States the average time of a lapsed churchgoer is eight years, whereas in England it is twelve years.”⁵

Baby boomers in the USA (born between 1943-1960) left the church in their teens because of their rebellion against tradition and structures in the church. In the mid eighties, after two decades of revolt against organised religion, the birth of their children stimulated a return journey back to church. Part of their motivation to return was also based on their desperate search “for significant life values and for a sense of meaning and purpose in life.”⁶ Sad to say, however, but beginning 1991 (in the USA) boomers started a massive retreat from the churches they had become part of. Exit interviews conducted by Barna and his research team found that they left because their churches promised more than they were able to deliver. Four million boomers found the Christian churches they were members of “irrelevant and disappointing.”⁷ We shall later return to some of the deeper underlying reasons for such departures.

Generally speaking, irrespective of age, there is a decline in membership of the broad spectrum of churches in the Western world. While some churches might claim continued growth patterns, the overall trend of membership is downward. The reason for certain churches growing in spite of the

⁵ Gibbs & Coffey, *Church Next* (I.V.P. UK . 2001) p.148

⁶ George Barna, *Evangelism that Works* (Regal Books, USA. 1995) p.48

⁷ *Ibid.* pp.48 - 49

general trend, could vary. Usually the churches that show a remarkable growth, use a market-driven approach. Growth as a result of this method usually includes a significant number of people who transfer their membership from other churches or denominations. Then there are churches that show a consistent growth pattern – even though it may not be spectacular – simply because of the healthy Biblical preaching and delivering the “goods”. Some of these growing churches have gone through the paradigm shift necessary to defy general trends.

In contrast to the above trend, which, as we pointed out, mainly refers to the (typically white) Western church, there is a different picture in the black churches, especially in the developing nations of the South. (It is interesting that Barna observed even in the USA that whites are more likely to reject church life than blacks).⁸

Certain black churches in South Africa, for example, experience strong growth patterns in spite of trends of decline in the traditional white Western churches. Apart from the obvious ones where the growth can certainly be attributed to the dynamic and balanced ministry of a living word, there are other reasons for this phenomenon. A participatory worship style offers a healing experience in a world that caused a lot of hurt, especially in a country like the old (and in some cities, even in the present) South Africa.

⁸ *ibid* p.49

According to Daneel,⁹ wise and anointed leadership helps the newly urbanised worker in his/her quest for belonging. In the uncertainties and competitiveness of urban life, good shepherding assists them into friendships and fellowship, and even advises and helps them in business matters and job opportunities. A new sense of identity is established in the urban world with its many ethnic groups that can be a bewildering experience for any person freshly from the rural community!

However, Hendriks and Erasmus warn that, although global mega-trends initially have a greater effect on the more educated people in a country, ultimately it affects everyone.¹⁰ West points out that already in 2000 a certain trend started among black unionised workers in South Africa: While eighty percent of them would regard the Bible as “significant” in their Christian life as workers, most of the same group found that the church was largely irrelevant to their life as workers.¹¹ Unless, therefore, informed leadership takes the necessary steps to counter global trends, these trends will sooner or later affect even these growing black churches. I have the privilege of being personally acquainted with a few such churches that have

⁹ Inus Daneel, *Quest for Belonging* (Mambo Press, Zimbabwe. 1987) pp.134-137

¹⁰ Hendriks J & Erasmus J, *Interpreting the New Religious Landscape In Post-Apartheid South Africa*. (Journal of Theology for Southern Africa Volume 109, 2001) p.60.

¹¹ West G, *Kairos 2000* (Journal of Theology for Southern Africa Volume 108, 2000) p.57

made giant strides into becoming dynamic new paradigm churches with healthy growth patterns. Some of these churches are already showing signs that they have the potential of reaching many nations on the continent and beyond.

Whether from the “never-churched” or from the “once-churched”, the ever present challenge to the church, is not only to see them fruitfully functioning in true body life, but to lead them to maturity. I believe many of the problems of the church will be solved when believers can lay aside their immature reactions and carnality.¹² Fromke puts it this way: People need to “wake up and become adjusted to the purpose for which they were created. It is a call for each to realise God’s ultimate intention.”¹³

In our next chapter we take a look into some of the factors that cause people to drop out of the race wounded or disillusioned. Many have given up on their commitment to a local church. It will be noted that not all the casualties are caused by the church and/or its leadership. So often it boils down to a certain mindset and/or inner struggles in the departing believers themselves.

The reader will hopefully understand that we cannot possibly address every perceived reason for people dropping out of churches. There are probably a multitude of reasons people would want to use to

¹² 1 Cor 3:1-5

¹³ Fromke De V, *The Ultimate Intention* (Sure Foundation, USA. 1974) p.10

justify their withdrawal. We will therefore endeavour to touch on only some of the more common reasons we have come in touch with through our interaction with such people, as well as on mistakes we have made in the ministry over the last thirty years through our own shortcomings, but with which we have hopefully come to grips.

In chapter three we will offer some perspectives on the restoration of fallen individuals. Although there are many stumbling blocks and other reasons that cause people to fall, in this chapter we focus only on two classical types. As the reader will see, true restoration goes beyond forgiveness and restored fellowship. A true testimony of the grace of God in the life of the restored person will pave the way for His ultimate intention of sonship in the person to realise. Then we devote a separate chapter in which we look at the restoration process involving the casualties of divorce, which include the children of broken homes.

In chapter five we take a look at some of the root causes of crumbling family structures in the world and how this influenced marital roles even in the Christian family. After evaluating some of the responses and efforts to counter this pressure on traditional family life, we take note of how Jesus treated women and also of Paul's view of 'neither male nor female'; we then suggest a few guidelines to enjoy a healthy partnership in marriage.

In our second last chapter we first deal briefly with some of the frustrations currently perceived in the wider Church. Then we look at the paradigm shift taking place in our time as the church enters into the third day. This transition requires a new kingdom mindset as it exits from the outer courts of the previous era and breaks into the third dimension or Holy of Holies. We also deal with some qualities and the atmosphere of the church that is called to play a crucial role as a healing community in which the true value of corporate fellowship has been discovered. And it is in this chapter that the reader will find the basic premises from which the burden for this writing was born. It is my sincere conviction that the church has crossed the threshold into the third millennium from Christ, which, in prophetic language could be seen as the “third prophetic day.” Add to this Hosea 6:1-3, and we begin to get a picture of what to look for in the “House of Healing for the Third Day”: “Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth.”

Lastly, we have tried to view what is happening in these days of restoration against the backdrop of the global picture. Where are we in terms of God’s global plan of restoration? God is obviously not caught by surprise and his sovereign master plan is

rapidly unfolding, as called and commissioned foundational ministries are emerging and bringing the body of Christ to maturity. By replacing old outdated divisive structures and dealing with sectarian infancies, these ministries are gradually “working within Christ’s body, the church, until we’re all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God’s Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.”¹⁴

We may not always see the big picture from where we are – often trapped in our own little world, working “for” Jesus – wondering why he is not acting fast enough rewarding us or answering our prayers. But, as Jesus said, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”¹⁵ This is good news! God is working! And it would make such a difference if we could work with him!

¹⁴ Ephes 4:12-13 (Msg)

¹⁵ Jn 5:17