Subject: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Fri, 09 Mar 2012 21:56:28 GMT
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Maybe we've been approaching the lack of signs and wonders in the wrong way.

Jman has rightly asked the question --Where are the 'signs' of the apostles?

We could go further and ask where are the 'signs following' the rest of the valid ministries of God? (Mark 16)

What about the pastor/teacher, the prophets, the evangelists? Are we to conclude that all ministries lacking the supernatural signs found in the pages of the NT, are false ministries?

Why stop with the so-called ministries? Mark 16 indicates that all believers will have these 'signs following'. Why not question the validity of all so-called believers if the signs aren't evident?

You all know that I have presented a case against the commonly held position that the ministries listed in Eph 4 are 'offices'. I think they are ministry gifts--not 'offices'.

Quote:Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

...

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Did He give 'offices' to men or did He give them ministry gifts ..."For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" (Eph 4:12)?

'Offices' are for occupying and 'gifts' are for using!

If the 'signs' go with the 'office', then a pretty good case could be made that we have no apostles, no prophets, no evangelists, and no pastor/teachers (or very, very, few.)

On the other hand, there are those who establish local Churches, speak for God, spread the Word, shepherd and feed the flock, using the gifts that they have been given, and who have various manifestations of the Holy Spirit working in and through their lives.

These ministers may not, in every case, have results as dramatic as we see in the book of Acts but however lacking they may seem, Churches are still being established, people are still hearing

the Word of God, the gospel is still being preached, teachers are still teaching and the flock is still being cared for by pastors.

I'm no historian but according to various writers who claim they are, the restoration of the ministry of the Holy Spirit (or the restoration of the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit') to the Church is not much more than a century old. The Topeka KS, and Azusa Street, revivals purported to be the beginning and precursor to the whole modern-day Pentecostal phenomena.

If we view these events as preparation for the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ and look back to the ministry of John the Baptist who ushered in the 1st coming of Jesus, there are some remarkable contrasts. John, who did no miracle, was nonetheless a prophet. He focused upon preparing the people for the coming of the Saviour. All true ministers of this dispensation are saddled with the same sort of ministry. With or without the remarkable signs and wonders, we are all called to prepare the way for the return of Jesus Christ.

We can lament the lack of signs but this should not be a deterrent to our mission to prepare the way for the Lord's return.

We are deterred to the extent that we are waiting for things to happen that are effectively out of our control.

I do believe that there will be (and to some extent already are) an increase in the sign-gifts because the Holy Spirit has been given to us, but does that mean we should not at the very least be proclaiming the Word of God that we know to be true?

Do you have a gift? Do you believe that Jesus heals and preach that to the masses? If there are no signs following your proclamation does it mean that the Word is not true, or that it shouldn't be preached? (Same goes for the proclamation of the gospel of salvation, etc..)

Maybe it is a lack of faith that hinders the 'signs following'; if so, that is one thing but if we are faithful to proclaim the message --in proportion to our faith and grace-- (Rom 12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; ...) and leave the confirming signs to the One who gave us the gifts in the first place, we might find there are reasons that we have yet to understand for that part of the equation.

We hear the oft-quoted verse that even non-charismatic's love to quote that says that there should never be tongues in a Church unless they be accompanied by an interpretation. It must be a verse that is taught in Vacation Bible School cause everyone quotes it as some kind of immutable law of Scripture.

The circumstances of Paul's admonition in 1Cor14 are quite different than the circumstances of

today. If a person in today's church, against all odds, finally overcomes his natural inclination to sit quietly and begins to speak out in tongues, he hasn't committed the unpardonable sin; maybe the person with the interpretation hasn't the nerve yet. Who knows? Now if we had the same situation that prevailed at Corinth, with so many willing participates, it might be necessary to regulate it a bit, but this isn't the case in most places I've attended!

That's not the greatest analogy (for obvious reasons) but my point is this: If God has given you a gift, and you, against all odds, step out and attempt to use this gift in proportion to your present faith, don't be discouraged if great signs and wonders don't immediately follow. (Even Jesus had a tough time on occasions where unbelief was thick enough to cut!<grin>).

When someone who has been sent (like an apostle?) to go into an area to establish a Church, based upon the Word of Jesus Christ, let's not be too hasty if that person can't point to a cadre of signs & wonders to validate his mission.

Same is true of those other ministries mentioned in Eph 4.

Sorry for the long-winded post... I haven't even covered some of the things I've been thinking about, but maybe it will generate some discussion anyway.

Date night begins right now, so I've got to run!

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Mon, 12 Mar 2012 14:18:24 GMT
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"Where have all the people gone?"

Immediately the old song written by Pete Seeger and made famous by The Kingston Trio and also Peter, Paul, and Mary..."Where Have All The Flowers Gone?" came to mind. I wuz once a flower child.....but now I'm a child of The King. PTL

"We can lament the lack of signs but this should not be a deterrent to our mission to prepare the way for The Lord's return."

"We are deterred to the extent that we are waiting for things to happen that are effectively out of our control."

I agree William, though I've certainly got much room for growth in this area, I see people(or rather 'read on forums') that are isolated from all things having to do with CHURCH and like to say they are only taught and influenced by Jesus Himself and shy away from 'the masses' and their call to share Jesus with them because they've became deceived or delusional . I would imagine they have been hurt and abused at some time in their Christian walk and are wary of organized religion(not to mention what they 'see' on christian TV).

For the last year or so I've been weekly watching or listening to Tom Hamilton in Shelbyville, Kentucky; he is as sound in doctrine as anyone I'm aware of, yet I have never seen much movement of the gifts in their meetings.(If I've missed it or if possibly they purposely don't record or broadcast any 'signs or wonders', then Praise The Lord...but I'm not aware of any gifts manifesting there besides the teaching gift through Bro. Tom) But I am edified and build up every time I join them in 'cyber-land' as he likes to say of those watching by internet...lol.

I'll wait until you've added those other thoughts you've been pondering to see where you're going with this but I didn't want you to feel as if no one was interested. Maybe Jman is busy on that book, but since you're the relationship expert (refering to date night) maybe you can give him some pointers.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by JWBTI on Mon, 12 Mar 2012 20:48:39 GMT
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James,

I saw the Gifts in operation at the Knoxville meeting, Tongues, Interpretation an Prophecy . It seemed to be a normal manifestation in the meetings. As you said Tom may edit out of the cds from Shelbyville tho.

William,

Good points to ponderâ€¦.waiting for more

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...

Posted by JWBTI on Tue, 13 Mar 2012 02:02:54 GMT
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I just wonder, if at this time God is allowing this to happen to those that are seeking
After signs and wondersâ€¦ Rather than seeking after Christ and His Word.

22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.
23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.
Mark 13:22-23 (KJV)

Just because there are signs & wonders, doesnâ€™t mean itâ€™s from God !

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Tue, 13 Mar 2012 14:13:04 GMT
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JWBTI wrote on Mon, 12 March 2012 20:02I just wonder, if at this time God is allowing this to happen to those that are seeking
After signs and wondersâ€¦ Rather than seeking after Christ and His Word.

22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.
23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.
Mark 13:22-23 (KJV)

Just because there are signs & wonders, doesn't mean itâ€™s from God !

Amen brother Ron, I totally agree and have been saying the same thing for several years. Not intending to toot my horn, hope it don't come across that way, but ever since Lakeland/Bentley and what's sprung up the last few years on TBN, Inspiration Network, and God-TV I strongly believe almost all seen in these settings are F-A-L-S-E manifestations from false prophets and they are designed to do just what Jesus warned about..."to seduce...even the elect." BUT, Praise Jesus and by HIS Grace, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE. He, (not us) gives His elect eyes and ears to see and hear, to discern the true from the false. (We may, from time to time, briefly get caught up in movements that aren't of God but He is faithful to always draw us back unto Him.)

Again, as I tell myself (and anyone who will listen) constantly, we are in a spiritual war and Satan desires to destroy God's people, we MUST daily put on the armour of God and walk in The Spirit

making no provision for the flesh. There are a lot of things I was taught by HEF that I've probably forgotten(or at least they've moved to the back of my memory files...lol) but the warnings of what would happen years down the road and what a Christians response to it should be, rings in mind quite often. '...If it ain't in your heart(faith) when the time comes you'll fall for anything.'(the crux of the warning). Discernment, without it we would fall for any and everything...it only comes from God, from knowing Him and His Word and applying it. The Holy Spirit will quicken to us when something is amiss; there is a 'check in our spirit' and because we are walking in relationship with Jesus we are spared from falling into the deceptions...whether they are 'signs & wonders, false doctrines, false prophets and teachers, or just someone misinterpreting scripture.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by JWBTI on Wed, 14 Mar 2012 00:58:06 GMT
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02/03/2012
Jman wrote:
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 34 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72
---------- ----------

So what you are saying Bro Jman ,
Without an Apostle, an no evidence of Signs & Wonders followingâ€¦â€¦..
The work and ministry of Faith Assembly and Hobart Freeman was not of God ?

William spoke of John the Baptists, he had no signs following.

What about AW Tozer ? Who was his Apostle and where are his signs ?
Was Tozers Ministry of God or of man ?

If we are in need of an Apostle to validate our gifts of ministry (Eph 4,)
Then I must ask you â€¦â€¦.
Who is your Apostle ?
Can we trust what you share if you have none ?

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Fri, 16 Mar 2012 00:47:43 GMT

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Quote:I'll wait until you've added those other thoughts you've been pondering to see where you're going with this but I didn't want you to feel as if no one was interested. Maybe Jman is busy on that book, but since you're the relationship expert (refering to date night) maybe you can give him some pointers.

I must be getting old cause I don't remember where I was going... I'm not even sure why I used that title... I guess it was the PBS special on folk music that had me humming the Kingston Trio hit! <grin> I was battling a fever last week and felt exhausted... maybe that's why I was seeing all of those strange creatures as I was looking out my back door! <grin>

Don't get me wrong though, I'm not trying to defend why there is such a lack of signs & wonders... I'm only saying that the lack shouldn't deter us from at the very least doing the things God has called each of us to do--spread the Gospel.

I have been thinking that maybe there is a distinction between 'signs & wonders' and works of faith. On some level we all have experienced the latter-- answers to prayer, healings, etc., but I don't think that is on the same plain as some of the things we would consider miraculous or as Jman would say 'apostolic signs'.

I guess the question boils down to whether or not these types of signs are more the result of our faith, or are they missing as the result of some grand design that we haven't figured out yet?

Ron has brought this question to the forefront before but I haven't arrived at an answer that satisfies this disconnect in our experience.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Fri, 16 Mar 2012 02:27:58 GMT
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Greetings,

What I am saying is that Christianity has signs-and-wonder-working apostles. (also I Cor 12

signs/wonders, Mk16)
We don't.

I read here you guys (excepting William) trying to come up with a theory/theology to explain why it is okay that we don't.

I hope you can create such a theology (a valid one of course). It would be a good help for all of us.

Listen to -
Tom Hamilton message of
Feb 5, 2012
42:12 mark to 42:55 mark

It is so easy for us to assume that signs and wonders must be happening here and there when in actuality they are not happening.

Can we really believe that if a church or an individual ministry were seeing signs/wonders that they would never talk about it????
That they would not put it on their automatics???
Or on the web????

I have no good idea regarding what I see William asking for - a perspective that allows us to energetically 'soldier on' while we continue to lack a full anointing.

One perspective I do think is important is that, while people soldier on, they stop engaging in "risky faith" in this time
period wherein we do not see expected instant manifestations.

By "risky faith" I mean faith positions that run up against death's door or otherwise have potentially profound, negative, long-term effects on people's/children's lives.

People should humble themselves enough to admit that things are not working - and modify their faith boldness.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 75 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Fri, 16 Mar 2012 14:20:21 GMT
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william wrote on Thu, 15 March 2012 18:47
I must be getting old cause I don't remember where I was going... I'm not even sure why I used that title... I guess it was the PBS special on folk music that had me humming the Kingston Trio hit! <grin> I was battling a fever last week and felt exhausted... maybe that's why I was seeing all of those strange creatures as I was looking out my back door! <grin>

William, William, William...

A fever eh? Maybe that's what Fogerty had when he was writing the song. I'd always thought he was partaking of some chemicals. I guess a fever will cause hallucinations; a giant doing cartwheels and a statue in high heels, happy creatures dancing on the lawn. But if you tell me you just got in from a trip to Illinois that caused the exhaustion...then...Doo, doo, doo keep looking out your back door.

Hey! At least the PBS special and the fever didn't cause you to to start "prophesying". I can hear it now..."But you tell me over and over and over again, my friend. Ah, you don't believe we're on the Eve of Destruction." Barry McGuire nailed it with that song, over 40 years ago and religious people still are predicting the best days are still ahead for America.(Benny Hinn and friends, that is if you'll 'sow' a big seed to TBN)

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Fri, 16 Mar 2012 14:46:13 GMT
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wishing34 wrote on Thu, 15 March 2012 20:27

I read here you guys (excepting William) trying to come up with a theory/theology to explain why it is okay that we don't.

Jman, I'd like to think that if you and I sat down together to talk person to person there'd be less misunderstanding, but alas, we only have this medium and too often we come up short in getting across our thoughts. Believe me when I tell you, I am NOT trying to come up with a theory/theology to explain why it is okay that we don't ...have signs or wonders or prophets or apostles. Nor do I believe brother Ron is of that mindset.

I hope you can create such a theology (a valid one of course). It would be a good help for all of us.

One perspective I do think is important is that, while people soldier on, they stop engaging in "risky faith" in this time
period wherein we do not see expected instant manifestations.

By "risky faith" I mean faith positions that run up against death's door or otherwise have potentially profound, negative, long-term effects on people's/children's lives.

People should humble themselves enough to admit that things are not working - and modify

their faith boldness.

"Risky Faith"...Jman, I don't have the answer to every problem that confronts Christians today, but I am convinced that true faith in Jesus Christ and His Word is NEVER risky. If you can't trust Him unto death, then answer me this, how can you trust Him unto life(eternal)? Based on comments you've made in other threads it's obvious you have different convictions of how to apply the faith message to day to day life than that which I have(and probably several others here, but I don't speak for anyone except myself.) I don't see where an apostle would be of help unto you, or signs and wonders...faith is within, it's also a gift...ask for it.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Fri, 16 Mar 2012 20:51:13 GMT
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Hi Jman,

I do think that James has a point about the thing you are calling 'risky faith'. We all are called to faith in God and I'm not sure we can effectively determine the line between 'risky faith' and what is otherwise known as plain old faith.

If by 'risky faith' you are meaning 'no faith' for a particular action then you might be more in line with what I believe to be the very nature of faith.

The Romans passage I mentioned earlier indicates that we should exercise gifts 'in proportion' to our faith so I take that to mean that there could be some things that our faith was not ready to take on but I wouldn't call it 'risky faith'... it seems a better designation would be simply to call that a 'lack of' faith.

True faith can't be 'risky'; (although it may seem that way to onlookers) if it is biblical faith then it is always the reasonable course for the Christian... at least that's the way I understand it.

Of course that doesn't mean that there aren't risky situations, there are. But one man's risky situation might be another man's daily bread. This highlights the fact that faith is personal and while we may have seen great personal victories that doesn't always translate to corporate victories on those occasions when our faith has been called upon to extend itself into the lives of others. That is why it is doubly important not to place another person into a position that they may not be ready to embrace--unless our own faith is up to the task of seeing the situation through regardless of whether or not the other is capable of believing.

I know that these things may be related but I think that, for the purpose of examination we might do better to separate our personal faith for healing, answered prayer, etc., from the other issue which is the confirming-signs that should be following those who teach the word.

I listened to the Feb. 5, 2012 message by Tom Hamilton and while I agree concerning the importance of preaching a pure word and the fact that God isn't obligated to 'confirm' that word unless it is pure, I couldn't help thinking that those who purportedly are preaching the pure word are not themselves seeing these 'confirming' signs.

I mean it's easy to say that the reason for the lack of signs (again, I'm making, for the sake of discussion, a distinction between personal victories and those signs and wonders that are, or should be, confirming the pure word) is due to a lack of purity in biblical exposition but that doesn't explain why there is a lack of signs & wonders following those who are claiming biblical integrity.

If it is the doctrine of women wearing the headcovering (to use one example) that is holding back the signs then why are those same signs missing from those groups that do wear the covering?

Is this type of thing really the problem? If we answer yes, then one can only conclude that there is NO ONE who has all of their doctrinal ducks in a row, yet.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Fri, 16 Mar 2012 21:05:31 GMT
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Hi JWBTI

JWBTI wrote:

02/03/2012
Jman wrote:
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 34 days.

Initial start date 1/1/72
---------- ----------

So what you are saying Bro Jman ,
Without an Apostle, an no evidence of Signs & Wonders followingâ€¦â€¦..

I think you have broken new ground here JWBTI. You're the first person that I have seen to actually will say there were no signs and wonders at FA.

I think you are probably right because if there had been we would have all heard about it at the time.

The work and ministry of Faith Assembly and Hobart Freeman was not of God ?

I am comfortable that I could show Scripturally that an alleged apostle is not of God if he does not have signs and wonders in his ministry. To take that concept and apply it to the rest of the fivefold is a new piece of theology to me- and theology that I do not agree with. Since HEF never claimed to be apostle then the "signs and wonders test" does not apply to his ministry as your question seems to indicate that it would.

William spoke of John the Baptists, he had no signs

Not applicable - John the Baptist was under a different covenant before the cross.

What about AW Tozer ? Who was his Apostle and where are his signs ?
Was Tozers Ministry of God or of man ?

I am unfamiliar with Tozer.

If we are in need of an Apostle to validate our gifts of ministry (Eph 4,)

This premise does not make sense to me. I do not understand what you are saying regarding the need of an apostle to validate gifts.

What I have been saying is that something is wrong that we have gone 40 years without an apostle at all.

Then I must ask you â€¦â€¦.
Who is your Apostle?

Of course, like everyone else, I do not know of an apostle.

Can we trust what you share if you have none ?

Your question is unclear to me.

I see your question here as being, in a broad sense,
"How valid are you, Jman, if God did not do His Word and bring an apostle into your Christian walk- for decades?

The ramifications of the fact that we have seen no apostles are too scary to consider.
So I like everyone else I stick my head firmly in the sand, cover my ears, and ignore the question.

Aside: I remember reading the newsletters from the Azusa Street outpouring. It has been decades but I remember at that time that I was surprised that there were no signs and wonders at the

Azusa Street outpouring.

I think that is an example where the story gets bigger and better with each retelling and now we have the legend of Azusa street. They gathered together and prayed and as I recall they rejoiced
whenever someone "prayed through" to become "sanctified" - as in the old Holiness movement.

I have heard reference in our time where people look back at the HEF era of FA and refer to it as if
it were full of signs and wonders. Probably if the world lasts another hundred years people at that time will hear stories of how we all used to walk on water.

William - regarding having an explanation as to why the signs and wonders are missing - I have no opinion
to offer. I wish I did. If we could identify the reason that the signs and wonders are missing then we could fix the problem and then we are off to the races.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 76 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Sat, 17 Mar 2012 00:12:28 GMT
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Greetings,

With regard to my difference with everyone else concerning whether or not to do what I called "risky faith" â€“ death's door, etc. . .

Is the following a fair description of our difference?

I say - "under the assumption that things are not working . . . etc, etc ,etc"

You all say - "under the assumption that faith is working normally .. etc, etc, etc"

The difference between us is our primary assumption - I say things are seriously not working and everyone else does not agree with me on that.

==========
this part is edited in as an afterthought.

Might it be accurate that you all would say "Not everything is working perfectly but our problems are not serious enough to change our ways regarding the bold, death's door faith walk"

==========

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 76 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Sat, 17 Mar 2012 01:33:44 GMT
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Well, if we are talking about our personal faith (not the apostolic signs & wonders) I think most of us would say that 'it is working' at least for the most part. When it doesn't we generally can find the reason for the failure, be it a lack of faith, lack of consecration, sin, etc..

Secondly, in those times when it doesn't work and we do not know why we rarely would charge God with the reason. Our theology is based upon God and not our experience. In other words, we don't adjust our theology based upon whether or not we got an answer to prayer. We just assume that when God has made a promise that any apparent exceptions to the promise must lie within our own limited abilities to ferret out and understand the reasons.

I don't think you are any different in this regard, btw.

We actually have a situation described to us in the gospels where the disciples prayed and believed only to later find out that something else was missing. Jesus didn't back off the faith message when He addressed the situation--He doubled down on it! And after stressing that faith will do the impossible, He tells them that 'this kind cometh not out but by prayer AND fasting.

Quote:Mat17:19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him

out?

Mat17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Mat17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Sometimes we find ourselves in the same situation as the disciples... we know that if we have faith -- NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE (that is our theology) and then we find out that there was another reason for the failure, something that didn't have anything to do with our faith in the promise, but the problem was due to some other limitation (our understanding!).

Jesus first stressed having faith, He didn't say that this was a risky business so you don't need to get so close to the precipice (pun intended), He tells them that they should cast the mountain into the sea, and then finishes up by giving them some useful information that might have given them a different outcome.

That is where we are... we are sure that nothing is impossible when true faith is present but we may not have all the information we need to see a successful outcome. My point is that we shouldn't look at hard cases and think that it is risky to exercise faith, but we should make sure we have our ear to the ground for the possibility that Jesus may be wanting to impart some more knowledge that will assure victory.

In other words, in those risky 'situations' lets make sure that we exercise faith -- double down on that! -- but we also should understand that the spiritual realm is still somewhat of a mystery to us and in those kinds of situations we need to make sure that we are willing to do whatever it takes-- not just mouth some words and call it over.

Am I making any sense?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Sat, 17 Mar 2012 01:39:17 GMT
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Assumptions...

OK, I'm assuming that we're discussing 'faith seriously not working as it should in the ministry of The Body/Church'; not on a personal level, right? Based on Williams comments, and I concure, concerning the separation between personal experiences of God's faithfulness and the lack of signs and wonders following those who 'teach/preach' (as in the office or gifting we sometimes refer to as the 5-fold ministry). Because I've just experienced His healing in the last couple of months...yet during that time I didn't experience Him heal anyone through me praying for them or anointing them with oil. And during the time that I was experiencing the trial I had a friend and a cousin die from cancer...I prayed daily for both of them, I recovered and they both died.

Now I would think that one could make the argument that if I had real faith it wouldn't have taken almost 3 months to be healed(or maybe if I had true faith I wouldn't have came on here and publicly asked for prayer..or maybe it wasn't my faith that brought the healing but that of one of you guys...btw: once more I say, thank you.) A skeptic might say that 'things aren't working right', I say that I was sick and now I am whole, I say Jesus healed me.

I agree with you Jman about there being a lack of apostles; I agree with you that there is something 'seriously wrong' within the western church(especially the charismatics); I agree that there aren't real signs and wonders following those who call themselves prophets/evangelist/teachers(at least of those I have knowledge of...and that's certainly limited to what I've witnessed in person or by TV/internet/radio); but I don't agree that we should EVER encourage any Christian to shy away from total trust/faith in Jesus Christ as both Saviour and Healer...I say if God's Word plainly states a promise to believers and He says He can't lie...then I say get those promises into your hearts and B-E-L-I-E-V-E them. And if you are at a place in your life where you consider this to be 'Risky', then Jman may I strongly encourage you(or anyone else reading this) to go back to the Cross, get on your knees and ask Jesus for forgiveness for unbelief and get into The Word (Faith comes by hearing The Word) and start obeying HIM. He's not looking for sacrifice, He demands obedience. We won't and can't experience anything of God with sin in our lives...and what's not of faith is sin; doubt is sin.

Having said that, if a person is walking in holiness without unrepented of sin in their lives and God doesn't manifest any signs and wonders at their hand to confirm what they teach...like Ron says, I don't think it means they are false...the false teachers/prophets/apostles are obvious to anyone walking with The Lord plus they are usually the ones giving 'themselves' these titles and trying to convince people to follow them(almost always have a plan for getting your money based on promises of a financial harvest/breakthrough).

I remember Jesus saying this, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20:29 Now I'm aware that the context of this scripture is concerning Thomas doubting His resurection without having seen Jesus in person. But I think it can be applied to faith as well...blessed are they who will take Him at His Word and believe without having to have it confirmed by signs and wonders.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Sat, 17 Mar 2012 01:47:40 GMT
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Amen James,

I'm not aware of a situation where signs & wonder were present in a ministry that didn't start with that minister's personal faith victories.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Sat, 17 Mar 2012 01:53:46 GMT
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Jman,

Just wanted to add that I think there is definitely room for a complete examination of our faith, but I don't believe that we should back-off of that faith just because we've run into situations that didn't pan out like we thought.

Quote:2Cor13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

2Cor13:6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by JWBTI on Sat, 17 Mar 2012 02:42:38 GMT
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Jman wrote:
I have no good idea regarding what I see William asking for - a perspective that allows us to energetically 'soldier on' while we continue to lack a full anointing.

One perspective I do think is important is that, while people soldier on, they stop engaging in "risky faith" in this time
period wherein we do not see expected instant manifestations.

By "risky faith" I mean faith positions that run up against death's door or otherwise
have potentially profound, negative, long-term effects on people's/children's lives.

People should humble themselves enough to admit that things are not working - and modify their faith boldness.

Reply:
Give up my risky faith and trust in the gods of medical science ? Nope !
They donâ€™t get instant manifestations.
People die every day in the care of MS.
Does the world and the church stop going to the doctors to try to get help, even when itâ€™s not working? Nope !
They keep pressing in, hoping for a cure, cause thatâ€™s all they got !

The Leper in Mt 8 risked it all to get healed.
The Centurion risked it all to get his child healed
The woman with the issue of blood put her life on the line to receive her healing..Mk 5

Brother Jman,
Our heads are not in the sand regarding the matter of signs & wonders.
We know we havenâ€™t obtained Mk 16.â€¦The Book of Actsâ€¦The wonderful works of Jesus John 14. We keep pressing in !

You said:
People should humble themselves enough to admit that things are not working - and modify their faith boldness.

The Leper did ! The doctors couldnâ€™t help him
The woman with the issue of blood did ! The doctors couldnâ€™t help her !
The Centurion did ! The doctors couldnâ€™t help him !
They modified their faith boldness and humble themselves before God and got Healed !

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...

Posted by JWBTI on Sat, 17 Mar 2012 03:33:32 GMT
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Jman wrote:
I am unfamiliar with Tozer.

Reply:
How many years did you attend at FA ?
Brother Freeman made references to his writings on many occasions .

Jman wrote:
I think you have broken new ground here JWBTI. You're the first person that I have seen to actually will say there were no signs and wonders at FA.

I think you are probably right because if there had been we would have all heard about it at the time.

Reply:
No signs and wonders that compared to the Book of acts.
Healing, miracles, changed lives, supernatural Blessing from Godâ€¦.Yesâ€¦.Many !

If you missed the parts about Tozer, you may have missed the other Blessings also.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Sat, 17 Mar 2012 12:03:51 GMT
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wishing34 wrote on Fri, 16 March 2012 15:05

What about AW Tozer ? Who was his Apostle and where are his signs ?
Was Tozers Ministry of God or of man ?

I am unfamiliar with Tozer.

Jman, if you'll take the time to go to the Bulletin Board and scroll down to message #8812 by william on Feb.21,2012, you'll find a link to a free online book by AW Tozer titled "The Knowledge

of The Holy". I believe you'll find it edifying and helpful in understanding some of the attributes of God. Also if you'll read some of the posts following that one you'll find some of our thoughts and comments on the book and what Tozer was sharing. It could also be helpful in reminding you(anyone) of just who God is and possibly shine light on some of the things people struggle with concerning having the wrong thoughts about who God is and what He expects of us. As William said when posting the link, if you read it you'll be glad you did...it's not very long.

A couple of quotes from Tozer:

"Any faith that must be supported by the evidence of the senses is not real faith." A W Tozer, The Knowledge of The Holy.

"True faith rest upon the character of God and asks no further proof than the moral perfections of the One who cannot lie." A W Tozer

"Perhaps it takes a purer faith to praise God for unrealized blessings than for those we once enjoyed or those we enjoy now." A W Tozer

---

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Sat, 17 Mar 2012 15:27:48 GMT
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Greetings,

William said:
Secondly, in those times when it doesn't work and we do not know why we rarely would charge God
with the reason. Our theology is based upon God and not our experience. In other words, we don't
adjust our theology based upon whether or not we got an answer to prayer. We just assume that when
God has made a promise that any apparent exceptions to the promise must lie within our own limited
abilities to ferret out and understand the reasons.

William â€“ so often and you are the best at getting to the heart of a matter.

I understand the position that says stick to the teaching no matter what because it is the Bible and that settles it. And then I see something like the missing apostles which is clearly an example

where the Bible did not work. I see what is impossible (failure of the Bible promise) has happened.

Right in front of us we see the example (missing apostles) wherin the Bible did not work (reasons unknown).
Shall we then put the life of our child on the line when "sometimes" the Bible does not work?
I said to don't do "risky faith"until we figure out why it's possible to sometimes not work.

Analogy: I say do not put your child on an elevator if there has been a pattern of elevator crashes that no one can figure out. Wait until you're sure the elevators always work before you put your child on it.

For most it is unthinkable to adjust our theology. For all of us it is unthinkable that the Bible would fail
as it has with respect to the missing apostles. I am saying something is very wrong. Until we figure out
and correct what is wrong that we should keep ourselves and our children away from elevators.

We actually have a situation described to us in the gospels where the disciples prayed
and believed only to later find out hat something else was missing. Jesus didn't back
off the faith message when He addressed the situation--He doubled down on it! And
after stressing that faith will do the impossible, He tells them that 'this kind cometh
not out but by prayer AND fasting.

Excellent, excellent point. One that I have not seen before.

Once the apostles knew that they needed prayer and fasting then they could
make the changes so that in the future they would not have a failure.

We do not even know why things don't work.
We do not know what changes to make.
Most among us don't even recognize that anything is wrong.

We have a 40 year pattern wherein often people have not been told what problems to correct in order
to avoid faith failures.

I am saying we are aware that sometimes super important things do not work (apostles in this discussion -

past tragedies also matter) so therefore we should adjust our theology and avoid putting our children at risk
until everything does work.

We also are aware that we do not see instant manifestations of God's power.
So if a person is in a "do or die" trial - wherein if a significant instant manifestation does not happen then someone dies - they are metaphorically driving off a cliff.

As if they know that the brakes are not working on their car
(we are aware that instant manifestations are not working) and yet they drive their car straight towards a cliff. (people take their child right towards death's door)

<<<< soundbite response to this section - Let's find out what is wrong and make the necessary corrections before we practice any more risky faith. >>>>>

Sometimes we find ourselves .....
....
....
.....and call it over.

Am I making any sense?

You have expressed a Biblical position of how things OUGHT to work.
Our 40 year experience tells us that even though we put our ear to the ground during trials people are not told what to correct to avoid a faith failures. It should work that way. Your theology is perfect but it does not work that way for us.

That is the heart of my position - our theology is so elegant and so perfect but it does not always work.
So I call for a moratorium on putting people's lives at risk - until things begin to work.

The clearest indicator for when things are beginning to work would be the presence of a real apostle.
This is because a real apostle, since it requires signs and wonders, could not be accidentally faked
by a sincere person.

==========
William said:

Amen James,

I'm not aware of a situation where signs & wonder were present in a ministry that didn't start with that minister's personal

faith victories.

To which ministry are you referring? . . . that has signs and wonders?

==========

Is it not negligent for us to encourage brethren to take themselves and their children up to death's door?

We know that instant manifestations are not happening.
We know that sometimes the clear Bible promise doesn't work(missing apostles).
We do not yet know why we have these problems.

Yet we still encourage each other to use faith up against death's door.

I say there should be a moratorium on "risky faith"

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 77 days.
 Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Sun, 18 Mar 2012 15:36:46 GMT
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Quote:William said:

Amen James,

I'm not aware of a situation where signs & wonder were present in a ministry that didn't start with that minister's personal

faith victories.

To which ministry are you referring? . . . that has signs and wonders?

What about Jack Coe? http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTMAplrC7Sk&feature=relat ed

A. A. Allen?

Oral Roberts?

William Branham?

T. L. Osborn?

Kathryn Kuhlman?

Kenneth Hagan?

Which one of these ministries didn't have signs and wonders would be an easier question.

Were they all doctrinally pure? No.
Did they have moral failings? Sure.
Did God use them because they believed? Absolutely.

Jman, you might have a point about faith being risky if we lived in a cessationist dispensation and these kinds of things never happened (you wouldn't have a point theologically speaking but at the very least I'd understand your frustrating cry--Where is the Lord God of Elijah?) but unless one wants to ignore all of these things that have happened or choose to disbelieve because you have a pre-disposition to unbelief, then the onus is on you to prove that these miracles never happened.

If you choose the latter, know this --there is a fine line between that and total unbelief of all of the things we have recorded in the Bible. There is a reason we are called 'believers'.

Should we be discerning? Absolutely. The Bible warns us about the work of the deceiver. However, all of the warnings become moot if all we need to do is deny the miraculous. Under

those circumstances we would know that if a miracle did occur we could automatically assume that the devil was at work. That kind of theology would make Satan more powerful than God Himself.

I don't really understand all of the dynamics of unbelief so I can't tell you where the line is to be drawn between one who CANNOT believe that miracles are happening while claiming to be a BELIEVER in the MIRACLE of salvation and those who deny all miracles and have never trusted in Jesus as their saviour but I can tell you that James 1 describes a doubter as one who will NEVER receive ANYTHING from God.

Next, I probably need to say a word to those in our circles who would boldly proclaim that God still is in the business of miracles (the signs and wonders type of miracles) and because of some theological hangups (concerning doctrinal purity, God working through flawed individuals, etc.) effectively DENY those same miracles when they are accomplished through earthen vessels.

I'm not sure that merely acknowledging that the Bible is true and then denying that God is (or has) worked through the legends of our pentecostal faith, is too much different than the cessationist who has effectively gotten to the point in their theology where they can acknowledge the miracles of the Bible while at the same time deny that the same miracles are valid today. Which is a better way to go? I have no answer.

Did Azusa Street usher in a restoration of signs and wonders for our generation? I say yes. You say no. We'll eventually see who is right.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by JWBTI on Sun, 18 Mar 2012 18:41:21 GMT
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Jman said:
William â€“ so often and you are the best at getting to the heart of a matter.

Amen to that !

Thank you William and Amen to the post above !

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Sun, 18 Mar 2012 19:56:46 GMT
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Greetings,

hi William.

I said:

To which ministry are you referring? . . . that has signs and wonders?

My bad. I thought you were referring to modern, current ministries.

I see you are referring to the 1950s ministers.

==========
In this thread I have been saying my normal thing - that we lack apostles and something is wrong.

I have taken a step forward to say we should have a moratorium on putting peoples' lives at risk.

I have not been referencing the 1950s as I share my ideas.
Even if past believers would have had everything imaginable working - we still have to deal with us today.

==========

The 1950s ministers/miracles are interesting though.

I heard that Jack Coe video of the link that you had.

It might be an interesting back-and-forth as to whether there is anything that is for sure supernatural on that video.

But that is an entirely new "rabbit to chase" for this thread.

==========

As to me being obligated to prove that 50-60 year old, alleged miracles did not happen seems to me to be a little off base.

Your "dynamics of unbelief" paragraph linking a position similar to mine regarding miracles to the unregenerate is out of character for you.

Pretty counterproductive.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 78 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Sun, 18 Mar 2012 21:03:48 GMT
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wishing34 wrote on Sun, 18 March 2012 13:56

Your "dynamics of unbelief" paragraph linking a position similar to mine regarding miracles to the unregenerate is out of character for you.

Pretty counterproductive.

Jman

Well, I certainly meant no offense there brother. I figured if anyone would take offense it would be those I referenced who claim to believe those kinds of things yet deny the reality of the miracles because of the vessels that were being used.

Also, my apologies if the early examples were not enough to sway you in your thinking about the apostolic signs & wonders.

I certainly believe that those same kind of things are happening in the world today. In most cases there isn't going to be the kind of documentation you are seeking, especially if you have trouble acknowledging that the supernatural character of that type of ministry. (btw, that Jack Coe video was only one of the first I found when I went looking; there are a lot more that people are putting

on youtube and other outlets nowadays.)

One common element for the doubters (read the comments) --THEY ARE NEVER SATISFIED!

This isn't a surprise however, because doubters always will be doubters even in the face of evidence to the contrary. It makes one wonder why there are still a few that believe the simple claims made by the writers of that ancient book we hold in our hands. No youtube videos, no doctor affidavits, no living eyewitnesses, nothing but the testimony of a few common folks (dead, to boot) ... that's it. The marvel is that the initial spark of comprehension --that mysterious force that suppresses all logic and reason --it seemingly comes out of nowhere and suddenly we can believe! (... flesh and blood did not reveal this...) Now that is the mystery! But when that simple ability comes our world is turned upside down. The spiritual becomes a reality to us --so much so that we have to be warned against the enemy who can also traffic in such things.

Again, I am sorry to have implicated you in my indictment of the unbelievers; that wasn't my intention. My intention is only to show that one will find it hard to draw a line between those who say they believe and those who are truly unbelievers if there isn't the basic assumption that all of God's Word is absolutely true.

If he says to lay hands on the sick and they shall recover who am I to tell someone that it is risky to believe that?

If God promises apostles and I don't see any among the 6 or so billion people on the planet maybe it because 1) I'm skeptical about the validity of the promise or 2) my lack of omniscience has caused me to overlook them.

Of the two the second option is the only one I'm wired to accept.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Mon, 19 Mar 2012 01:04:19 GMT
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By the way, the new picture is just me doing my part in trying not to scare people away... the old one looked like I was some skeptical dude that wished he was somewhere else... but this one... this one highlights a visionary whose face is set like a flint to the wall (or, depending on your perspective, whose back is against the wall!!). <grin>

Some of you should take the cue and go to the "User cp" (user control panel) and select "settings" and upload your own mug!

Now if we can just get James to post another message on the bulletin board so that the number 666 wouldn't be the defining number for the coffee break section, we might find some people coming back!

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by GWB on Mon, 19 Mar 2012 03:18:49 GMT
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Too funny, William!

I will think about a good mug shot for ya!

Also, this has been a good conversation. I do have a bunch of things on my heart to share. I will be doing so very soon.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Mon, 19 Mar 2012 16:43:03 GMT
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Greetings,

It appears those like me are cast in a negative light because we are skeptical about alleged miracles.

Here is a quick list of ways that what looks like miracles would not be actually miracles.
Others who are not as skeptical as I am might be tricked to think something supernatural happened.

Of course such trickery would affect their view of various ministries as well as their view of what God is
currently doing.

==========

Ways to imitate signs and wonders:

Appear to grow legs by moving the legs left and right as a person sits with their hips unable to rotate as they
sit in a chair. The movement will make one leg appear to grow longer than other. The effect will reverse
in appearance when you realign the legs.

pray for hundreds and whoever goes into remission naturally then say that your prayer healed them - the rest must
have not met the conditions for answered prayer

have someone who can partially walk get out of their wheelchair for a while - pretend it is total healing

pull a scab off of someone's body and say the cancer fell off and is totally healed

if someone says a tumor is somewhat softer than say the tumor melted away and is totally healed.

Have several strangers try to feel a small, soft tumor through a person's clothing - if they cannot discern it
say that this is proof that the tumor is totally gone

if someone is deaf turn them away from the music source and have them signal when they hear music - feet/skin vibrations
will allow them to sense the music it has a lot of base.

get the crowd into an emotional state - endorphins will make many pains go away
as individuals move about the stage temporarily pain free

pretend someone partially deaf was totally deaf before you prayed - then demonstrate that they can partially hear

same regarding poor eyesight

if ever there is a case of med diagnosis error then claim that the second, healthy diagnosis is because of your prayer

everyone out there prays before they ever get to you - have a secondary methodology that they can try as you pray
with them so they have new hope that your methodology will be the thing that works - placebo effect will occasionally
get you a manifestation. Possible secondary methodologies - get rid of your TV, eat a certain diet, buy a special
vial of anointing oil, give to a building fund, special methodologies for deliverance sessions, and so on.

let the placebo effect cause some people to get better and then claim it was from your prayer

give people a little push on their forehead and many will fall down - after that many more by the power of suggestion

set up a hidden electronic communication device into your ear - have someone relay people's information to you
while you claim it is the word of knowledge - personal information gleaned in the lobby before the meeting

With modern technology the charlatan options are many - Photoshop ailment photos or photos of medical records, holograms
technology will soon, if not already, allow the possibility that people will think they see a completely solid
looking object or person appear on stage and then disappear, supposedly technology has the ability to send
microwave radiation that will cause a person to hear a "real" voice in their head.

Fancy medical drugs could temporarily imitate death- secretly give the antidote while you pray and then when the
person wakes up you have apparently raised the dead.

Probably there are mucho more

After implementing one of the above methods of imitating a supernatural event - from then on in advertisements, writings, and sermons refer to these past alleged supernatural events to increase credibility.

<<<< No doubt at some point I will stand alone not being willing to believe incredible claims that come from
various ministries. If the supernatural events were fakes originally then the retelling of them does not make them
become true supernatural events. Ministers claims, self serving?, hold little weight with me.

Also I find it suspicious that tremendous things are often claimed in Africa where there is no video nor
medical records. >>>>

Aside: in some of the above cases a minister and the people could be innocently self deceived that something supernatural happened - so we cannot assume a bad intent.

==========

Whether we as individuals are on the skeptical side of things or on the gullible side of things we must
represent to the world, fellow believers, and ourselves a practice of Christianity that is real and that works.
We should not promote non-supernatural things as signs and wonders.

Otherwise we do a great disservice to ourselves and others, we sin before God by representing an altered
form of Christianity, and we invite tragedies as others are emboldend to take risks.

With film and cameras available for approx. 100 years, ubiquitous now days, it should be impossible
that there are no videos/film of true signs and wonders - those with no human explanation possible.

==========

I might be asked "With such skepticism how will I ever be satisfied that a sign and wonder did happened?"

We live in an age of cameras everywhere. We are talking about promised signs and wonders from

God who is
without limit. He can replace a veteran's missing foot as easily as He heals a common cold.
There should be manifestations of the visual power of God on some occasions - such as replaced limbs..

If outward demonstrations of God's power are indeed happening they will be caught on camera at some point
and there will be before and after medical imagery and records.

When I see a pattern of such videos then that will start me
on the path to investigate the ministry/believers that are involved - theology, ethics, God gets the glory, etc.

so I foresee two steps:

1) Worldwide coverage of news, especially Christian oriented organizations, will bring to our attention
when there are verifiable (videos, medical imagery and records) demonstrations of God's power - in ways that have no earthly explanation.

2) research the people involved as far as their theology, ethics, God gets the glory, etc.
(if somebody goes crazy with Photoshop to deceive the world about miracles they will not be able to fake theology, ethics, God's glory)

by the way â€“ my skepticism is in the normal range not extreme.
It is you all that are not thinking this out clearly.

==========

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church
without apostles for 40 years and 79 days.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Mon, 19 Mar 2012 18:32:42 GMT
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Quote:by the way â€“ my skepticism is in the normal range not extreme.
It is you all that are not thinking this out clearly.

I'll agree with this, in fact I'll take it a step more and say that anyone who believes in miracles (I'm talking about those who actually expect that the same kinds of things recorded for us in the Gospels and Acts are prone to happen at any given service) are very rare.

Which, as you know from the New Testament, is a perfect prescription for assuring that few if any miracles will actually occur.

Couple that (the unbelief) with the standards that you have set forth (video recording both before and after shots and doctor affidavit) it it any wonder that we don't have that kind of evidence?

I mean, given the wide-spread unbelief that such a thing as a miracle could ever happen in the first place, why would anyone set out to document something they don't believe in, anyway?

I don't know about you, but I don't believe I've ever been in a service where prayer for the sick has been recorded on video, even if cameras are, as you say, ubiquitous.

You've got the same thing in the NT... people getting healed and miracles occurring and you've got Jesus almost hiding Himself in the background --NOT MAKING A BIG PRODUCTION, even though surely there were many more people that could possibly have believed on Him had He done it the way you seem to want it. Yet the ones who believed, did believe and the rest were left with the option of believing the report of the miracles or not.

I have to believe that it is the same for today... if God wants to gather a crowd and prove Himself to them, He is certainly capable, but the 'normal' way that He seems comfortable in implementing, is through the preaching of the Word. He then reveals Himself, secretly as it were, to those disciples He has chosen.

When there are mighty signs and wonders, they are almost always not believed by those who hear about them and sometimes not even the participants believe-- this is --IN AND OF ITSELF --A SIGN!

Signs & wonders are not a good barometer to judge whether or not a person is one of the elect,

many who saw the miracles turned away when things didn't go as they had expected. Faith that is based upon un-retouched video is about as shallow as it comes.

Quote:Luke11:29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Mon, 19 Mar 2012 19:21:37 GMT
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wishing34 wrote on Mon, 19 March 2012 10:43

No doubt at some point I will stand alone not being willing to believe incredible claims that come from
various ministries.

Not much confidence in your brethren there Jman. Where you get the idea that "all of you" are caught up in being deceived by false ministries, I have no clue. If you ever took the time to read others threads and posts you'd find that there are people here who do not endorse the vast majority of ministries out there claiming whatever it is they're claiming. Some here spend quite a bit of time an energy exposing the false prophets and teachers(see Lakeland/Bentley thread); there's enough to write a small book.

But.....I'd caution against allowing the skepticism to get to where you can't believe anything is of God. I believe The Bible works, I believe God watches over His Word to perform it...the fact that charlatans attempt to deceive Christians to fleece them of their finances or to boost their own names, doesn't mean or prove that God doesn't honor His Word or work through men. The lack is in the character and faith of men; when men walk humble, holy, and in the presence of God...people will know.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Mon, 19 Mar 2012 21:53:31 GMT

Quote:Here is a quick list of ways that what looks like miracles would not be actually miracles. Others who are not as skeptical as I am might be tricked to think something supernatural happened.

By your own standards not one of the miracles of the Bible, including those recorded in the book of Acts, have enough evidence to be accepted. Even those who saw the miracles of Moses have plausible deniability because the magicians replicated most of the signs.

As far as being 'tricked', that can only happen if the basis of your faith relies on the validity of what you see and hear. Hopefully, our faith, if it is 'true', transcends the realm of the obvious. No one is denying the fact that many things can be faked, only a fool would think otherwise-- but everything we receive from God has the potential of being explained away by the doubting mind. Tongues, salvation, healing... everything can be explained away by a doubter who doesn't want to believe.

Does God exist? Of course. Can I prove it to anyone? No.

If you can't believe without physical evidence, you can't believe. Faith/belief ceases when physical proof is proffered. It's no longer needed.

I guess this is why I find this conversation so frustrating, on the one hand we rightly lament the lack of apostles or signs, but then to go further and yoke a lack of faith to the lack of signs and then say that we need absolute proof before we can have faith --that's madness!!

A lack of faith may indeed be the reason for the lack of miracles, but I can assure you that lack of faith is not going to be remedied by the physical proof of some miracle happening somewhere.

If a lack of miracles is due to a lack of faith then the ONLY way a miracle is going to happen is if someone has faith enough to believe it BEFORE it happens.

If a baby is dying you can have faith in man, or you can have faith in God... all I'm saying is that it is far less 'risky' for me to place my faith in God at that point than it is to place my faith in man.

Man may have a few videos that show the successful removal of a tumor, I can choose to put my trust in their ability to duplicate their feat one more time on me, OR I can choose to believe that the God that created me is more capable of removing that tumor, by believing, not in a video, but in a living Word that I happen to have faith in.

I trust the one I'm more comfortable in trusting -- not because I have proof that they've done it before -- but because I believe Him to be a more reliable source for that type of operation.

The reason (I suppose) that you call it risky to trust one method and not the other is not because

of the word of the doctor over the word of the Living God, it's because you have proof that the preponderance of evidence will show that one method has a success rate of say 50% or higher and unless and until you have evidence (videos, etc.) that God has at least as good of a track record as the doctors, you're not going to go with just His Word. Essentially you are saying that the odds are in your favor to go with the track record that has the most physical evidence. Your faith is in the physical evidence and I'm saying that faith is the evidence of things NOT SEEN. We are talking apples and oranges here.

That's why James, Ron, and myself are having such a hard time understanding your position. There is no such thing as 'risky' faith in our understanding of the whole concept of faith. We either believe, or we do not. We have faith, or we do not have faith. Hence it is perfectly logical for us to link faith for healing and faith for salvation-- both are based upon words written in a book. If it is 'risky' to have faith in the healing parts, it is also just as 'risky' to have faith in the salvation part. I think the reason you don't see this as a disconnect is because you have no physical (nothing in the medical journals) evidence of a heaven even though you do have those words written in the aforementioned book. So, due to the lack of evidence to the contrary, you decide to believe the book. The odds are in your favor because there is no physical evidence to suggest otherwise... actually there are plenty of logical reasons that suggests that death is final (decaying flesh) but for some reason you choose to ignore that and continue to believe in the afterlife. It seems a bit of a stretch to believe some of the words and not all of them.

Please don't be offended at this -- I'm not saying you aren't saved, I'm sincerely trying to understand your position concerning faith and show you why we are saying the things we are saying.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Mon, 19 Mar 2012 23:45:00 GMT
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Here is my line of thought:

If the Bible worked for us every time what you guys are saying
is how it would be and I would be saying the same thing also - agreeing
with you guys.

But since we are living in a time where the Bible does not always work for us

I am calling for a moratorium on death's door faith attempts until we understand why it does not always work.

Examples of how the Bible does not always work for us are

missing apostles with signs and wonders,
missing ICor 12 power gifts such as the gift of healings,
and the lack of demonstrations of the power of God in the form of visible instant manifestations(missing limbs
restored for an example)
==========

Factor in the 40 year track record of death's door faith failures both in the lives of persons much respected and in the lives of people maybe not respected so much.

My call for a moratorium on death's door faith makes sense.

==========

==========

If you have a spiritual mentor in your life ask the following questions -

Is it not true that real apostles, ICor 12 power gifts - do not work for us?

If they say yes it does work - please report back here we would all like to know details.

If they admit it does not work - ask them why you should put your sick child's life into a do or die situation when we do not understand why things do not always work.

Possible response : "The Bible says ...(Insert our theology here) ..... Therefore the sick child will recover"

Response: But the Bible also promises regarding real apostles, ICor 12 power gifts. - And they do not work!
So something is wrong.

==========

Many believe we can soldier on without apostles and without first Corinthians 12 power gifts.

But you cannot soldier on without your child.

==========

I repeat my call for a death's door moratorium until we know why things are not working.

By the way â€“ someone functioning as an overseer of God's flock should agree with this moratorium as part of his caretaking for the flock and looking out for their best interest and safety.
Admit that something is wrong between us and God. Let's figure it out. Let's fix it.
And then we are off to the races.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 79 days.
 Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Tue, 20 Mar 2012 00:42:27 GMT
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Quote:But since we are living in a time where the Bible does not always work for us
I am calling for a moratorium on death's door faith attempts until we understand why it does not always work.

What would you say is an example of something that has worked for us in the Bible?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Tue, 20 Mar 2012 02:42:28 GMT
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Greetings,

William said :

What would you say is an example of something that has worked for us in the Bible?

==========

How about Rom 10:13 ?

And mix in a some Ephesians 2:8

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church
without apostles for 40 years and 79 days.
 Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Tue, 20 Mar 2012 02:46:57 GMT

wishing34 wrote on Mon, 19 March 2012 20:42Greetings,

William said :

What would you say is an example of something that has worked for us in the Bible?

==========

How about Rom 10:13 ?

And mix in a some Ephesians 2:8

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church
without apostles for 40 years and 79 days.
 Initial start date 1/1/72

That's kinda my point... you've given me an example of something that has yet to be proven with physical evidence.

Got more?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Tue, 20 Mar 2012 03:23:12 GMT
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hi William,
What is your point?
Just express a concept of what is on your mind.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 79 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Tue, 20 Mar 2012 03:30:12 GMT
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Well, you are saying we need to back off because 'it's not working'.

The reason you know it's not working is because you have no physical evidence.

How do you know you are saved? You have no physical evidence.

That is the point... I think that your thinking is flawed.

That's why I asked you to give me an example from the bible where you have concrete evidence that it is working.

I'm just trying to understand where you draw the line with your faith.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Tue, 20 Mar 2012 05:10:48 GMT
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hi William,

Well, you are saying we need to back off because 'it's not working'.

What I am actually saying is that we should call a moratorium on death's door faith attempts because parts of the Bible do not work for us and if the faith at deaths door part happens to fail then someone dies . . . . again.

The reason you know it's not working is because you have no physical evidence.

Fair enough. The missing physical evidence is missing apostles and missing I Cor 12 power gifts.
These things do not work for us as the Bible would indicate that they should.

How do you know you are saved? You have no physical evidence.

By faith because the Bible says so. Earlier I thought you indicated that maybe I refuse the Bible miracles because I refuse modern alleged miracles.

The Bible miracles are real because they are in the Bible. And the prime, most basic assumption for me is that Christianity is defined by the Bible - Textus Receptus and Masoretic text.

That is the point... I think that your thinking is flawed.

That's why I asked you to give me an example from the bible where you have concrete evidence that it is working.

As I said above the concrete evidence for Bible miracles is that they are in the Bible.

For me concrete evidence that the same miracles indeed happened today would have to be that

there is no possible earthly explanation for what happened. This fits the "wonder" part of signs and wonders.

I'm just trying to understand where you draw the line with your faith.

My perspective regarding all this is that I recognize the missing supernatural at the point of the apostles and I Corinthians 12. I also realize that we do not see outward, immediate, visual manifestations to prayer.

At that point I ask myself what for sure supernatural stuff do we see?

Then I realized whatever is happening, whatever the proper understanding is - something is very wrong and unscriptural.

Notice I responded above with salvation and mixed in grace. I think we need to count on God's grace if our salvations are going to be effective. Of course that is theology 101 but I mean we are at the opposite end of the spectrum from the elite super right on people that we once thought we were - I believe we are all getting in by the skin of our teeth - mucho emphasis on God's grace.

Maybe I am rambling ideas you did not mean to ask about.

To touch on another concept I think I have seen from you over the years -I do not look to see the supernatural in order to believe. I believe, take the Bible exactly literal, and then am upset that the promised supernatural stuff, which should be Church 101 (fundamental and basic), does not happen.

Add to the mix that since I am aware that we lack the apostles and the first Corinthians 12 power gifts
and I am aware that these should be Church 101 basic stuff, and since I am aware that we have had many faith tragedies over the years, I call for the moratorium in the attempt to save lives until we get things working properly.

Yes, I realize that I am circumscribing the basic faith message to be used only on "non-risky" things but if things don't always work then we should stop being "risky" until we figure out why - like using an elevator that sometimes crashes and we cannot figure out

why.

It is after midnight. More tomorrow if you want.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 80 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Tue, 20 Mar 2012 13:04:25 GMT
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Quote:To touch on another concept I think I have seen from you over the years -I do not look to see
the supernatural in order to believe. I believe, take the Bible exactly literal, and then am upset that the promised supernatural stuff, which should be Church 101 (fundamental and basic), does not happen.

Add to the mix that since I am aware that we lack the apostles and the first Corinthians 12 power gifts
and I am aware that these should be Church 101 basic stuff, and since I am aware that we have had many faith tragedies over the years, I call for the moratorium in the attempt to save lives until we get things working properly.

Okay, here is what I hear you saying:
1) You don't need the supernatural to believe.
2) You believe.
3) What you believe is not working.
4) How do you know? The supernatural is missing (see #1 above).
5) Stop believing until the supernatural is found.

I'm sorry if I'm not comprehending something, but that is the way it is coming off to me.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Tue, 20 Mar 2012 21:59:15 GMT
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Greetings,

Williams said:

Okay, here is what I hear you saying:
1) You don't need the supernatural to believe.

I do not need the supernatural to believe the Bible.

I do need the supernatural to believe that brother XYZ is an apostle - he needs to have the signs of an apostle.
I do need the supernatural believe that a supernatural thing has happened (ex. ICor 12 healing gift)

2) You believe.
3) What you believe is not working.

the missing apostles, missing ICor 12 power gifts, and expected demonstration of God's power generally (ex -occasional instant ,visible manifestation as people pray as they live their lives) - all are not working. They are missing.

4) How do you know? The supernatural is missing (see #1 above).

maybe this concept is key:

I do not need to see the supernatural to believe what the Bible says.

I do need to see the supernatural to believe that apostles and ICor 12 power gifts are happening today.

Consider in Rev 2:2 where they judged those that claim to be apostles but actually they were not apostles.
Obviously in order to make a judgment about an apostle you must see the "signs of an apostle."
So you would not believe that a guy is an apostle until you see the supernatural.

5) Stop believing until the supernatural is found.

stop believing up against death's door until things are working.

=======

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 80 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Tue, 20 Mar 2012 23:03:46 GMT
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Alright, maybe we are getting somewhere but you keep jumping from apostles to 1Cor 12 gifts, and finally to prayers of the saints.

1) Prayers of the saints. That works. God's hand of deliverance, healings, etc.. that has worked not only in my life but in the lives of multitudes of others. Plain old faith in God (not talking about the charismatic gifts) works and continues to work daily in our lives.

2) 1Cor 12 gifts. Those work. Tongues, interpretation, prophecy --we've all heard them. They are as ubiquitous as those cameras you mentioned. I've used those gifts, as has (I suspect) everyone here. Word of knowledge, wisdom, and discerning of spirits; all common gifts that we've either experienced ourselves or have watched as others have demonstrated them. Gifts of healings, faith, and miracles. All gifts that we have either personally experienced ourselves or heard about. (Miracles -- like the supernatural restoration of an eye, might be the exception here --but I believe they happen! I'm confident I'll eventually be a witness to this gift.)

3) Apostles. Now we narrow the field. If we accept that the signs of an apostle are different than the gifts of 1Cor 12, then we *might* have a case for missing apostles. There have been those called and commissioned by God Himself (by their own testimony) and sent forth with a message (T.L Osborn comes to mind) but admittedly there seems to be few in this category (based upon my very limited exposure). That said, I think that it is a bit presumptious to say that there aren't any because we've never been personally exposed to one; that seems to be a bit of a stretch.

So there. You may or may not have experienced some of these things but you are way off base to say that they don't work just because the level of authenticity hasn't met your high standard of proof. Like James said, Thomas was rebuked when he doubted the valid testimony of his peers. You can doubt or say we are lying, but you can never make me disbelieve those things that I know to be true.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Wed, 21 Mar 2012 00:17:00 GMT
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But William,

In all three cases

Missing apostles
missing I COr12 power gifts
missing instant visible manifestations to everyday prayer

We never see things in these three areas that are for sure supernatural.

And we should.

If you think I ignored your last post it is because your three topics
were not the same three topics as my three topics above.

==========

I take a much stronger stand than you regarding saying that apostles are missing

because I believe it would be impossible for the signs and wonders of an apostle
to happen and we not hear about it through "Christian" media - Internet and TV.

To adopt an assumption that the apostles exist but they are hidden from us - maybe
in a deep jungle - puts us in a position where we are not in God's favor.
I am not ready to go to that theological place.

==========

If someone thinks the level of anointing we have seen is enough compared to
what I describe as "missing instant visible manifestations to everyday prayer"
then they are happy

If someone thinks the level of signs and wonders (any ???)
that we have seen is enough to say they know of apostles then they are happy

If someone thinks that the ICor 12 power gifts (gift of healings for example)
is fulfilled by what they see in the meetings - past and present - then they are happy

To my mind if they are happy with such things they are not thinking clearly.
You apparently see it differently.

I'm beginning to feel like I'm holding the silverware from HEF's old "bailing the ocean
out with a spoon" phrase that he always used to say.

I realize that every discussion has a viewpoint from the side of the other opinion so
I acknowledge you probably feel like you are using a spoon as well.

I think our discussion is winding down.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church

without apostles for 40 years and 80 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Wed, 21 Mar 2012 03:04:59 GMT
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You're right, I guess I do see it differently.

No, I'm not satisfied with the status quo but I certainly don't live in a world that is devoid of these things (healings, gifts, apostles).

Secondly, I don't live in a world of fear; fear of failure, fear of trials, the fear that permeates the lives of so many. Fear and faith cannot co-exist so whenever fear is present there is no faith. Gideon lived in a time of fear. He experienced fear. Even when God saw fit to give him supernatural signs, he persisted in fear (supernatural signs don't necessarily solve problems). Gideon feared all the way up to the time for the final act. Then, after all that God had shown and said to him, he finally overcame his fear. This one little event where one of the heathen oppressors shared a dream overheard by Gideon, it was this, the most unlikely of 'miracles', that finally pushed out the fear so that his faith could operate. The faith that was REQUIRED for his mission to succeed. One of these days it might be something so simple as this that will convince a mighty man of God that His word is true and worthy to be trusted. Some unbeliever might interpret some dream and without any further ado (no parting of the sea, no walking on water) a child of God may be prompted to do exploits!

Like Gideon, we are not going to see anything happen until we settle down, set aside all fear, and believe.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Wed, 21 Mar 2012 14:22:11 GMT
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Amen William; Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, is an excellent comparison, his first response to the

angel of The Lord was to ask why things weren't working as he thought they should. He wanted to know "...where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of...?"

Something I noticed concerning fear and lack of total trust in God; Gideon was threshing wheat by the winepress for the purpose of 'Hiding it"(the wheat) from the Midianites, rather than trusting God to supply their daily needs. Maybe he considered it "risky" to rely upon God due to the fact he hadn't seen the miracles that had been reported by the forefathers. And even when The Lord showed him the requested 'sign',(dew on the fleece and dry ground) he still asked for more 'proof'.

"Now all these happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." II Corinthians 10:11

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Wed, 21 Mar 2012 14:57:50 GMT
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james wrote on Wed, 21 March 2012 08:22Amen William; Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, is an excellent comparison, his first response to the angel of The Lord was to ask why things weren't working as he thought they should. He wanted to know "...where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of...?"

Something I noticed concerning fear and lack of total trust in God; Gideon was threshing wheat by the winepress for the purpose of 'Hiding it"(the wheat) from the Midianites, rather than trusting God to supply their daily needs. Maybe he considered it "risky" to rely upon God due to the fact he hadn't seen the miracles that had been reported by the forefathers. And even when The Lord showed him the requested 'sign',(dew on the fleece and dry ground) he still asked for more 'proof'.

"Now all these happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." II Corinthians 10:11

Good point James, I should have read the account before shooting from the hip!

Another thing is that we've kinda focused on the lack of faith being the primary reason for our lack, with the question of God's sovereignty running a close second, but another major reason may well be the sinfulness of the Church in general.

In each of the dispensations you can see the ebb & flow of the supernatural miracles mirroring the spiritual condition of God's people. Sin being the prime cause.

Not only do we see that in the book of Judges but also in the time before Jesus' first coming. There was a period of almost 400 years of silence before John the Baptist (without miracles) begin to pave the way for the coming King. Yes, it was a different dispensation but that doesn't negate the pattern that we see over and over in the Scriptures. I trust that paving the way for His second coming will be replete with miracles and signs but that doesn't mean that a lack (seemingly) right now, means that God's promise isn't working.

You brought up Gideon's question when he asked: "where be all of His miracles...?" The 'why?' was answered in the context of the account. That answer may also go a long way in explaining our own situation.

Blessing,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Wed, 21 Mar 2012 16:20:13 GMT
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william wrote on Wed, 21 March 2012 08:57

Another thing is that we've kinda focused on the lack of faith being the primary reason for our lack, with the question of God's sovereignty running a close second, but another major reason may well be the sinfulness of the Church in general.

In each of the dispensations you can see the ebb & flow of the supernatural miracles mirroring the spiritual condition of God's people. Sin being the prime cause.

You brought up Gideon's question when he asked: "where be all of His miracles...?" The 'why?' was answered in the context of the account. That answer may also go a long way in explaining our own situation.

Exactly! That is what I was seeing as I re-read the account...

The chapter(6, Judges) starts off by stating that the children of Israel did evil in the sight of God,(btw: that's part of the problem today with the 'church', people act like God doesn't SEE the

evil.)and yet today we (the church) have false 'prophets/pastors/teachers' telling all that will listen that the future is rosie, the best is yet to come...Repentance? Are you kidding? This is a 'christian' nation, we are the chosen ones...one nation under God, ect. ect. "SIN? You're just being judgemental and critical."

Mean time we have Christians, who KNOW better, questioning God with the same questions..."Where are the miracles? Give me proof and more proof!"

It was suggested that we go to "our spiritual mentors or advisers" for advice concerning apostles and miracles(signs and wonders manifesting from those claiming to be an apostle) and that we should avoid 'risky faith' situations(a moratorium of death door faith experiences). Okay, I have, and my Spiritual adviser(The Holy Spirit/God's Word) encourages me to trust HIM with ALL my heart...not to lean unto my own understanding...to have faith in GOD...and walk free from fear...to boldly speak HIS WORD to all that will listen...to be humble and yet strong...to BELIEVE.

Moratorium on trusting God in situations that could results in death? I DON'T THINK SO...

By His Grace and Mercy, I will trust Him in ALL things. Thank You Jesus...Lord grant us (The Body of Christ) grace to repent, to return to our first love, to hear your voice in these end times, to live the lives you've called us to.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by JWBTI on Wed, 21 Mar 2012 20:32:59 GMT
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Amen !
James and William.... good examples.

Abraham had the right attitude towards the promises that God had made him !

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.
Romans 4:20-21 (KJV)

Let us be fully persuaded in the things that God has promised us also !
(Eph 4, 1 Corth 12-14 Mk 16 The Book of Acts)

Blessings

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Thu, 22 Mar 2012 14:09:08 GMT
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Greetings,

I see you guys waving the flag of "no compromise" with respect to
my suggestion to modify/compromise the faith message with a moratorium
on death's door faith attempts - until we figure out why we do not see
the supernatural as promised (such as the missing apostles.)

Have you forgotten that we have all lived with and accepted
compromise for decades because of the missing apostles?

Because there are no apostles all of Christendom must come up with some
form of church governance that does not need apostles.

In our case we had/have "man in authority" - a form of church governance
this is actually explicitly forbidden by the Lord in Matt 20:25-26.
We have operated with this error from the beginning.

We discussed this before at the following link:

http://overcomersonline.com/FUDforum2/index.php?t=msg&th
=547&start=0&S=1772a9867a2866b73286c2d01fc52d6d

If you want to wave the no compromise flag I think maybe you should waive it
at half mast - or better yet upside down.

I think an upside down flag is the universal symbol to communicate 'we are in distress.'

An upside down flag would be a very appropriate symbol for us to use since we are indeed in distress
since we are missing the promised supernatural as I have described several times in this thread.

My moratorium would indeed be another compromise relating to the missing apostles.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 82 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Thu, 22 Mar 2012 14:52:13 GMT
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Quote:I see you guys waving the flag of "no compromise" with respect to my suggestion to modify/compromise the faith message with a moratorium on death's door faith attempts - until we figure out why we do not see the supernatural as promised (such as the missing apostles.)

I don't know how many ways or how many times we have to say it but --the SUPERNATURAL IS NOT MISSING FROM OUR LIVES!!!

Secondly, I haven't really missed the 'missing apostles'. I have nothing to do with calling them, nothing to do with sending them and I'm not in the least bit stressed about the lack of one in my life! Maybe you know something I don't and could enlighten us as to how our lives would be different if one happened on the scene?

Quote:Have you forgotten that we have all lived with and accepted compromise for decades because of the missing apostles?

??

Quote:Because there are no apostles all of Christendom must come up with some form of church governance that does not need apostles.

Only if one accepts your premise that apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor/teachers, IS the authority structure. I do NOT.

Quote:My moratorium would indeed be another compromise relating to the missing apostles.

How am I compromising when I have nothing to do with a supposed lack of apostles? How am I compromising when I have nothing to do with the lack of any gift???

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Thu, 22 Mar 2012 16:25:34 GMT
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william wrote on Thu, 22 March 2012 08:52
Secondly, I haven't really missed the 'missing apostles'.

There's a saying that states that we don't really appreciate what we have until it's gone. Well, I guess the same would/could be true concerning apostles, if we never had or experienced them then I suppose we can't really 'miss' them.

Jman, it sometimes appears to me that you are a bit like the character Rip Van Winkle, you seem to 'sleep' through many of our discussions. We just went through a discussion on a book about The Harlot Church System last summer and fall, where everyone except you participated. I think most everyone agrees that there is a major problem with the institutional church system of man. Take time to read the thread and get a feel for what some of us believe before painting everyone with the broad brush of "compromising"...

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 00:09:56 GMT
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Greetings,

We all have compromised when we allowed "man in authority"
to be our church governance because it is unscriptural.

This compromise happened because of the lack of apostles.

This compromise applies to each of us - all of us.

{{{ Response to William's words indicating that he does not miss apostles
as if apostles would not make a major difference - response left out because, William,
I do not think you really mean to say that }}}

I do not believe that there should be any authority (except Jesus of course)
in the church. See the link above in my previous post.
I explained this to be my position in that previous link a long time ago.

==========
James said:
>>There's a saying that states that we don't really appreciate what we have until it's gone.

>>Well, I guess the same would/could be true concerning apostles, if we never had or

>>experienced them then I suppose we can't really 'miss' them.

Complements to James.

==========

William said:
>> SUPERNATURAL IS NOT MISSING FROM OUR LIVES!!!

But the promised supernatural is missing (apostles, I Cor 12 gifts of miracles and healings).

Jesus said this is how I operate a church ....

And what He said is not how it works for us.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 82 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by Mark on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 03:46:07 GMT
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I don't see why there has to be apostles. And we have (I have) and (I'm sure others have) seen miracles/gifts operating at times. I've seen both happen through me in my life. Not the prayer of faith type but the anointing type. Not in large measure I hasten to add (past tense) but they have been there.

Gifts and annointings and apostolic gifts/ministries have come and gone in various movements and revivals over the years. There is nothing that says everything has to be here all the time.

For whatever it is worth I think apostles/prophets are coming in great numbers around the world. Thats another subject.

Your point if I understand you correctly is that because we don't have these ministries/gifts operating in our midst we should be much more careful about how we exercise our faith. Because the senior ministry aspect of oversight is missing. It looks to me that while I totally disagree with you your heart is in the right place.

I don't think having apostles would make any difference. More anointing more miracles etc. Absolutely. But the issue of having faith for answers & healing is not going to change. People still have to learn how to use it. The anointing doesn't take the place of faith. We would still have people making mistakes with faith maybe stupid ones. Because the only way to learn is to do it.

My apologies in advance if I'm just repeating what others have said. It has been a long thread and I've read it in a disjointed way. I couldn't always keep up. Which is why I haven't commented.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 13:28:07 GMT
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Greetings,

Mark thanks for posting.

Well I am absolutely stunned.

This makes 4 of you who think having apostles would not make any difference and the need for apostles is not seen (you do not miss them).

William and Mark have expressed her thoughts as such.

James and JWBTI agreed by their silence -you guys are never silent when you see something important that you think is an error.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 83 days.
 Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by Mark on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 13:38:43 GMT
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This makes 4 of you who think having apostles would not make any difference and the need for apostles is not seen (you do not miss them).

No you're reading too much into that. Speaking for myself I think apostles are totally nessecary. I think they would make a tremendous difference in the life of the church. But I was speaking concerning faith and getting answers to prayer.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 13:54:33 GMT
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wishing34 wrote on Fri, 23 March 2012 07:28

James and JWBTI agreed by their silence -you guys are never silent when
you see something important that you think is an error.

Silence? I've made 10 posts/comments on this thread that William started on the lack of signs and wonders; and I believe we need apostles in the Body of Christ today...BUT they aren't present and it's not my calling to 'call and anoint' them so we press on. Still believing and trusting God, exercising what He has given(for me, encouragement, exhortation,and helps.)

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 14:11:13 GMT
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Greetings Mark,

Thanks for posting.

My call for a moratorium is not because we're missing senior ministry.

I call for moratorium because we experience what should be impossible - the Bible
itself does not always work for us -

Examples are:
missing promised apostles
missing promised ICor 12 power gifts
missing occasional instant, visible manifestations (no specific promise for this but it naturally is expected to be part of the faith and healing messages)

==========

Since we are a people to whom sometimes the Bible does not work - I call for a moratorium on what I have termed "risky faith"

Jman

_____

At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 83 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 14:14:51 GMT
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Hey guys,

I don't like to push something that I haven't had time to check out but in this case I'm going to make an exception.

I've only read the first chapter but so far this is a good read and it may turn out to be a great read.

The reason I want to post the link right away is because Kindle is offering it free right now and it is subject to go up to the regular price at any time.

All you need is the free kindle reader for your PC from Amazon (sign up and download the reader if you don't have an account already) and you can download this free ebook on miracles.

Here is the link:

http://www.amazon.com/Journey-Hard-Side-Miracles-ebook/dp/B0
04ZZT4BM%3FSubscriptionId%3D1GVBN9WWNVXC5DBPE502%26tag%3Dkiq
-free-20%26linkCode%3Dxm2%26camp%3D2025%26creative%3D165953%
26creativeASIN%3DB004ZZT4BM

Get it and we can talk about it later!

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 14:30:44 GMT
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Greetings,

Mark,

Since I am pretty sure you will come back to this thread
which means you will not miss this message.

I just wanted to say that I like and respect you on this forum.

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church
without apostles for 40 years and 83 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 20:08:14 GMT
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Greetings,

In the pharmakeia thread last fall and in this thread
I have noticed things devolving more and more into strawman arguments,
gamesmanship, forum strategies, - like are common on other forums.

I find unless I am passionate about a particular topic it is not worth the frustration
to deal with it all. I do not have any new passionate topics that I can think of.

So I have decided to take a break from participating in the forum - at least for a while.

I need to focus on other stuff anyway.

Goodbye for now and please e-mail me if an apostle shows up.

James: Rip Van Winkle is ready for a long snooze

Jman

_____
At the time of this post . . .
FA, the satellites, the spinoffs,and the FA diaspora have been having church without apostles for 40 years and 83 days.
Initial start date 1/1/72

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by Mark on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 21:18:55 GMT
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I have some material here on tape about apostles I was going to post. I think you'd find it interesting. Its on tape and I have to get it digitalized. Couple of weeks maybe. I'll send you a note.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by Mark on Fri, 23 Mar 2012 21:25:31 GMT
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You all know that I have presented a case against the commonly held position that the ministries listed in Eph 4 are 'offices'. I think they are ministry gifts--not 'offices'.

Where is that? I'd like to go and have a look.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Sun, 25 Mar 2012 16:00:52 GMT
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wishing34 wrote on Fri, 23 March 2012 14:08
In the pharmakeia thread last fall and in this thread
I have noticed things devolving more and more into strawman arguments, gamesmanship, forum strategies, - like are common on other forums.

If presenting scripture and encouraging people to totally trust Jesus and His Holy WORD in matters of daily living makes one appear to be using "forum strategies, gamesmanship, or making strawman arguments" then consider me as such. But though I may lack in formal education and am a simple man, I have learned from experience(both my own and the observing of others for 60

years, plus what is recorded in The Bible for our instruction and learning.) that if I don't stand on God's Word 100%, then I'll wind up compromising and falling for whatever Satan presents as wisdom and truth.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12

THIS is TRUTH, THIS is WISDOM !...GOD'S WORD!

"Trust in The LORD with ALL thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."Proverbs 3:5

So what have we been presented with? Words of encouragement to strenghten our faith, or an argument that undermines the clear teachings of Jesus to trust Him and Him alone? A moratorium on 'death door experiences', 'risky faith'? Does this line up with God's Word? Is this wisdom from above?

I'm NOT coming against Jman the person, I AM coming against the idea and suggestion he is presenting that could plant seeds of doubt and fear in people and goes against what was purchased at Calvary by Jesus our LORD.

"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."I Peter 2:24

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Sun, 25 Mar 2012 23:18:10 GMT
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Mark wrote on Fri, 23 March 2012 15:25You all know that I have presented a case against the commonly held position that the ministries listed in Eph 4 are 'offices'. I think they are ministry gifts--not 'offices'.

Where is that? I'd like to go and have a look.

I'll have to find it, it's been awhile.

In a nutshell: The bible presents us with two methods that God uses to mature His Church:

1) Elders (overseers) and 2) Gifts (for ministry).

Elders rule while the ministry gifts are for ministry.

Ministry gifts (1Cor 12, Eph 4, for instance) are given to individuals on a personal level for the edification of the body of Christ.

Ministry gifts do not convey leadership on anyone. All of us (men and women) are called to minister. Every person has a gift or gifts and will eventually need to give an account to God for what they have done with those gifts.

The eldership are charged with the oversight of the assembly. Naturally they will also have ministry gifts, but in addition to those gifts they will be responsible for the leadership of the body. If an elder moves to Indiana from Alabama, he doesn't have elder responsibilities in Indiana, he only carries with him the ministry gifts that he has been given.

Ministry gifts are a personal transaction between God and the individual. If a teacher moves to another location he is still a teacher wherever he goes. Ideally, the eldership in the new city should recognize the person's gift and act accordingly but if they don't this doesn't mean the person loses that gift. That gift has been given to him by God and no matter where he finds himself, he should seek opportunities to use that gift. (Same applies for all of the gifts.)

Elders have local responsibility only, while ministry is trans-local.

Most organizations have lost this concept. First, they assume that anyone with a gift is automatically endowed with leadership responsibilities in the Church. It's the same old clergy and laity doctrine presented in a different garb. The clergy, or those with gifts, they rule. The laity, well, they don't have any gifts (other than the gift of giving, and I'm not referring to a supernatural gift here!).

This causes, as you can imagine, many problems. You've got leaders (mostly called pastors in protestant circles) that are shifted around at the whim of the bishop's board. Women (until recently) were excluded from exercising any of the ministry gifts because, as they conclude, a woman, with the gift to teach, for instance, would not fit into their paradigm.

In fact, in this scenario, there are no women apostles, (God can't send a women even if He wants to) no prophets, (this presents a bit of a problem for them because prophetesses are mentioned in the Bible--a contradiction that different churches have dealt with in different ways), no evangelists, no pastors and no teachers (after all, to them ALL of these gifts are leadership offices to be limited to men only.)

What do you think?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by Mark on Sat, 31 Mar 2012 00:25:56 GMT
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Sorry I didn't get back to you William we had major problems with my dad this last while. For various reasons I am off work right now and it was a blessing in disguise. I've spent a lot of time helping.

I know you wrote extensively on the subject of women in ministry somewhere and I have always intended to get to it but never had time. I'm going to correct that before long. So I'm leaving aside that issue for now.

One question I have is how are elders called? As opposed to those with ministry gifts. I know Paul talked about giving honor to the elders that rule well especially those who . . . word and doctrine. So there seems to be a distinction there.

I'm gong to give some thought to this.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Sat, 31 Mar 2012 01:43:28 GMT
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Mark wrote on Fri, 30 March 2012 18:25Sorry I didn't get back to you William we had major problems with my dad this last while. For various reasons I am off work right now and it was a blessing in disguise. I've spent a lot of time helping.

I know you wrote extensively on the subject of women in ministry somewhere and I have always intended to get to it but never had time. I'm going to correct that before long. So I'm leaving aside that issue for now.

One question I have is how are elders called? As opposed to those with ministry gifts. I know Paul talked about giving honor to the elders that rule well especially those who . . . word and doctrine. So there seems to be a distinction there.

I'm gong to give some thought to this.

I trust that the Lord will give you wisdom in dealing with your dad!

Concerning the issue of leadership... I totally believe in the concept of leadership in the Church. The jury is still out (in my thinking) as to whether this leadership is a gift or a calling. I'm leaning more toward it not being a gift, but like I said, I haven't really looked at the issue close enough to be definitive one way or the other.

On the other hand, look at your own gifts --if it's teaching, evangelism, or even prophetic-- do these gifts convey any type of a leadership position? Of course others might view your ability to teach, etc., as some form of a leadership mantle, but does it really, from a biblical standpoint, translate into a leadership office?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by JWBTI on Wed, 06 Mar 2013 01:28:43 GMT
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Wishing34 Wrote: Message #8884 March 22,2012

Greetings,

I see you guys waving the flag of "no compromise" with respect to
my suggestion to modify/compromise the faith message with a moratorium
on death's door faith attempts - until we figure out why we do not see
the supernatural as promised (such as the missing apostles.)

Jman,

Glad to have ya back,

It has been 11 Months and 11 Days since this Post and We are still waving that flag

Of â€œNo Compromiseâ€• !

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.
Luke 1:37 (KJV)

We love U Brother !

Blessings in Jesus Name !

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by william on Wed, 06 Mar 2013 03:21:33 GMT
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Now that's funny!

Isn't it great to be a part of a group of wonderful people like us?

Hey Jman, you know we love you... (and missed you, too!)

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by wishing34 on Wed, 06 Mar 2013 03:23:14 GMT
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Hi JWBTI

I am not actually back. Tom was just interesting.
I am not even going to "back and forth" with him.

Jman

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Wed, 06 Mar 2013 15:31:21 GMT
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wishing34 wrote on Tue, 05 March 2013 21:23Hi JWBTI

I am not actually back. Tom was just interesting.
I am not even going to "back and forth" with him.

Jman

Shucks! Jman, don't you find us interesting? LOL

Stick around, you don't have to take up permanent residence, just pitch your tent and hang for a while. We're hoping that sometimes in the next few months Tom is going to share his wisdom on what he believes true faith is(as opposed to the flaws, I guess, in what he perceives "the faith message " teaches (btw: There is a difference in the 'faith message/message of faith' that most here believes and lives, and 'the Word of Faith<WOF>' as is taught by so many today,) ...meanwhile we can be sharing whatever The Lord gives us.

I know! I KNOW! We still don't got no apostles, but we do got love for each other.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by Marilyn Crow on Sun, 22 Sep 2013 00:02:28 GMT
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james & all.

`We still don`t have no Apostles.`

Having been brought up in the Apostolic movement/denomination in the `50`s & `6o`s, I`ve had a different experience. The movement came from the Welsh revival in 1905 & spread to other countries. However I think it never really got going in the USA.

I was brought up with the `5-fold,` ministries & looking back the immediate difference of an Apostle was the depth in his ministry of expounding on the word, prayer & revelation that would come over time.

Now this was in a structured setting, so today as many of us are not there I still believe, as you do that Christ has His Apostles receiving revelation of Him that will bring the Body of Christ to maturity. We may not see them but as they teach others we will be recipients of that further revelation.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by james on Mon, 23 Sep 2013 14:46:06 GMT
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When I said "We still don't got no apostles", I was referencing a earlier discussion we'd had a few years ago(Jman) about true/real apostles and the lack (in american 'churches'). There's no shortage of people 'claiming' to be apostles here, all one has to do is tune to the 'religious channels ' of a TV or computer...

Not only apostles, we got bucket loads of profit prophets as well, saying "it's all good", "the best is yet to come", "we are God's chosen nation", ect.

Meanwhile, this rudderless ship (the misguided, institutional religious system of man) is tossed about in whatever direction the waves take it, and few even see the impending danger. Why does the Titanic come to mind here? (Rev. 3:17)

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by Marilyn Crow on Tue, 24 Sep 2013 01:18:14 GMT
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So true james, counterfeit Apostles, Prophets etc... Having read a little about Hobart Freeman on this site I believe he would have had an Apostolic calling.

And about those `waves,` I think you would agree that we in the Body of Christ have yet to come through some of those. (Eph. 4: 14) Then being mindful as you posted about our attitude of `love,` & us having been recipients of great truths, it is a challenge to `speak the truth in love,` building on what people know of the truth.

Thus I appreciate this site as you have a variety of topics & allow others to have a go. Thank you all.

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by Gary on Tue, 24 Sep 2013 09:35:13 GMT
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Quote: Having read a little about Hobart Freeman on this site I believe he would have had an Apostolic calling.

It may of been possible. But this man stated the Lord called him to be a teacher to the body of Christ. If you ever heard any of his sermons you would understand why he claimed this.

The anointing of God was very evident on this man, but as far as I remember he never functioned in the same function as the Apostles.

My take on a true Biblical Apostle is this:

An Apostle who has the calling will mirror the ministry of the NT Apostles. He will have the gift to heal, raise the dead, cast out demons, establish churches, etc. etc.

We would see the same mighty acts of God operating through the man as we see it in the New Testament. At least that is how I view the calling of an Apostle.

A visible miracle never occurred under Hobart Freemans ministry (like the Apostles in the New Testament), even though he prayed for people that were healed or delivered from demons, he mainly taught the Bible by the Spirit of God.

Gary

Subject: Re: Where have all the people gone...
Posted by Marilyn Crow on Wed, 25 Sep 2013 06:11:13 GMT
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I agree Gary about H. Freeman being a Bible teacher from the notes I`ve seen on this site. I look forward also to listening to his teaching on the tapes.

I`ve written some notes from (Apostle) William Rowe (`60`s Melbourne, Australia). He & his family came out from England, sent from the main church to lead the work here in Australia. These notes are from his book, `One Lord, One Faith.`
Here is a quick overview.

THE SIGNS OF APOSTLESHIP.
The Power Sign.
The Passion Sign.
The Vision Sign.
The Virtue Sign.

THE SEAL OF APOSTLESHIP
Pioneering.
Building-up.
Administrating.

THE SERVICE OF APOSTLESHIP
A Vital & Authentic Witness.
A Spiritual & Authoritative Ministry.
A General & Affectionate oversight.
Supernatural & Apostolic Activity.

I have only written the first part on `The Signs of Apostleship.`
If you would like the others I will write them out for you.
In the light of these notes it would be interesting to hear what you see of Hobart Freeman & his ministry. I couldn`t seem to get it as an attachment so just cut & pasted.

The Signs of Apostleship

`Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you
in all patience, in signs, & wonders, & mighty deeds.`
(2 Cor. 12: 12)

Signs are the visible indications of invisible realities. Cause has its effect; substance has its sign. Signs are the words of a special language. Words indicate hidden thought; signs point to unseen realities. It is imperative to learn the vocabulary & grammar of the sign language with which we are dealing. One sign may require another for its identification & confirmation. The power- sign for instance may have a divine or Satanic origin (Acts 2: 43. 2 Thess. 2: 9) So with the power â€“ sign God gives a love â€“ sign of divine purpose. The one identifies & confirms the other. Yet one may be so taken up with signs as to miss the substance. Others may have spiritually mastered the sign

â€“ language & have passed on to a keen & certain apprehension by faith of the things of God.

To the initiated a single little bird may give in advance a sure knowledge of a glorious summer on the way. We speak of a `straw in the wind.` We learn by straws, but we can pass on to know the direction of the wind without them. The right understanding of signs & the abilities of faith unveil for us the unseen realities of God. We have found that Apostleship is needed to day & that it is scripturally provided for. Now we seek to interpret correctly the signs.

THE POWER SIGN.

`....Signs & wonders, & mighty deeds` (2 Cor. 12: 12)

The Power â€“ sign is one of the Apostolic signs. We see these grand evidences in the history of the early Church. We dare to believe that `Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday, & today, & forever.` (Heb. 13: At the same time we note in our study of the scripture that outstanding power â€“ signs amongst the Apostleship in the New Testament were manifested through the instrumentality of a few of its members â€“ mainly Peter & Paul. As we have seen already, not all Apostles are gifted in the same manner nor degree of richness. There is James & an Epaphroditus as well as a Peter & a Paul. They are equally called if not equally used in the same way. This we may expect today.

As the Lord in His sovereignty may determine so the power will flow through this or that member in varying degree at different times. We magnify the Lord for many mighty demonstrations of His power through the Apostleship throughout the years. Progressive Christian & Apostolic experience is always stretching out for more.

Our standards are always higher than our reach. As we look at the Church in the Acts of the Apostles in full flood of supernatural power we find a further challenge to our faith.
It is not only a challenge to our faith in the Apostleship; it is a challenge to every ministry, to every member & not to one Church alone but to all Churches. Is any an Evangelist? Then he is confronted with the supernatural ministry of Philip in Acts 8: 6 â€“ 7. Is any an Elder? Then before him comes the necessity of a supernatural power as indicated in James 5: 14 â€“ 16. Is any a simple believer in Christ? Then the sweeping supernatural signs of Mark 16: 17 â€“ 18 are required. Of course, the same principle applies, that individuals will differ in the measure of supernatural giftedness. The challenge of the need of a greater measure of the supernatural comes to us all â€“ Apostles.....Evangelists.....Elders.....& every disciple of Christ. We look for a further latter-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Lord is preparing vessels, `not a few,` of all types & sizes. Glorious as the present blessing has been it should be but an earnest of what is to come.

THE PASSION SIGN

There is such a thing as the sign of Apostolic passion. Power is not the sole criterion of Apostleship. There is a heavy enduement of divine passion in the call. Perhaps one has to progress further in the mastery of the sign â€“ language to appreciate this. To the less spiritual Corinthians Paul contends for his Apostleship & emphasises the power â€“ sign, but to the Christlike Philippians he declares, `...I have you in my heart...` & `How greatly I long after you....in the bowels of Jesus Christ.` (Phil. 1 : 7 â€“ Doubtless they understood. This is not a vapid sentiment but a mighty function of love that brings to birth divine purposes in the Church of Christ. With what burning passion he contends for the Gentile believers against the legalizers. As a hen gathereth her brood under her wings so the Apostle covers the flock under his care.

This great Apostolic heart has a surge of passion overflowing for Israel. `For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites....` (Rom. 9: 3 â€“ 4) This is a sign of true Apostleship to the eye of faith. Think of such burning words as `I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus;` `I count not my life dear` & `I am ready to be offered.` he was burnt â€“ up for the Lord & His people! He was a burnt â€“ offering on the altar of God. His life seemed as tinder in the matchless but awful blaze of divine love & purpose. Whether he looked up to the Head, or around at the members of His Body, or out on the lost, the fire of Apostolic passion consumed him. Apostleship is fixed with the sign of passion.

THE VISION SIGN

`Am I not an Apostle?.... have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?` (1 Cor. 9: 1)

Undoubtedly the Apostle was meeting the objections of the carnal Corinthians respecting his call. He does do again in the same letter to the same people. (1 Cor. 15: 7 â€“ 9) This apparent requirement that Paul must needs have personally seen the Lord in the days of His flesh, in order to verify his Apostleship, is by no means a proof of a divine condition. Paul goes on to say in the next sentence, `If I be not an Apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you.` (1 Cor. 9:2) Or as much as to say, `If that is the carping criticism of others, it cannot affect my Apostleship to you. You are the seal of it! Nevertheless I have seen the Lord.`

Whether or not corporally or in vision â€“ probably both â€“ makes no matter, the glory of the Person of Christ had broken over his soul in a mighty conquering manner. `He has seen the Lord in the way.` (Acts 9: 27) The effect lasting through the years drew from the heart of the Apostle before Agrippa, the exclamation, `I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.` (Acts 26: 19) It was a heavenly vision of the ascended, glorified Head from whom He was a Gift to the Church that Paul relied, `When He ascended up on high, He ... gave gifts unto men...He gave some, Apostles....` (Eph. 4: 8 â€“ 11) He had the glory â€“ sign of His commission. An Apostle must have the sign of the heavenly vision. The heavenly vision is the throbbing theme of Apostolic witness, fellowship & service. Burning ourselves â€“ we shall burn it into some. The depths of Apostleship can be measured by the substance, radiance & insistence of its vision. We are

jealous that no diversionary interests shall dim the wondrous vision of the glorious Head.

THE VIRTUE SIGN

As power & passion are hand in hand so vision & virtue walk together. Notice the sequence in the following sentence. `Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, & wonders, & mighty deeds.` (2 Cor. 12: 12) Fancy ` patience` before `wonders, & mighty deeds!` We had never thought of patience as a sign. The virtue of patience. But it puts us on the track of the virtue sign. If the Apostleship meeds anything, it needs patience. It is a divine virtue. `The God of all patience.` Without patience we can, as an Apostleship, squander what we have received. We can fail to finish the course. Then, what of the virtue of faithfulness? In Hebrews 3: 1 â€“ 2 Christ Who is spoken of as `the Apostle,` was declared to be `faithful to Him that appointed Him.` The true Apostles were men that were faithful to the end. The Apostles, the messengers, the `sent â€“ ones` finished their circuit in the perfect will of God at the feet of the glorious Christ Who sent them.

Patience & faithfulness are lovely jewels set side by side. Humility is a virtue of an Apostleship that magnifies the Master; it is another sign. Neither as being `Lords over God`s heritage...` What is more wonderful than the meekness & humility of the Apostle â€“ Christ? That is the spirit! Listen to true Apostleship! `Have I committed an offence in abasing myself?` (2 Cor. 11: 7) How is humbles us when we think of the exalted ministry of this servant of God. What of this? `Ye have reigned as kings....God hath set forth us the Apostles last....` (1 Cor. 4: 8 â€“ 9) All these & many other such virtue signs have their base in holiness, the great virtue sign, `Holy Apostles & Prophets....` (Eph. 3: 5)

Power needs passion to balance & control it. So does vision demand virtue. The supernatural calls for the practical in both cases. Vision must be accompanied by virtue for `Without holiness no man can see God.`

Let us then pray for a greater world â€“ wide manifestation & recognition of Apostleship & for its development in power & grace. It is Christ`s own personal gift & appointment.`