



The Church: God's Holy People

By Gilbert James

Introduction

It is true that the subject of holiness, because of the convictions of guilt it brings, is not always a pleasant and popular one among fallen humanity. In fact, in this day of rising end-time apostasy in the Christian religion, it is not surprising that the subject of holiness is even quite unpopular among professing Christians. The tendency, oftentimes, is to avoid identifying sin as sin but rather excuse sinful deeds with more acceptably mild terms. Sometimes, it seems as though Christians are expected to adapt to, even go along with, and not to detest, the prevailing culture of sin.

But holiness is indeed the essence of Christianity and is fundamental to the Christian believer's relationship with God, who is Himself the ultimate of holiness. Holiness is a centrally important subject that we can neither afford to ignore nor to evade in the Church. This is why in this present move of the Spirit much has been, and continues to be, spoken and written on holiness. And we must not cease to reprove, exhort and admonish one another towards holiness "until all the ransomed Church of God is saved to sin no more." Therefore, the following study is another such effort to

admonish and exhort believers in the Church towards holy living.

Important Questions

The main emphasis of this study is that holiness is a fundamental attribute of the Church. The Holy Ghost is reviving and revealing in this end-time a lot to us concerning the Church, the Body of Christ, and the Christian believer's place in it. The holy character of the Church is made obvious by the fact that the Church is the Body of Christ, who Himself is the Holy One. Ironically, however, the need for each individual who is a member of the Church to be holy is not always reflected in the personal conviction and conduct of all professing Christians, who claim to belong to the Church.

In fact, today, the issue of holiness among believers in the Church generates questions that need to be addressed clearly and forthrightly. Some questions that arise in this context are: Is holiness a characteristic which is attainable by believers in this world and which we can and should possess as individuals, if we are indeed in the Church? Or can we be in the Church and yet be unholy, though feeling more or less religiously obligated to be holy? In other words, is holiness merely a matter of preachers' rules

and churches' norms, all of which may vary according to the opinions of a particular church or preacher, and not a matter of personal obligation? How then do we become holy? Is holiness a matter merely of what we do and don't do, or more fundamentally what we are, particularly as members of the Body of Christ? These questions are important questions. All of us have confronted one or more of them at some time. And, thank God, the Scriptures have not left them unanswered.

Definition of Holiness

Before moving on, let us now define holiness. Holiness, to us, is not some standard of ethics, which are determined by man's opinions, religions, or cultural norms. Holiness is the character of God. The absolute moral excellence of God and His separation from evil and corruption define holiness. God is holy and is the fountain of holiness. Therefore, holiness indicates the standard of character and behaviour of everyone who is in harmony with God.

It conveys the notion of moral and ethical wholeness or perfection. It thus denotes the state of impeccable virtue and righteousness. Holiness is, hence, possessing and exercising the power not to sin (1 John 3:4-9).

Man is not born with a holy nature. Holiness in man, because of his inherent fallen and corrupt nature, must be derived purely from God (Romans 3:19-26). Christian believers must always recognize this truth. Hence, man has no true holiness of himself other than that which ensues from the divine nature of God imparted to him when he is born again (John 3:5-7; 1 Peter 2:2-3; Galatians 5:22-25). Thus, when we speak of holiness, we actually refer to God-likeness or godliness. And so, holiness becomes possible for man only by virtue of the indwelling presence and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit of God in man. This truth forms the basis of this study on holiness. We will explore these aspects of holiness in more detail as we go on.

An Indisputable Truth

As mentioned earlier, it is an indisputable truth that the Church, being the Body of Christ, must be a holy institution. Few professing Christians will deny that the Church ought to be holy. The truth is that if Christ is holy, then His Body, which is the Church, must be holy. Yet, it is equally true that there are many who claim to belong to the Church but today lack sound personal moral convictions on the question of holy living. In some cases, some who once had firm moral convictions on the issue of holy living are today balking and wavering in the face of the increasing tide of moral perverseness rising in all areas of modern society.

Moreover, there are many who acknowledge the importance of being holy, but see holiness as merely a lofty ideal that is unattainable in this world by humans. As a result, they consider and accept constant moral failure as a religious norm. From that standpoint, they usually fail to resist sin, or piously treat holiness just as the special attire we put on for church services, and afterwards conveniently take off. In other words, ironically, there are many professing Christians who expect themselves and other Christians to sin, rather than to be constantly holy. And to a large extent, they justify this expectation by certain misleading doctrines and convictions that deny the possibility of living a holy Christian life in this world and distort the truth of the

grace of God. Such perverse doctrines often are quite clear on the love and mercy of God in providing forgiveness for sins, while denying the power and will of God to take away sin (2 Timothy 3:5).

Therefore, there is a dire need today for clear understanding and conviction of the truth of personal Christian holiness among professing Christians. However, it is by returning to the uncompromising Biblical doctrines on the truth of holiness – indeed, by studying the Scriptures, and allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the truths they contain on holiness – that we will come to a true understanding and personal conviction of God’s standard of holiness for us. Because of the existence today of a prevailing mind-set or philosophy that justifies unholy living among many professing Christians, holy living and victory over sin must be won in our minds, at least, as a fundamental start to a life of holiness. In other words, for many professing Christians, holiness requires a renewing of their mind-set regarding sin, and the acceptance of deep personal conviction, grounded on the Scriptures, that God wants us to be holy, and can empower us to be holy, in this present evil world; and that, hence, every believer in Christ can and should be holy in the midst of this present world. As Paul puts it in Romans 12:2: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (NKJV). Truly, to live a genuinely transformed and holy life in this world, one requires a renewed and nonconformist mind-set towards today’s distorted religious and secular doctrines of moral compromise.

Not only do we need the right mind-set, we also need the right faith, or beliefs, to live holy lives. Our faith is built and shaped by the doctrines that we perceive and become convinced are true. Sound faith for sound Christian living must be based on the word of God. For “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17 NKJV). Moreover, faith, what we believe, has a powerful influence on

how we live. The Scriptural truth that the just shall live by faith reveals the powerful influence that our beliefs can have on how we live the Christian life. Hence, if our faith is informed by doctrines that come short of creating in us a firm belief and a sound mind-set that it is possible and expected by God for us to live holy Christian lives in this world, it is obvious that in practice we will lack the will and power to live holy and righteous lives. However, as we examine the Scriptures closely in this study, we will recognize that the word of God clearly teaches that it is the will of God for every believer in the Church to live a holy life right here on earth in this world.

Salvation: A Call to Holiness

Salvation from Sin

Central to God’s divine purpose in bringing salvation to sinful humanity is the bringing forth of a holy nation of redeemed and sanctified believers (Isaiah 35:8; Luke 1:67-75; 1 Peter 2:9). The divine judgment brought upon the creation as a consequence of the Fall of man, when sin entered human nature, clearly reveals God’s abomination for sin. In his fallen sinful state, man had to be expelled from Eden and kept away from the life-giving holy presence of God, symbolized by the Tree of Life in Eden. According to Genesis 3:24, God “drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

However, in His love for humanity, with mercy and grace, God designed a plan to deal with the sin of humanity in order to restore man into a holy communion with Him. God Himself came down to earth to execute the plan and reconcile man back to Him (2 Corinthians 5:19). By designing the plan Himself, and executing it Himself, God underscores two important points that are extremely significant to us in understanding the importance of holiness. One is the divine importance that God places on dealing with the sin-problem in humanity to the extent that He Himself designed and executed a plan to take away sin; the other is the full confidence we can have in the

effectiveness of the plan to take away our sins, since it is God Himself who designed and executed the plan. In essence then, the holiness of man is so important to God that He took it upon Himself to rid man of sin.

Dealing with the sin-problem in humanity by taking it away, eradicating it completely, is God's primary aim of salvation. This is clearly declared in the Scriptures, and we must recognize this truth, if we will appreciate the importance of holiness in our Christian lives. Let us look at a few of the many Scripture passages that clearly point out God's definite purpose in providing salvation as an effective means of ridding man from sin. Notice how definite and precise the Scriptures are with regard to the taking away of sin.

John 1:29 (NKJV): "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

Matthew 5:20 (MKJV): "For I say to you that unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

Romans 6:22: (MKJV) "But now, being made free from sin, and having become slaves to God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life."

1 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV): "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

2 Corinthians 5:21 (MKJV): "For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

1 Peter 2:24 (MKJV): "He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that dying to sins, we might live to righteousness."

1 John 1:9 (KJV): "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 John 3:4-5 (NKJV): "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin."

Salvation unto Holiness

These are only a few of many

Scripture passages which indicate clearly that holiness is an integral aspect of our salvation. Thus, salvation does not only bring to us forgiveness of sins, but also full deliverance from sin.

God has called man to holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16). God's call to holiness indeed implies that it is both necessary and possible for the believer to become holy, regardless of his original sinful state before receiving Christ and of the relentless challenges which seek to compromise the call to holiness in both doctrine and practice in this modern liberal world. **The will of God never demands of us to do what the grace of God does not empower us to do.** In other words, the fact that God has called us to holiness is sufficient indication that He does not only expect us to be holy, but has made ample provision for our sanctification according to the abundance of His grace and faithfulness towards us in Christ. Peter states this assurance this way in 2 Peter 1:2-4: "Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, **according as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue, through which He has given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, so that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust**" (MKJV).

Many easily connect salvation to the mercy and grace of God in pitying their sinful state and forgiving their sins, but do not easily make the same connection between salvation and the mercy and grace of God to take away sin completely from their lives and make them holy. They need to recognize the truth that the salvation that God offers to fallen man is more than mere forgiveness of sin; it includes salvation unto holiness through deliverance from sin (Romans 6:6,11,22; Titus 2:11-14). Every Christian believer who wants to walk in holiness should uphold this truth. In this great salvation, God has given to us the power to be holy. How wonderful God is to give us, who have experienced the shame and

corruption of sin, the opportunity to experience the purity and dignity of holiness! In fact, as we will see in the next section, the need and provision for the holiness of man in his relationship with God is the basis for the establishment of the New Covenant by God.

The New Covenant

The Need for the New Covenant

The possibility of a believer living a holy life is grounded in God's present covenant with man. The New Covenant, as this present covenant is called in the Scriptures, embodies the truth of God's will and provision to bring man into holiness. By instituting the Church to be His New Testament nation of holy people and the Temple in which He dwells, God expects every one who becomes a living part of the Church to be holy. In light of the New Covenant which God has established with the Church, the truth is that believers or members of the Church become holy, not by the force or obligation of moral and ritual codes, but by the transformation wrought in them by the indwelling nature of God.

This is a wonderful truth that some overlook, but it contains the powerful revelation of the true source of holiness. Railing accusations, judgmental criticisms and condemnation, laws and regulations, and self-imposed penance do not make anyone holy. By the New Covenant, God has covenanted to transform sinful man into a new holy creature. Man's responsibility in this covenant is to come in repentance to God and yield in faith and humility to Him, and then God Himself will sanctify him and cleanse him of all his sins.

The Failure of the Old Covenant

The Old Covenant was the covenant that God established to define the relationship between Himself and the people of Israel. It is also known as the Mosaic Covenant or the Law of Moses because Moses was the mediator by whom the codes of the covenant were detailed to the people of Israel in the wilderness. The Old Covenant clearly demonstrated God's holiness, His displeasure with the sins of man, and His will and intention to take away man's sins. However, the Old

Covenant proved weak and useless in enabling man to be holy and to enter into true fellowship with God. The Old Covenant, while declaring God's standard of holiness and God's demand for man to live up to His standard of holiness, could not provide the power that sinful man needed to be holy (Romans 8:3-4).

In fact, the Old Covenant seemed destined to fail from the beginning by the nature of its construction. Examining closely the nature of the Old Covenant, as it was first established at the foothills of Sinai, one notices that the covenant was a conditional one – its fulfillment and its success depended primarily on the children of Israel fulfilling their part first, then God fulfilling His. It was built on demands that man, in himself, had no power to fulfill. Let us review the covenant as it was introduced in Exodus 19:3-8:

“And Moses went up to God, and Jehovah called to him out of the mountain, saying, You shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. And now if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all the nations; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the sons of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which Jehovah commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, All that Jehovah has spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people to Jehovah” (MKJV).

Clearly, the covenant was based on the presumptive assumption that the children of Israel possessed the inherent capability to obey the voice of God, and, therefore, could have vouched their capability to be holy, to be obedient to God by themselves, as an initial condition to receive God's favour. It seems that the children of Israel were persuaded by this presumptive carnal mind-set because their hasty response to Moses was unanimous and confident: “All that Jehovah has spoken we will do.”

In fact, to prove how convinced they were of their own capability, their response remained the same even after Moses, prior to sealing the covenant, presented in full detail to them the demands of the precepts which God expected them to obey. We read in Exodus 24:7-8:

“And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the ears of the people. And they said, *All that Jehovah has said we will do, and be obedient.* And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah has made with you concerning all these words” (MKJV).

That the children of Israel could be so presumptuous to enter into such a covenant was an indication that mankind was yet too steep in his false sense of self-righteousness to appreciate his need for God's mercy and grace. This was even more so when one thinks that this took place so soon after their dramatic confrontation with their total helplessness on the beach of the Red Sea and the experience of God's supreme intervention for their deliverance (even as God reminded them in the preamble statement of the Old Covenant: “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself”). God was reminding them that the nature of their victory and deliverance out of Egypt and at the Red Sea was a supernatural one, without human efforts (Exodus 14:13-14), whereby they were carried in the Spirit – borne on eagles' wings. Wasn't that reminder then a clear suggestion that in their response to the covenant which they were about to enter into with God, they should consider their total helplessness and God's pattern of being their total help? Wasn't it then an opportunity for them to indicate to God that they acknowledged their total dependence on God and that they would prefer to institutionalize such a relationship and establish a covenant that did not depend on their doings but on God working in them and for them?

However, what eventually took place at the foot of Mt Sinai was a dramatic repetition of the error of Eve in the Garden of Eden. It was

unfortunately another case of repeating the Edenic error of choosing the knowledge of good and evil instead of requesting from God access to the tree of divine life and enablement as a means of becoming godly. In the Garden of Eden, Satan deceived Eve into believing that partaking of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (although God had forbidden it) – being able to know right and wrong – was the way to become like God (Genesis 3:1-6). At the foot of Mt Sinai it was virtually a similar decision: “just tell us what to do, and we will do it all.” The error continues today among mankind, propagated in the philosophy of humanism, and various versions of a self-righteous gospel, which proposes that man is basically good and all he needs is to know what God requires of him and he can and will obey. Like it did to Eve in the beginning of human history, and to the children of Israel under the Old Covenant, such an approach to godliness always leads to disappointment, frustration, and moral failure.

The Mosaic Law under the Old Covenant brought the knowledge of sin but not the power to be holy. Paul puts it this way in Romans 3:19-20:

“But we know that whatever things the Law says, it says to those who are under the Law; so that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may be under judgment before God, because by the works of the Law none of all flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law is the knowledge of sin” (MKJV).

It is clear that God did not fail to display before the children of Israel at Sinai the overwhelming awesomeness of His Holiness. The writer of the book of Hebrews, comparing that event with the situation we now enjoy under the New Covenant of grace, describes it this way, in Hebrews 12:18-24:

“For you have not come to the mountain that might be touched and that burned with fire, nor to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words (which voice they who heard begged that a word should not be spoken to them any more, for they could not endure the thing commanded, And if so much as a

beast should touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart, and so fearful was the sight that Moses said, 'I exceedingly fear and quake'). But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel" (MKJV). (Compare Exodus 20:18-21).

Such awesome manifestation of God's holiness should have driven the children of Israel to their knees acknowledging their total moral wretchedness and inability to do their part in meeting God's condition of obedience to His holy word. In sincere confession of their sinfulness and helplessness, they should have beseeched God in prayer and supplication to give them first His grace and enablement to meet His conditions in the covenant – to hear and obey His voice. Indeed, it would have brought about a different covenant – one that reflected the truth and reality of the fact of man's total moral helplessness and his absolute need of and dependence on God's supreme power and grace to walk in obedience and holiness with God. Mankind then, as many still do today, failed to realize that without God's initial grace regenerating them, and motivating and activating them to holiness, their inherent carnal nature and mind "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7-8 MKJV).

In fact, even under the Old Covenant, God's mercy and grace were made available for sanctifying those who sincerely acknowledged their sinfulness and helplessness and their need of God's sanctifying grace. For instance, we may recall here that when Isaiah, the prophet, had a revelation of the awesome holiness of God, his immediate reaction was to acknowledge his own sinfulness. "Woe is me, for I am unclean!" he cried out in repentance and helplessness (Isaiah 6:1-5). The

immediate response from God was to dispatch one of the seraphim with a fiery coal to sanctify him. Isaiah was made instantly and completely holy. "Then one of the seraphs flew to me, having a live coal in his hand, snatched with tongs from the altar. And he laid it on my mouth and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged" (Isaiah 6:6-7 MKJV). In Psalm 51, especially, and in several other Psalms, David clearly acknowledged his total sinfulness and expressed his earnest need for and his faith in God's grace of sanctification. David prayed: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions...." (Psalms 51:1 MKJV).

Introduction of the New Covenant

It ought not be surprising, therefore, that the record shows that the children of Israel, on a whole, proved themselves to be of complete failure in keeping their part of the Old Covenant throughout the Old-Testament era. They never did all that the Lord said as they had hastily promised at Mt Sinai. However, this demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the Old Covenant and the need for a New Covenant, if man were to be reconciled to God in holiness and be obedient to Him and enjoy His blessings. The Old Covenant was eventually annulled, and a new and better arrangement introduced by means of a new covenant, which can enable man to become holy and obtain access into the holy presence of God (Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:11-15).

Thus, God in His mercy eventually offered to Israel, as well as to all other peoples of the earth, a new arrangement in the form of the New Covenant, whereby God Himself promised to initiate and produce in man the condition of holiness which man must have in order to obtain His favour. Nonetheless, as generous as has been the new arrangement offered to mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, under the New Covenant, there are those who have refused to submit to God's righteousness, preferring instead to pursue by their own efforts their own self-righteousness as means of becoming holy enough to

gain God's favour and blessing (Romans 10:1-4; Galatians 3:1-3).

Distinction between the Old and New Covenants

It is important that we note the crucial difference between the arrangements under the Old Covenant and those under the New Covenant. As mentioned earlier, the Old Covenant was a conditional covenant. It was premised on the presumption that the children of Israel had the inherent capability to walk in holiness before God on their own. Therefore, the covenant rested on the children of Israel first walking in holiness before God, fulfilling all the precepts of the Law. According to the terms of the covenant, if they did that, then God would do His part and bestow blessings upon them as His people; if they failed, they were cursed.

Thus with reference to holiness, under the Old Covenant, no provision was made to enable man to be holy. Instead, man was expected to obey the holy precepts of God, as though he was inherently holy. We know now that the Old Covenant served the purpose of helping man come to the realization that he was inherently sinful and could not walk in holiness on his own, but needed an arrangement with God whereby God can enable him to be holy and righteous (Romans 3:19-26). The introduction of this arrangement in the New Covenant represented the crucial difference between the Old and the New Covenants, with respect to man's holiness.

Let us read God's introduction of this new covenant as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother,

saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (NKJV).

In the New Covenant, the conditionality is turned the other way. God and not man is the first player. Instead of an arrangement conditional upon man walking in holiness, the new arrangement was now conditional upon God in His sovereign will and grace enabling man to walk in holiness. Man has now to meet no self-righteous condition but to acknowledge the fact that his nature is sinful, and he is morally helpless and needs the mercy and grace of God to walk in obedience to God. It is no longer an arrangement that depended on 'if man will hear the voice of God and obey His laws' – a condition that man failed to meet because of his inherently sinful nature. It is now an arrangement that assumes man's sinfulness and depends on God first enabling man to be obedient to God: "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." According to the terms of the New Covenant, God is declaring in His sovereignty: "I will... I will... I will..." instead of the "if you will..., then I will..." of the Old Covenant. Praise the Lord!

What an arrangement! The Great I Am was declaring His role of being the sovereign initiator of holiness and righteousness in sinful man according to His sovereign will. If those of us who are privileged to live under this new arrangement in this dispensation of grace can ponder on and comprehend the profound implication of the New Covenant for our holiness, we will have no doubt that all who are believers in Christ can and should be holy by allowing God to forgive and take away our iniquity and to work in us both to will

and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

Another of the prophets, Ezekiel, predicted also this wonderful arrangement and its implication for man's holiness under the New Covenant in similar words to those of Jeremiah:

"And I will sprinkle clean waters on you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from your idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do them" (Ezekiel 36:25-27 MKJV).

Finally, the prophet Malachi also prophesied this glorious sin-cleansing work of Jesus Christ in the Church in Malachi 3:1-3:

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears? For He will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness..." (NIV).

From the standpoint of this study, what is highlighted in these Scripture passages is the sure effectiveness of provisions under the New Covenant to bring sinful man into holiness. The Law, which constituted the Old Covenant of God with the nation of Israel, only revealed sin. It could not effectively take away sins, nor secure true righteousness and holiness for the people of Israel. It was introduced to convince people of their need of salvation from sin, their inability to save themselves from sin, and thus to lead them to Christ, the Saviour, through whom God set out to deliver and save man from sin (Galatians 3:19-29). Jesus Christ Himself became the mediator of the New Covenant, by which He is able to produce true righteousness and

holiness in all who will put their faith in Him (Romans 8:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Unlike the Old Covenant, which was confined to the people of Israel, the New Covenant is a universal covenant that extends to all mankind the opportunity to be a holy people of God (1 Peter 2:9-10). Under the New Covenant, all who believe in Christ, called from every tribe, race, people and nation on earth, are brought together into a new "commonwealth of Israel" and constitute the Church, which is the corporate Body of Christ and God's holy people (Ephesians 2:11-13; Galatians 3:13-14).

From this background, therefore, we can explore further the truth of the holiness of the Church as a characteristic attribute of the Church, and how God, under the New Covenant, makes us, who belong to the Church, His holy people individually and as a corporate Body.

The Church As God's Holy People

What Is the Church

We see in the preceding discussion that the New Covenant makes holiness accessible universally to all of mankind by God. Under the New Covenant, God Himself has promised to impart His holy character into the heart and mind of man. Out of this arrangement emerges the Church, a holy people, of whom God declares: "and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." God will sanctify in the Church all who will believe and receive this promise of grace as His holy people. If we explore further the concept of the Church, we will discover that holiness is fundamental to the meaning of the concept of Church. In other words, implicit in the concept of the Church is the idea of the holiness of God's people. Therefore, let us examine closely the concept of the Church to consider the importance of the holiness of the Church.

We know that there are various definitions that have been given to the word "church" by men today, and many people are misled or even confused about what the church really is. But since the Church is an institution of God, it is to the Bible we must turn for an authoritative definition of what the Church really means. Therefore, let us examine the

Biblical concept of the word “church.”

We find that in the Bible the word “church” is translated from the Hebrew words “*qahal*” and “*edah*,” and from the Greek word “*ekklesia*” (ek-klay-see’-ah). These words mean — the people of God; the collective body of believers, as well as congregation, assembly, and very significantly, the Body of Christ.

However, although the concept exists in the Old Testament, it is mainly or only in the New Testament portion of the Bible that the translators use the English word “church.” And this is obvious since it is Jesus Christ who instituted the Church, and the term “church” was first mentioned in connection with the well-known declaration by our Lord Jesus in the New Testament when He declared, in Matthew 16:18: “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (KJV). Then in Matthew 18:17, Jesus again referred to the community of believers as “the church” in instructing His disciples on the procedure for disciplining an offending brother.

In fact, in the entire four Gospels of the New Testament, these two references quoted above — Matthew 16:18 and Matthew 18:17 — are the only references in the Gospels to the word “church.” The infrequent mention of the word “church” in the four Gospels, and its virtual absence in the Old Testament, may be explained by the fact that, whereas the Church was founded by God in Christ before the foundation of the world and was typified in the Old Testament by the company of God’s called out people, the children of Israel, it was only after the Ascension of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon His disciples in the Upper-Room on the day of Pentecost that the Church, which Jesus declared in Matthew 16:18 that He would build, began to be made manifest (Acts 2:47). Therefore, to understand the holy nature of the Church, as is the focus of this present study, we will examine the meaning of the word “church” when used by Jesus as well as by other writers in the New Testament.

The Ekklesia

Notwithstanding the infrequent

mention of the term “church” in the four Gospels, the term is mentioned altogether in the entire New Testament no less than 115 times, mostly in the Book of Acts and the writings of the apostle Paul, and to a lesser extent in the other epistles and the book of the Revelations. At least 92 times this word refers to a local congregation. The other references are to the church general, or all believers everywhere for all ages.

The Greek word used in all these references in the New Testament for church is “*ekklesia*” (ek-klay-see’-ah). It is this Greek word, therefore, that can provide us with at least the basic definition of the term “church” when used in the Scriptures, and can give us a general concept of the nature of the Church, particularly insight into its holy nature, as described in the Scriptures.

What therefore is the meaning of this word “*ekklesia*?” Used 115 times in the New Testament by Jesus Christ and other writers in the New Testament to refer to church, its meaning must be fundamental to any definition or understanding of the nature of the church. The Greek word “*ekklesia*” is formed from a compound of a Greek preposition, “*ek*” or “*ex*”, which means from or out, and a derivative of another Greek word, “*kaleo*” (kal-eh’-o), which means to call or summon. Thus “*ekklesia*” means a calling out, a called-out group, an exclusive meeting. It is necessary to note that both the words “call” and “out” are very significant for a proper conception of the compound word “*ekklesia*” when used in reference to the Church. It is that which gives the Church its intrinsic meaning or character of being a “called-out” people.

Hence, when the Bible refers to the Church of God or the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible is not referring to some parochial Christian denomination that has officially named itself “The Church of God” or “The Church of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and so forth. But the Bible’s reference to the Church, using the word “*ekklesia*,” refers to a divine designation of a people “called-out” by God — a people who has sincerely and practically responded to God’s calling out from the world and the

universal sinful condition of man.

Therefore, the “Church,” the “*ekklesia*” of God, when used in the Bible, refers to people, and more specifically to a people characterized by being sanctified or separated from worldliness and sin, whether in terms of a local group or a universal group of Christian believers. Thus, immediately implicit in the meaning of the word “church” is the attribute of holiness, because holiness itself implies sanctification or separation. The Church, therefore, is a virtual group or company of people, who are not confined to or defined by a location or a denomination. The principal common characteristic of the people who form the Church of the living God is that they are a divinely called-out or sanctified people — their lives and life-styles are deeply characterized by their complete answer to the call of God to be sanctified from sin or worldliness and carnality.

It is important to emphasize the significance of *people* in the concept of the Church being essentially a called-out people. Only to people is it given to respond to the divine calling-out by God. The Bible does not use the word “church” or “*ekklesia*” to refer to a building where people meet for worship, or to a particular religion, or to a Christian denomination. A building, as sacred and elaborate as it may seem to be, cannot respond to the call of God — it is lifeless. And a religion or a Christian denomination may easily constitute of members who have not responded to the call of God to separation and sanctification in Christ. The answer to the call of God out of a worldly lifestyle of ungodliness and sin is a primary qualification and characteristic of all those who genuinely constitute the real Church, the true *ekklesia* of God.

Thus we can see that by using the word “*ekklesia*” to refer to the Church, Jesus Christ and the writers of Scriptures were signifying by the very name, “Church,” the solemn and divine call to, or the vocation of, a life of sanctification or separation from worldliness and sin. This means that holiness is essentially a fundamental characteristic of the Church on a whole, and of every member of the assembly or

community of Christians who constitute the Church. The Church, therefore, is indeed a called-out people, called out of the world unto God, and made pure and holy by the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.

A Holy Nation

A Scriptural concept which captures the verity of the Church's call to separation from sin and worldliness, and thus connects the concept of Church to the concept of holiness, is in the use of the term "holy" to describe the character of God's people. For example, Peter refers to the people of God as a holy nation in 1 Peter 2:9-10:

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy" (NKJV).

In the Bible, holiness is presented as a highly revered attribute of God that must be also reproduced or manifested in God's people. We read in 1 Peter 1:15-16: "But as He who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be holy; for I am holy" (KJV).

As mentioned already, since holiness originates in God, only by sharing God's holy nature can any man be truly holy. In the New Testament, the Greek word from which "holiness" is translated is "*hagiasmos*." Both "*hagiasmos*" and the adjective "*hagios*" (hag'-ee-os), which means pure or morally blameless and is translated "holy" in the New Testament, are used for referring to the holiness of both God and man. The basic meaning, therefore, conveyed by the concept of holiness with regard to God's people is that of possessing and manifesting the hallowed nature of God; and thus, by extension, it means to be set apart or separated from worldliness and sin, and to be consecrated to God by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the holiness that the Christian believer is called upon to possess and manifest is essentially the same holiness that God possesses.

"Be holy; for I am holy," is God's divine charge to the believer in Christ. Such a concept of holiness describes God's purity, majesty and glory in His exaltation high above all creatures and, at the same time, it denotes also God's own righteousness imparted into the human nature by God's indwelling the believer in Christ.

Holiness of God

Character of God

Holiness is a defining attribute of God's character. Holiness as a characteristic attribute of God is emphasized throughout the Bible. A few examples are: "Who is like you, O Lord?" (Exodus 15:11); "There is none holy like the Lord" (1 Samuel 2:2); "Who shall not fear You, O Lord... For You alone are holy" (Revelations 15:4). God's attribute of holiness presents God as possessing an awesome sanctity that separates and distinguishes Him far above His creatures.

The Old Testament is quite graphic in presenting God in this glorious, awesome manner. For example, consider for a moment the awesome inapproachability of God's presence or of the symbols of His presence shown in these accounts of Old Testament events:

God's holy presence at Mt Sinai — Exodus 19:10-12 (NKJV):

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, "Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death..."'"

Hebrews 12:20-21 (NKJV):

"(For they could not endure what was commanded: 'And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.' And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.')"

God's holy presence in the holy of holies — Hebrews 9:2-8 (NKJV):

"For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the

showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil ... which is called the Holiest of All ... Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing."

God's holy presence symbolized by the Ark of the Covenant — 1 Chronicles 13:9-10 (NKJV):

"And when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God."

These dramatic incidents in the Old Testament describe the utter reverence of the holiness of God's presence as displayed before the people of Israel. The holiness of God's presence is presented as a hallowed aura that absolutely forbids any form of contamination or disrespect by man or beast. The contrast in the New Testament where the presence of God has become easily accessible to man must not be misconstrued to mean that God has compromised or lowered the standard and awesomeness of His holiness to accommodate sinful man.

Extended to Man

The glorious Cross of Calvary makes real that symbolic ladder which has spanned the height between God and man without compromising God's divine holiness. God's Incarnation in the form of Christ (deity indwelling humanity), the renting of the veil that barred the holy of holies in the temple, Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection and ascension into glory are important events designed and executed by God to take away man's sins and to transform and elevate humanity from its sinfulness into God's holiness without any compromise to the holiness of God.

These historical events altogether and in their respective ways opened

to mankind the fountain-source of a holy life. Their ultimate divine purpose was to bring man into reconciliation and communion with God in His holiness. And as by faith we grasp the divine significance and meaning of these glorious events, especially as incidents involving such monumental divine cost and sacrifice, we can appreciate the extent to which God has gone, and the efficacy of these God-ordained requirements, to bring humanity into holy fellowship with Deity.

In other words, the monumental divine cost and sacrifice that these redemptive events represent demonstrate how important it was for God to bring salvation to mankind in that manner. We will recall that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane for an alternative way, perhaps less severe, but He eventually had to submit to that way as the inevitable will of God. Moreover, the greatness of the price that God had to pay for our salvation highlights how far man had fallen, the magnitude of what was required to restore mankind, and how important man's salvation is to God. In all of this, we can appreciate God's amazing grace that bridged that huge gap between God's holiness and man's sinfulness through this great salvation. Why then should we doubt that God can and will make us holy? "Truly He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things" (Romans 8:32 MKJV)?

Declared in Man

Now, therefore, God's people are called of God and expected by God to share in and manifest His holiness. "Be holy; for I am holy," is the admonition God gives to all His people (1 Peter 1:16). It must be noted that this declaration to be holy is not merely a legalistic command by God. There is divine creative power unleashed in this divine declaration to be holy, if we can hear it and perceive it rightly, and respond to it by faith. In the beginning of creation when darkness covered the earth, it was a divine declaration – "Let there be light!" – that brought forth light out of total darkness (Genesis 1:3). According to Hebrews 11:3: "By faith we understand that

the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (NKJV).

Therefore, similarly, this declaration by God Himself to the believer to be holy as He is holy is an appeal to our faith. Actually, God is commanding us to grasp by faith the divine potential of being holy that He imparts to our humanity when by the new birth He makes us partakers of His holy nature. The hour has come for sons of God in this generation to hear the voice of God in His call for holiness, and believe and live in true holiness. It is not a call to intensify some sort of pious conduct of self-righteousness or religious ceremony, but a call for the Christian believer to respond to the quickening and sanctifying power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God; it is a call for every believer to rise up to genuine holiness, into an anointed disposition or lifestyle that rejects and renounces all of the moral perversion and carnal practices which challenge the holy character of the Church today. Our response to the call of God to be holy must be like the resurrection of Lazarus to life in response to the life-giving voice of the word of Jesus, though Lazarus was already dead and buried for four days in a tomb (John 11:38-44). We can be holy as God is holy because God speaks into us, in our dead sinful state, to arise and be holy as He is holy.

God Makes Us Holy

The Sanctifying Work of God

Every Christian believer who will acknowledge or has experienced the frustration and pain of human moral weakness will find comfort and hope in the truth that the sanctification of believers in the Church in response to God's call to holiness is the work of the Holy Spirit. In our humanity, we are weak. But in calling us to holiness in the Church, God has given the Holy Ghost to help our infirmities, and to enable us to respond without compromise to the divine call to holiness in this present evil world. I am convinced that Christians will live holy lives when they yield to, and depend absolutely on, the Holy Spirit to produce holiness in them.

Therefore, do not try to become holy on your own, my dear brothers

and sisters. Of course, it is good to try or endeavour to be holy, to "hunger and thirst for righteousness," but you will not succeed by your self efforts to be holy. Let God fill you with His holiness. Your hunger and thirst for righteousness must be a symptom and realization of your own helplessness in being holy, and your total dependence on God to make you holy. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6 NKJV).

If you have been trying to pursue holiness by your own self efforts, by now you have experienced a lot of frustration and failure. You need to humbly turn to God and, in prayer and supplications with faith, ask Him for the will and power to be holy. The Holy Ghost is the one who is making us holy, and the process mysteriously involves the impartation and manifestation of God's divine nature within us. Therefore, it is imperative that every believer who wants to be holy walk in the Spirit – we must submit or yield to the Holy Spirit and let Him accomplish His work of sanctification in us. In fact, there is no stage in our Christian development where we can walk in holiness on our own. Our walk in holiness with God will always be a walk of absolute dependence on God (John 15:4; Galatians 3:1-3).

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, Paul makes it clear that the sanctification of the believer is a work of the Spirit:

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (MKJV).

Peter, recognizing the role of the divine power of God in making the Church holy, declares to believers in 2 Peter 1:2-4:

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these

you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (NKJV).

And then there is Paul’s wonderful description of the Church’s relationship to Christ in Ephesians 5:25-27:

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (KJV).

For example, in 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, and 1 Peter 1:2, the concept of holiness or sanctification used in connection with Christian believers refers specifically to separation to God by the presence and work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, or the divine nature of God within the believer. It also denotes the resulting state or quality and, of course, the consequent conduct, befitting those so separated or sanctified (for example, see 1 Thessalonians 4:3,4, 7, Romans 6:19,22, 1 Timothy 2:15, and Hebrews 12:14). It is also important to note from these Scripture passages that the holiness or sanctification of God’s people is thus a state predetermined by God for believers. As mentioned before, it is the ultimate purpose of God in the plan of salvation. Holiness is a fundamental aspect of the Christian believer’s reason of existence, and it defines his life-style in Christ in the midst of this world. God by grace calls every Christian believer into that holy state, and exhorts him to continue in it by the empowerment of the Spirit of God.

Believers, in being called to partake of the holiness of God, must respond to God with faith. While conscious of their total helplessness to overcome sin on their own, they must, at the same time, respond to the quickening power of the indwelling Christ with a firm awareness of, and yielding to, the operation of God’s power of holiness within to free them completely from the bondage of sin and death. Paul admonishes us to reckon ourselves

to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11). In fact, the basic concept of “reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” refers to that which we mentioned before as the renewing of our mind-set into a mind-set that is convinced of the possibility of Christian holy living. Thus holiness is not only an ideal to be pursued by a believer, but a characteristic experience in Christian living.

By submitting to the power of the Spirit of holiness within them, believers are cleansed from all defilement, thus forsaking sin, living a “holy” life (Romans 6:12-14; 1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 3:11), and experiencing real fellowship with God in His holiness (1 John 1:7). In other words, the believer must focus on and trust in the power of God who calls him to holiness, and respond to that divine power which produces that holiness in him. It is true that in the flesh we are weak and cannot walk in holiness on our own. But we must understand that God is willing and able to make us holy.

Hence, it is a false and deceitful sense of humility that many believers hang on to, but which neither brings benefit to us, nor any glory to God, to remain dwelling in our weaknesses and carnality, by failing to enter into God’s abundant provision of grace, which can enable us to overcome sin and live holy lives.

Sainthood and Sonship

Who Are Saints?

Are saints so-called beatified deceased believers who lived extraordinary Christian lives on earth? Or is sainthood the expected Christian life-style on earth for every believer in Christ? Interestingly, in the Bible, Christian believers are called “saints,” which is translated from the Greek word “*hagioi*” and means separated, sanctified or holy ones. It is then also interesting to note that the word “*hagioi*” translated into “saints” is a derivative of the word “*hagiosune*,” which denotes the manifestation of the quality of holiness in personal conduct. It is used in Romans 1:4 concerning the absolute holiness of Christ in the days of His flesh, which distinguished Him from all merely human beings.

It is interesting because that Scripture passage indicates that it is through the Spirit of holiness or sainthood that Jesus in His humanity was declared or appointed with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead. Therefore, the call of the Christian believer to sainthood or holiness is a call to Sonship, the entering into which is absolutely dependent upon the operation of the Spirit within the believer.

The apostle John makes a clear and fundamental connection between sainthood and Sonship in 1 John 3:2-10, and it would be helpful in the light of this study to take a look at that Scripture passage:

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when He shall be revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope on him purifies himself, even as that One is pure. Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was revealed that He might take away our sins, and in Him is no sin. Everyone who abides in Him does not sin. Everyone who sins has not seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who does righteousness is righteous, even as that One is righteous. He who practices sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that He might undo the works of the Devil. Everyone who has been born of God does not commit sin, because His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God are revealed, and the children of the Devil: everyone not practising righteousness is not of God, also he who does not love his brother” (MKJV).

That Scripture passage is self-explicit. To be born of God and be a Son of God in the midst of this crooked and perverse world is to possess the attribute of God’s holiness; it is to have the power not to sin because of being born of God, even when temptations relentlessly beset. It is living the holy life of a saint of God by virtue of being an offspring or Son of God. However, it

is necessary to note that sainthood, like Sonship, is not an attainment of human efforts. No human being can take upon himself such a status. It is a state into which God in grace lifts or places ordinary human beings who come to believe in Christ, and are, therefore, born of God to become sons of God (John 1:12-13). The working of the law of the indwelling “Spirit of life in Christ” or the Spirit of holiness within the believer, rather than the believer’s self-efforts, sets him free from the law of sin and death, and makes him holy or appoints him into sainthood (Romans 8:1-4). Hallelujah! But in entering into Sonship, there must first come to the Christian believer an awakening to the realization or a profound revelation of the truth or reality of the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of the Son of God, or the Spirit of holiness within, and a faithful submission to the Holy Spirit as He develops within him a character of holiness, and leads him in a path of righteousness (Romans 8:5-17). In other words, the point is that, if we are going to be saints and Sons of God in this world, we must hear the voice of God declaring to us to be holy as He is holy; we must have faith in God’s declared word, submitting absolutely to it, and living by it a holy life. Indeed, this is responding to the call to sainthood.

Whereas holiness denotes that unique attribute of God that presents Deity far above humanity, the concept of sainthood — the presence of the Spirit of holiness within man — reveals the glorious possibility of the reality of a man being a holy man or a saint even while here in this world. But, as has been said again and again in this study, to fully experience true holiness or sainthood, Christian believers need to renew their minds; that is, to demolish the old crippled mind-set that causes them to perceive themselves as still slaves to sin, and not as saints whom the power of the indwelling Spirit of holiness has set free from the forces of sin and death. In other words, the victory of holiness in a believer’s life is virtually a victory of the mind. Paul puts it this way in Romans 12:1-2:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren,

by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (NKJV).

That Scripture passage, which makes it clear that we can be completely transformed by the renewing of our minds, supports the well-known adage: “you are what you think you are.” Therefore, we need to stop allowing ourselves to become intimidated by the challenges of living holy lives in this present world, and renounce the lies of the devil, who tries to convince us that the time and place for holy living is not here and now. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that God has called us and has given us the grace “to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...” (Titus 2:12 NIV).

Sainthood and the Church

Indeed, the call to holiness or sainthood, as it directly pertains to the Church, is brought out clearly in the Scriptures. For instance, Paul, writing to the local church in the city of Corinth, addressed them in this way:

“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:2-3 KJV).

It is interesting to note that here in this Scripture passage Paul is referring to the believers at Corinth as those who are “called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ...” Here, Paul shows the possibility of ordinary humanity everywhere rising to the glorious level of sainthood by the grace of God. No where in the Scriptures is sainthood taught, like some have it, as some sort of exclusive status bestowed on a Christian after death for exceptional practice of virtue and good deeds while on earth. According to the Scriptures, God honours no one in heaven on the basis of human

endeavour and self-righteousness. In His presence, there shall no flesh glory (1 Corinthians 1:29).

If we must glory, we can only glory in the Cross, which signifies God’s abundant grace and mercy extended to fallen humanity. And so, sainthood, which actually means those who are sanctified in Christ, is a call to “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,” and it, therefore, embraces the whole Church. Many believers excuse themselves from a holy life, and still consider themselves to be a part of the Church, because they assume that a holy life is for exceptional Christians. The call to holiness is for all Christian believers in the Church of the living God. And no true Christian can excuse himself from this solemn call.

It is clear that the divine call of the Church, *ekklesia*, is identical to that of sainthood, *hagioi*, in that it is the one and the same call of Christian believers out of sin and worldliness into a holy consecration to God. The saints are thus referred to in Scriptures in various terms that denote the body of holy believers constituting the Church of the living God: for example “a holy temple” (1 Corinthians 3:17); “the Church” (Ephesians 2:21, 5:27); “a holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5); “a holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9). Therefore, conceptually, “the Church”, “a holy people”, and “saints” are identical concepts that imply a people sanctified from all that which is sinful and corrupt. The Church is God’s holy people. Therefore, whether it is in terms of bringing forth saints, or the *ekklesia*, a called-out people, or Sons of God, the call to holiness is one which primarily defines and characterizes the nature of the true Church.

Conclusion

We can now conclude on the basis of sound Scriptural teachings that the Church is an institution of God’s holy people. Everyone who is a true part of the Church can and must be holy. Holiness is an invariable criterion that defines the character and conduct of all who belong to the Church. There can be no exemption or compromise to this divine criterion. Paul puts it plainly: “Nevertheless, the solid foundation

of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity'" (2 Timothy 2:19 NKJV).

Therefore the concept of an *ekklesia*, a called-out people, used by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures to identify the Church in this world, should not be taken lightly. It has a fundamental purpose of identifying the characteristic nature of the holiness of the Church in this perverse and ungodly world. In other words, the concept of an *ekklesia*, a called-out people, gives to the Church uniqueness or exclusiveness in character that fundamentally distinguishes it by its holiness in the world. And every believer who is truly a part of the Church must manifest a holy character.

This study has shown that God will help us, who belong to the Church, to be holy. If we humbly look to God, He will give us both the

will and power to be holy. His grace is abundantly available for us. Holiness should be a normal, characteristic way of life for every true Christian. We must look to God to inspire us with the firm faith and conviction that He is willing and able to remove sin from our lives completely. The Blood of Christ can and does cleanse and purge us, who believe in Christ, from all sins, and the Holy Spirit of God can and does enable us to walk as Sons of God and saints in sincere holiness in the midst of this present corrupt world.

Let us, therefore, reject the misguided mind-set of inevitable sinning that tends to spiritually and morally paralyse so many professing Christians into a state of perpetual feebleness. Let our faith and mind be established on the truth clearly taught by the Scriptures that God is willing and able to make His people a holy people. If, when we were in our sinful state, helpless or dead in our sins, God, by grace, ministered to us and

quickened us to rise up and walk in the life and Spirit of His Son; by His grace He will enable us to live holy and overcoming lives in Christ. Therefore, "now, being made free from sin, and having become slaves to God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22 MKJV).

Let us end this study on holiness with Paul's reminder in Titus 2:11-14 of the good news of the gospel of the Kingdom that the grace of salvation empowers us to live holy lives:

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (NKJV).

Offences

By F.T. Paterson

It should be evident that the father of offences is the god of this world, more precisely, Satan or the Devil. This goes back to his rebellion in Heaven when he desired to be like the Most High. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:12-14 KJV). He took offence because he did not like that there was someone who was more important than he was, and it is often the same today. We may feel that we are not treated as importantly as we think we should be. "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it" (James

4:1-2 NIV). I dare say I am correct in saying that most, if not all, wars and conflicts, as well as quarrels of any sort, are fuelled by offences. We see the first reported case of human offence in the account of Cain and Abel. They brought their offerings to God, and God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but did not have respect to Cain and his offering. Cain was offended and very wroth, so much so that he slew his brother (Gen. 4:5).

Not only are others hurt, but we ourselves are hurt by offences. The results of offences are many and varied; they tear us apart. We avoid one another, causing disunity, unforgiveness, bitterness and many other things to manifest themselves because of offences. The church should be an island of peace in the midst of troubled waters; yet we see churches split, brother and sister at odds with one another, and the body of Christ compromised in ways that should never be named among us.

Offences do not stop at the door of

the church, but extend to our neighbours and many other situations. In the last while we have seen a term emerge called "Road Rage;" people are offended because of some real, or imagined, traffic offence. Someone cut them off or passed them when they were not supposed to. This has led to physical violence and even murder. I observed a situation, not long ago, where a young man was shouting obscenities at another vehicle for some infraction that had been committed. As I got closer, I saw the universal symbol of Christianity, a fish, on his vehicle. I do not know if this person was a Christian or not, but if he was: WHAT A TESTIMONY!

Brother, sister: the world is watching us, hearing our message of salvation, deliverance and peace. Are they observing the fruits of a spiritual life, or hearing empty words without their manifestation being observed in our lives? Jesus upbraided the Scribes and Pharisees, calling them a

whitened sepulchre full of dead men's bones (**Matt. 23:27**). They were beautiful on the outside, but had no substance on the inside. I have heard it said, when someone is offended, "I am grieved in my spirit." There is a grieving of the spirit when we see the evil around us, but let's not try to dress up offences in religious garments. Because of our relationship with Christ and our walk in the Spirit, to take offence at a brother or sister in whom Christ dwells is actually taking an offence in Christ. "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me" (**Matt. 11:6 KJV**). This does not give us license for an offence in the church or in the world, for the scripture is plain that we are not to take offence. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (**Matt. 18:7 KJV**). Arthur Barry was a jewel thief that became somewhat famous in the 1920s because he only stole from the very wealthy. It even became somewhat of a status symbol to have been robbed by him. He was caught and spent a number of years in prison. In prison, he made up his mind to change his lifestyle and moved to a small town and became a productive citizen. Eventually, a newspaper reporter recognized him and interviewed him. One of the questions asked was, "Can you remember who you stole the most from?" He answered, "The person I stole the most from was Arthur Barry. I wasted many years in which I could have been a teacher, doctor, engineer or many other things which would have benefited mankind." It is the same with giving offences: the person that is hurt most is one's self.

It is bad enough when offences are directed at those that are outside our family circle, but many times these are directed at family. Broken marriages result with families torn apart. Husbands and wives barely tolerating one another are anything but loving participants in the marriage. This has a devastating effect on the children, who must wonder what will happen, causing them to live in insecurity. Because of offences, whole families are devastated and go their separate ways. Siblings are torn apart and may not speak to one another for the rest of their lives.

There are reports of family members reduced to hating one another and, years later, they could not even remember the offence that started it all.

We have concentrated on taking offence thus far, but scripture also tells not to give offence. "We give no offence in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed" (**2 Cor. 6:3 NKJV**). "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (**1 Cor. 10:32 KJV**). I realize that people can take offence at almost everything; but as Christians, we are as much as possible to live at peace with all men (**Rom. 12:18**). When an offence takes place, it is usually the result of pride on the part of the one that is offended, and possibly a lack of discernment on the one giving the offence. The scripture points out that pride causes contention. "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom" (**Prov. 13:10 KJV**). We are not to give offence in word or in deed. "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (**Eph. 4:30-32 NIV**).

If there is an offence; there needs to be forgiveness; if not, the offence will grow into bitterness, and defile not only those who are involved, but the whole church. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;" (**Heb. 12:15 KJV**). "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (**Matt. 6:14-15 KJV**). Is it not better to defuse a situation before it escalates rather than hope it will improve? In most cases, the situation will not improve, but will get worse: "Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it is written, 'I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it,' says the Lord. Instead, do what the Scriptures say: 'If your enemies are hungry,

feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done for you.' Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good" (**Rom. 12:19-21 NLT**). "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. **Settle matters quickly** with your adversary who is taking you to court" (**Matt. 5:23-25 NIV**). Apologize quickly, even if you feel you are not wrong; for a soft answer turns away wrath and grievous words stir up anger (**Prov. 15:1**). If you have been at odds with someone and they come to make things right, I urge you not to hang on to the hurt; be forgiving, even though you may feel that you are right and the other person is at fault. Often we find it very difficult to forget when we have been hurt, but we can still forgive with the help of the Holy Spirit. "No, dear brothers, I am still not all I should be, but I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead," (**Phil. 3:13 TLB**). It is pride that keeps us from making the offence right. "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife" (**Prov. 26:20-21 KJV**). "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" (**Matt. 5:44 KJV**). We have no-fault insurance for our automobiles, and the insurance company fixes the damage without laying blame. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have no-fault forgiving where the blame is forgiven regardless of who is at fault?

It is evident that if there is no offence, forgiveness is not required, and if there is no offence taken, there is peace. We can choose to be offended and we can choose to forgive. No one forces us to be offended or to not forgive. The story is told of a man who went to by a paper at a news stand, and the clerk was very rude to

him. He, in turn treated the clerk with courtesy. When asked why he did so, he replied, "I'm not going to let him tell me how to live today or to ruin my day." No one ever became bitter by not being offended. The following is a motto that we could put on our fridge with the different sayings that we often put there, along with the pictures and drawings from our children and grandchildren. **"Forgiveness takes place when love accepts the abrasions of life and drops all charges against the other person."**

Great peace have they which love thy law: and **"nothing shall offend them"** (Psa. 119:165 KJV). Peace is one result of forgiveness. God's word tells us how to achieve peace and the rewards of that peace. "You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You" (Isa. 26:3 NKJV). "This is what the LORD says - your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: 'I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea'" (Isa. 48:17-18 NIV). "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John

14:25-27 NIV). "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33 NIV).

Bitterness and bad feelings will fester and become worse if we do not deal with them quickly. With the help of the Lord, we are able to put the hurts aside, enter into the grace of forgiveness and partake of the peace that the Lord has promised. "So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting" (Eccl. 11:10 NASU). Actually, life is too short to spend our time living in anger and bitterness when there is so much of love and joy to be enjoyed by walking in the way of peace and the paths of righteousness. "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things" (Phil. 4:4-8 NIV).

Church history records many grievous things which have happened because of religious offences. People are treated despicably, tortured, scourged, burned at the stake; and

even crucified, all in the name of religious truth. I watched a documentary on the life of Conrad Grebel, one of the leaders of the Anabaptist movement. He was persecuted by the reform movement because of his belief in believers baptism rather than infant baptism. These same reformers had been cruelly treated by the Roman church not many years before. All because their religious views differed from those accepted as truth by the persecutors. In the closing scenes of the film, Conrad Grebel, tied to a stake in a cart, beaten and bloodied, was being paraded through the streets to a place where he was to be burned at the stake. The greatest example of religious intolerance is found in the gospels in the account of the crucifixion of Jesus. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5 KJV). Though the method of execution may have been different, the same fate awaited the disciples and church leaders of the early church. It has been the same down through church history; from the arenas of Rome to the ecclesiastical courts of the Spanish inquisition, men and women have been martyred because they refused to give up that which they considered to be the will of God.

Jesus said that (in the end of the age) the angels would gather all things that offend, and in judgment cast them into the fire (Matt. 13:41-42).

In Everything Give Thanks

By Albert Hannigan

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet

believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:3-9).

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12).

We, too, have much to thank God for and to rejoice in as we walk this pilgrim pathway. "O the joy of our

salvation! O the joy of being free; Free from all the bonds that bind us. O the joy of victory!"

What a joy, just to know that our sins have been forgiven us and washed away by the blood of Christ; just to know that we have eternal life because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; what a joy to know that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ in His kingdom. Glory to His wonderful Name!!

After the children of Israel left Egypt and crossed over the Red Sea on dry land, and their enemies perished behind them; then there was great rejoicing in the camp. Moses and the children of Israel rejoiced saying, "I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him" (Exodus 15:1-2).

Not only did Moses rejoice and sing, but Miriam also, and the ladies went with timbrels and sand and danced with joy for God's great deliverance.

Cannot we too rejoice with joy unspeakable for the deliverance and salvation that God has provided for us? He has called us to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ in His eternal Kingdom. Glory be to God!!

And God is interested in the whole creation being delivered from the bondage it is in. The whole creation groans and travails under the bondage of the curse. But God's intention is to lift the curse: "Because the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed IN US" (Romans 8:18).

The creation is waiting for that unveiling of Christ in his many-membered Body.

As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the

coming of the Son of Man; they were eating and drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage, till the flood came and took them all away (Matthew 24:37-39). But Noah and his family were in the ark.

Signs are on every hand that it is the same today as it was then. There is sin and darkness everywhere. There are wars and rumours of wars. The land is filled with violence. There are earthquakes, floods and fires, perilous times are upon us, and disease and famine are in the land. But there is a people who God is hiding in the Ark of safety; a people who are dwelling "in the secret place of the Most High." The coming of the Lord in all His power and glory draweth nigh. Let us rejoice in the victory that is ours in Christ Jesus, our blessed Lord.

As we have been delivered from our sins and the power of the enemy, even so shall the glory and power of Christ set the people of the earth free. There will be judgement for the ungodly and disobedient, but there is mercy and forgiveness to the repentant sinner. Praise God.

No doubt, many are going through severe trials at this very time. It may be trials in your physical body through illness; it may be financial problems for which there seems to be no answer. It may be conflicts between people within the home, in the church, or in the world. Jesus is the one who came to bring peace to our hearts. He has broken down the walls that divide us. He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). His love can bind us together as nothing else can. He is the great Physician, who is able to heal our bodies. Many times we have received that healing touch when we have called upon Him. And He is able to provide the wisdom that we need in regard to financial matters. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

May the Holy Spirit encourage us in the midst of our fiery trials; "But

now thus saith the LORD that created thee... Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour" (Isaiah 43:1-3).

Because people rebel and disobey the commandments of the Lord, God is obliged to send his judgements upon them. He said, "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

But "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1). May God help us to run and hide in the shelter of His Wings. There, there is safety; there, there is joy and peace.

Truly these are perilous days in which we live. The trials and testings are many. And we could have great reason to be despondent and discouraged. How we need to stand together and bear one another's burdens! How we need to hold one another's hands, to comfort and uphold, and embrace one another, and weep with one another, when the trials are overwhelming. And the precious Holy Spirit is able to bring comfort and lift the heavy burdens. He gives "the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3).

We can be so thankful that we do not walk this way alone. In Ephesians, chapter two, the apostle refers to our togetherness several times: "and made us sit together" (verse 6); "building fitly framed together" (verse 21); and "builded together" (verse 22). Even Jesus did not walk alone. He had twelve disciples with him much of the time. He took Peter, James, and John with him to the garden of Gethsemane. Above all, He was in close communion with His Father. We, too, can walk together to support and strengthen and encourage one another. And the Lord, from whom we can receive strength every moment

of the day, is always with us.

After Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, and after He defeated the enemy by quoting to him the Word of God, Satan left Him, and, we read in Matthew 4:11, "behold, angels came and ministered unto him." Glory to God! Speaking of angels, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14)? No doubt but that God has many times sent His angels to minister to us in times of great need, and has helped us.

Indeed, God has given unto us all

things that pertain unto Life and Godliness. Let us rejoice at all times, not only when things seemingly go well, but also when things seem to go against us. When we praise Him, He dwells in our praises. When we pray in the Spirit, we are edified, and the Holy Spirit is praying through us according to the will of God, and He knows the needs that are being met.

What a wonderful Lord! What a wonderful salvation! What a glorious kingdom is the Kingdom of our God. Let us ever press on to higher heights and deeper depths in Him.

God richly bless you. Amen.

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James Easton

February 12, 2004
Chilliwack, BC
• • •

Jennie McLeod

(Elder's widow)
April 8, 2004
Winnipeg, MB
• • •

Gerry Matthias

May 24, 2004
North Battleford, SK

DATES OF IMPORTANCE

Young People's - Hidden Acres, ON Sept. 3-6, 2004
Young People's - Park Valley, SK Sept. 3-6, 2004
Family Camp - Winkler, MB Sept. 3-6, 2004
Minden Meetings Sept. 24, 25, 26, 2004
New York Camp Oct. 29-31, 2004
Pinelov Fall Family Camp Nov. 11-14, 2004

MINDEN NEBRASKA MEETINGS

September 24 - 26, 2004

For reservations contact
Duane and Janice Olson
Phone (308) 832-1712
or email

mindenolsons@hotmail.com
Reservations no later than
September 10th.

PINELOW FALL CAMP FAMILY CAMP

November 11-14, 2004

Contact: Daryl Martz

Fax (604) 795-5365

e-mail: martz@shelbrook.com

New York/New Jersey Camp Meeting

October 29 to 31, 2004

Leibenzel Retreat Center,
Schooley's Mountain,
80 Pleasant Grove Road, New Jersey 07079

Please bring your own linens (single bed), towels & pillows, as these will not be available at the campground. A limited amount of linens can be rented for \$5/set for those travelling from further away.

Registration begins at 3:00 pm on Friday, October 31. Meals will be served in the dining hall, beginning at 5:30 pm on Friday, followed by the first meeting at 7:30 pm. The camp will conclude with the noon meal on Sunday, October 31, 2004.

Charges for your room & board:
Under 3 years of age - no charge
Age 3-10 - \$20.00
Age 11 - Adult - \$60.00

For transportation contact
Cleveland Gajee at debgaj@aol.com
or Phone 201-486-5644

Please RSVP by October 13th to:
New York, New Jersey Camp
c/o Brad & Carrie Wensley
10 Penn Commons
Yaphank, NY 11980 or
Phone: 631-924-7626
or email: carriemw@optonline.net

Sharon Children's Homes and Schools
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