

Inspiring Quotes From Pentecostal Leaders And Others

The word “revival” means:

- the *radical changes* seen in the thoughts, purposes, actions and lives of born-again Christians through the *Holy Spirit’s power* by *God’s grace*
- the associated *large numbers* of *real conversions* of unbelievers to Jesus Christ
- and *resulting changes* in *secular society*.

But in the United States and many other Western countries since about the 1970’s, the word “revival” has been changed by some to refer to numerous poor imitations of the real thing. Some churches have claimed to have revival on the basis merely of positive thinking and positive confession. They went around for years loudly proclaiming they had a revival even though none had manifested. They believed that God was obliged to give them revival because of their mere “faith” confessions done without deep heart repentance and accompanying fruits of repentance in daily living. Such people think they are having a revival just because they advertise in the paper they are having one.

Other churches who preached an easy believism “gospel” and cheap grace claimed to have revival just because they were attracting large numbers of people. When you examined closely such churches, you would find that a large number of their people were unconverted or were living at the highest levels of carnality possible for a saved believer. Church discipline at such compromising churches is usually almost non-existent except in relation to anyone who disagrees with the compromise, worldliness and easy believism “gospel” preached at such places. Also such churches usually are experts at attracting sheep from other churches through providing plenty of excitement and so on.

From the early 1970’s, some churches have claimed to be experiencing revival just because they were having many prophecies, tongues and interpretations, Words of wisdom, discerning of spirits, healings, demons cast out, people being “slain” in the Spirit, dreams, visions and revelations of the Holy Spirit. When genuinely from God, all of these are wonderful things. But note the Corinthian church had all or most of these things in abundance, but was not a church in revival. In fact, the Corinthian Church was full of babes or infants in Christ who had never matured and many people who had backslidden from the type of heart attitudes they had originally at conversion.

In some churches, the claims about supposed “God-given” revelations, visions, prophecies, miracles, healings, deliverances and so on far exceeded the truth about what God was doing among the members of such churches. Some people thought that being outwardly positive about results was more important than not telling lies. How different is the Bible! After Jesus ministered at Nazareth, the Scriptures record how few miracles he did there because of the people’s unbelief (see Matthew 13:58). I love to pray in tongues, see God heal others supernaturally, observe people being freed of demons, receive personal revelations and

supernatural guidance from God, experience the Holy Spirit's power and observe the gifts of the Holy Spirit operating. But I hate it when Christians exaggerate or lie about such matters.

Sadly, in Africa and other parts of the Third World, there has arisen especially in the 1990's some groups who have copied the sin-compromising attitudes of those Western churches who preached easy believism and cheap grace. Such third world groups are usually great boasters of their "revivals" also. Such revivals are only imitations of the real thing.

In the rest of this chapter, I will give you some quotes of some Pentecostal ministers from groups who have experienced various measures of *real revival*. As you will see such groups do not preach easy believism or cheap grace, but instead preach a strong Gospel just as did Paul, Peter and the other Apostles. Also these Pentecostal groups exercise church discipline. I do not necessarily agree with every attitude expressed in the following quotes. But maybe I am wrong and need to adjust my views about a number of matters. Also note there is a certain amount of difference of opinion among these Pentecostal leaders. But despite this, there is a similarity in much of what they say.

Note:

- The following are questions asked to some leaders of Pentecostal denominations overseas which have experienced large scale revival and associated church growth.
- When I wrote to Pastor S.T. Asior, I mistakenly did not ask him all the questions. This is why some answers are not here from him.
- The following answers to my questions come from letters these Christian leaders wrote to me in 1995.
- I agree with most of what these leaders say but not every word. I believe you need to read what these godly men have written here.

Question about handling unrepentant adulterous church members

Question 1:

If a church member who has been born again for many years, falls into adultery and won't repent, how would your fellow pastors deal with this?

A) The first answer is provided by Rev. Blessed Agugua. (He is the Principal of the Western Bible College which is a part of the Assemblies of God in Nigeria. The A.O.G in Nigeria had about 4000 churches, 274,000 members and an extra 685,000 affiliated regular attenders in about 1990. ¹ They have grown since then.

"If after one is born again and he falls into adultery and repents of his sins he will be reconciled. But if he continues to live an adulterous life and never repents, he will be regarded as an unbeliever. Since he sees no reason for repentance, such a person has lost his status of membership."

B) The below answer is from Rev. N.O. Awojide. (He is a regional superintendent of the Apostolic Church in Nigeria. The Apostolic Church in Nigeria had 5,135 congregations, 380,000 members and also an extra 844,000 affiliated regular attenders in about 1990. ²

¹ Patrick Johnstone, "OperationWorld", O.M. Publishing, 1993, page 421.

² Ibid.

“If a Church member who has been born again for so many years falls to a sin of adultery and will not repent after suspension by the Church authority and he or she shows no sense of penitence or remorse, he would be ex-communicated, and the Church will make such person to know or understand that he or she is suffering under the yoke of Satan and the Pastors will still endeavour to pay a visit to such member and continue to admonish and encourage him or her the Scripture and continue to emphasise to him or her that he or she or her soul could be saved from perdition and the Pastors or the Church will show such person that they do not hate him or her that they love him and they will continue to pray for such person, until the person changes and ceases from committing the sin of adultery and be reinstated as a member.”

C) The below answer is from Rev. James H. Stewart. (He was formerly field leader of Assemblies of God missionaries in the southern nations of Africa. Speaking of his own background, he said: *“Previously I had worked in South Africa for 10 years with the South African Assemblies of God and then for 25 years with the ‘International’ Assemblies of God which was that part of the Assemblies of God that affiliates with the American Assemblies of God and the Worldwide Fellowship. I was involved during this time with the organization of the Assemblies of God in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Mocambique and Swaziland.”* He was recently planting A.O.G churches in Namibia. The A.O.G in South Africa alone had about 2,000 churches, 250,000 members and an extra 300,000 affiliated regular attenders in about 1990 (Johnstone, page 494).) Rev. Stewart said:

“Those members who are guilty of adultery and do not repent are dismissed.”

D) The below answer is from Rev. Jack Nkandu. (He is the Director of Youth and Christian Education of the Church of God (Cleveland) in Zambia. The General Overseer of the Church of God in Zambia, Bishop John H. Mambo wrote approving of Rev. Nkandu’s answers. Bishop Mambo is the President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Zambia – a group of leaders from the main Pentecostal denominations in Zambia. The Church of God is one of the fastest growing Pentecostal groups in Zambia. It has about 100,000 members and over 200,000 adherents including members. Jack’s answers here are fascinating considering he deals so much with youth).

“This person cannot find it easy to have an open fellowship, since he/she is known. A complaint can be lodged to start dealing with this member. If all efforts of restoring him fails, then the person is excommunicated from the fellowship and will be counted as an Infidel and this is announced in the church.”

E) The below answer is from Dr Kriengsak Chareonwongsak. (He is founder of the Hope of God Churches – one of the largest Pentecostal groups in Thailand. This group has a heavy emphasis on evangelism and church planting.)

“1. Church discipline – we follow the principles given in Mat 18:15-18. If someone does wrong, according to Scripture, we first bring the matter up with them privately. If they remain unrepentant we bring it to the leaders, and if they are still unrepentant it comes before the church. Someone will only be suspended from fellowship if they remain unrepentant having discussed the matter with them at length and prayed for them. They will be suspended only where they clearly disobey Biblical principles. They are suspended through our desire to see them right the matter before God and to be changed in their life. It is always our desire, if someone needs to be suspended from fellowship, that they will repent and be brought back into fellowship.

2. Someone in this situation (i.e. adultery) would be dealt with as above. We would hope that they would confess their wrong from the past and be repentant of it and would counsel them in love and with prayer to bring them to repentance and forgiveness. If they are unrepentant then the above steps would need to be taken.”

F) The below answer is provided by Pastor F.W.K. Akuffo. (He is an area superintendent of the Apostolic Church in Ghana. He has many churches and pastors to oversee. The

Apostolic Church is one of the largest Pentecostal groups in Ghana. They had 1500 churches and 300,000 adherents (out of which 200,000 were members) in 1993).
“Such a member shall be considered as an adherent he or she automatically ceases to be a member, though his membership can be restored, but not until it conforms to scriptural standards.”

Handling new converts who continue a previous sexual relationship outside marriage

Question 2:

If a new convert was before conversion having a sexual relationship with a person to whom they are not married and then continued this fornication relationship after conversion, how would your fellow pastors deal with this problem?

A) Rev Blessed Agugua’s answer

“In this case, the new convert will be advised that if he doesn’t want to leave his sexual partner and decide to have her as his wife, he should go and settle the bride price (a Nigerian custom) and marry her as his wife or husband. But if they don’t want to marry, they have to separate because there is no middle ground for them to be in the church and live together as husband and wife without being legally married. In conclusion Christians should not cohabit or engage in trial marriage. Either they are married or not married.”

B) Rev N.O. Awojide’s answer

“If any convert before his conversion was having sexual relationship with a person whom they were not married and continue this after conversion, the answer to this is that the Pastors will treat or regard the sexual immorality that the new convert had before conversion to be sins committed during the time of ignorance and after conversion if such person continues this shows that the conversion of such person is not genuine and the Pastors will continue to preach to such person to repent and desist from the sin of fornication and this mean that the Pastors will have to be closer to such person and make such person realise that God hates sin.”

C) Rev James H. Stewart’s answer

“New converts are aware of the sin of fornication. An illicit relationship would mean no consideration for membership. We would expect them to legalise such a relationship or if this is not possible to break it off.”

D) Rev Jack Nkandu’s answer

“If the new convert after conversion still continues having sexual relationship with some lady who is not a wife, he will be fully helped to understand what it means to repent – to be born again, and surrender one’s life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Secondly if it is discovered that the person is under bondage, then he will be given counsel and then deliverance will be ministered. In most cases, if the sinning partner is an unbeliever, the new convert is encouraged to make his stand known to the partner, and then breakup the relationship.

If they are both converts, they will be called together for counselling and advised to make their marital status legal by marrying and that is only if they have sincere love for one another. The church will after proper counselling and arrangements are done, wed them and make their marriage legal.”

E) Dr Kriengsak Chareonwongsak’s answer

“On conversion we must teach our people the truth of God’s Word. This cannot be done all at once, but if the situation is as you describe then this matter would need to be brought up with the new convert as soon as possible and dealt with. They would be shown God’s principles on this from the Bible and led to

understand it themselves so that they can make the right decision. This would be done by a leader who is close to them and knows them personally.”

F) Pastor F.W.K. Akuffo’s answer

“The same as question one answer. Such as a person would be suspended. His action would be announced publicly and would be regarded as an adherent. His membership would be restored when his life conformed to Scriptural standards.”

Ministry to new converts about turning from specific sins

Question 3:

When new converts come into the church, do your fellow pastors have bible study or discipleship classes in which the new converts are clearly told in what areas of their lives they must change or repent? If so, who teaches these classes – the senior pastor or assistant pastors or lay leaders? Do these leaders lovingly warn the new converts about witchcraft, stealing, lying, adultery, fornication, pornographic magazines, pornographic type movies and similar moral issues.

A) Rev Blessed Agugua’s answer

1. *“New Converts are taught the basic doctrines of the Bible called Tenets of Faith – Study of Biblical Teachings.*
2. *This class is taught by either the Senior Pastor, Associate or assistant pastor. An elder teacher in good standing could teach this class also.*
3. *They are warned about those unchristian behaviours and similar immoral dealings.”*

B) Rev. N.O. Awojide’s answer

“In the Apostolic Church we have ample provisions for new converts, such as Bible teachings, Doctrine teachings, Sunday School teachings and officers teaching meetings where the Pastors, the Elders and other officers of the Church are mandated to teach the new converts and indeed the entire members of the Church, although in The Apostolic Church in Nigeria there is no senior or junior Pastors, since both young and old Pastors are well trained and versed in the scripture they can handle any teaching assigned to them and not even for the new converts alone, but teaching that can meet the needs of the saints under their folds. The leaders in The Apostolic Church in Nigeria who is assigned to teach the new converts and the entire Church members do warn them seriously against the dangers inherent in any convert or member to be practicing or belonging to the witchcraft cult, stealing, lying, adultery, fornication and pornographic movies and other immoral issues in accordance with the precepts of the scripture that any person who engages in the above evil practices will not enter into the kingdom of God but they will have their portions in the hell-fire.”

C) Rev James H. Stewart’s answer

“We do have new converts and then membership classes in which both negative and positive conduct is dealt with.”

D) Rev Jack Nkandu’s answer

“When new converts come into the church, they are encouraged to attend and go through new converts lessons, Bible studies conducted by Pastor, lay leaders or elders. The leaders of the Church of God do constantly and lovingly warn not only the new converts, but old members as well about witchcraft, stealing, lying, adultery, fornication and all that is mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21 (The acts of the sinful nature). They are also encouraged as Christians to avoid literature, programs and music which are worldly in content or pornographic in nature.”

E) Dr Kriengsak Chareonwongsak's answer

"When people make a decision to follow Christ they are followed up within 24 hours, and then taught systematically from the Bible once or twice a week the basic principles of Christianity including life characteristics and habits from a Biblical perspective. They will be challenged to respond by repenting of areas where change is needed. They are taught by shepherds or care group leaders. If there is a serious matter it may need to be discussed with a higher level leader. The new believers are taught about all matters dealt with in the Bible."

F) Pastor F. W. K. Akuffo's answer

"Yes, special Bible study classes are organised every Wednesday for new converts. It is sometimes conducted by a Pastor or a lay preacher. They lovingly take them through all the moral issues you raised."

G) Pastor B. T. Asior's answer

"Yes, Pastors in the Apostolic Church – Ghana do hold classes for new converts and teach them what they need to repent of eg. 1. Fornication 2. Adultery 3. Thieving 4. Fighting etc and every practice which is contrary to God's Ordinance or contrary to Christianity."

Their attitudes to conversion, repentance and receiving Christ as Lord

Question 4:

When preaching to *unbelievers*, do your fellow pastors and evangelists only ask the unbelievers who seem to desire to be saved, to believe that Jesus died on the Cross for their sins and was resurrected from the dead? Or do your fellow pastors and evangelists tell these inquirers about salvation that they must also repent and surrender their lives to Jesus' Lordship in order to be born-again?

A) Rev Blessed Agugua's answer

"The second part of the statement is the pattern we adopt here to get the unbelievers to get committed in their belief in Jesus for salvation. Surrendering their lives to Jesus' Lordship not only to be born again but also to grow in grace and the Word and knowledge of God. This includes getting involved in discipleship and faithful life."

B) Rev N. O. Awojide's answer

"Our Pastors and Evangelists when preaching to unbelievers do not only ask the unbelievers who seem to desire to be saved to believe that Jesus died on the cross for their sins and resurrected but to admonish or exhort them to repent and surrender their lives to Jesus, by accepting Him as their personal Lord and Saviour."

In another part of his letter, Rev. Awojide also said: *"Our preachers preach to sinners or unbelievers to repent from their sins and not to claim grace of God alone but they are made to realise that they have to repent and forsake their sins before the grace of God can be extended to them, and even believers themselves can not abound in sins and ask the grace of God to multiply."*

C) Rev James H. Stewart's answer

"Our stand is that in order to be saved, sinners need to repent (show enough sorrow for the old life as to turn around) and then to believe on the substitutionary death of Jesus and in the power of His resurrection."

D) Rev Jack Nkandu's answer

"When preaching to unbelievers, the full message of salvation is given and that repentance is key to salvation. We help them believe that Jesus died on the cross for man's sins and was resurrected from the

dead, and that just as our lives were under the control of Satan – those who have repented of their sin and have confessed Jesus as Lord and Saviour, must also surrender to his Lordship to truly become his,”

E) Dr Kriengsak Chareonwongsak’s answer

“When challenging unbelievers to come to Christ the Gospel message of Jesus’ death and resurrection is explained to them as well as repentance and giving their life to Jesus to be Lord of their life.”

F) Pastor F. W. K. Akuffo’s answer

“When preaching to unbelievers, we ask them to repent of their sins and surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.”

Immanuel Lazaro’s words

Rev Immanuel Lazaro is a former General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Tanzania and now the Director of Evangelism of A.O.G in Tanzania. He wrote in January, 1995:

“In your letter you asked about the church’s discipline and your first question was how would the Tanzanian A.O.G pastors deal with a church member who would not repent from the sin of adultery. The answer is: We shall try to our level best to help him through the word of God in Matthew 18:15-16 but if he continues with the act then we separate him from the church according to the word of God in Matthew 18:17-20 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 says.

Your second question was about a new convert who has a sexual relationship with a person to whom they are not married with but have been together before conversion to Jesus and the pastor knows it after 6 months. The answer is: We first ask him/her whether he/she would like to live with the partner as a wife/husband. If he/she agrees then we ask them to go to the Government Registrar of Marriage to register themselves as husband and wife. After having their marriage certificate they may come for the Church’s Blessings; otherwise, if they are not in favour of living as husband and wife, then they have to separate and if the convert does not like to separate from the partner then she/he will be separated from the church.

*Your third question was whether we teach the new converts clearly about their behaviour as Christians. The answer is: Yes, we do. First, we make sure that their behaviour is right according to the word of God. Secondly, we offer special sessions, specifically for the new converts and **thirdly we insist on those teachings before baptizing any convert.** In case we hear or we learn about a convert with such behaviour as you narrated in your letter, we call him personally and try to help him/her as an individual.*

Your last question was about the sermons we preach to the unbelievers whether we preach only the love of God and what Jesus achieved on the cross for them or do we preach them about their moral standards. The question was a challenging one. Personally I have been to America and Europe and I have seen how they preach to the unbelievers. Usually they preach the Love of God and what Jesus accomplished on the cross. In Africa it is different, we begin telling someone about his sins and if he/she would like to see God’s Love then should “cast out” all his/her sins and stop sinning any more. It is after that when they can receive forgiveness and salvation. It is because you preach people the love of God only without first bringing them to conviction of their sins that the Lord’s Church in Europe and America is dying spiritually. This is the mistake done by Ministers who think that by preaching to people about their sins means to dishonour them.”

Edgar Gschwend’s words

The Apostolic Faith Mission is one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the southern nations of Africa. It was founded by the greatest revivalist John G Lake (1870-1935). Lake was greatly used by God in awesome miracles of healing and casting out of demons. The

Apostolic Faith Mission had about 2,787 churches, 369,000 members and 615,000 extra affiliated regular attenders in about 1990 in the nation of South Africa. Their missions director for many years was Rev Edgar Gschwend. In answer to my question about what Apostolic Faith Mission pastors would do if they have new converts who were continuing after conversion in a fornication relationship which began before conversion, Pastor Edgar wrote in July 1995:

“In answering these questions on marital matters it must be borne in mind that these are hypothetical cases and that in real life there could be an infinite variety of complications which one cannot foresee and deal with in such a questionnaire.

Pre-marital sexual relationships are very much frowned upon by our Pastors and members and are regarded as sinful.

Should a person with such a relationship be converted he or she would be encouraged to get married so that their union would be recognised by the church and the community. We have found that in most cases there is no problem and a marriage is speedily arranged.

Where one partner is still married to someone else, we would insist on the born-again partner leaving the sinful relationship entirely. The church cannot be seen to sanctify such a state of affairs. Should the convert not be willing to forego the relationship, the fellowship of communion would be withheld and possibly other disciplinary steps taken as an open declaration in the worship service to the effect that the relationship is out of order and the convert is not in full fellowship.

Should there be children as a result of such a sinful union, the born-again partner should be willing to take responsibility for them even if the relationship is broken up by one partner not being willing to marry.

Pastors feel it must be emphasised that, especially in the present climate of loose morals in the world, the church must clearly show the way and there can be no doubt that sex is only permitted within the boundaries of a recognised marriage.

At the same time, Christlike love must be the guiding motivation – especially in the case of newly-converted persons. Pastors should be so gentle that they never unnecessarily hurt people, while at the same time taking a stand for what is right. They should show loving consideration for the difficult circumstances in which converts find themselves. Converts should be helped to find their way to what is right and good in spite of it being painful. They must be taught and firmly encouraged to put their feet on the path of right living as this is the only way they will have a clear conscience and be blessed and experience the approval of God.”

Here is Rev Gschwend’s July 1995 answer to my question about whether Apostolic Faith Mission pastors preach it is necessary to repent and surrender to Jesus as Lord at conversion in order to be saved: *“Pastors are generally careful to tell sinners that they must repent and surrender their lives to the Lordship of Christ. There is a strong perception that Christ must either be Lord of our lives or He is not Lord at all.”*

The words of Leon Stewart, a former General Superintendent

Bishop Leon Stewart is a former General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Holiness Church denomination – one of the five largest Pentecostal groups in the United States. He wrote the following answers in July 23, 1996 to the questions I have listed below:

Question: When new converts come into the church, should they be lovingly warned by pastors about things such as witchcraft, stealing, lying, adultery, fornication, pornographic magazines, pornographic type movies and similar moral issues? Or should this be left to the Holy Spirit to do all this without pastoral assistance? If pastors should warn of these things, when is it best for

these things to be done – at new converts classes or in personal conversations or by some other means?

Answer: A pastor should have a new converts class and discuss all the issues you have mentioned. If the church is not large enough to have a new converts class, the pastor should discuss these issues personally with new converts. Either process will take some of the pastor's time. If the pastor teaches or talks to new converts in love, the Holy Spirit will do His work in leading the new convert away from an ugly lifestyle.

Question: What aspects of holiness teaching do you believe need to be emphasised in the modern church?

Answer: Practical daily holiness should be emphasised in the modern church. God still demands a daily holy walk from His children. God never changes. By daily practical holiness I refer to man's relationship to God and to his fellow man. In daily practical holiness the question is always why a person did what he or she did rather than what he or she did.

Question: When preaching to believers, should preachers:

- a) only encourage and comfort them or
- b) mainly rebuke and correct them or
- c) encourage and comfort them often and rebuke and correct them often also?

Answer: Pastors should encourage and comfort often and rebuke and correct only as necessary. A pastor's rebuke should always be in love and not in anger.

Question: What is your attitude to cheap grace and easy believism?

Answer: The majority of modern conversions fall into the category of cheap grace and easy believism. That may account for the fact that most of them do not result in a changed lifestyle.

Question: Do you believe that believers can by God's grace and power resist every deliberate wilful sin that may tempt them each day? Or do you believe that it is normal for believers to fall into some deliberate known sin each day or on most days?

Answer: I believe that the grace of God is sufficient to keep any believer from sin in any circumstance.

Question: When preaching to non-Christians, do you believe evangelists should only preach about the love and grace of God? Or should they also preach about God's Biblical holy moral standards with the aim of making the non-Christians feel convicted of sin and convicted of their need of a Saviour.

Answer: "Jesus spoke to sinners about sin, hell and judgement often. No modern evangelist can have a different standard from the Lord's. Love is expressed in action more than in words. One preacher may preach on hell and judgement and act as though he is glad sinners are going there. Another may preach on hell with a broken heart, revealing that he cares. The latter was the spirit of Jesus."

(Note I have quoted Leon Stewart above primarily because as man who has been involved in the Pentecostal movement in the United States for about years. He represents the type of Pentecostalism which spread rapidly throughout the United States decades ago in the power of the Holy Spirit.)

Great revival in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana

The Church of Pentecost has experienced a remarkable revival in Ghana over many years. It began in Ghana in 1937 through the ministry of a Pentecostal missionary named James McKeown from Northern Ireland.

The Church of Pentecost is the largest Pentecostal group in Ghana. The Church of Pentecost had about 3,871 churches, 240,000 members and an extra 429,000 affiliated regular attenders in about 1990 (Johnstone, page 241) out of a total population of about 15 million. This

was about 4.5% of the total population of Ghana. Rev. Emmanuel Parker was the Dean of the sole Bible College of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana for many years. On 29th June, 1994, he wrote to me saying:

“The Church of Pentecost is not only the most widely-spread indigenous Church (in Ghana). It is also experiencing a remarkable revival in recent times owing to a resurgence of miracles and signs reminiscent of the apostolic days. The preaching of the gospel is backed by the power of the Holy Spirit imparted in long waiting before the Lord in prayer and searching of the Word of God. Many, touched by the preached Word and the moving testimonies of Christians, are turning their lives over to Jesus Christ. Besides winning souls for Christ, the church has a responsibility to ensure that converts grow into fruit-bearing Christians. Towards this end, our pastors stress repentance and genuine confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. They go further to help establish converts in the faith by asking them to surrender all jujus and fetichs in their possession for destruction and to renounce all satanic allegiances and practices. The next stage is to ground the young Christian in practical Christian living. This entails teaching on the Person of the Holy Spirit, Christ as the foundation of the Christian faith, the Bible as the immutable Word of God, the essence of prayer in the life of the believer and fellowship. All these are geared towards instilling an awareness of the need for practical holiness in members in their daily living. Practical holiness is one of the pillars of the church’s doctrine as recorded in Hebrews 12:14. We believe that Spirit-filled Christians are ready instruments in the hands of God and, subsequently, instruments for revival in the church of God. The church maintains this spiritual standard by frowning on sin and disciplining members who fall into sin, irrespective of their status in the church’s hierarchy. To conclude, if the Church of Pentecost is undergoing a revival in contemporary times, it is because it has struck to the high and holy calling of the Christians faith which requires not only preaching holiness and fruitfulness, but also living it.”

Here are Emmanuel Parker’s words about discipline in Church of Pentecost Churches in Ghana:

“Discipline is aimed to be remedial instead of being punitive, when a member falls into open sin. At times a member is rebuked and warned for his own good and prayed for, but if he continues in sin he is suspended. When the same person continues in sins he is excommunicated. However some members cry for help from God to change their lives and when that happens, the pastor and presbytery receive him back into the church. Of course, suspensions and excommunications don’t occur frequently in the church. It is the Spirit which helps to keep the level of holiness and righteous living within the Church of Pentecost, but suspensions and excommunications make the others in the church sober and kills the lust in them.”

Here are Emmanuel Parker’s words on the ministry of the pastors of the Church of Pentecost about television-viewing and other matters:

“We speak to members of programmes which are good educative and warn them others that encourage sexual immorality, and leave the rest to the Spirit of God and their own conscience. We talk to them to be watchful especially over their children. In Ghana, almost every one knows that we don’t smoke, so in converting, the newcomer knows he must kill the flesh and let the Spirit work. Also new converts are taught that own bodies are the temple of God, and therefore should not defile it through alcohol or smoking.”

Below are the comments of Rev. Abraham T. Kabutey about the causes of the revival in the Church of Pentecost in Ghana. As a district pastor, Abraham was overseeing 22 assemblies in Ghana in 1998. He wrote the below to me on 3rd June, 1994:

- “1. Number one point for the Church of Pentecost revival was dependence on the Holy Spirit, also evangelism was also one.*
- 2. The true Word of God, prayers, fasting, holy living, obedience etc.*
- 3. The ordinary believers’ attitudes they have to God was that they have real love for the work, commitment, self-sacrifice toward the progress of the church.*

4. *The church is self-reliant. It does not depend on foreign missions for help through finance. The members are the sole financiers of the church.*

5. *The full gospel is taught to all believers in the church and we do not compromise with sin. We interdict, excommunicate, suspend anybody who is due these words."*

The word "interdict" above refers to an official church prohibition which prevents a person from attending various church functions. Note also in point 4 above, Rev. Kabutey says the Church of Pentecost is self-sufficient in relation to finances. But he did not mean they do not trust the Holy Spirit for needed finances. Instead he meant they do not rely on large gifts from churches in wealthier countries.

Enormous revival in China

The below is from a letter to me dated 13th May, 1989 from Pastor Dennis Balcombe, a Pentecostal missionary living in Hong Kong and continually involved in ministry to Communist Chinese pastors and churches for many years:

"My main burden is to share about the work of the Holy Spirit with these precious servants of God (most of them being young people) and we have seen several hundred of them baptised in the Spirit, speak in new tongues and some have prophesied. The one thing that is so outstanding is their fervent prayer. Nearly everyone prays out very loudly and most of them weep when they pray. In our meetings they start prayer at 4:30a.m and pray hours during the course of the day.

They preach and teach with great authority and conviction and many of the listeners are in tears during the preaching (which usually lasts for several hours). New converts make a total break from the world and reports of smoking, drinking, gambling or any involvement with the opposite sex outside marriage would result in strict disciplinary action. I have never felt I had to preach on subjects such as holiness or dedication to the Lord as there is a love for the Lord unlike anything I have ever seen. Many believers attend meeting weekly lasting for up to 6 hours. The experience has changed me for life and given me a total different perception of what the Church is all about.

Persecution is real and many preachers are in prison for sharing the Gospel. We shared at one village church in North Anhui of over 1,000 believers for two days, and the day after we left the police arrested four of the leaders and to our knowledge they are still in prison. I visited one 18 year old sister whose mother and brother were executed by the communists (the brother's wife was sentenced to life imprisonment). They prayed for someone who later died and were accused of using prayer to murder the person."

The below is part of Dennis' letter to me dated 22/1/1997 about revival in China:

"No objective observer can deny that this nation is in the midst of one of the greatest revivals in history. Almost everyone who has had the opportunity to visit and share with the house church leaders will testify that it is like living in the "Book of Acts". Though the church has been in the fires of persecution for nearly 47 years, this has not in any way hindered the work of the Holy Spirit. I have no space in this cover letter to explain this phenomenon, but will mention principles that we can all learn. They are (1) extended hours of prayer daily and frequent extended periods of fasting with only water from 3 days up to 40 days; (2) the baptism of the Holy Spirit in which believers pray much in the Spirit – using "tongues" or the "prayer language" the Lord has given them; (3) making evangelism and the saving of the lost primary focus of everything. It is so easy to be distracted by placing emphasis on God's blessings and basking in His presence, and forget there is a dying world going to hell without Christ. The constant cry of the Chinese Christian is "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel." Thus, throughout China, each year over 8 million people are saved and baptised in water."

William Kumuyi's words

William Kumuyi is a Pentecostal pastor of the largest local church in Africa – the 140,000 person Deeper Life Bible Church in Lagos in Nigeria. The Deeper Life Bible Churches had about 4,733 churches, 348,980 members and an extra 612,641 affiliated regular attenders in Nigeria in 1990.³ They have churches in other African nations also. According to Alan Wood, who was previously an Australian Charismatic missionary with the Sudan United Mission in Nigeria, Kumuyi is a very humble loving family man. Pete Simonis is the **Director** of Every Home Crusade in some African countries. Every Home For Christ which was previously called the World Literature Crusade is the fine worldwide Evangelical organisation who are working towards distributing evangelistic literature to every human on Earth. Pete wrote the following about William Kumuyi:

“ I pictured him differently from the stocky man who greeted me with a friendly smile and outstretched hand in the foyer of the Pretoria Holiday Inn. He was so unassuming, casually dressed in an open-neck shirt, that it took me a few moments to realize he was not going to take me to his boss. He was the man!...Since the interview, and after listening to the tape recording again, two strong impressions have grown on me.

First: This is indeed one of God's special men for Africa today!

Secondly: Yes, I was right when I saw him for the first time in the foyer of the hotel. He is not the boss – Jesus is!

As a student, Pastor Kumuyi was converted after someone invited him to church. He majored in mathematics and became a lecturer at the University of Lagos, where he shared his faith and led many students to the Lord. Fifteen of them came to his home for Bible studies, then more and more were added, because lecturer Kumuyi had a deep concern for people, and those he disciplined acted likewise. God spoke, and by November 1982, Pastor Kumuyi founded a church. The church started to grow very fast.”⁴

Kumuyi said the below things:

“Before we can say we are children of God we must first repent from all wickedness and be converted. The Bible says so in Acts 3:19 ‘Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.’ To repent is to turn around; to turn the opposite direction. Leave all the sins you have been committing. Come to the Lord. Then ‘be converted’. To be converted is to change.”⁵

“Paul was a militant soldier. He was tough with those who were peddling false doctrine. Today some people say ‘I just want to preach a positive message. I don't want to sound tough or legalistic’. You are not Paul's brand of person. You can never succeed in the work of the ministry except you are militant. You must knock the bottom out of every false doctrine.”⁶

“The Scriptures caution us against adding anything to the word of God. A lot of people today have gone aside from biblical Christianity because they have tried to add a little carelessness, a little frivolity, a little worldliness and a little indulgence. There are people today who are not willing to remain under the authority of the word of God...You may speak in tongues but if you depart from the pristine truths of Scripture you are a backslider. You may still raise up your hands and say ‘Alleluia. Praise the Lord’. You may even dance in the Spirit and shake somebodies hand and say ‘God bless you’. You may even try to change your voice and speak like a foreigner. ‘Praise the Lord. The presence of the Lord is in this place. How many of you feel the presence of the Lord? The Spirit is moving over here. It is moving over there.

³ Patrick Johnstone, page 421.

⁴ “Every Home for Christ” newsletter, April 2000, page 6.

⁵ William Kumuyi, “Power For Youths”, Zoe Publishing, Lagos, Nigeria, 1996, page 124.

⁶ William F. Kumuyi, “The Good Fight of Faith”, Zoe Publishing, Lagos, Nigeria, 1993, page 12.

Don't you feel it? Don't you feel the Spirit of God?' You can do all that without having the Spirit of God in your heart.

*You may say 'The Spirit has been moving all over me. I feel it in my body. I feel it in my heart. I feel it in my soul. Everywhere I go I just move in the Spirit', and still end up deceiving yourself. The moment you forsake the word of God, you also forsake the Spirit of God as well. All that remains is just the chaff."*⁷

"The type of life lived by members in our churches is determined by the emphasis of our preachers. Instead of emphasising what will take people to heaven some leaders often try to use the pulpit as a forum for making members take cover in fear. Submission to leadership without holiness is dangerous. I am bothered when preachers begin to use the pulpit to 'campaign' for submission to leadership instead of teaching God's people how to live holy lives. Some members or workers can submit to their leaders and still lead sinful defeated lives. We should stop laying wrong emphasis. Rather we should begin to emphasise holiness and true Christian character. If members are submissive to God and to the Bible, they would without doubt be submissive to leaders.

*Honouring your leaders without honouring God amounts to hypocrisy. God is more concerned about the secret lives of believers than an outward submission to leadership. What we need is the fear of God. With the fear of God in the heart the Christian will almost easily lead an upright life. If Christian leaders will begin to give the people of God a clear picture of what true Christianity is all about, the Church will be filled with people who genuinely love God."*⁸

*"The most important thing in the life of a believer is obedience to the word of God. Some people maintain that obedience is not the important thing in Christian life. They opine that God's emphasis changes from dispensation to dispensation. They state that the major thing at the time of Martin Luther was justification by faith. They also state that sanctification and holiness was the emphasis at the time of John Wesley. They conclude that God's emphasis in this generation is worship. Thus they lead the weak astray and deceive the heart of the simple."*⁹

"I told some of our pastors that we would only know a large church when we get to heaven. A three hundred-member church which consists of real children of God is better than a three thousand-member church which is filled with sinners and hypocrites. Recently I told some of our pastors outside the country not to worry about how to grow large churches. I made them to see that it is not the size of a church that matters but the number of true believers that make up the local church. I made them to see that it is much better to have a church with a sizeable and sound membership who lead holy lives than to boast of overflowing crowds that are made up of backsliders and sinners. Of what use is it if your church is filled with backsliders, witches, wizards, occultists, thieves, murderers, liars and lawless folks? Sometimes, I am more comfortable with small churches where I can see everybody and diagnose the impact of the truths which I teach. I would rather have a small church of two hundred people who are all saved, sanctified and ready for the rapture than a church where there are millions who are so far removed from the essence of true Christian living.

Large numbers are deceptive. When a church is large it becomes difficult to really know who is who. Pastors of large churches are often exalted above measure. I am often embarrassed by the reactions of unstable church members. One gets worried when one comes across immature members who attempt desperately to touch the preachers cloth. I was surprised when I got to church and saw so-called church members who were wild with jubilation and excitement just because of my presence. I was shocked when I saw them rejoicing as if Jesus had come. I was sad. I told them 'Brethren, I feel embarrassed. We are shifting our emphasis from God's word. You are making an idol out of me. The church is fast becoming a social club. We are missing out on the real essence of Christian living. These are danger signals. Unless we are watchful we might be ending up going the way of the historic denominations.'

⁷ Ibid, pages 34-35.

⁸ William Kumuyi, "The Believer in the Last Days", Zoe Publishing, Lagos, Nigeria, 1995, pages 40-41.

⁹ Kumuyi, "The Good Fight of Faith", pages 32-33.

I am really astounded when church people abandon the word of God for bread and butter today. I still remember the good old days when believers cared for nothing but the life of Christ. That is why I bleed today whenever I preach and write. I see much adulteration of real Christianity today. There is a serious dearth of real Christianity. It reminds me of the time when the temple was rebuilt in the Old Testament. The younger generation were laughing and jubilating, while the older generation were weeping because they knew that the glory of the new temple was quite unlike the glory of the latter. Some people might rejoice when they see what the Lord has done in the Deeper Life Bible Church today. I cannot rejoice. There is a mix of sadness and joy in my heart. I thank God for the great things He has done while at the same time I long passionately for a return to the old fashioned Bible way. I long for restoration of the original primitive Christianity as it was in the Acts of the apostles. This is the cry of my heart. I am waiting for a time when the Deeper Life Church will go back to scriptural Christianity.”¹⁰

The words of Dr R.A. Torrey and Leonard Ravenhill

Dr R.A. Torrey was a great revivalist, evangelist and Bible teacher. In 1901, he preached throughout Australia and had about 20,000 conversions to Jesus Christ through his ministry here. This was two years before the famous Welsh Revival. Torrey said:

“Many a church is praying for a revival that does not really desire a revival. They think they do, for to their minds a revival means an increase of membership, an increase of income, an increase of reputation among the churches; but if they knew what a real revival meant, what a searching of hearts on the part of professed Christians would be involved, what a radical transformation of individual, domestic and social life would be brought about, and many other things that would come to pass if the Spirit of God was poured out in reality and power; if all this were known the real cry of the church would be: ‘O God, keep us from having a revival.’

Many a minister is praying for the filling with the Holy Spirit who does not really desire it. He thinks he does, for the filling with the Spirit means to him new joy, new power in preaching the Word, a wider reputation among men, a larger prominence in the church of Christ. But if he understood what a filling with the Holy Spirit really involved, how for example it would necessarily bring him into antagonism with the world and with unspiritual Christians, how it would cause his name to be ‘cast out as evil’, how it might necessitate his leaving a good comfortable living and going down to work in the slums, or even in some foreign land; if he understood all this, his prayer quite likely would be – if he were to express the real wish of his heart – ‘O God, save me from being filled with the Holy Ghost.’”¹¹

Leonard Ravenhill (1907-1994) was a great preacher and New Testament prophet. All of us can learn from his following prophetic words:

“Why does revival tarry? The answer is simple enough – because evangelism is so highly commercialised. The tithes of widows and of the poor are spent in luxury living by many evangelists. The great crowds, great lines of seekers, great appreciation by the mayor, etc., are shouted to high heaven. All get publicity – except the love-offering! The poor dupes who give ‘think they do God service,’ while all they are doing is keeping a big reputational small-hearted preacher living in Hollywood style. Preachers who have homes and cottages by the lake, a boat on that lake, and a big bank balance, still beg for more. With such extortioners and unjust men, can God entrust Holy Ghost revival?...

The evangelists today are very often prepared to be anything to anybody as long as they can get somebody to the altar for something. They glibly call out: ‘Who wants help? Who wants more power? Who wants a closer walk with God?’ Such a sinning, repenting ‘easy believe-ism’ dishonours the blood and prostitutes the altar. We must alter the altar, for the altar is a place to die on. Let those who will not pay the price leave it alone!...

¹⁰ Kumuyi, “The Believer in the Last Days”, pages 45-47.

¹¹ R.A. Torrey, “How To Pray”, Oliphants, London, 1955, page 40.

Away with all fleshly backslapping and platform flattery! Away with this exalting of 'My radio programme,' 'My Church,' 'My books!' Oh the sickening parade of flesh in our pulpits: 'We are greatly privileged, etc.' Speakers (who are there really by grace alone) accept all this, nay – even expect it! The fact is that when we have listened to most of these men, we would not have known that they were great if they had not been announced so!...Mere preachers may help anybody and hurt nobody; but prophets will stir everybody and madden somebody. The preacher may go with the crowd; the prophet goes against it...The preacher will be heralded; the prophet hounded...John the Baptist and Elijah would not last six weeks in the streets of a modern city. They would be cast into a prison or mental home for judging sin and not muting their message.”¹²

Jonathon Edwards on some of the signs the Holy Spirit is moving

Jonathon Edwards was one of the leading preachers in the Great Awakening revival which occurred in the United States in the 1700's. He wrote:

“We know what the apostle means by 'the world' or 'the things that are of the world' from his own words in chapter 2:15,16 'Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world.' Plainly he means everything to do with sin and includes all men's corruptions and lusts, everything they look to for satisfaction. So from what the apostle says here we may safely conclude that if a people:

- a) have their love of ordinary, worldly pleasure, profits and honours lowered*
 - b) are weaned from eagerly chasing such things*
 - c) have a deep concern about eternity and the eternal happiness that comes through the gospel*
 - d) earnestly begin to seek God's kingdom and righteousness*
 - e) are convicted of the ugliness and guilt of sin, as well as the misery to which it leads*
- then the Spirit of God must be at work.*

A man with an awakened conscience is the hardest man in the world to fool! The more awake a sinner's conscience is, the harder it is to quieten it down until it is really delivered from sin. The more a conscience is aware of the greatness of man's guilt, the less likely he is to be satisfied with his own righteousness. Once a man is thoroughly frightened by a sight of his own danger, he will not believe himself truly safe without good grounds. Awakening a conscience in this way is not likely to confirm a man in his sins; on the contrary, it is likely to lead to sin and Satan being driven out.

So, whenever we see people made aware of:

- a) the ugliness of sin*
- b) God's anger against sin*
- c) their own natural lostness because of sin*
- d) their own need of eternal salvation*
- e) their needs of God's mercy and help*
- f) their need to do what God has commanded in seeking salvation*

we may certainly conclude that it is the Spirit of God at work!”¹³

Edwards also wrote:

“When man are persuaded to love the Holy Scriptures more, and trust their truth and divine origin more, it is certainly the Spirit of God at work. This is the sign the apostle gives us in the sixth verse: 'We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This

¹² Leonard Ravenhill, “Why Revival Tarries”, Bethany House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1959, pages 56-58, 60-61 and 39.

¹³ Jonathan Edwards, “God at Work? – Signs of True Revival”, Grace Publications Trust, London, 1995, pages 38-39.

*is how we recognise the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.'...It has often happened in history that many sects of enthusiasts have undervalued the written word of God. They set up some other authority which is over the Scripture. That still happens today. But when men come to value the Scriptures more, not less, then the Spirit of God is certainly at work."*¹⁴

Study Questions

1. Discuss some of the attitudes expressed by the Pentecostal leaders recorded in this chapter to:
 - a) handling unrepentant adulterous church members.
 - b) handling new converts who continue a previous sexual relationship outside marriage.
 - c) ministry to new converts about turning from specific sins.
 - d) conversion, repentance and receiving Christ as Lord.
2. Summarise the comments of:
 - a) Immanuel Lazaro
 - b) Edgar Gschwend
 - c) Leon Stewart
 - d) Emmanuel Parker and Abraham Kabutey
 - e) Dennis Balcombe
 - f) William Kumuyi
 - g) R.A. Torrey
 - h) Leonard Ravenhill and
 - i) Jonathon Edwards.

¹⁴ Ibid.