

...FOR THOSE SEEKING THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE *Holy Spirit*

# LutheranRenewal

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## The Secret of a PREVAILING *Church* by Larry Christenson

How does the church prevail? How does it live out the kind of destiny the Apostle Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 2:14, *"Thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere."*

A journalist once asked Smith Wiggelsworth, the great Pentecostal evangelist, "What is the key to successful evangelism?" He expected Wiggelsworth to emphasize healing and miracles, which were prominent in the evangelist's own ministry. Wiggelsworth surprised him with this answer: "The key to successful evangelism is the leading of the Holy Spirit in each individual encounter."

This is the secret of a church that prevails: a prevailing church lives not simply by principles, but by the presence of the living Lord.

### A pious misunderstanding

One of the great traps in living the Christian life is the tendency to substitute principles for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. We scour Scripture looking for principles we can apply to life situations. In almost any story or text we can ferret out a general principle, a formula for dealing with a life problem. When the formula doesn't seem to work, well, you have to refine the principle. "Love one another" doesn't seem to cut it with that rebellious student? Re-examine your principles. Try the "tough love" formula. There's a principle for every situation or problem. Keep looking.

The danger in this approach is that it can foster a belief in Scripture that effectively neutralizes the presence and

power of the Holy Spirit. Lutherans run the danger of all but handcuffing the Spirit to "Word and Sacrament." The Holy Spirit is politely invited to confine His work to inspiring and authenticating the Word. We end up with a trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Scripture.

Now, general principles serve a positive purpose: they point us in the right direction. For example, *"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church"* (Ephesians 5:25). In all times and places, husbands have a clear goal, to love their wives. What they do NOT have is an intuitive or immediate understanding of how to accomplish this in every life situation.

How do you love your wife when you come home and have to tell her you lost your job? How do you love your wife when she is devastated over a breakup with her best friend? How do you love your wife when she gets into a fight with your mother? How do you love your wife when she overspends the credit card three months in a row? How do you love your wife when she gets a diagnosis of breast cancer?

If a close friend or a dutch uncle happens on the scene, what will he offer a beleaguered husband? A refined principle? "Remember, Jack, love is listening. That's what you need to do. Just listen to her." Or some other "principle" he pulls out of his knapsack of advice? (Understand, the Spirit might indeed speak exactly such an idea through a friend. Derek Prince, who had a profound understanding of divine grace, was fond of saying, "There's nothing wrong with a principle—as long as the Holy Spirit is the one who kicks it into gear!")

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## The problem with principles

Living the Christian life involves more than believing in Christ and then living according to biblical principles. The problem with trying to live simply by principles, even biblical principles, is that we perpetuate our old individualistic life. We make right judgments, we do this or that, we follow correct teaching. Scripture points us to a new mode of living altogether: *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20).

We are called to a life that is different at its very root from our old life. Not simply a life with some external changes—changed standing with God, changed hopes and beliefs, changed behavior, changed destiny, and so on. Rather, a life so radically different that Scripture calls it a new creation. *"If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation! The old has gone, the new has come"* (2 Corinthians 5:16-17). Not like the change of a sparrow with a broken wing



that gets healed so it can fly; that would be an improvement but not a basic change. The new creation is more like the difference between a sparrow and an eagle—two different natures.

What Scripture calls the new creation shatters our basic understanding of the human person. In the new creation a person does not continue to exist, relate, and act as a solitary individual, never mind how redeemed or improved he may be. In the new creation our basic nature as individuals is changed —*"His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the DIVINE NATURE"* (2 Peter 1:4).

Human nature is transformed in order to share in the divine nature, the nature of the Holy Trinity. The relatedness of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit becomes the hallmark of our new nature. This is a theme I will be unwrapping in greater detail at the Holy Spirit Conference on Saturday morning, August 8. In a word, a new creature in Christ does not live simply by correct principles, but by the indwelling presence of the Lord.

The problem with living simply by "principles" is that the old fallen nature does not get decisively dealt with. According to Scripture, the old man is not simply forgiven, scrubbed up, and given a new set of principles to live by. According to Scripture, he is crucified; he dies.

*"We know that our old self was crucified with Jesus in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin"* (Romans 6:6).

The "new nature" of a believer is not an improved version of the old nature, but a new and differently constituted nature. Jesus became like us, in order that we might become like Him, and Jesus is a Person who by His very nature lives in unity with His Father. When we partake of the DIVINE NATURE, that is what we partake of—a life-union with the Lord.

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**"A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST does not live simply by correct principles, but by the indwelling presence of the Lord."**

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A believer, or the church as a whole, does not prevail simply by practicing certain principles. It prevails when the presence and power and guidance of the Lord steps out of a theological textbook and becomes a functioning reality.

## Jesus promised something beyond principles.

When Jesus returned to heaven after His resurrection, He did not expect His disciples to live simply by principles He had taught them. He did not say, "Remember the four rules for healing the sick. And my sure-fire formula for casting out demons. And three steps for dealing with an erring brother."

What he promised them was divine presence: *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper [the Holy Spirit], to be with you forever"* (John 14:15-16).

Principles point us in a particular direction, but when the rubber hits the road—when it comes time to apply a principle—we need more than a principle, we need the Lord's presence. Jesus' very last words to His disciples were, *"Teach [new disciples] to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:20).

## The Holy Spirit is a Person whom we receive.

The early church knew well the difference between living by principles and living by the presence of God. When new believers were welcomed into the church, the apostles expected them to "receive the Holy Spirit." They did not simply assume (as the present day church often does) that receiving the Holy Spirit happens automatically along with faith and Baptism. They knew from firsthand experience that this was not true. When Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, many people believed and were baptized yet they did not receive the Holy Spirit. When Peter and John came down from Jerusalem and prayed for them they received the Holy Spirit in a noticeable way. The account of this event in Acts 8:12-17 stands athwart any attempt to collapse "receiving the Holy Spirit" into faith or Baptism, or to represent it as happening automatically.

The Greek word here is *lambano*, which carries the connotation of "take hold of, choose, make your own." The English word "receive" is more passive. Nevertheless, we must underscore the fact that "receiving the Holy

Spirit" is more than intellectually assenting to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and crediting it with "the power to make ethical decisions" (as one German theologian put it). Precisely because the Holy Spirit is a person, simply believing something about Him is inadequate. According to Scripture, receiving Him means we receive His living presence. *"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"* (Luke 11:13) What child would be content on Christmas morning if we patted him on the head and told him, "Your membership in the family is assured, along with which you have also received good gifts. What? You don't see any gifts? Believe. Have faith."

### Safe Principles or Divine Presence?

Principles fit in with our human way of thinking. Human society has always organized itself around a set of laws and customs. Learn them, accept them, apply them. Some of them may be a tad demanding but they are wonderfully safe. You can make plans. Life is predictable.

Life-in-union-with-Christ is full of surprise. We are swept into a new world. The Holy Spirit brings with Him the ways of God. These ways are as old as creation, but they are new to human experience. *"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:9). The serpent's lie in the Garden of Eden—*"God knows that when you eat of the Tree of Knowledge your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"* (Genesis 3:5)—that lie is laid to rest. The Holy Spirit returns us to the ways of God whereby we live not according to knowledge but according to life-union-with-God.

The ways of the Kingdom of God cannot be mastered simply by knowledge. Scripture reveals important truths to us, most importantly God's plan of salvation. But to walk in the ways of the Kingdom of God we need a surer guide than our own knowledge, even our knowledge of holy Scripture. We need divine presence, we need the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Some pious people shrink from this. It sounds suspiciously like "situation ethics," the idea that every situation must be weighed in the light of "love" or "other centeredness" or some such general principle. It seems to do away with absolutes. Too wishy-washy. But there is a decisive difference between situation ethics and a Spirit-led life: Spirit-filled believers are not guided by an abstract principle which they understand

and put into practice. They are empowered and guided by a living Lord, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

### Learning to listen to God

Scriptural principles are necessary and helpful. They get us listening in the right direction. In this regard immersing yourself in the Word of God is fundamental to living-in-union-with-Christ. But even if you were to memorize the entire Bible, your understanding of God's ways would be fragmentary. *"Lo, we have touched but the outskirts of His ways; and how small a whisper do we hear of Him!"* (Job 26:14) God's plan is not simply that we grow more and more knowledgeable in the ways of God, but that we tread the pathways of the Kingdom under the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We must learn to hear the Holy Spirit's gentle promptings. It takes time. And patience. It's a little like learning a new language. We don't always get the accent right, and we miss some of the words from time to time. But if we stay with it—dwell daily in the Word, cultivate a prayer life that spends quality and quantity time in the Lord's presence, and live in a fellowship of believers where our spiritual life and perception is open to discernment and, when necessary, correction—day by day His life becomes our way of life.

Like Moses we will say, *"You have said, 'I know you by name and you have also found favor in my sight.' Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways . . . for how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us?"* And God said, *"My presence will go with you"* (see Exodus 33:12-14).

It is wonderful beyond description, the difference between putting a "principle" into practice according to my own will and understanding, and living by a word the Spirit breathes into my soul. The first may prosper for a season, the latter prevails unto the establishing of the Kingdom.

*Larry Christenson has been involved in the charismatic renewal among Lutherans for nearly 50 years. He served from 1960-1982 as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in San Pedro, California, then as Director of the Lutheran Renewal Center in St. Paul, Minnesota until retirement in 1995. Larry will be speaking on Saturday morning, August 8, at the Holy Spirit Conference.*



# The Key to the Kingdom

by Rick Joyner

This great and increasing clash of light and darkness should not discourage us but encourage us, because we know our redemption is drawing near. If darkness is growing, then we must also be growing in the light. As even the creation teaches us, any living thing that stops growing has begun the process of deteriorating and dying. Are we still growing spiritually? Paul exhorts in II Corinthians 13:5 to *“test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!”* One of the primary ways that we can test ourselves is found in Proverbs 4:18: *“But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.”* Are we walking in every increasing light? Do we see our path more and more clearly? If this is not the case, then somehow we have departed from the path, and we need to go back to where we missed the turn.

We are told in the next verse, *“The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know over what they stumble”* (Proverbs 4:19). Both light and darkness are increasing in the world, and we can expect the distinction to increase between those who are walking in each. Those walking in the light will have increasing confidence and, therefore, boldness in where they are going but those walking in increasing darkness are going to be stumbling more and more.

## The Key to the Kingdom and our Freedom

The path of the righteous is a straight and narrow path—a clear and specific road that is actually the highway or “higher way” to the kingdom. How do we get on this road and stay on it? The Lord gave us the simple instructions in Matthew 6:33. *“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”* If we make all of our major decisions based on this one principle, we will stay on the path of the righteous, progressing toward His kingdom.

If we are making major decisions based on our own preferences or other people’s desires who want us to do their will, we will be constantly stumbling over things we do not see because we are not walking the path of the righteous. If we are on the right path, there will be ever increasing clarity and, therefore, confidence and peace in our lives. As both the light and darkness grow, the distinction will become more clear as to which path we are on.

You can be a Christian, go to church every time the doors open, read your Bible, pray, lead others to Christ, even cast out demons and do many miracles, yet not be on the path of life as the Lord made clear in Matthew 7:21-23:

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast our demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”*

It is not enough to be doing the works of God—we must be doing His will. Several times in my life I have gone rather far down a path, working very energetically for what I thought was the

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**“BUT THE PATH of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.”**

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Proverbs 4:18

work of God, which I later found out He had not called me to do. These may have been good works and may have accomplished good things, but they were not His will for me. Each time I drifted from His will, I did it the same way. I do not want to go awry again, and I am sharing this with you so that if, like me, you have done this, you can get back on the right path immediately. And if you have not done this yet, you can avoid it.



I learned much every time I got sidetracked, and I think I have matured to become more sensitive in understanding His guidance, so this time was not wasted. It is reassuring to learn in both the Scriptures and church history that almost all who accomplished great things for God also had some times of being distracted from their main course. However, God, in His grace, would let them learn all they needed to from this and then draw them back to the course. It is profound foolishness to think that it is sometimes better to make mistakes so we can learn from them. This is the hardest way to learn from mistakes and we do not have the time to keep learning this way.

### An Ultimate Pride

Even though many of us have drifted from the course at times, the Lord has been in the business from the very beginning of drawing back His wayward people to the course. I once went down such a path for seven years, being out of His will in what I was doing and where I lived. After seven years, I found out that what I was doing was not only out of His will but it offended Him when I thought I was serving Him. I was building a business in which I was going to use the proceeds to support my ministry, and because it was so successful, it looked like I would have the ability to support the ministry of many others as well. I thought this was a very noble thing to do, but when this business was at the peak of success, I had an encounter with the Lord in which He let me know how offended he was at this! When He asked me if I did not think that He could support His own work, I do not think I have ever been more embarrassed at my own pride.

Though I did not see it until then, my real motive for wanting to build this business to support my own ministry was because of my pride. I hated taking up offerings which I felt had become so cheapened and manipulative in the church that I just did not want any part of it. I found out the Lord felt this way too about the way many took up offerings, but He said that the answer was not to stop doing it, but to do it right. He also said that if I did not reach His people to give as they are called to do, I was weakening them in a matter that would one day be the most basic trial they would face—handling the resources entrusted them.

The Lord then asked me to put my business on the altar. I agree immediately to do this, and meant it, but I was shocked at how fast my prosperous work went up in smoke. We had lost a fortune, including our dream house, and I had no clue where our support was going to come from, but I had not felt better in years! Faith in God is a far greater foundation to build on than anything we can do ourselves. I may not have known where our support would come from, but I did know whom it would come from, and He has never failed anyone who has trusted in Him. And, just as fast as my business had disintegrated, my ministry seemed to grow.

I am sharing this because a primary reason for the present economic shakeup is that God is doing a similar thing for many of His people as He did with me and the collapse of my business. Many of His people have drifted far from His will, often doing good things with what seem to be good intentions,

but they are not His will. Let those things go. Do it as honorably and as sensibly as you can, but do it. The Lord will shake the world just as much as He needs to in order to set His people free. The longer we take to get the message, the more devastating it will be.

You may understandably wonder if He would shake up the whole world's economy just to get His people back in His will, and the answer to that is "yes!" This whole church age has the purpose of preparing those who are called to rule and reign with Him in the age to come. Egypt often represents the present world in Scripture. Just as His judgments came upon Egypt so that His people would be set free, He is now going to do what it takes to set His people free from its bondage.

Even if we have to lose some things, like the business I had worked very hard to build, it is worth it many times over to have the peace and joy that comes from knowing we are in His will, doing His work, as well as not having to hear on judgment day that He never knew us.

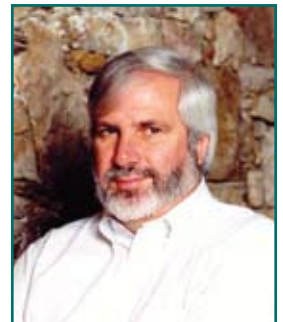
We are told in Hebrews 12 that everything that can be shaken will be shaken. Then we are told that we have been given a kingdom that cannot be shaken. The shaking that is coming upon the world is for our sakes. It is for the world's sake. The basic root of every human problem is mankind's choice to try to run this world without God. The answer to every human problem is to return to God.

Judgment begins with God's own household. There are several kinds of judgment in Scripture, and only one of them is condemnation. He is not coming to judge the world to condemn it, but to save it. He loves the world so much that He came and gave His own life for it. Now is the time for those who have received His redemption to give them lives to Him, just as the basic conditions of the New Covenant require. Each one who begins to live in the New Covenant life is helping to prepare the way for the Lord and bringing heaven to earth.

This good news of the kingdom will be preached by those who live to do the will of the Lord and have therefore established their lives upon a foundation that cannot be shaken. They will stand as a great contrast to the world that is falling apart. Light and darkness, and the consequences of following each, will become increasingly distinct as this age moves toward its conclusion. By the end of this age, the entire creation will know for sure that we never want to do anything without God again.

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Rick Joyner founded MorningStar Publications and Ministries in 1985 and he currently serves as the senior pastor of MorningStar Fellowship Church. He is a well-known author and speaker and will be joining us at the August 5-8, 2009 Holy Spirit Conference, "The Prevailing Church."



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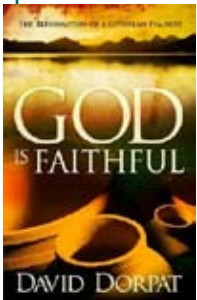
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## GOD is Faithful

**The Reformation of  
a Lutheran Pharisee**

By Rev. David Dorpat

One day, David met a Pharisee and was ashamed to discover that he was that Pharisee. Pride, fear, intolerance, anger, antagonism, and insecurity had slowly filled him. Then something happened. In the mid-1960s, he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Fresh with this wonderful new insight, he and his wife, Donna, set out to share the good news, but he was not met with open arms in his LCMS congregation. Read about how his faith never wavered even amidst an agonizing time in his life.

To order this book, please send \$15/copy (price includes shipping) to: Rev. David Dorpat; 1738 S. 80th St.; Tacoma, WA 98408.

## Igniting a Passion for Missions by Rev. Bill Moberly



Despite Jesus' command to His church to go and make disciples of all nations, active and personal involvement in the Great Commission has not been a high priority in many congregations over the past generation. Drawing from 25 years of experience as a Lutheran Pastor, and many years serving with mission agencies, Bill weaves together sound Biblical teaching, inspirational stories and practical instruction about eight key building blocks for a strong missions church, no matter the size. Visit [www.alwm.org](http://www.alwm.org) to order your copy.

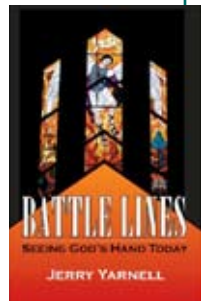
## Battle Lines

Seeing God's Hand Today

By Dr. Jerry Yarnell

The war between God's people and the enemy of our souls has been raging for as long as anyone can remember. It is fought in the individual lives of all who have ever lived. Many people never realized they were in a battle—that ultimately was a battle for life or death. In this book, Jerry takes us on a journey of faith, both a personal journey as well as the corporate journey of St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Canton, MI, where he serves as the senior pastor.

Visit [www.zoelifepub.com](http://www.zoelifepub.com) to order copies of this book.



# RESOURCES

NEW!

## Church on Fire

Morris Vaagenes tells of the transformation and spiritual renewal that came to North Heights that continues to this day. The lessons learned can be applied to individuals and churches—to whoever is crying out for renewal. (\$13)

## Six Prayers God Always Answers

Mark Herringshaw and Jennifer Schuchmann point out that the most authentic prayers aren't about a specific posture or a recitation of words, but rather the foundation of a relationship—a relationship where some unexpected results can occur. (\$13)

## The Mantle of Esther

Larry Christenson uses the story of Esther to show the marvelous promise and power that God attaches to the ministry of intercession. Esther's mantle is not foundationally a description of something the intercessor "does" or "causes," but something that happens when the intercessor draws close to the Lord. (\$11 That's lower than at Amazon!)

## Answering Your Questions About Speaking in Tongues

Larry Christenson addresses questions like: "Is the gift of tongues for today?" "What does speaking in tongues mean?" "Is speaking in tongues for me?" and many more. (\$8)

## Baptism, God's Activity of Grace

Dr. Morris Vaagenes answers questions such as, "Why is baptism important?" "Is baptism a passport to heaven?" There are questions for discussion at the end of each chapter. (\$16)

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A booklet by Paul Anderson that identifies key strongholds of bondage in our lives and how we can break free through the power of the Spirit and not merely by our own effort. (\$2)

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## Dare to Dream and Workbook Set (\$14)

## Especially for Pastors

Edited by Paul Anderson, a monthly Newsletter to encourage and assist pastors as they shepherd the Lord's flock. This newsletter is available by e-mail only. (\$12 annually for e-mail version. Please include your e-mail address on the order form.)

## The Father's Gift

Paul Anderson has written a book that answers many of your questions about the Holy Spirit. Are you wondering about the gifts? Would you like to be filled with the Spirit? Can the Spirit really lead us? There are questions at the end of each chapter. (\$10)

## The Gift of Tongues (Booklet)

A biblical study of this spiritual gift by Larry Christenson. He also traces its connection with receiving the Holy Spirit, answers questions, covers theological concerns, and discusses practical aspects. (\$2.25)

## Healing From a Father Wound (Booklet)

A message by Paul Anderson that brings emotional and spiritual healing to those who carry wounds from the past. (\$2)

## Prayer Ministry (Expanded)

A booklet by Paul Anderson with practical help in training prayer ministers. Twice the size of the original. (\$3)

## The Renewed Mind

This book by Larry Christenson touches on five major areas of spiritual experience: Dependence on God; Facing challenges with the authority of Christ; Patience; Discipline; Prayer. (\$9)

## Ride the River

Using a parable of Lewis and Clark's exploration of the American West, Larry Christenson helps you discover how God the Father puts your life journey under the co-leadership of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. (\$11)

## What About Baptism? (Booklet)

The topics in this booklet by Larry Christenson include: Infant Baptism, Immersion, Re-baptism and Baptism with the Holy Spirit. (\$2.25)

## You Shall Be Baptized in the Holy Spirit

This book, written by Elsie Fuhrman, teaches believers how to receive empowerment of the Spirit and how to minister it to others. (\$7)



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