

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

LutheranRenewal

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Soul Shift

*Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."
They said to him, "We will also come with you."
(John 21:3)*



Peter represents believers who are faced with the harsh reality of change. His situation is also typical of the many uncertainties of life that come our way. Like many of us, when confronted by sweeping changes, this disciple seemed to be lost in a world that was constantly evolving. Just the previous day, he had been enjoying success, and now the world as he knew it had come to an end.

Why such an extreme shake-up in Peter's life? When hope dies, passion is soon to follow. When Jesus died on Calvary, Peter's hopes and dreams seemed to die with Him. Until that historic day, he was convinced that the Lord was going to be crowned king of Israel and that he would reign with Him.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE fishing from the wrong side of the boat when hope is replaced by disappointment and despair.

Now all that remained was the haunting echo of what seemed like a cruel and empty promise.

Everything in Peter's life had fallen apart. He had lost his Lord,

his ministry, his faith and integrity, and now he couldn't produce a single fish after a long night of sweat and toil. Thankfully, he went forward in life, but not with the same zeal that motivated him in

the past. Jesus had promised that he and the other disciples would become fishers of men, but once again they were fishing for fish. Passion was long gone and destiny seemed to be lost in the confusion of events that had recently transpired.

In what way does this apply to the lives of believers today? Although I do not have all the answers, I am sure of two things. First, I have found that comfortable people seldom change. It's just too painful. They change only when the pain of their present condition is greater than the pain it takes to change. For this reason, God is often reluctant to deliver us from hurtful situations, and will often allow us to simmer in our discomfort until we are forced to cry out from transformation. As with Peter, the pain of failure and disillusionment became the tipping point for change and provided the disciple with an opportunity to transition into a fresh dimension of God's purpose.

I am aware that many modern-day Christians have also suffered the death of their hopes and dreams. Perhaps we have misinterpreted the purpose of our destiny, or we are wrong about the timing. Or, maybe we have let the misfortunes of life steal a piece of our future dreams. In either event, many of us go through life fishing out of sheer habit instead

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of passion. And, once we give in to disappointment and despair, as with Peter, we bring others along with us, adding to the problem. Ultimately, we end up living out lives from a mindset of hopelessness.

In view of these things, I am certain of our need for radical change. If we want to fish from the productive side of the boat, we must be willing to shift even though feelings and circumstances tell us otherwise. If we ignore this call for change, success will elude our best attempts to fill our nets. Most importantly, we can miss our appointment with destiny.

Finding Hope in Despair

On a personal level, I have faced seasons of intense adversity. Some of these hardships diminished with the passing of time—others have been fatal to my hopes and dreams.

At one point in my life, I went through a season of tragedies and failures that seemed too difficult to bear. In the end, I was overcome with such a sense of loss that I gave up the struggle of full-time ministry and returned to the workplace. My hopes and dreams for fulfilling God's call on my life appeared to be lost forever, and like Peter, I was fishing out of disappointment.

After several years of this despair, the Lord visited me and encouraged my heart. He awakened me late one night and talked to me about the many discouragements that the Apostle Paul faced in his ministry.

"If anyone had a reason to despair," He said, "it was Paul." He informed me that this great apostle suffered from pain, hunger, thirst and was at times cold and weary. He was also betrayed, beaten, put in prison, and eventually shipwrecked on a remote island (see Acts 14:19, II Corinthians 11:23-29).

All of this, the Lord said, was not because Paul was out of His will, but was actually a sign that the apostle was walking in His will. I was reminded that Jesus had revealed to Paul in Acts 9:16 the great things he must suffer for the Lord's sake. The Lord also reminded me that those who live godly lives in

Christ will suffer persecution (see II Timothy 3:12).

Then Jesus spoke a simple word to my heart that forever shifted my outlook on life. He said, "The will of God is often met with great adversity." He exhorted me to never make the mistake of believing that His will is easy, or that it goes unchallenged by evil powers. He also informed me that in spite of my adversity I am blessed by the Father God "...who according to His great mercy had caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1:3).

The next day, I made a quality decision to pull out of my pit of despair. If this was the case in Paul's life, I concluded, then why must it be any different for me? People in the Bible such as Abraham, Moses, David, and Joseph also faced incredible adversity but refused to bow their knees to a spirit of despair.

They not only weathered the storms of life, but survived against impossible odds. In the end, hope guided them to the fulfillment of their destiny.

As a result of this revelation, I came to

understand that the fulfillment of my dream is tied to my willingness to hope in the midst of despair. Regardless of my situation, I had to shift. I could not let my dream become a nightmare. Nor could I let the illusions of failure dictate my destiny. Regardless of the pain of the moment, I had to revive my passion for life. I would no longer fish from a paradigm of hopelessness.

Shortly after my encounter with the Lord things started to turn around. I found strength in the faith of the men previously mentioned and began to rediscover my zeal for ministry. Especially encouraging was the Romans 4:18 reference to Abraham, who in hope believed against hope. Within several years, I was free from the stranglehold



“...that all things work together for good to them that

of despair and once again I was swimming in the river of my destiny. Like Peter, pain and failure had brought me to the threshold of radical confrontation. This confrontation provoked change—change realigned me with my initial destiny.

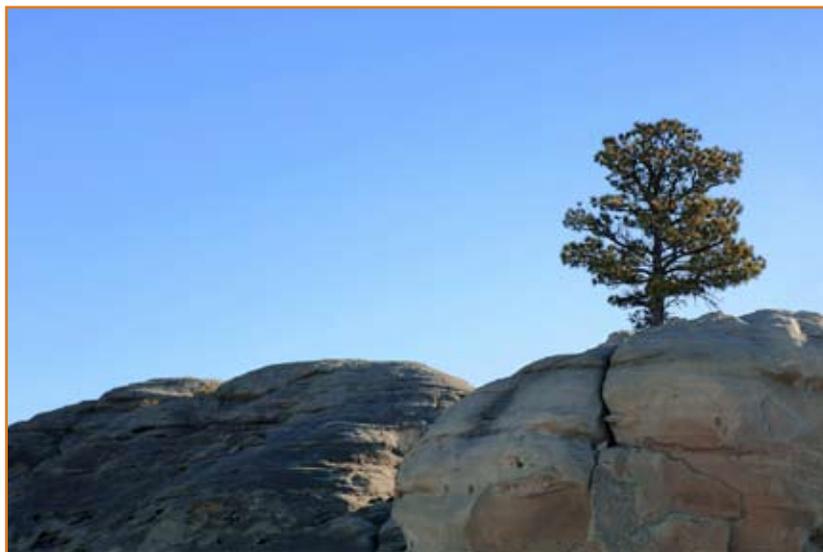
The Big Shift

A God-given dream is the embryo of our destiny. Disappointment and despair, on the other hand, can be dream killers. If Satan can get you to abort your passion through hopelessness, he can steal your future. According to I Peter 5:8, he goes about like a thief seeking who he can devour. He knows how important hope is to your purpose in life and will try to keep you in a prison of disappointment.

In spite of this evil strategy, we must never lose hope in God's ability to help us transition from the reality of His dream for us. Whether today or tomorrow, the Lord will make good on promises that are nurtured through faith and trust. We might have to shift our position now and then, but if we cling to hope, we will eventually see the fulfillment of our destiny.

These things were especially true for the life and ministry of Joseph. According to Genesis 37:5, the young lad was given a dream of wealth and power beyond his wildest imagination. However, after telling the dream, he was betrayed by his jealous brothers and sold into slavery. Rejected and falsely accused, he ended up in the bottom of an Egyptian prison for more than a decade.

Regardless of the misfortunes that befell the young dreamer, he never gave up hope. Psalm 105:19 says, *"until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him."* Because he was faithful to maintain a level of expectancy while in prison, God was faithful to fulfill his dream. And, when the fullness of



time came, God enabled him to shift from a place of obscurity to a place of prosperity and rulership on Pharaoh's throne.

In what context does this incredible story apply to the present-day church? Like Joseph, believers today have been given an opportunity to transition from our "prison of broken dreams" to our "throne of destiny." All we have to do is believe in our heavenly dreams and let Jesus help us change our paradigms. This means we must find hope in our distress, encourage ourselves in the Lord, and reconnect with our zeal for life. In the end, our motivation for ministry will come from passion, not despair.

The Stephen Syndrome

Now, for the other side of the coin! How do we deal with the reality in Hebrews 11:39 that several men of faith died without receiving their promise? What do we do when there seems to be no chance for the resurrection of our dream? Do we continue to fight or do we throw in the towel? Also, is it possible that a greater purpose is working in the midst of our despair?

Misfortune can sometimes be a blessing in disguise. Actually, it is in times of great despair that we can learn to trust the sovereign grace of God. One can understand, therefore, why the Apostle Paul stated in Romans 8:28 "..."*that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*" (KJV). He was convinced

that God is sovereign and arranges all things after the counsel of His will (see Ephesians 1:10).

Such was the case of another believer in the New Testament named Stephen. According to Acts 6, he was a man of integrity, full

love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

(Romans 8:28)

of faith and power. Because of his excellent spirit, he was chosen as a deacon and shortly afterwards began to perform notable signs and wonders among the people. He was undoubtedly a rising star in the first century church and perhaps one of the best models for New Testament ministry.

Tragically, Stephen was killed before he reached the fullness of his destiny. Acts 6 and 7 record that a group of religious leaders from the synagogue of the Libertines were angered by his defense of the gospel and shook their fists in rage. Shortly afterward, they cast him out of the city and stoned him to death.

According to Acts 8, Stephen's death was a devastating blow for believers in Jerusalem. The fledgling church was already suffering under the strain of great persecution; now God's promise seemed to be dead, and they were burying a piece of their hopes and dreams. Bewildered by the event, devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him.

During this time of mourning, however, something extraordinary began to happen. A disciple named Philip left the grief-stricken church in Jerusalem and went to the city of Samaria. As he preached Christ to the Samaritans, he began to experience the same caliber of miracles that were performed through Stephen. The lame walked, the sick were healed, and many possessed with unclean spirits were delivered. Eventually, the whole city was overcome with joy (see Acts 8:5-25).

What can we learn from this incredible story? Sometimes we have to bury our "fallen Stephens" in hope that God will raise up an alternative plan. When plan A dies, we must believe that plan B or C is also a part of the big picture. We must also believe that the last often becomes the first in God's kingdom. This means, of course, that we have

to stop grieving over our failures and be willing to embrace something different than what we conceived in the beginning. When we make this connection, we will find a "Philip" waiting at the grave of our "Stephen." When the burial process is complete, this Philip will intuitively pick up Stephen's mandate for ministry and go forward with a fresh anointing.

Closing Thoughts

The question remains: Do we hope against all hope for the resurrection of our Stephen? Or, do we bury our Stephen and trust God to raise up a Philip in his place?

Paul tells us in Philippians 2:12 that each of us must "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*" The solution, therefore, lies with you and your relationship with the Holy Spirit. You must ask the Lord to show you what season of growth is upon your life. Should you hang on to the initial plan a little longer or is it time to shift?

If the latter is true, then we must be willing to embrace seasons of transition, even though they appear to be difficult at the time. Like Peter, Joseph, and Philip, we must make the critical shift from our grave of disappointment to the joy that is set before us—no matter what form it takes. Otherwise, revival is delayed while men and women of God learn to shift.



*This article was taken from **The Coming Shift** © 2006 by Larry Randolph. Used by permission of Larry Randolph Ministries. To order a copy of this book or to order other resources by Larry, please visit his website, www.larryrandolph.com, or call 336-921-4447.*

Larry Randolph has a global prophetic ministry with a strong teaching anointing. In addition to *The Coming Shift*, he is the author of several books including *User Friendly Prophecy* and *Spirit Talk*. We were so blessed at the 2007 Holy Spirit Conference by his teaching and his ministry, not to mention his great sense of humor, that we have invited him back!

Larry will be one of the speakers at the February 1-2, 2008 Equipping Conference.

Breaking Up Fallow Ground Preparing Our Hearts



By Mary Ann Herzan

Have you felt it—the growing, urgent sense of God wanting to bring change and newness to the Church, so that we are prepared and equipped for the turbulent times in which we live and which are to come? Many individuals, ministries, and congregations are experiencing upheaval and wondering what it going on. Saints, it is good; God is having mercy on us. He is helping us do what we would not do on our own: He is preparing us! Can it be that the Lord has much to pour out but that He is being held back by our lack of preparedness? Often we are anxious to bring in the crop, whatever that may be for our individual life or ministry, but are not anxious to take the time to prepare our hearts as a farmer prepares his field. If the field is not prepared, the sowing of the seed will most likely be in vain or, at best, yield a poor crop. A good crop comes from a good field. If our hearts are not prepared it may be possible for us to go about our Christian lives and miss what God is saying; we may seek Him and still not accomplish what He is after.

In 2 Chronicles we are told of two kings—Rehoboam who *“did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord”* (12:14) and Jehoshaphat who *“prepared his heart to seek God”* (19:3). As I read these words it was interesting to me that they were not just about seeking the Lord but *“preparing”* one’s heart to seek Him. These words caused me to reflect on the subtle difference between them, though they sound the same. With the image of a plowed field in mind, the parable of the sower (Matthew 13) took on new meaning for me in how it relates to the established child of God as compared to evangelism and the new believer. The parable applies in any situation where the Lord desires to sow a new word or direction into our individual life, ministry, or in His church as a whole.

“...Some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.” Jesus said this represents the one who does not understand the word so the devil is able to snatch it out of the heart. (It is important to realize here that Jesus is not speaking of the normal journey of faith where we do not understand all things at first but, having a teachable spirit, grow in the knowledge of Him, allowing Him freedom to unfold His wisdom as we are able to receive it. See John 16:12-13.) The “wayside” speaks of the well-traveled path of the world or traditions, creating a hard-packed path. When a child of God walks in this way, kingdom words or thoughts can fall beyond his understanding and lay as exposed seeds, easily picked off by the enemy. Even a good status quo can become a hard place which does not allow something new or different to take root. The “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” attitude can be one of the hardest for the Lord to overcome with something new. Consider His words in Revelation 3:15, *“I could wish you were cold or hot.”* The one who is lukewarm has just enough heat to think they are doing just fine. In His day Jesus spoke to those who claimed to be in the kingdom through Abraham and said, *“My word has no place in you”* (John 8:37). The truths He was telling them could not enter their hearts; they were walking in the hard-packed way of their day and their traditions. Like Abraham and the disciples, Jesus calls us to leave what we know and follow Him. It may be a way in which we have not gone before, but it will be a glorious way for we walk with God Himself; all that He is—love, joy, peace, provision, strength—is ours.

**“PREPARED HIS HEART
to seek God”**
(2 Chronicles 19:3)



“Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth...” Jesus tells us that this is the one who receives the word with joy but *“has no root in himself, but endures only for a while.”* Stones keep seed from being able to take deep root, creating a shallow foundation. A tree that is poorly rooted is easily toppled in the first stormy wind. We may have an initial excitement and zeal for His word but at some point, when the going gets a little tough, it becomes “not worth it” because too many stones of our natural life still remain in the field. These stones can be situations we will not face or deal with—stones of fear, shame, anger, or judgment against another. Preferences—how we like to worship, what kind of speaker we will listen to, what we are used to—can become hard and fast places in the heart which will not yield to the invading root of God’s word. Yet He has prepared a way through Jesus for any stone in our heart to be taken care of, if we let Him. In Him there is more than enough grace, mercy, power, love, and forgiveness for any situation.

“And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.” Here we find the word or plan of God being received and growing but which in the end is choked out by thorns—*“the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches.”* How many of us begin with great faith and vision but along the way the childlikeness is lost and the concern for numbers—both physical and fiscal—takes over. We begin with a zeal that will *“go anywhere and pay any price”* but after a while we begin to focus on our lifetime instead of eternity, saying, *“But surely, Lord, You aren’t talking about my home, my job, or my savings.”* We do not *“consider the lilies of the field”* but worry about what we shall eat or wear. How many of us is the Lord speaking to when He says, *“I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land now sown”* (Jeremiah 2:2)? He is remembering our being driven by love before everything got so complicated. He wants the original devotion to be as present when the field is harvested as before it was even sown. This is not saying that when growth happens administration and financial accountability are not required; no one believes in them more than I. Yet how easily these things can take center stage in our minds and hearts, choking the original vision and devotion, leaving us paralyzed and unable to walk in absolute confidence in the Lord alone and what He has spoken. Jeremiah

encourages us to *“Break up your fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns”* (4:3). We must not let God’s word to us get sown in the midst of all the “what abouts” that are of this world. Come to Him often and let His presence wash over you as you linger, overcoming every question and care, until you are soaked with the awareness of Who He is and what He can do. *“Be still and know that I am God”* (Psalm 46:10).

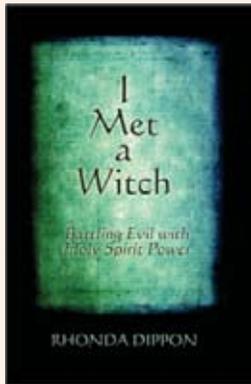
**“THOSE WHO
SOW IN TEARS
shall reap in joy”**
(Psalm 126:5)



“But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop...” How pleasing it must be to the Lord when He seeks for a field to plant His word and finds one well-prepared! How beautiful is the soft, rich soil of this field which is set apart from the way of the world, just waiting for Him to plant as He wills. He rejoices as He can already see the bountiful harvest which will come forth. *“Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy”* (Psalm 126:5). There will undoubtedly be tears as our hearts are prepared, but the reward is beyond our imagining! Let us take courage, walk in patience, and give the Lord the kind of field of which He is worthy. He loves us and knows that the greatest joy our hearts can know is the joy shared with Him in glorifying the Father.

*“You visit the earth and water it,
You greatly enrich it;
The river of God is full of water;
You provide their grain,
For so You have prepared it..
You water its ridges abundantly,
You settle its furrows;
You make it soft with showers,
You bless its growth.”*
Psalm 65:9-10

Mary Ann Herzan served as the LR Administrator for ten years serving with three different Directors. She continues to share in teaching, prayer, and mentoring through David’s Heart, a ministry of East Immanuel Lutheran Church in St. Paul, MN. To contact Mary Ann: maherzan@msn.com.



I Met a Witch:

Battling Evil with Holy Spirit Power

By Rhonda Dippon

Witches and demons aren't real, are they? And isn't Satan off in some dark corner or alley somewhere? That's what Rhonda Dippon thought before she met the witch who asked her this question: Do you believe in the power of Satan?

Rhonda used Tammy's question to witness to her about One more powerful than Satan—Jesus. When Tammy tried to break free from the bondage of witchcraft, Rhonda was thrust into the spiritual battle between darkness and light.

Rhonda Dippon and her husband, Darrel, reside in St. Paul, MN and are members of North Heights Lutheran Church. They also serve on the Lutheran Renewal prayer team.

(See back page to order.)

To our Friends:

We are feeling a significant crunch in our budget at this time. I am writing to ask you to consider giving an extra gift to Lutheran Renewal.

I've been working with LR for just over twelve years now. This season beats the previous years for excitement. We so appreciate all who are helping us connect with young adults, pastors, congregations, and a growing constituency. More people than ever are giving us feedback that our ministry is helping them to do what God has called them to do. Your gift will help to extend the important and precious truth of the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

We appreciate congregations including us in their budgets. We are also grateful for individual contributions of any size. Your generosity enables us to keep traveling to congregations here and abroad, to mentor leaders, to give help and counsel to pastors, and to equip and release God's people to live out their destiny.

With thanksgiving,

Paul Anderson, Director

PLAN NOW!

February 1-2, 2008

**Equipping
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RESOURCES

NEW!

I Met a Witch: Battling Evil with Holy Spirit Power

Rhonda Dippon writes about her encounter with a witch and how the Holy Spirit equipped her to fight against the enemy. (\$15)

Answering Your Questions About Speaking in Tongues

Larry Christenson has re-released this helpful book, now with a new preface, that has already sold over 250,000 copies. He 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 which make this book an excellent resource for an adult study class or to prepare baptism sponsors. (\$16)

Breaking Strongholds in My Life

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)

Building Christian Character

An inspiring and challenging study by Paul Anderson of 34 Christian character traits. The study gives a biblical meaning and example of each trait and shows how the trait can be applied in practical ways. (Workbook or Teacher's Guide: \$6 each, 8 or more \$5 each)

Dare to Dream

Do you want to discover your dream? Learn how to pursue it? Need to recover broken dreams? In Dare to Dream, Paul Anderson will help you to discover what God has placed inside of you! (\$10)

Dare to Dream Workbook

This journaling book by Paul Anderson will assist you in creating the kind of climate in which God-sized dreams can grow. Each page has a Dream Reflection and accompanying questions. (\$6)

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. (\$24 annually for hard copy or \$12 annually for e-mail. Include e-mail address on 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? Questions at the end of each chapter make it great for a Bible study group, Sunday School class, or for personal reflection. (\$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)

Pray For the Power of the Spirit (Tract)

By Rev. Del Rossin, a biblical study on releasing the power of the Holy Spirit. (6/\$1 or 100/\$15)

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)

A Soldier Looks at Spiritual Warfare

Author Dick Denny uses military analogies to confront readers with the reality of spiritual warfare. "Superb" said one longtime adult educator. (\$15)

What About Baptism? (Booklet)

A practical 17-page booklet by Larry Christenson. Topics 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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