

AN ENGINEER LOOKS AT REBUILDING THE CHURCH

**by John H. Painter
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INTRODUCTION.

For years and years, Andrew Strom¹ has been writing about his vision of a great revival. And for years and years, I’ve been reading what he has written. And, I agree with what he has written. It is what he has not written that draws my interest, here.

Andrew is the revival expert. That is, he has studied documented revivals from the early 1700s to the 1950s. In his most recent book on why he left the prophetic movement², he laments that we are past the average 50-year interval between occurrences of major revivals. He tells about what is needed to get a great revival. And, he tells about how today’s Christian churches don’t seem to be up to the task. He also tells what the true prophets should be doing now, in contrast to what has been going on in the so-called ‘prophetic movement’. He describes this indictment of modern Christianity as a terrible picture.

What Andrew doesn’t say is that the Bible also paints this same picture, and that it is indeed terrible.

What I would like to do is give some Biblical details as to why the picture of Christianity today is so terrible, and how that fits with God’s documented plan. I will then share how I think the great revival will come about.

As to who I am, to be writing something like this, I will hang a short Resume at the end of this letter.

WHAT THE BIBLE IS, AND HOW THE WILL OF GOD WORKS.

The Bible and Its Prophetic Use in End-Times Christianity.

Bible teaching in the churches today is not very good. So, many Christians do not understand the prophetic usages of the Bible at the corporate level. Modern Christian ministry is by and large at the level of the individual. And, that is good for evangelizing and training up new Christians. But, how many churches teach about the corporate view of Christianity? How many teach about the corporate Church (with a capital 'C') operating as the Body of Christ, and how God views it?

God today views the corporate Church just like He always has. And, He's written that view down, in both Old- and New-Testament.

A considerable amount of the Bible is about the corporate aspects of the Church. And, that includes the Old Testament. The Bible, consisting of both testaments, is a unitary document, and it's all about Jesus and His Church. Jesus, said the Old-Testament was about Him [Luke 24:44]. Stephen referred to God's people in the Old-Testament as 'church' (Gr. - *ekklesia*) [Acts 7:38]. And, Paul said that their entire experience was to be a 'type' (Gr. - *typos*) from which we should learn [1 Cor. 10:6].

Speaking as an engineer for a moment, a 'type' is just a model, originally developed for one structure, which also applies to another at a later time. But, since this is a letter in the Christian venue, I'll use the Christian term, which is 'type.'

The Old Testament is a Christian Document.

Modern conservative Bible interpreters agree with the early Church that the Old Testament is a Christian document³. They also agree that the Old Testament is a rich source of types that apply to the Church of the New Testament. And, they agree that the types of the Old Testament are for prophetic use, as Paul said, "*These things typically happened to those men and were written for the admonition of us to whom the ends of the ages have arrived.*" (from the literal Greek) [1 Cor. 10:11].

Old Testament types are for us, who are living in the very end-times. Moreover, this means that God caused those things to happen to the Old Church (Israelites) and be recorded so that we would be warned. That is, types provide a warning for the end-times, if and when they can be prophetically interpreted. The timing, of course, is up to God.

Within the Old-Testament there is a type that will show us how things are going to go with corporate Christianity, from beginning to end. If we can see what that type is saying, then we will know more about how Andrew Strom's great revival is to happen. ... And, when. (Not a calendar date, but some very explicit signs of the times that cannot be misinterpreted).

How the Will of God Works, ... Corporately.

So, would God let a whole lot of bad things happen to His first Church, just to provide a warning for his second Church? The answer is “Yes.” And, that answer is bound up in God’s Will. Actually, God’s Will has three parts, just like the Godhead, itself.

There is God’s perfect Will, which is all the good things He wants for us. Then, there’s God’s permissive Will, which is what He will allow us to choose, even though the choice may be harmful and violate His perfect Will. Finally, there’s God’s ultimate Will, which is where He shall, in the end, get what He wants from us, regardless of our bad decisions. And, that Will operates at both the individual and the corporate levels. His first Church, the Israelites, is an example of God’s three-part Will at work. And, it is a corporate example. It is a corporate type, for us.

This three-part Will of God was first formulated by a London Pastor during World-War-2. He was searching for an answer to why God would allow such bad things as the bombing to happen to the good people of his flock.⁴ Later, the 3-Wills of God model was picked up by others.⁵

The 3-Wills of God model applies to the Old-Church/New-Church ‘type’ situation in the following way. God can see all the way to the end in total detail. Therefore, before He created the Israelite Church, He could see the decisions they would make. Thus, He knew He would have to have a flesh-and-blood Son, who would die for the sins of many. And, that Son, Jesus, would create the Christian Church. So, he orchestrated events as they subsequently unfolded for the Israelites. But, He could also see the decisions the Christian Church would make. And, he is therefore orchestrating events for that Church, which would usher in the very end-times. So, what we see happening in general, and about the end-times great revival specifically, is wholly according to God’s Will. And, it’s corporate outline is given in the Bible.

THE ISRAELITE CHURCH TYPE FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

The Israelite Type as a Sequence of Events.

In doing the Biblical research for a book in the year 2000, I slowly saw a procedural type for the corporate Christian Church, based on the history of the Israelite ‘Church’ between 959 B.C. and 515 B.C. This was the period from the completion of the first Temple (Solomon’s) until its rebuilding after its destruction in 586 B.C. The sequence of events between the earliest and latest dates characterizes the type.

After Solomon’s Temple was built, the Israelite Church split, with the northern kingdom, Israel, and the southern kingdom, Judah, going separate ways, religiously. The northern kingdom went through a phase in which their ‘church’ was first institutionalized and then became apostate. God sent in prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha, to bring warning and to preach repentance, but the northern church wouldn’t listen. So God sent them into captivity in Assyria (Iraq) in 722 B.C.

The nature of the apostasy was idolatry. That is, the Institutional Israelite Church began worshiping things that were not God. And, there was a sexual

component to that idolatry. God hates idolatry, in any form, especially if it is in His people's hearts. And, He sends His prophets to tell them so [Ezk. 14:3].

After Israel's captivity, Judah was left as a 'Remnant Church,' the only true Church still worshiping God. However, because of intermarriages between the leaders of the former apostatized Institutional and worshiping Remnant Church's ruling families, unbelief seeped into the leadership of the Remnant Church. Sexual sin gained a greater foothold. God then sent more prophets, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah to the Remnant Church, with warning of impending captivity.

By then, the people of the Remnant Church were so used to the practices of the Apostate Church that they wouldn't repent. So, in 586 B.C. The Remnant Church was carried into captivity to Babylon (Iraq). The first Temple was destroyed.

But, it wasn't over for the Remnant Church. By 539 B.C., Babylon had been conquered by Persia (Iran) and Cyrus, the king, allowed any of the conquered people of God who desired, to return to Judah and rebuild the Temple. Only 50,000 responded. The balance of the Remnant Church remained in the land of captivity and enjoyed it. The returnees became a remnant of the Remnant Church, overcoming their captivity and becoming an Overcoming Church.

This event sequence may be simply described by a six phase diagram:

Beginning → Institutional → Apostate → Remnant → Overcoming → Ending

The Israelite Type as a Cycle in Church History.

After further Bible and historical research I realized that the entire history of Judaism and Christianity was and still is composed of cycles of the basic type. The first (that I found) commenced with Moses leading the people out of captivity in Egypt and ended with the building of Solomon's Temple. The next was between the two Temples. After that was the period from the second Temple until the commencement of Protestantism. The final cycle is from the commencement of Protestantism until Jesus' Millennium. Therefore, I place us in the Remnant Church phase of the final cycle of the Israelite Church type. The final phase of the Overcoming Church is yet to come. (Could there be three more cycles, starting from Adam? Interesting question.)

Captivity as God's Judgment on the Church.

Before God's Church can be restored, there must be periods of captivity, according to the Biblical type. In the Temple to Temple period, the Israelites' two captivities were physical. In the following Judeo-Christian cycle, the Israelite captivity was physical (the Diaspora), while the following Christian captivity was spiritual. In our present Protestant cycle, the first captivity was of the Denominational Church, while the second is of the Non-Denominational Church. Both these captivities have been spiritual. It is why many of us now feel like strangers in a strange land, in my opinion.

God always sends captivity of His people as judgment upon the corporate sins of His Church. We serve a judgmental God. And, when we do not corporately act like the Body of Christ, judgment comes. And, the judgment of the end of the age is going to be terrible, both physically and spiritually. Many Christians will not understand it. They will not understand it unless they are told.

There are going to be two things going on at the end of the age. One is God's physical judgment upon the world, following His judgment of the Church [1 Pet. 4:17]. The other is the Great Harvest of the last great Revival. Jesus called this judgment the Great Tribulation. And, He said figuratively to "... *head for the hills, ...*" when it happens [Mat. 24:16]. He did not say, "*I'll rapture you out, before it happens.*"

The popularization in recent fiction of the Pre-Trib Rapture theory, is just part of the increasing deception of the very end-times. To convincingly peg the occurrence of the Rapture to the other Biblical events of the times, it takes only three scriptures, they being [Rev. 8:6-12], [Mat. 24:29-31, and [1 Cor. 15:52], in that order. The trumpets are key to relating the Rapture timing to the Great Tribulation.

While yet in spiritual captivity, Christians must be told that they may restore the Church. And, they must be told that the driving imperative for restoration is to achieve the great Harvest that results from the Great Tribulation. This will be the last great Revival.

THE FINAL CHRISTIAN PHASE, PRIOR TO THE RAPTURE.

The Final Restorative Phase.

The final phase of each cycle of the basic type is always a restoration phase, wherein the 'Temple' is restored. In the Israelite cycles it was the building or rebuilding of the physical Temple. In the next Judeo-Christian phase, it was restoration of the corporate spiritual Temple, resulting in Protestantism. In the final Christian phase it is again the restoration of the corporate spiritual Temple, performed by an Overcoming remnant of the Remnant Church of the very end-times.

So, how is this to happen? How is there to be a remnant of the Remnant Church, which overcomes its captivity and becomes an Overcoming Church? To rebuild the Christian spiritual Temple is going to take a lot of stones. And they are not the remnant of the Remnant Church of this cycle. The remnant of the Remnant are the craftsmen who prepare the stones and put them in place in the Temple. So, the stones for rebuilding must be new. In my estimation, they are the result of Strom's great Revival. And, the Overcoming Church is the one that conducts the last great Revival. It will take place in the disastrous period of the very end-times. And, we already see signs of the times pointing at that disastrous period.

How It Happens.

In Strom's late book², he mentions that true prophets like Elijah and Elisha must bring a convicting message of repentance to the present Church. He says that historically, that's the only way a great Revival can be triggered. And, he says that God will only send those prophets in response to much prayer by those who see the need. But, what is the need, specifically and precisely?

Is a great Revival needed because we need one every fifty years or so? Or, is a great Revival needed because modern Christianity is in such bad shape, compared to God's model? Or, do we need a great Revival now because it would fit into God's plan for the very end-times? For, it must fit God's timing or He won't send it.

It seems to me that the need is to synchronize the activities of God's Church to His schedule. As usual with things of God, it is all about timing. This means first coming out of captivity, second, restoring the Church, using a remnant of the Remnant Church, and third, conducting the Revival.

The Overcoming Church must be restored, prior to the Revival, because they are the ones carrying the converting message of repentance. But, the Overcoming Church is a remnant of the Remnant Church. It is not large. The need is to do those things that precede the occurrence of the second Day of the Lord, as recorded in the Bible by God's prophets.

Specifics.

Restoring the Church into overcoming form will require two things. First, the Prophetic must be restored. Second, Apostolic Governance must be restored. The early Church forms of these went away by the Third Century, A.D. The Old-Testament types are Elijah and Elisha for the Prophetic and David and Solomon for the Governance. As in both of those sequences, there will be a transition between first and second parts of the restoration. These two Restorations will overlap in timing. The Transition comprises the second part of the restoration of the Prophetic and the first part of the restoration of Governance. Therefore, restoration of the Prophetic starts first and restoration of Governance ends last. It's going to be just like in Jesus' day. First, the forerunning prophets, then Jesus, then apostolic governance.

Again, we rely on Old- and New-Testament types to characterize these very end-times events. Although we cannot detail all in this short letter, the Transition is of particular interest, because its types are and always have been about Jesus. There are several types that serve to characterize our Transition. The Old-Testament types in chronological biblical order are Joshua, David, Elisha, and The Branch (Gk. - *Anatole*). Jesus, of course, is the New-Testament type [Luke 1:78 Gk., - *Anatole*]. That's why I say that the Transition is all about Jesus. The Transition for our Restoration is the Manifested Sons of God [1 John 3:2]. And, that is Jesus, spiritually appearing in corporate form.

A Warning About Heretical Beliefs and Movements.

It is now time to post a warning about what has been written in the section above. Restoration of the Prophetic and Apostolic has been picked up before and become a theme or tenet of aberrant theologies such as the Kingdom Now Theology. These aberrant theologies cropped up during the Charismatic Renewal. My opinion is that they occurred because the Charismatic Renewal was not known for Bible study or for fitting its theologies to the Bible, ... all of the Bible.

One of the movements springing from this theology was the Manifested Sons of God cult. All of these heretical beliefs have come about by men attempting to accomplish by their efforts what only God can do. And that is bringing the Kingdom of God into existence now, by the efforts of men. I give credence to none of these beliefs. For more reading on such things I recommend Googling 'Manifest Sons of God,' or going to the website: <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/120.html>

The Corporate Appearance of Jesus in the Church.

I said, above, that Jesus would spiritually appear in His Church and that appearance would fulfill the manifestation of the sons of God, so long awaited [Rom. 8:19]. This spiritual appearance was first suggested by a Houston pastor in 1994⁶. He made good use of the Old Testament in his argument, but the key was the meaning of the Greek word, *phaneroo*, for 'appear.' Scripturally, it is shown that this appearance by Jesus is prior to His physical second coming (Gk. *parousia*). And, it is not the Rapture. From my own scriptural research, this spiritual appearance fulfills the scriptures for manifestation of the sons of God.

What this all means is that prior to the Rapture, Jesus will make a spiritual appearance, corporately, in His Church, and that will be seen as the manifestation of the sons of God. At that point, Christians will finally realize fully what it is to be a son of God. The timing of this appearance is such as to fulfill the Revival need for the appearance of an Overcoming Church, as a remnant of the Remnant Church. The bottom line is that the timing of the manifestation of those prophets and apostles needed for the last great Revival is strictly in Jesus' hands. Man cannot cause it to happen, other than by fervent prayer.

CONCLUSION.

I have attempted to fill in some specific scriptural details about how it is that Strom's last great Revival can happen. These details are the result of twenty-five years intense study of the Bible, and subsequent writings. The 'theology' presented here has been checked against the tenets of previous and present cults and heresies and found to be in no way similar to them. Only the motivating events have been similar. This follows a principle, first articulated by Paul [1 Cor. 15:46] and also cited by Meeks⁶, that when two similar events happen in a Christian context, the first may well be natural or fleshly, while the second is spiritual. Another way to say this is that the first may be the deception, while the second is the true.

What has been said in this letter is that Strom's vision of a last great Revival fits right in with what God has documented for His Church of the very end-times. What I have tried to contribute to Strom's vision is a biblically-based rationale for getting from where we are to that last great Revival. To formulate this rationale I have invoked a procedural 'type' or model of the Protestant Christian Church, originally found in the Old Testament. None of these Bible-based findings have yet received wide notice. That's because a prophetic message is not widely noticed until a prophet articulates it. And that is what has been attempted here. I hope that this is received in the spirit in which it is offered.

AUTHOR'S ABBREVIATED RESUME.



John H. Painter is a retired engineering teacher who spent twenty-five years in Academia.

After being baptized in a First Christian church in 1943, he spent exactly forty years wandering in the wilderness. Then, he met Jesus. The Lord started John intensely studying the Bible and

writing what he found on a guided tour. The topic was always the same, being what the Christian Church was to be, versus what it is, today.

In 1992, John produced an unpublished manuscript detailing the Christian walk to maturity, based on the walk of the Israelites from captivity in Egypt to living in the Promised Land. This manuscript was the basis for an adult Sunday-School class John taught for seven years in a charismatic Methodist church. In 2002, he self-published a book on the topics in this present letter, entitled The Church Visited⁷

In his youth, John spent five years as an Air Force Navigator and ten years as a NASA Engineer. He learned that he liked teaching when he taught space radio communications to the second and third classes of Gemini and Apollo astronauts.

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