

Introduction

Everywhere one turns in the Body of Christ today the theme of ‘passion for God’ can be heard. Books on developing spiritual passion continue to be among the most popular on the Christian market today. Christian conferences on this topic are common fare today throughout the land, usually drawing large numbers. Prayer conferences where people spend hours in worship and prayer in God’s presence have also gained in popularity over the last two decades. It would seem that this emphasis on the passionate pursuit of God is more than a passing phase, but is here to stay.

The growth in the theme of spiritual passion is certainly an encouraging sign. As the return of appetite is often the first sign that a person has recovered from illness, so this renewed appetite for God is evidence that many in the community of faith are recovering from spiritual sickness. While their previous Christian lives may have soothed their consciences but did little to create a deep appetite for God, many today are hungry to know God and pursue Him passionately. For all who love Him this is cause for rejoicing.

Yet despite the encouraging signs of increased passion for God in the Church today there is also reason for concern. Much of the literature promoting the passionate life focuses largely on Christian *experience*—the need for a deeper

experience of God's presence or love. Noticeably absent from much of it is any mention of the pursuit of *truth* as an important component of the passionate life. Some devotional writers not only ignore this aspect of the passionate life, they teach that the pursuit of truth and of God are antithetical. For example, in the preface of one of the most popular books on the passionate Christian life today the author draws a distinction between those ardently pursuing God and those content to "camp out around some *dusty old* truth." From this opening paragraph, the author sets up an adversarial relationship between pursuing God and pursuing truth. One might be tempted to excuse this as mere hyperbole on the author's part. Yet later in the book he refers to the New Testament letters as "old love letters" and encourages his readers to seek for fresh experiences of God's love rather than content themselves with living off *old* correspondence, just lovers are always doing.

Neither is this author alone in expressing such sentiments. Many of the books on Christian spirituality on the market today sound out a similar theme. Whereas intellectual conviction and belief in the truth was once viewed as a major aspect of spirituality in many branches of the Church, that is no longer the case. One can exhibit the shallowest views of Scripture yet still be considered spiritual based on the fact that they have had certain spiritual experiences. A new concept of

spirituality has emerged today, one that is big on experience, while playing down the need for doctrinal certainty.

Why have most writers on spiritual life today ignored this important component of passion for God? In many ways they are reflecting the general attitude of the culture which has become increasingly ‘anti-intellectual’ and ‘anti-truth.’ That (unfortunately) includes the religious culture as Christian statistician George Barna astutely observed:

“The religious climate in America these days reflects the true soul of the population: one which thirsts for experience rather than knowledge, for exposure rather than understanding, for choices rather than the simplicity and the security of a limited set of alternatives”

While Barna is reflecting on the *general* religious climate of the culture this trend has also taken its toll on the Body of Christ as well. Many Christians today are reticent to define themselves Scripturally feeling that it is somehow too narrow and inhibiting. As one Christian leader is reported to have said when it was pointed out to him that what he was teaching was not Scriptural: “Oh brother, you’re just Word-bound.” Many believers today are deathly afraid of accepting

the perimeters of Scripture for fear they might be defining themselves by a “limited set of alternatives.”

Nowhere is this more evident than among the *Pentecostal* and *Charismatic* branches of the Church; that branch of the Church of God which tends to lay greater emphasis on the need for the power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. That is not to suggest that other branches of the Church do not equally stress the place of the Holy Spirit in Christian life. Yet the Church of God owes an immeasurable debt to these believers who have sought to recapture the clear teaching of the New Testament regarding the presence and power of the Spirit. To this day, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are among the fastest growing groups of Christians worldwide. Yet while Pentecostals and Charismatics traditionally emphasize the biblical theme of the power of the Spirit, what is often lacking in their churches is a corresponding emphasis on biblical scholarship and the need for solid, doctrinal substance. Simply speaking, many Pentecostals/Charismatics are shallow when it comes to understanding and teaching God’s Word.

There are several reasons for this, but one of the primary ones is that many of these believers have been taught to be suspicious of the mind. They have therefore either knowingly or unknowingly become *anti-intellectual*. This has not been intentional but is the inevitable result of the belief that the mind is a hindrance

rather than a help in the development of Christian spirituality. It is not surprising therefore that there has been very little biblical scholarship coming from this camp over the last fifty years (although that is changing). Since spirituality is a matter of seeking direct experiences with God and the Spirit rather than developing the mind in any meaningful way, there has not been any real emphasis on the need for intellectual development. Rather, believers in this camp are encouraged to seek after spiritual experiences. So for many in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition, the choice has been between passionate spirituality instead of intellectual exercise.

Yet such a choice between the development of the heart or the head is bogus. Nowhere in Scripture are we told that we must choose between the experiential realm and the realm of the intellect. In fact, the Bible clearly teaches that one can develop his or her mind as a Christian to the fullest without sacrificing passionate spirituality in the process! Far more important, the Scriptures put a high premium on both. God calls those who know him to be both passionate pursuers of God and equally pursuers of divine truth.

Nevertheless, the Church of Christ remains divided between two camps, each drawing sides around their particular emphasis. *Evangelicalism*, with its rich heritage of biblical scholarship and emphasis on the need for biblical accuracy, continues to produce a massive amount of biblical scholarship which has been an untold blessing to the Body of Christ. And *Pentecostalism* (Charismatic)

continues to emphasize the need for believers and churches to experience all that is normative for the Church regarding the power of the Spirit and spiritual life. Not only are the two camps divided, they remain, for the most part, highly suspicious of the other. Many Evangelicals judge Pentecostals and Charismatics as biblically superficial, fixated on experiences and spiritually shallow. On the other hand, many Pentecostals and Charismatics judge Evangelicals as spiritually dead, lacking any real passion for God. Having drawn their lines they remain firmly entrenched.

Yet in recent years, God has been working to destroy the division between these two groups. One of the ways he is doing that is by dismantling this false dichotomy between Word and Spirit that has been erected. And with the awareness that such a choice between passion and truth is bogus, many in each group are realizing the unique emphasis which the other contributes. Many Evangelicals, while not in agreement with Pentecostal theology, are realizing the biblical truth of the Pentecostal emphasis on the power of the Spirit and are seeking for more evidence of His power in their own churches. On the other hand, many Charismatics, tiring of the superficiality of *experientialism*, are hungry for biblical scholarship and theology. Some have even joined Evangelical churches, apparently willing to suffer the loss of ‘Pentecostal church life’ for a richer feeding of God’s Word.

An evidence of the bridging of these two groups is the increasing popularity of the teaching of John Piper whose books are read and enjoyed by believers in both camps. While Dr. Piper himself clearly identifies himself as an Evangelical many Pentecostal and Charismatic believers have been deeply enriched by his writings. This should not seem strange in light of the fact that Dr. Piper believes he is called by God to expose this generation to teaching of American theologian Jonathan Edwards. Edwards himself embodied a man who deeply fed from both streams. He was certainly no slouch when it came to biblical scholarship and intellectual development; indeed, many believe he possessed the finest mind America has ever produced. Yet while Edwards spent much of his time pursuing truth intellectually, he was anything like a cold, sterile technician, but a man who knew firsthand the things of the Spirit. His journals are filled with records of his deep spiritual experiences as he personally witnessed and participated in the First Great Awakening. Edwards sought to normalize the position that one could think deeply without sacrificing the reality of spiritual experiences. The writing of Edwards as mediated through John Piper and others has contributed greatly to helping people realize that it is not necessary to have to choose between truth and power.

Today, a whole host of literature has appeared in the Edwards' tradition making clear that both (truth and power) are our heritage. Books such as Doug Bannister's *The Word and Power Church and Convergence: Spiritual Journeys of a*

Charismatic Calvinist by Sam Storms are examples of books that have helped contribute to the destruction of this false dichotomy. Along with such books is the emergence of Christian leaders today who are passionate about raising up churches where both the pursuit of God and the pursuit of truth are held in proper balance.

I come to this subject, not merely a passive spectator but as one who has been fed deeply from both streams. My personal spiritual roots are in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition. As someone who has spent all of my life in that branch of the Church, I am deeply grateful for my spiritual heritage. I have learned firsthand the importance of the Spirit in keeping the Church alive and vibrant. That does not mean that I am in agreement with all that I have seen in this branch of the Church; at times I have been the harshest critic of some of the imbalances of Charismatic church life. That being said, I believe that the Charismatic/Pentecostal emphasis on the power of the Spirit in the Church today is not only biblical, it is absolutely vital if we hope to recapture normative, biblical church life. We ignore it at our own peril, as the Church through the ages has discovered.

Yet while growing up in Charismatic church life, I have also drank deeply from the stream of Evangelicalism. In fact, I credit Evangelical writers with keeping me from being bored in my Christian life. Early on in my first church experience I

became bored intellectually and desperately sought intellectual stimulation. It was not just brainpower I was looking for, but an understanding of the truth that satisfied my mind. I knew that God had changed my heart but I longed for my head to catch up to my heart. This need was met when I was introduced to the richness of the writings of men like J.I Packer, C.S. Lewis and Charles Spurgeon,. They stimulated me to think deeply and realize that importance of biblical scholarship and accuracy when it comes to handling God's Word. They have been a welcome haven from much of the subjectivity and superficiality which often accompanies Charismatic church life.

At no time have I felt that I had to choose between one or the other. As a Charismatic, I continue to feel at home among those groups of Christians seeking for a richer experience of God's Spirit and power. And as an Evangelical (theologically), I feel comfortable exercising my mind to the fullest in the pursuit of the truth.

That doesn't mean that members of either group know exactly how to classify me. Indeed, I remain somewhat of an enigma to both camps. Evangelicals, who assume all Charismatics are non-intellectual experientialists certainly don't know how to explain me. Standing in line to board a plane in South America one day I struck up a conversation with an Evangelical missionary also returning to the States. Before long, we found ourselves deeply engaged in a theological

discussion. Since I was fully acquainted with the finer points of his theology, I was able to converse with him with relative ease on theological matters. All was well until he discovered that I was a Charismatic, at which point he was visibly shaken. He confessed he had never heard of such a thing as a ‘thinking’ Charismatic. For the remainder of our conversation he seemed totally bewildered by my very existence.

Charismatics, who write off most Evangelicals as letter-bound and unspiritual, equally have had difficulty putting me in the proper class. I once recommended a book by a non-Charismatic Evangelical scholar in a church network newsletter and took some flack for it from fellow Charismatics who were puzzled as to why I would recommend a book from someone who not ‘Spirit-filled.’ There was no consideration as to whether the author’s thought in the book was biblical; because he was not Pentecostal or Charismatic they concluded that they could learn nothing from it.

Why I Wrote This Book

While the general difference between these two camps has been foremost in my mind while writing this book, I address my words primarily to those in the Church who tend to view spirituality as experiential and thus minimize the pursuit of truth. My aim is to urge them to recognize that the pursuit of God must include the passionate pursuit of truth as well. My heart’s desire is to sound out the theme

that we do not have to choose between passion for God and passion for truth.

Such a dichotomy is bogus. The reader should keep this before him or he or she reads.

In many ways, this book mirrors my own journey from the superficiality of Charismatic church life to a biblical faith. I wrote it because of my deep burden for those who have known the power of the Spirit, yet have not discovered the rich heritage preserved for them by Evangelicals. My message is that they can embrace it without having to deny any of the reality of the power of the Spirit I am firmly convinced that the main burden Evangelicals carry for a biblical faith is not at all at variance with the burden Charismatics have for the Church to rediscover the power of the Spirit.

What is encouraging to see is a growing hunger among many Christians today who have known the power of the Spirit to return to a biblically based faith. Many are tired of the shallowness and superficiality of a faith rooted solely in experience rather than the truth of God. Many now long for a faith which is not only deeply experiential, but also biblically informed and theologically based as well.

Yet many of these people are not really sure how to pursue it. Very little has been written to guide church members who are passionate for experience with God in the passionate pursuit of truth as well. Besides general exhortations to read

their Bibles many church leaders today do not know practically how to lead people who have known the power of the Spirit into a hunger for the truth of God's Word. To that end, this book was written.

This book is not written as a 'how-to' manual for creating passion for truth. The truth is, there is no simple formula which will automatically produce hunger for truth in the Church. Rather, this work deals largely with those principles which underlie passion for truth both in terms of its creation, as well as its sustenance. I believe it has been the tendency to ignore these principles which accounts for the waning of passion for truth among many believers today. If these principles were reduced to their common denominator they would apply largely to the nature of biblical authority and the place it should hold in the life of the Church today. In my opinion, great harm has resulted from the waning of biblical authority in those churches where people are encouraged to actively seek for spiritual experiences.

Having said that, this book does not recommend a passionless 'experience-less' Christianity as an alternative to subjective, superficial spirituality. I am well aware that many who advocate the restoration of biblical authority in the Church today do advocate such a faith. In my mind, that is as unbiblical as a faith rooted solely in experiences. What I advocate is for believers and churches to seek for all Scripture teaches is normative in terms of spiritual experience, while being fully submitted to the authority of Scripture.

To achieve that it will be helpful for the reader to be aware of how I have laid out the material in this book. I have divided the chapters into three sections each of which deals with an important aspect of the principles underlying the restoration of the passionate pursuit of truth in the Church today. Section one entitled, *The Tragic Loss of Truth* addresses some of the reasons for the general loss of truth in the Church today: *experientialism*, modern ideas regarding *revival* in the Church, and *postmodernism* (or at least the Church's response to it). Chapter One, entitled *Are You Experienced?*? examines the effects on the faith which have resulted from an emphasis on subjective experiences without the safeguards of the authority of Scripture. Chapter Two, *Blowin' in the Wind*, looks at the whole area of revival and how a fascination with it has diminished the importance of truth. Finally, Chapter Three, *The Virtue of Unoriginality*, challenges popular ideas regarding the Church's response to postmodernism and what effect they have had on a biblical faith as well.

Section Two, *Your Mind Matters*, is an examination of current notions in vogue today regarding the place of the intellect in the Christian life. I believe that what we think about the mind (no intended oxymoron) and its place in Christian living lies at the heart of much of the loss of passion for truth in the Church today. Recovering a biblical view of it (the mind) also is critical for its recovery. It goes without saying that the passionate pursuit of truth requires the use of the mind to

its fullest. In Chapter Four, *A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste*, the reader is introduced to a general treatment of the central place of the intellect in God's original creation of human beings. Chapter Five, *Transformed by the Removing of Your Mind*, reviews some of the current notions regarding the place of the intellect in Christian living popular in the Church today. Chapter six, *The Cure for Boredom with God*, examines the important place of theology in keeping the mind active and renewed. Finally. Chapter Seven entitled *Enjoying God Without Losing Your Mind*, explains how the active use of the mind in the Christian life in no way denies the important place of the emotions as evident in the lives of Jonathan Edwards and the Puritans. In my mind, these Christians stand out as examples of those who developed their minds to the fullest without any loss of personal passion for God.

The final section, *Passion for Truth*, looks at some of the ways God has ordained for nurturing passion for truth in the house of God. While written largely with leaders in mind everyone who reads it will find some helpful recommendations. Chapter Eight, *That Dirty Word Doctrine*, is a plea for doctrine to once again occupy an important place in our nurturing of believers, especially those who are new. Chapter Nine, entitled *Where Have All the Preachers Gone?* is a reminder that preaching is still God's ordained means of fueling passion for truth in the Church today. The final chapter, *Truth is a Person* examines the

relationship between the written Word and the Word (Christ). I felt it important to remind the reader that truth for believers is infinitely more than mere belief in certain propositions, but faith in a Person Who is the life of the Church.

I send these words out in the hope that they might deeply stir a passion for truth in God's house today. To all who desire to increase their love for the heavenly Bridegroom I pray that these things will be a source of great encouragement. I am indebted to all those who passionately seek Him. May what I have written here produce a harvest of passion for truth in those who love Him with a pure heart.

And why bother educating your mind instead of seeking after the things of the Spirit? These are the attitudes I often encounter from Charismatics who are mystified by my desire to read Evangelical books so that my mind grows along with my spirit. I once wrote an article for a Charismatic publication and was taken to task by someone who was surprised that I would quote from someone who was Charismatic.

Sadly, the end result has been that Pentecostal and Charismatic believers are often the shallowest when it comes to understanding the Scriptures. And withdrawing from intellectual development has not issued in a greater level of power in the Church as was expected. Rather, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are filled with believers who love God emotionally, but have never learned to fulfill the Great Commandment to love him with their minds as well

(Matthew 22:37). Growing up in such a church in my first experience of church life, I found myself intellectually bored within a year. There is no doubt that the believers in that church loved the Lord. It's just that there was no emphasis on the need for intellectual development in our love for God. Consequently, many remained shallow and unaware of the biblical mandate to grow intellectually.

It would be wrong to suggest that this is a problem only the Pentecostal/Charismatic branch of the Church must deal with

As someone who has spent all of my life as a believer in the Pentecostal/Charismatic branch of the Church, I am deeply grateful for the heritage I have received. I believe that the Charismatic/Pentecostal emphasis on the need for the power of the Spirit in the Church today is certainly biblical and much needed if we hope to recapture normative, biblical church life. We ignore it at our own peril as the Church down through the ages has discovered. Aside from one's personal position on spiritual gifts, honesty demands that one recognize the central place the New Testament gives to the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Yet even though I appreciate this needed biblical emphasis which I inherited from my forebears, I reject the notion that I must choose between *Word* and *Spirit*

in living the Christian life; between real scholarship and biblical accuracy on the one hand and the power of God on the other. Such a false dichotomy between Word and Spirit is not to be found in Scripture. The truth is, the Spirit *always* works in conjunction with the Word, never apart from it. They are totally dependent on each other and should never be viewed in opposition. So the notion that we must choose between them is ludicrous. The power of the Spirit is not a substitute for thinking, nor is the pursuit of truth a substitute for the need for Spirit anointing and power.

While the Charismatic branch of the Church has traditionally emphasized the need for the Spirit in the Church, Evangelicals, on the other hand, stress such things as biblical scholarship, inerrancy, and the importance of sound doctrine. Most Evangelicals are Cessationists (the belief that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit vanished with the Apostolic Age) and therefore view Charismatics as extreme and imbalanced. Looking at their superficiality and lack of accuracy in handling Scripture, they conclude that most Charismatics have little or no interest in the pursuit of divine truth.

The result has been that a deep wall of division exists between the two, each being deeply suspicious of the other. Charismatics judge Evangelicals as being occupied only with mental stimulation having no interest in the things of the Spirit—thus spiritually ‘dead.’ Evangelicals, on the other hand, view most

Charismatics as experience oriented and subjective, having little or no interest in biblical accuracy. And until recently, very rarely did the two sides venture out from beyond the safety of their own walls. I say until *recently*. In the last few years a phenomenon has been at work which, though not having received much public attention, is slowly breaking down the walls which exist between Evangelicals and Charismatics. It has been spawned in part by the realization of believers from both camps that *Spirit* and *Word* are not in opposition but are in fact gloriously wedded. Evangelicals are increasingly coming to realize that their Charismatic brethren have captured a needed biblical emphasis on the need for the Holy Spirit in church life. That is not to say that all Evangelicals are abandoning their cessationist views, for clearly that is not the case. Yet many are realizing that they have not given the proper place to the Holy Spirit in the Church which Scripture does. This has forced many Evangelicals to re-examine their previous attitudes towards Charismatics.

The journey of Evangelicals towards Charismatic church life has been documented in recent years by the release of two books in which the authors record their personal journeys (*The Word and Power Church* by Doug Bannister and *Convergence: Spiritual Journey of a Charismatic Calvinist* by Sam Storms). The value of each of these works is that neither of them repudiates their previous Evangelical positions (except in regards to Cessationism); rather, they provide the

reader with an understanding of how the unique emphasis of each complements the other. And in so doing they also help in providing a roadmap for the future as more and more Evangelicals are led to see the value in the Charismatic emphasis on the power of the Spirit and its implications for church life.

What has not been as widely publicized in recent years is the journey of many Charismatics towards Evangelicalism. Increasing numbers of Charismatics today have tired of the subjectivism which so often characterizes much of Charismatic church life and which often produces little more than a desire for spiritual experiences. Many of these are finding in Evangelicalism with its emphasis on biblical scholarship and theological clarity a richness which has only been enhanced by the power of the Spirit. This has resulted in some Charismatics leaving their churches and going into Evangelical congregations where they might be taught the Word of God. Yet most have remained in their own churches, hoping that they may become places where they might receive proper biblical instruction and where they do not have to repudiate their belief in the immediacy of God's presence and the operation of spiritual gifts.

I write as one who has personally made this trek from Charismatic to Evangelical, not in the formal sense of having left a Charismatic church for an Evangelical one, but in the sense of having grown up in a Charismatic church and eventually discovering the richness of the Evangelical root. For me, it was not a

matter of consciously choosing one above the other, but of enjoying one and then discovering the other out of necessity. After a powerful encounter with the Son of God at a Christian meeting in South Florida in 1971, I immediately joined a little Pentecostal church from which I received my first instruction as a believer. I learned firsthand in that congregation the necessity of the power of the Spirit, the importance for the gifts of the Spirit in church life today, as well as what it means to pray in the Spirit. Yet within a year or two I was totally bored with what my church had to offer in terms of a biblical diet. The messages were shallow, consisting largely of exhortations to *will* ourselves into holiness along with frequent calls to feel bad about how we were presently living. Out of my own sense of need, I turned to Christian literature in order to find food for my soul. It was then that I discovered the richness of such writers as A.W. Tozer, J.I. Packer and others. I devoured their works like a starving man who was invited to a banquet to feed deeply on the richest foods. And I did so before I even knew what an Evangelical was! I was simply starved for the Word of God and since I wasn't learning it in my own church, I turned to these writers for spiritual food.

Thirty five years later I continue to be fed by these two streams; Evangelicalism, with its rich heritage of biblical scholarship, and Charismatic church life, with its emphasis on the immediacy of God's presence and spiritual gifts. At no time have I felt as if I had to choose one above the other. That doesn't

mean that it has always been easy navigating between both. Often, it is quite difficult knowing how to describe myself to either Evangelicals or Charismatics. Standing in line to board a plane in South America one day I struck up a conversation with an Evangelical missionary who was returning to the States. Before long, we found ourselves deeply engaged in a theological discussion. Since I was fully acquainted with the finer points of his theology I was able to track with him without difficulty. All was well until he discovered that I was a Charismatic at which point he seemed visibly shaken. He confessed that he had never heard of such a thing as a ‘thinking’ Charismatic! For the remainder of our conversation he seemed totally bewildered by my very existence.

I have also found a similar response of bewilderment by my fellow Charismatics upon discovering that I read books by theologians who are not ‘Spirit-filled’ (non-Charismatic). What could I possibly seek to learn from them since they are in dead churches? Besides, why even bother educating your mind instead of seeking after the things of the Spirit? These are the attitudes I often encounter from Charismatics who are mystified by my desire to read Evangelical books by scholars who challenge me to think.

Why I Wrote This Book

In many ways this book, though not an autobiographical account of my journey, does mirror my own experience from the superficiality of Charismatic church life to a biblical faith. I wrote it because of my deep burden for believers who have known the power of the Spirit yet long to embrace the biblical heritage preserved for them in Evangelicalism. I want them to realize that they can embrace it without having in any way to deny the reality of the power of the Spirit. That's because I am firmly convinced that the main burden of Evangelicals (for a biblical faith) is not at all at variance with the burden of Charismatics that the Church rediscovers the power of the Spirit in the Church.

I believe there is a growing hunger among Christians today who have known the power of the Spirit and are now tired of much of the shallowness in the Church, to return to a biblically based faith. I have experienced this newfound hunger firsthand among many of the churches I am privileged to work with. Years of superficial church life have taken its toll. Many now long for a faith which is not only deeply experiential but which is also biblically informed and theologically based as well.

Yet many of these people are not really sure how to pursue it. Very little has been written to guide church members as well as leaders who are passionate for experience with God in the passionate pursuit of truth as well. Besides general exhortations to read their Bibles, many church leaders today do not know practically how to lead people who have known the power of the Spirit into a hunger for the truth of God's Word. To that end, this book was written.

This book is not a 'how-to' manual that if followed will guarantee success. I did not write it like that simply because I do not believe there is a simple formula which will automatically produce hunger for truth. Rather, this work deals largely with those principles which underlie such passion both in terms of its creation as well as its sustenance. I believe it has been the tendency to ignore these principles that accounts for the waning of passion for truth among many believers today. These principles apply largely to the nature of biblical authority and the place it should hold in the life of the Church today. In my opinion great harm has resulted from the waning of biblical authority, especially among those believers who actively seek for spiritual experiences. I do not believe that the proper response is to deny the validity of spiritual experience (which is what many advocate), but rather, a return to the full authority of Scripture and with it the practice of submitting all that we believe and do to its light. A Church that seeks for all that

Scripture teaches is normative in terms of spiritual experience, yet is fully submitted to Scripture is a mature Church.

To achieve that it will be helpful for the reader to be aware of how I have laid out the material in this book. Each of the three sections that follow deal with a differing, yet complementary aspect of those principles underlying the restoration of the passionate pursuit of truth in the Church. Section One entitled, *The Tragic Loss of Truth*, addresses some of the reasons for the general loss of truth in the Church today: *experientialism*, modern ideas regarding *revival* in the Church, and *postmodernism* (or at least the Church's response to it). Chapter One, entitled *Are You Experienced?*, examines the effects on the faith which have resulted from an emphasis on subjective experiences without the safeguards of the authority of Scripture. Chapter Two, *Blowin' in the Wind*, looks at the whole area of revival and how a fascination with it has diminished the importance of truth. Finally, Chapter Three, *The Virtue of Unoriginality*, challenges popular ideas regarding the Church's response to postmodernism and what effect they have had on a biblical faith as well.

Section Two, *Your Mind Matters*, is an examination of current notions in vogue today regarding the place of the intellect in the Christian life. I believe that what we think about the mind (no intended oxymoron) and its place in Christian living lies at the heart of much of the loss of passion for truth in the Church today.

Recovering a biblical view of it (the mind) also is critical for its recovery. It goes without saying that the passionate pursuit of truth requires the use of the mind to its fullest. In Chapter Four, *A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste*, the reader is introduced to a general treatment of the central place of the intellect in God's original creation of human beings. Chapter Five, *Transformed by the Removing of Your Mind*, reviews some of the current notions regarding the place of the intellect in Christian living popular in the Church today. Chapter six, *The Cure for Boredom with God*, examines the important place of theology in keeping the mind active and renewed. Finally. Chapter Seven entitled *Enjoying God Without Losing Your Mind*, explains how the active use of the mind in the Christian life in no way denies the important place of the emotions as evident in the lives of Jonathan Edwards and the Puritans. In my mind, these Christians stand out as examples of those who developed their minds to the fullest without any loss of personal passion for God.

The final section, *Passion for Truth*, looks at some of the ways God has ordained for nurturing passion for truth in the house of God. While written largely with leaders in mind everyone who reads it will find some helpful recommendations. Chapter Eight, *That Dirty Word Doctrine*, is a plea for doctrine to once again occupy an important place in our nurturing of believers, especially those who are new. Chapter Nine, entitled *Where Have All the Preachers Gone?*

is a reminder that preaching is still God's ordained means of fueling passion for truth in the Church today. The final chapter, *Truth is a Person* examines the relationship between the written Word and the Word (Christ). I felt it important to remind the reader that truth for believers is infinitely more than mere belief in certain propositions, but faith in a Person Who is the life of the Church.

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