

“What Is In Your Boxes?”



By Mrs. Sojourner

Moving time can be a time of mixed emotions and challenges. One can be happy about the new location and sad to leave the familiar place where so many memories were created. One can be frustrated by the challenge of getting ALL of those things that have been piled in the “black hole” of the back closet organized and into boxes, but also challenged by the question of how to get that oversized piece of furniture through the not-so-oversized door in the new home.

So once the move is made, everything is in the new location and good-byes have been said to former neighbors, the next challenge is: unpacking those boxes.

The contents of some of the boxes carry no emotional tug with them, others bring floods of memories and/or tears as the dish your favorite Aunt (who died last year) gave you as a wedding present gets uncovered, or as you pull out your favorite sweater from your high school years (that you forgot

you even had) is unpacked from a box that had been in the attic for decades.

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Consider with me. Are there any “boxes” in your spirit that have, over the course of time, been shoved into a corner of your heart and buried? These boxes could contain dreams that the Lord instilled in you years ago that for whatever reason have been buried, or hurts or memories. James tells us: ⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you... Ja. 47-8 (NIV) Allow the Heavenly Father to help you find and open those boxes hidden in your heart. Keep close to God and in the right timing he will show you a box, how to open it, and give you the wisdom and grace to handle whatever you find inside it, be it pain or buried treasure.

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Sojourning

Vol. 7 No. 27 July 13, 2008

...with The Sojourner

“The Church Early & Now”

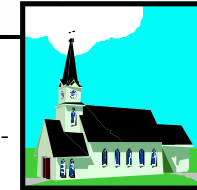
(Teaching Sketch)

Acts 2:42-47



The early or first century “Church” had several characteristics which differed from what is generally seen and recognized as the “Church” now. Please understand some of this teaching may seem critical but that is not my intent. There are more than enough critics of “The Church” to fill that unbiblical role.

As a matter-of-fact, when I first accepted Christ as Lord and Savior, the people around me were all saying, “We need to be like the first century Church.” Well that sounded right to me, but how? Nobody seemed to have the answers. They spoke much of miracles and such as happened at the birth of the Church as rendered by Luke the physician in the Book of Acts. Later then the big thing was to get the anointing. All this confused me for about twenty years. During that time I saw Christians I respected live lives which fell far short of what I understood as correct behavior. I nearly



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lost my faith.

Then a little over twenty years ago the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me telling me the last century Church would look much different than the first century one. Much in the same way a baby has many of the features of an adult but has not the understanding or exact same features as the child will as an adult, in it’s many stages. We don’t throw out parts of the body as we grow, but the parts do change in ability and strength.

Place Of Meeting

The early Church met in houses and in the Temple courts. The now church in developed nations meets “Church” buildings. Many now see the “Church” as a building rather than a body of believers.

Relationships

The early Church, held each other closely, was a source of mutual encouragement, and was accountable to each other for their Christian life walk (this is not a bondage as some have come to make it).

Growing A Disciple

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“The Church Early & Now” (Teaching Sketch)

Acts 2:42-47

Scripture:
Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

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Growing A Disciple ^{cont.}

Disciples were helped to grow by the mentoring of those gifted to disciple others, and who were more well-versed in scripture or experienced in the Christian walk. Now, the emphasis is more on educating through classes with little mentoring.

The Gifts

The gifts of the spirit were in evidence among Believers unlike today when many congregations see no gifts, ignore them, or think they are only for the clergy.

Evangelism

The early emphasis was on making disciples who understood and functioned in building “The Kingdom” rather than building an organization, “come grow with us, we’re going to be the biggest. We have great programs.” Leadership over Lordship.

The Sojourner's World Hub

The Sojourners World Hub moved 10 days ago! While we are moved, we are certainly not yet settled into our new place. Things may not happen normally for a few days, please be patient with us. This is especially true for the internet site as we have encountered numerous challenges with our equipment.



Coming: TSOJ Radio

“The Church Early & Now” (Teaching Sketch)

Acts 2:42-47

Pastoral Focus

Early on, the goal was to equip believers to minister by relationship. This has now, in many places, changed to preach great sermons to help me.

Test Of A Leader

Early Church expected the leaders to have a loving disposition, good character, and fruit from their walk. Now, how much do you know, and how much do you have?

Prayer Focus

The original Christians placed a major emphasis on intentional prayer, individually and corporately. Currently, in most circles, prayer is limited to do-it-yourself, and is limited in scope and practice.

Growth Inclination

First century expected to be a part of a small group, often home-based, rather the present congregation expectation.

Teaching Direction

Believers were once taught to apply scripture to every aspect of their lives rather than a general philosophy of behavior.

Gathering Of Members

Members gathered daily to share testimonies, challenges, prayer, and Kingdom matters of living in those blossoming days. Now gatherings often occur for “fellowship” once a week after a service.

Just so you'll know:

Our service is informal. We look to the Holy Spirit of God to guide us corporately and individually.

Our service usually follows this general pattern:

- **Informal sharing** of what we have seen the Lord do in, through, and around us since we last met.
 - Testimonies are often a part of the conversation.
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Praise & Worship**
- **Words of Prophecy or Knowledge** if they have been given during “Praise & Worship” (other times as the Spirit moves).
- **The Pastoral Message**
- **Prayer Requests**
 - Ministry to those present & intercession.
- **The Blessing**

