

## PREFACE

As an ex-physician, I have learned from studying the natural order that we all must fully integrate into it or else we will suffer the consequences. As the world was intelligently designed, we cannot hope to succeed at anything if we do not know and follow life's requirements. *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, laments the Lord."* (Hosea 4:6a) Most people go through life without a clue that all things work together to maintain or restore order and unity (wholeness) in the individual and in the environment. Therefore, this book, *Steps to Wholeness*, will shed light on God's natural model for life, in which, truth is tied to righteousness, loving-kindness, peace and wellness, and on its restorative paths to wholeness.

God has a roadmap for geo-social wholeness: to restore everything, including people, who have lost their way in life, including their relationship with Him. There is a restorative path of justice for every path of injustice. Thus, we can learn from Elijah's last journey of the phases of God's restorative and redemptive plan to move us from enslavement to freedom, from brokenness to wholeness, and from enmity with God to falling in love with Him -- both individually and as a society.

As you can imagine, it is God who will complete the process of being *"made a new creature in Christ Jesus"*:

*"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ." (II Corinthians 5:17-21, NLT)*

This book will illuminate specific growth principles that will enable individuals as well as corporate institutions to be restored so they can thrive in the Kingdom of God on Earth.

This hour of power word is for such a time as ours when governments are compelling everyone to align with their politically (in)correct stance, their human rights agendas and action plans regarding climate change. God's program involves healing a land that is hurting, a fact that is fuelling conversations around water fountains and dinner tables across the globe regarding climate change. A cry is going up from the land for society to turn back from Nature's breaking point and the brink of disaster and come back to the Way. As we earnestly await our Lord's return in this hostile, toxic environment, the teachings of this book will enable us all to remove barriers to unity, correct injustices, restore the natural balance, while promoting growth and restoring divine order. This divine revelation will restore all our trust in God's rule and re-energize our love for God and our search for truth and learning.

This book, in bringing together both faith and science, vindicates Christian values as natural, and proves that moral values are not optional, but essential for wholeness and wellbeing. You will see that as God, the Creator, wisely embedded His values into Nature, you cannot reject (or accept) one without rejecting (or accepting) the other. Thus, it will strengthen and encourage leaders to stand firm with -- rather than against their God and Lord, help everyone understand the essence of Natural Law, as well as the need to remain systemically integrated, within the normal range (narrow way); not the politically correct 'normal', or what people consider to be 'normal', but within God's and nature's true normal.

I hope the reader will catch this vision that the Lord has revealed and, by it, may step out upon their own journey back to life, rise in divine oneness to go forth in turn to benefit others and the environment, and bring joy to their Heavenly Father.

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M.Div., MD

**Author's note:** Yahweh, whenever used, is the name of the God of Israel and our Heavenly Father.

## INTRODUCTION

I had once thought that serial killers had no chance of rehabilitation or salvation until I heard Aldo Nascimento's story, which changed my thinking. It made me even more amazed at God's awesome unconditional power and love for us all.

He had grown up in the Assemblies of God Church in Brazil. His mother was a strong believer, but his dad was not. At the age of 6, like many his age, he was a hyperactive child. One day, while travelling with his mother, Aldo decided to pull a prank on her and hide in the train station's washroom. After fruitlessly searching for him and seeing a little boy that looked just like her own enter the train, she boarded hoping he was onboard. The train left while Aldo was still in hiding. After a while, he began to look for his mom, but she was nowhere to be found. Scared and alone, he was now a street kid having to fend for himself on the fearsome and brutal streets.

Later, he was adopted by a witch, who would groom this church-going child to become one of Brazil's foremost Satanists, even while he was still a teenager. He thrived in the entertainment world providing satanic services to the TV industry's actors and actresses. According to Aldo, he would kidnap and ritually murder children then offer their blood to Satan, to dedicate a soap opera. While still a young man, he was finally arrested as a serial killer and sentenced to life in prison.

Even though he was dying of terminal cancer, Aldo was euthanized in the jail's hospital, after two failed attempts, despite his profuse protesting and not before he had cried out to the God of his mother to save him. You see, after almost two decades, Aldo had an unfulfilled urge to find his mother. Finally, he was pronounced dead, was issued a death certificate and his body was removed to the morgue. There, God miraculously brought him back to life. He was rushed back to the hospital, where he fully recovered; and under the guidance of the Prison Chaplain, he repented of his past sins and reconciled with God.

After acknowledging that Aldo had fulfilled his sentence by death and seeing his amazing transformation from serial killer and Satanist to 'born again' transformed Christian, he was released from prison into the custody of the kind chaplain, who took him in, helped him find and reconciled him with his mother. Eighteen years had passed since that ill-fated day. The chaplain

then groomed him to become an ordained pastor. You can hear the testimony of this completely transformed ex-Satanist, in greater detail, on YouTube (but only in Portuguese).

How can this happen, you ask? What do you have to do? I have entitled this book *Steps to Wholeness* and consider this a very important timely topic. When God created our world, everything worked together as one, so much so, that he was pleased with His masterpiece, concluding that it was “*very good*”. It is only when humanity fell, that even our earth, never mind our own selves, became corrupted, as we veered away from God and polluted our earth with our rebellious ways. God’s desire is to move us back by taking us along His journey to wholeness and restoration of our lives. I have thus taken advantage of the template of Elijah’s journey going from Gilgal to the Jordan River to show God’s plan and purpose for how this restoration to wholeness should take place. However, first we must look at the definition of wholeness.

According to **the Oxford Dictionary**, the definition of ‘Wholeness’ is the state of forming a complete and harmonious whole; unity. Again, according to **the Free Dictionary**, wholeness implies that all components are complete, not divided or disjointed; not wounded, injured or impaired; sound or unhurt. As each transgressed, became wounded and/ or broken and fell away from the wholeness that once existed when the Creator pronounced that everything He created was “very good”, we need to be restored to that wholeness. Christians often say, “I am whole in Christ,” or “Christ has made me whole.” What does this mean? It means that we are being brought back into the whole -- physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually -- through Christ. In other words, we need to, once again, align with and be integrated into the unity of the kingdom of God and of His ecosystem. Then, they will be able to experience the goodness of God and of His creation, “lacking nothing”.

Through the life of Elisha, on his journeys through Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho and the Jordan River and interspersed with my own testimony, and Biblical passages, I have attempted to outline the various life phases that God planned for us all to go through on our way to heaven. It is truly God’s steps back to wholeness and to life.

So, let the Lord reveal to you ‘the hidden manna’ of this revelation knowledge how to find freedom, deal with the critical aftermath of years of abuse and attain physical and emotional wellbeing. Anyone can obtain a new lease on life with a new identity, new wholesome labels and a renewed hope -- if they surrender to the Lord of all life and take up His ordained journey for their lives. Let this book identify the steps that God calls us all to go through on our way back to wholeness and life.

**START YOUR STEPS TO WHOLENESS  
AND RESTORATION**



# STEP ONE

## GILGAL: TO RID THE SHAME OF PAST MISTAKES

For those of us who have fallen short of the glorious and abundant life and have become disjointed from the whole – the kingdom of God and of the ecosystem -- one must find how to take that very first step on the journey back to wholeness. We must first restore our inner spiritual balance, before we can embark on restoring the rest towards wholeness. However, before we start out on this journey, we must ask ourselves these probing questions:

Is there any hope for me?

If I had the opportunity to start over again, would I take it?

If I had a second chance at life, what would I do differently?

Can I recover from the calamity and horrendous abuse that I endured in the past?

Can I forgive the person(s) who offended me?

Can I rid myself of the shame and stigma of the past?

Can I get rid of the shackles of addiction and mental health issues that have kept me chained for such a long time?

Will my loved ones or society ever forgive me for my past mistakes?

Can I ever forgive myself?

Can I regain my lost freedom, self-esteem, health and integrity?

Can I ever enjoy life again?

The answer to all these questions is a definite resounding **YES!!!** In the Bible Old Testament story, Israel was in just such a situation. They cried out for help and received it. Like the Israelites, we can all be restored to enjoy life again.

Elijah's last journey (and our restoration) begins at Gilgal, which was located on the eastern border of Jericho (Joshua 4:19) just west of the Jordan River. It was the place where the Israelites encamped immediately after crossing the Jordan River for the first time. An altar of 12 stones, each representing a tribe, was set up at Gilgal. Joshua was told to circumcise the people as this younger generation had not been. Their parents, apart from Joshua and Caleb, had all died in the desert. Upon seeing their obedience, *GOD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt."* (Joshua 5:1-12, MSG). Thus, began the journey back to normalcy.

Let's look at the journey from Elisha's perspective. *"Just before GOD took Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on a walk out of Gilgal."* (2 Kings 2:1-17, MSG)

## **Elisha's Reflections on His Journey with Elijah**

"Do you need me anymore, Elijah? I asked.  
"No, you can go to bed, Elisha", he replied.

I sensed that he was going to sleep. I had already given him his bed-time tea. I was tired and wanted to go to bed. An excitement was in the air as there was talk among the others that something fantastic was about to happen. Some even said that Elijah would be leaving us, for good. I myself felt that the Lord had been preparing me to take over from Elijah as His Prophet to Israel. I wondered if the others knew. Elijah had never said anything to me. So, I wondered... Anyway, I trusted in the Lord's choice, whoever He was.

Over the past few years, I had been having many great and wonderful experiences with the Lord. I had been reading the Torah over and over, ever since I had learned to read. God's Word had been consuming me night and day... every spare moment I had. I felt as if I was walking on clouds, I was so full of joy. The Lord spoke to me often – sometimes comforting me when I felt that I couldn't handle Elijah's overbearing attitude, sometimes revealing the hearts of our ancestors, such as, Moses, or just, filling me with words that I myself didn't understand. I just knew that God loved me and was very pleased with me. I felt special, very special. I understood how Moses had felt. I even understood my Rabbi, Elijah. My confidence had grown a great deal ever since Elijah had called me to be his disciple.

This night, I was especially tired, so I went straight to bed. I had to pack our stuff because Elijah had said that the Lord had told him to go to Bethel. The funny thing was that he hadn't said "we" but "I". I hadn't bothered to question him about it as I was too tired. Anyway, I would see about that in the morning. As I lay there with my eyes closed, I thought about Gilgal and what it meant for Israel and for me. I had visited the pile of twelve stones that Joshua had the people build on the Lord's instructions. Some of them had fallen away from the pile and were just lying there next to it. The pile symbolized the unity and wholeness that the Lord wished for Israel. Even though my people were divided into twelve tribes, we were to act as one people; but, like the rocks that had fallen away, Israel had also fallen away from that unity and wholeness.

I began to imagine the joy and relief that the people must have felt as they stood there, finally, in the Promised Land. Freedom! Rescued! Saved! Redeemed! Delivered! Safe again! Happy! Alive! God had done it. He had fulfilled His promise. Most significantly, He had proven His ability to redeem an entire nation from under the tyranny of slavery to the Egyptians. Amazingly, He had done it in spectacular fashion forcefully wrenching them out of Pharaoh's hands, inflicting numerous plagues on the nation and its people, even killing all their firstborn, both of people and of animals, on Passover night. What a terrifying night it turned out to be, but greater still, what an amazing deliverance for all those who believed. They had submitted to God, obeying His every instruction and painted the doorposts with the lambs' blood just as He had instructed Moses. Moreover, God did not send the people away empty-handed, for He instructed the people to ask for jewelry and other valuable stuff from their neighbors who, amazingly,



handed it all generously over to them. Thus, they plundered the Egyptians before leaving. Praise be to God!

God led them miraculously across the Red Sea on dry ground and when the Egyptian army attempted to do the same, they drowned when the walls of water came crashing down on the soldiers and horses alike. Like a compassionate Shepherd, He guided and cared for the entire group of Israelites on through the dangerous and relentless desert, feeding them with His own creation, manna, and with quail in abundance. Even their shoes did not wear out! Only those, who rejected His instructions and did not submit to His leadership, wore out and died on that epic journey. Gilgal was the end of a long journey from slavery to freedom. It was the turning point in Israel's history -- a new beginning for my people in the land that God had promised our ancestors: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the land that has been ours now for the past 550 years.

Soon after arriving at Gilgal, Joshua had everyone circumcised, even those who had not previously been. I imagined that was necessary as the whole generation of children who were born in the desert were not, so God had told Joshua to have the people fulfill the covenant He had made with them before. This practice was not yet established at its beginning as it is now. My thoughts went all the way back to my own circumcision, which I was told occurred just after my birth. I had been covenanted with the Lord. I was an adolescent when I reaffirmed my commitment to God. I had told Him that, as He was my God and my Lord, whatever He wanted me to do, I would do and wherever He wanted me to go, I would go. Thus, when Elijah called me to be his disciple, I readily accepted. It was an easy decision. I left everything and followed him.

Then, as usual, after seeing the people's obedience, came God's blockbuster declaration: "*Today I have removed the disgrace (shame) of Egypt from you*", God said to Joshua" (Joshua 5:9); which gives us the name Gilgal, which means 'rolled away'.

I understood what this all meant for me and my people and, even more so, God's role and importance in it. It was our God, the God of Israel, who had rolled away the disgrace. He had rolled mine away and that of everyone who had submitted to Him. He was our Savior. What a salvation! My people had been severely mistreated and humiliated as slaves in Egypt. Every family in Israel had loved ones who had died as a direct result of the mistreatment. Tears came to my eyes as I thought of their suffering and shame. I too could have been born into slavery... God had graciously redeemed and delivered my people from the humiliation of subjugation. I was glad that the Lord was my God. I shall not be afraid of my enemies even if I fall into their hands because He is my God and Deliverer. "*Thank you, Lord!*"

The people had been physically damaged because of all the maltreatment they had endured, so the Lord had healed them and taken away this aspect of the disgrace. Even if I was hurt because of persecution from God's enemies; I trust in my Lord to heal me, if He so wishes. They were also emotionally unstable from all the abuse they had endured. Again, the Lord healed them after they had obeyed His instructions to renounce anger, hatred, grudges against the Egyptians and refrained from going back into the past to remember the abuse. I myself had to forgive the Egyptians for what they had done to my people, and love them and all the foreign people, who lived among us. The Lord had confronted me before about my anger, especially,

towards foreigners. I had thought it was alright to have fits of rage when people hurt my feelings. God, however, said it was not alright and that I had to forgive quickly, control myself and not allow my anger to boil over. Now, I am much better at controlling myself and haven't had a fit of rage in a while. You see, the Lord had also revealed that I was afraid of being abused and that I had no reason to be afraid since He was always with me. If I remained faithful, loving, fearing and obeying Him, I had no reason to be fearful. So, I disciplined myself not to be afraid and constantly reminded myself of God's faithfulness to me and mine to Him. I have even helped people who were emotionally unstable by reminding them of these same instructions the Lord gave to Israel and to me.

*“Thank you, Lord, for healing and restoring me  
to emotional stability!  
Thank you, Lord, for removing the stigma  
and shame of mental disease from over me!”*

Then the people celebrated the Passover, which was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their Exodus from Egypt and the source of the shame of it all. I have celebrated the Passover many times, but I wished I had been there with my people at that time as it must have been special! Oh, what a joy it must have been to remember the goodness of the Lord in delivering us from our enemies and redeeming us from the scourge of slavery. He covered our sins by shedding the blood of the Passover lamb, which we painted on the doors of every believer's house. This showed His special care and love for His Son, Israel. Yes, I am glad that He is my God. What great and wonderful things He has done for Israel and has done and will do for me! Hallelu-Jah! What a deliverance! I couldn't help but smile.

After the celebration was over, the people had to get accustomed to their new situation. They were no longer slaves nor travelers in the desert. Food was no longer scarce, but abundant. Life was no longer difficult, but easy. The manna and quail had stopped as the people were no longer in the desert, so didn't require God's daily provision of food. I wonder how this might have affected the people, at that time for, like children, they had received everything, but now they had to fend for themselves; even though, it was in a land of plenty. I hoped they all would adapt quickly, grow up and move to a higher maturity level, where they could begin to take advantage of the fertile land and enjoy this new phase of their life, without grumbling.

I awoke sometime during the night with the Lord speaking to me -- *“Elisha, you are to go with Elijah to Bethel. Do not be afraid for I am sending you. Do not leave Elijah alone; follow him wherever he goes for He will soon be going home.”* I was filled with joy as I broke out in prophesying to the Lord. I must have fallen asleep again as I awoke with the sunlight streaming through the tiny gaps in the walls. The shadows danced on the ground and walls as the wind rustled the leaves of the fig and date trees outside. I felt refreshed as I got up quickly to prepare for the journey to Bethel. I heard Elijah walking about in the adjacent room. Suddenly, he appeared in the doorway and said, *“Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to Bethel.”* I quickly replied. *“As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you”.* (2 Kings 2:2) He did not say a word. So, after we had eaten, we set out for Bethel.

I felt different. I had a renewed sense of purpose. I had heard from the Lord. Previously, I had suspected, but now I knew that I was His chosen one. I belonged. I was no longer just Elijah's servant, but God's chosen vessel. I felt at peace. I felt one with the Lord, the God of Israel. He was my God.

## **YOUR JOURNEY --THE LIFE LESSONS--**

### **Setting the captives FREE**

At Gilgal, Israel was called to repent and to renew its covenant with the Lord. Israel had committed mistakes in life for which they had suffered the harsh consequences. They had left the highway and had sinned against Nature, themselves, others and their God, by engaging in the same sins as the Egyptians, who worshipped many different gods, which gave them no benefit, except the misery of enslavement. They had abandoned their God, Yahweh, the Fountain of the Water of Life and had *“dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all”* (Jeremiah 2:13). Indeed, Israel needed to covenant to repent and turn back to the way of righteousness and shalom.

In any covenant between two parties there must be a commitment from both sides, especially as the plan is for One to save the other. Gilgal is about our commitment to **forsake all**, **repent** and **enthron**e Jesus as Savior and King before the Lord circumcises our hearts and proclaims that we have been **enlivened** -- set **F.R.E.E.**

### **Forsaking All**

The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt. That was their starting point. We must ask ourselves what is our own starting point?

What is yours? Are you a slave, (a bonded or forced laborer), in a bad marriage, a child or sex slave, a child soldier, an addict to sex, drugs, alcohol or gambling, or are you just feeling an overwhelming sense of emptiness and that something is missing in your life? Are you bitter with lots of hatred towards someone or something? Do you have an extreme (or just a simple) dissatisfaction with your life or the way it is going? Have you ever thought of committing suicide? Well, you don't have to kill yourself, but you can take the steps to surrender your broken life to Jesus Christ and be willing to give up everything that He asks you to. In return, He will give you a new life, new attitude and a new heart. He will place His Holy Spirit within you, who will give you the will to choose righteousness. In other words, surrender this life of sin and brokenness and choose God's offer of a new righteousness-loving life.

It was Israel's extreme dissatisfaction with the status quo that drove them to cry out to the Lord day and night for deliverance. They cried out to many gods, but only the Lord God of Israel, responded and sent a savior, Moses, who showed them the way out of their misery. The Lord will also show you the way out of yours. He sent Jesus Christ to be your own personal

Savior and Lord. Are you crying out to Jesus? I recall a young man who was fascinated with the Gothic lifestyle, who called out to a demon god that he had heard of to save him from oppression by evil spirits. Obviously, the situation got worse. It was only when he cried out to Jesus Christ and rebuked the evil spirits in His name that he was delivered.

## **Forsaking Your Comfort Zone**

The decision to abandon the life you know, which you may have been living for years, if not decades, is not an easy one. It will take a lot of courage to abandon the only life you know; even though, that life is one of seemingly endless pain, guilt, misery and sorrow. It took a lot of courage for the Israelites to abandon their life of slavery. They knew what it meant to run away from their slave masters. It could mean death if they were caught. They could lose their meager rations of food. They would have to abandon their homes, their friends, the temples where they practiced witchcraft, and the slave conditions in which they had worked and where they had seen many of their friends and relatives die. You might wonder why they would not want to abandon those conditions. Well, it was their lifestyle. It was what they had been accustomed to all their lives. It had been the lot of their parents, their grandparents and their great grandparents before them. It was their comfort zone, even if it was cold. What is your comfort zone? It doesn't matter what form of bondage you are in -- it has been your 'cold comfort' zone for a long time and it is time to forsake it.

Jesus encourages us all to '*deny*' ourselves, pick up our cross and abandon this 'cold comfort' in order to seek freedom and a new life of joy, satisfaction and hope in Him. Just as He did for the Israelites, He will also do for us. He will defend us against our enemies and nurture us back to life. Therefore, we are not to be afraid to forsake it all. Why should we continue to hang on to such a life? It will only continue to offer more pain, suffering, guilt, despair and misery. Furthermore, the status quo is never static, but it will continue to get worse each day we remain in it. Today, like the Israelites almost thirty-five hundred years ago, we can walk away. First, we must be willing to deny ourselves by forsaking our comfort zone. You will not regret leaving yours.

I witnessed an amazing testimony by Mike W. who came to my church on Thanksgiving Sunday (2010) when I was on the Pastoral Team. That Sunday, I gave everyone the opportunity to give God thanks. This young man, whom I had never seen before, was the first to jump up and say how thankful he was to God for saving him. He had been desperate to get out of depression, alcoholism and illicit drug abuse, so one night, at around midnight, he determined to seek God until he found peace. He prayed and read all the verses in his Gideon Bible that pertained to his situation until about 4 a.m. when he finally felt peace. He was so happy but was concerned that this experience might be short lived. However, his peace and inner joy remained. He later had an inner urge to find a church, which was why he was there. There, he was guided through the steps to wholeness, has remained faithful and has since married a beautiful and God-fearing young woman.

It is wise to seek help from the experts -- from our Heavenly Father and His representatives: pastors, prophets, Christian counselors, etc. and have a submissive attitude in

following their advice. Seeking their help and not fully following their advice is unwise. So....**forsake all** and...

## **Repent**

*"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you" (Acts 3:19-20, NASB)*

The first step to freedom is repentance. There is no freedom without first turning away from the very wrongdoing that placed you in that miserable situation to begin with. Repentance goes beyond regret or remorse. Regret does not imply admission of guilt nor responsibility. Remorse does imply admission of guilt and personal responsibility and is accompanied by emotional pain and anguish. Neither regret nor remorse imply change, but repentance goes further and implies a decision of the will to change. So, one must repent rather than just being regretful or remorseful. You must conclude that enough is enough and that there needs to be a dramatic change in your life. Whoever works with drug addicts knows how important this little detail is. Unless a person wants to be helped, is willing to collaborate in their own process and is ready to abandon their bad habits, they cannot be helped. They must first hate the addiction and all the pain it is causing and decide to change. They must not only regret and be remorseful, but they must make the decision to turn away from their sinful ways and return all the way to the normal range.

To achieve victory at Gilgal, we are to commit ourselves to turning away from all that ruined our lives -- from all the sinful, harmful, evil ways that we once walked in. Our Savior said, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."* (Matthew 16:24-25 ESV) Yes, all of us first must let go of what is broken and ready to be discarded and offer it to Jesus, the Savior, so He can fix it and give us new life.

While repentance is a priority when you are the offender, what about when you are the one that has been offended?

## **The Priority of Reconciliation -- Forgiveness**

**Principle:** Forgive, forget, reconcile and move on in order to heal

To walk in freedom, there must be the willingness to forgive, forget and let go of past offenses. We are not to wait on the perpetrator to ask for forgiveness as they might never do so or even repent. We are to just leave a post-dated cheque of forgiveness, as Jesus did, and move on. Forgiveness can only be 'cashed' when the person repents of wrongdoing in the same way that you were only able to 'cash' in on Jesus' forgiveness, when you repented of your sins. You will do yourself an enormous favor by just leaving that cheque of forgiveness and getting on with your life. Only then, will you be able to walk away free from the baggage of bitterness and hate. The alternative is waiting, hanging on to the forgiveness without giving it, and experiencing its

transformation into bitterness, rage, depression, and other emotional and physical ailments. So, sincerely, we are to forgive all those who have sinned against us.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus revealed its importance by including the principle that being forgiven by the Father is conditional on our forgiving others: *"Forgive us as we forgive others."* (Matthew 6:12) In the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, Jesus told us the story of the person who was forgiven a large debt, but who was unwilling to forgive a much lesser debt owed to him by someone and he even had him thrown in jail. The forgiveness that had been extended to him was then withdrawn and he was thrown in jail. *"So also my Heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."* (Matthew 18:21-35) Jesus' counsel to *'forgive from your heart'* means to forgive sincerely and passionately, with all your heart. Many of us have heard of the stories of Corrie Ten Boom and Phan Thị Kim Phúc, mostly known as Kim Phúc, who were both survivors of the horrible atrocities of war -- Corrie, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and Kim, of the Vietnam War.

Corrie, immortalized in her autobiography, *The Hiding Place*, and in the movie of the same name, witnessed the death of her father and sister in the Nazi concentration camps. She, herself had suffered detention at the infamous Ravensbruck Concentration Camp in the Netherlands. Even though she was a born-again Christian, she harbored hatred towards those who committed the atrocities. After surviving both the war and the concentration camps, Corrie spoke of her ordeal and how she had dealt with it. After one of the many meetings at which she spoke, she came face to face with one of the Nazi guards. She wrote:

*"Even as the angry vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.... Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness... And so, I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives along with the command, the love itself." "Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart." "And for all these people alike, the key to healing turned out to be the same. Each had a hurt he had to forgive." (Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*).*

Yes, thank God, for He indwells us and gives us both the will and the strength to do the very things that He demands of us -- things that benefit us enormously because they complete our healing and as you will see later, they restore balance.

Kim Phuc's story, like Corrie's is no different. Her story, that of 'The Girl in the Picture', became etched in our minds in the book and movie of the same name. She was horribly burned when a South Vietnamese Air Force pilot mistakenly napalm-bombed her group, killing two of her cousins and two other villagers. The Pulitzer Prize winning photo of Kim Phuc running naked and crying turned out to be one of the most haunting and defining images of the Vietnam War. She stated:

*"Forgiveness made me free from hatred. I still have many scars on my body and severe pain most days, but my heart is cleansed. Napalm is very powerful, but faith, forgiveness,*

*and love are much more powerful. We would not have war at all, if everyone could learn how to live with true love, hope, and forgiveness. If that little girl in the picture can do it, ask yourself: Can you?"* (Kim Phuc)

As the previous stories suggest, forgiveness and reconciliation are not only necessary when it is between individuals, but they are also imperative when it is between individuals and corporate bodies or between corporate bodies.

## **Corporate Forgiveness**

Many, like the Israelites, must also deal with the consequences of abuse by corporate bodies: governments and their institutions, ethnic groups, religious groups, including churches, and commercial and charitable organizations. Inter-religious strife is all too common in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, but government abuses against minority religions, most notably against Christians and Jews, are still very common in majority Communist, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and even secular atheistic nations.

*"Around the world, presidents, state officials, police, religious warriors, radicals, terrorists and even ordinary citizens are trying to stop the spread of the Christian faith. "I will stop Christianity in this country," said Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2007."* (The Persecuted Church Global Report, 2011).

Today, there are numerous accounts of genocide -- some in the distant past, such as the Armenian Genocide of about 1.5 million Christian men, women and children by the Muslim Turks in 1915; the Holodomor, or Ukrainian Genocide by forced starvation of millions of Ukrainians by Stalin in the 1930s; and still others more recently, such as the Rwandan Genocide of about 1 million Tutsis by the majority Hutu tribe in 1994. Church abuse is quite common, unfortunately. The Inquisitions within the Roman Catholic Church, which began in the 12<sup>th</sup> and continued up to the 19th Century, were the cause of much bitterness. More recently, there are stories from India and Pakistan where whole villages, such as, Gojra, with their churches, have been burned to the ground with many people martyred. Further to this, my editor owned a Christian Publishing House in India that was burned to the ground by Hindu extremists in April 2017. She lost 150,000 Christian books -- the proceeds of which were going to support Indian indigenous pastors. Again, closer to home, the victims, and their descendants, of the Residential Schools in Canada are still dealing with their bitterness towards the Roman Catholic Church and the Canadian government. Today, while not at the same level and intensity as during the Inquisitions, persecution of so-called heretics continues across Christianity and in every religious group.

Whatever the abuse, the need to deal with the trauma of it remains a reality today. The consequences of chronic emotional, mental and physical imbalance are passed down from generation to generation, often within the same family line, so the children suffer from a past life that they had nothing to do with. This still requires the very same solution as at the individual level -- the need of the corporate body to repent and reconcile with their victims on the one hand (which often is not even close to ever happening) and the abused one to forgive, forget, reconcile and move on, on the other. While it is hard to repent and apologize or forgive and forget, at the

individual level, it is even more difficult and complex at the corporate level. Corporate bodies are groups of individuals that function as one. Therefore, making decisions are not simple. They all have different decision-making processes holding them back, such as, unanimity, wherein every individual member must agree; the preponderance of members, wherein, the majority, at least two-thirds, must agree; and, simple majority, wherein half plus one must concur. So, don't wait for an apology from a corporate body as it may never happen but, leave a post-dated cheque of forgiveness and move on.

Some corporate bodies have acknowledged the abuse, but many have not. Even when a public apology was given, it was done many years or decades, even centuries, later. In the past few decades since the end of World War II, many church groups have officially apologized to the Jewish people for the role of their governments and church organizations in actively and passively ignoring the plight of Jews who were fleeing the Holocaust. In late 2010, a 50-member delegation of Amish groups in Idaho went to Israel to apologize on behalf of the entire Amish people *"For our collective sin of pride and selfishness by ignoring the plight of the Jewish people and the Nation of Israel."* The Catholic Church in France apologized for their role in passively, and sometimes actively, supporting the arresting and placing of Jews in local concentration camps and of deporting many to concentration camps, such as, Auschwitz.

While corporate apologies are welcome, individuals must still know how to deal with this issue at a personal level. Individuals, such as Corrie and Kim Phuc, had to contend, not only with their bitterness and hatred towards specific individuals, but also with people groups, nations, organizations and even churches. The Lord, knowing of the danger of not being able to forgive, commanded the Israelites not to hate the Egyptians: *"Do not despise an Egyptian, because you resided as foreigners in their country."* (Deuteronomy 23:7b) One may argue that they were abused and enslaved by the Egyptians so were thus justified to harbor bitterness and hatred. As the inability to forgive leads to bitterness, which in turn has physical, emotional and spiritual adverse effects, it is not justified for us to hurt ourselves over and beyond the hurt that has already been inflicted. It is, therefore, wise to forgive quickly, forget the issue, reconcile with the perpetrator and move on, so as not to suffer greater emotional and spiritual adversities. Furthermore, we are commanded to love, not hate, our enemies as this is essential to quality life both in our natural world and in God's Kingdom. I will discuss this further in Step 4. To experience full restoration, it is not enough to forgive; we must also commit ourselves to forgetting the abuse.

## **Forget**

Even as God forgets our sins, we must also forget those of others. He said, *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* (Hebrews 8:12) This is a long, hard process, but to be restored, you must commit to forgetting and not keep reliving the memories. Whenever you find yourself reliving any offense, just stop, push it out of your mind, and occupy your mind with something else: *"Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."* (Philippines.4:8, NLT) This takes time, perhaps months and even years; so, don't give up but keep striving towards the goal of forgetting.



Don't try to forget without first forgiving; that would be a mistake. It does not work that way. It only takes a voice or sight of something or someone or a thought that can trigger a flashback and a flood of painful memories. Planning not to forget is also a mistake as the painful memories will persist longer thus prolonging your suffering. Besides, the constant distraction of reliving the abuse or thinking about the abuser will disturb your day-to-day life. It can hurt your job; distract you while operating dangerous machines; and endanger your life or the lives of others. No wonder Jesus warned us that *"No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God."* (Luke 9:62) Looking back while plowing is a temptation that can cause you to miss the rock in the ground and potentially break the plow. We must always pay full attention to what we are doing in the present. Constant looking back into the past will only distract you and hamper your effectiveness in carrying out your responsibilities in the present. So, forgive **and** forget.

## **Reconcile**

The third component of forgiving is reconciliation, as it restores balance and community life. The goal and purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation, if possible. I say, 'if possible', because reconciliation must be avoided in certain cases, such as, with an unrepented sexual offender or murderer, as these will repeat the abuse when given the chance. Holding onto unforgiveness places barriers, which are detrimental to community. Community, common unity, or interdependence can only occur when there are no barriers to the flow of give and take. If a barrier exists to this exchange, such as the barrier put up due to offenses -- *"I don't want anything from you", "I will not give you anything"* or *"I don't want anything to do with you"* -- then both parties suffer and wholeness is lost. Good social or interpersonal skills are dependent on one's ability to effectively socialize within the boundaries without being limited by the barriers erected because of unforgiven offenses. We will explore further in the 4<sup>th</sup> step how reconciliation is necessary for overall balance and wholeness.

Jesus drove home the priority of reconciling and of completing the entire process when he said:

*"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."* (Matthew 5: 23-26)

In those days, there was only one centralized House of God. Many had to travel great distances to get there. So, Jesus' command to leave your gift at the altar and, first, go back to solve any outstanding issues, before returning to complete your dealings with the Lord, speaks, loud and clear, regarding the priority of forgiveness, reconciliation and community. All barriers between people must be broken down just as there must be no barriers between you and God.

You can only let go of the bitterness and move on, if you first forgive, literally and intentionally put it out of your mind, and, reconcile. Only then can that chapter of your life close, freeing you to begin another chapter, this time, free of the chains of bitterness that once bound you.

## **Let Go of the Past, Move on -- Do Not Look Back**

Now that you have closed this chapter related to the offense, you can literally move forward unfettered by it. God Himself says, “*as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*” (Psalm 103:12) Therefore it doesn’t make any sense to bring the memory back to the forefront of what has been relegated to the past. In the book of Isaiah, we read, “*Do not remember the past events, pay no attention to things of old.*” (Isaiah 43:18, HCS) Therefore, avoid contemplating on your past with all its hardships, mistakes, traumas and heartaches. It is wise to not look back in life to the things that only caused you pain, whether they were self-inflicted or caused by others. Rather, walk in your new freedom with confidence, gratefulness and happiness. You are NOT a slave any longer. You are FREE! You thought as a slave. You lived as a slave. You behaved as a slave. Others treated you as a slave and you expected to be treated as one. But now, you must think, live and behave as a freed person and expect to be treated as one. You would be living on false expectations if you were to expect anything different in your new reality. The truth is that you have been freed and saved by God’s immense grace. Believe in this truth, with all your heart. Focus all your efforts on aligning your entire life, including your thought sphere, with this new reality; and, live it out, with all confidence and gratefulness. Enjoy your new reality.

However, you must overcome the awkward and uncomfortable feelings that stem from living a new reality. Everything is new; therefore, everything will feel uncomfortable at the beginning until the new reality sets in and becomes normal and comfortable. Remember that your old life with all its mistakes, traumas, pain and misery was what constituted your ‘comfort’ zone. It was what you were accustomed to. It was your ‘normal’, not God’s or nature’s normal, and for this very reason, the results were disastrous. So, don’t be fooled by the awkwardness that you are feeling, but trust in the *rightness* of your decision and actions that are solely based on truth. This truth will be illuminated throughout the rest of this book.

Making the mental shift from everything related to the offense and, hence, moving out of the past and into the present, is a very important part of cementing yourself in your new healthy lifestyle. You will reap the benefit of “*quietness and confidence*” the sooner you do so; and, you will avoid harvests of unnecessary anguish, pain and sorrow. How much effort you put into aligning yourself with your new reality and the intentional forgetting of the past will determine how fast you make the transition. Memories take time to fade, but the forgetting happens at a faster rate the more you avoid thinking about it. When you find yourself thinking about a specific episode of the past, intentionally stop and think about something different. Those of you suffering from some form of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) -- this is the prescription for your full recovery. It’s the turning away from what is in the past that will save you and allow you to live in quietness and confidence -- “*In turning away and resting is your salvation, in quietness and confidence is your strength.*” (Isaiah. 30:15 (PP) Again, “*And this (rightness) will bring peace. Yes, it will bring quietness and confidence forever.*” (Isaiah.32:17 NLT)

Remember, “*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*” (Psalm 103:12 KJV) So, when we give over our lives to God and fully repent, He removes all our past life from us.

But, in moving on ...

## **Don't Transfer the Offense of the Past onto Others**

‘Transference’ according to Mosby's Medical Dictionary: *is ‘an unconscious defense mechanism whereby feelings and attitudes originally associated with important people and events in one's early life are attributed to others in current interpersonal situations, including psychotherapy.’*

This is a common unconscious temptation that must be avoided. The saying, ‘*Once bitten, twice shy*’, applies here if one has been hurt before, as it is common to put safety mechanisms in place to avoid being hurt a second time. While these mechanisms are valid, it is unhealthy, when transference is added. These mechanisms become unhealthy when they have been broadened to include others, which is not only unjust, but damaging to community.

For example, the temptation, for the Israelites, was to transfer the offense of those Egyptians who had enslaved and mistreated them, onto all, as well as, future generations of Egyptians and onto any foreigner. Hence, we have the Lord's warning to “*not despise an Egyptian, because you resided as foreigners in their country.*” (Deuteronomy 23:7b) As they had been foreigners in Egypt, the Israelites should be grateful to them for receiving and treating them well in the time of Joseph and thus be tolerant of any foreigners living among them. In other words, they must treat others in the same right way that they would want to be treated.

If you were offended, don't transfer this offense onto others. For example, as I had been offended by my dad, I became rebellious against those in authority. I expected people in authority to be just as faulty as my dad had been, which was both unfair and false. When my dad had repented and reconciled, it would have been unfair of me to perceive and treat him as if he was the same person that had offended me in the past. Others often transfer the offense of their dads to their husbands when they become fathers, and even onto all men; or, to their wives and all women, if the offender was their mom. Similarly, rape victims may transfer onto all males or females. One or two corrupt politicians becomes transferred into “all politicians are corrupt”. The scenarios are endless. So, we are to discipline ourselves to observe, without voicing or labelling people with the original offense, because once we do so, we are transferring. The person in your present is NOT the person in your past.

The curse of the original offense can live on indefinitely and ruin many relationships around you; if you do not break the cycle. You have probably heard of long-standing feuds, such as, with the Hatfields and McCoys, the War of Roses, Israel and the Palestinians/Arabs, the Koreas etc. An important step in breaking the cycle, whether it is between individuals or clans or nations, is to forgive; and, as was mentioned before, to forget, reconcile and move on -- all the while being careful not to transfer the original offense onto others. Community is hurt whenever

this process is incomplete and must be restored. So, repent, as often as is necessary, until reconciliation and restoration can be completed, and justice is victorious.

When you make the decision to forsake your old lifestyle, it includes the decision to turn away from wrongdoing. Jesus tells us to ‘deny’ or humble ourselves. Begin, therefore, to curtail your wrong desires. Self-control is an essential virtue because it helps you return to the normal range. Exercise self-control so as not to be excessive or deficient, but ‘just right’; say “No!” to temptation and “Yes!” to the right behavior. Remember that if you do not control yourself, somebody else must control you, whether it is the justice system placing you in custody or the Mental Health workers placing you in a strait jacket. God’s life system always has a way to bring you under control, one way or another.

So, ‘*take up (your) cross*’ of repentance or turn away, in the same way that Jesus walked with His cross to his death. Pick up your cross of wrongdoing, mistakes, bitterness, anger, hatred, temper tantrums, wild behavior, negative labels, self-condemnation and all the unrighteous and unjust ways and walk with it, dying to each one, and leave it at His feet. Also, do not pick it up again later. This is the refining process that will make you into pure gold. In order to complete this entire process of repentance and refining, you must enter into the covenant with your Savior, Jesus Christ, as your Lord. It is taking up the cross of this New Covenant, with all its rights and responsibilities, for all eternity. You must enter this covenant with Jesus Christ. He is the only Way, for “*He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*” (1 Peter 2:24, NASB) He is giving you a wonderful opportunity to transform your life of sin and accept his offer of rebirth as a righteousness-loving person. Will you accept His offer? How?

## **Enthroned Jesus as Savior and Lord**

The most important lesson of Gilgal is to give Jesus His rightful position in your life. He is Lord and King. He must be **your** Lord and King in order to be your Savior and lead you to safety for He knows the way. The Lord is the Head and, therefore, the only One who can show and lead you to this new life. He is the only One who can change you on the inside and make you into a new person. He is the only One who can heal and save you and the only One who can help you forsake all and repent. Remember, you cannot do any of this without His help. None of us who have already become Christians could have succeeded without His daily help. This covenant with Him is, therefore, foundational and essential. You are the only one to decide to accept Jesus as your Savior and Lord, and Yahweh as your God and King. In humility, you commit to follow and obey Him. This is the firm foundation on which is built your faith. You are entering a covenantal relationship with the Almighty God because you need Him to be your Heavenly Father.

So, what does it mean to enthrone and accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

It means:

- Belonging to God's and Jesus' family;
- Placing yourself in His Divine Order even as the planets are in the Solar Order;

- Announcing your decision to follow Jesus Christ as your Lord, Leader and King;
- Taking the decision to repent and submit to the clean(sing), purifying and sanctifying work of His Indwelling Holy Spirit;
- Entering God’s Kingdom;
- Living by His House and Kingdom rules of righteousness, which as you will see in Step 4, is expressed in Natural Law.

So, enthrone Him!  
Pray with me...

“Dear Lord, forgive me all my sins. I commit to turn away from my sinful ways and return to your narrow way of life. I forgive myself and all those who have offended me (name each person or group) even as you now forgive me my sins. I surrender my life to you to be yours and for you to become my God and Lord. From now on, your will be done in my life even as your will is done in Heaven. I will follow you all the days of my life. This is my decision. I trust you to make me into a new person by giving me a new heart and attitude and your Holy Spirit to indwell me so that you can always be with me.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen!”

Now, cement your resolve by...

## **Water Baptism**

The word baptism comes from the Greek words, ‘*bapto*’ and ‘*baptizo*’, which mean ‘*to dip in or under*’, ‘*to dye*’, ‘*to immerse*’, ‘*to sink*’, ‘*to drown*’, ‘*to bathe*’, ‘*to wash*’. *Bapto* appears in the New Testament in its literal sense meaning ‘*to dip*’, (Luke 16:24) ‘*to dye*’ (Revelation 19:13); and, ‘*baptizo*’ is used in a cultic sense, meaning ‘*to baptize*’. These words are translations of the Hebrew word ‘*taval*’, which means ‘*to dip*’, ‘*to plunge*’. None of the other Greek meanings are understood by this Hebrew term (TDNT; The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon).

## **The Preponderance of Believer’s Baptism**

At the time of the Old Testament, water baptism was common place to the Israelites and baptism by immersion was the norm. They were accustomed to the ritual washings that accompanied a trip to the temple or before they offered a sacrifice or in preparation for the Day of Atonement. It was common practice for the priests to immerse themselves in water before entering the temple, especially, on holy days such as Yom Kippur, as part of their ceremonial cleansing. What many did not realize was that with the coming of Jesus and His baptism, it was the dawn of the New Covenant that Jeremiah had prophesied over 600 years prior. (Jeremiah 31:31-34) This new baptism in water held the same spiritual significance that circumcision had under the Old Covenant and, hence, was to be done once. Jesus confirmed this when He Himself asked to be baptized in order to “*fulfill all righteousness*”. (Matthew 3:15)

The Jewish practice of proselyte baptism utilized **baptism by immersion** due to the Levitical command to “*bathe the whole body in water*”. (Leviticus.15:16) New converts to Judaism had to fulfill one or two of three rituals as part of their initiation -- circumcision (for males) and baptism by immersion in water (for both males and females). The third practice was to offer a sacrifice, which was waived due to the absence of the temple. Thus, baptism was touted as a new birth experience. (Yebamot 22a; 48b; 97b) – (Yebamot is a tractate of the Talmud that includes rules governing conversion to Judaism).

Baptism previously referred to the ritual washing or cleansing of both people and objects. Some common usages in the Old Testament:

*“Then a man who is ceremonially clean is to take some hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle the tent and all the furnishings and the people who were there.”* (Numbers 19:18)

*“He shall dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it before the Lord seven times in front of the curtain.”* (Leviticus 4:17)

*“...Wash and be cleansed! So, (Naaman) went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, as the man of God had told him.”* (2 Kings 5:13-14)

So, we can assume with confidence that the word baptism refers to the act of *dipping* in water. Later, it came to refer to the ritual cleansing or initiation of people in preparation for the coming of the Messiah/Holy Spirit in the New Covenant. Therefore, a believer’s baptism is a core Christian ordinance. The evidence even suggests that Jesus was thus baptized in the presence of John. People were baptized by immersion -- the individual dipped himself or was dipped completely, while standing in water in the presence of witnesses. This complete submersion of the body would have been the basis for Paul’s baptismal analogy of burial and resurrection with Christ. (Romans 6:3-4)

Our Lord clearly stated that baptism was a requirement for new believers -- *“It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.”* (Matthew 3:15, NLT) A person entered the Old Covenant with the Lord through circumcision and, similarly, baptism symbolizes entry into the New Covenant by the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ blood is not only the price of redemption for your soul, but it is also the covering of grace that allows God’s Holy Spirit to indwell an unclean place. *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* (Acts 2:38) Thus, it symbolizes the real baptism – that of the Holy Spirit.

The three symbols of inner cleansing then become present -- water, blood and the fire of the Holy Spirit. Like how water cleans people and things of dirt and other uncleanness, the purpose and symbol of baptism is that it declares your disposition to be cleansed of sinful habits and to put on the white, clean and pure clothes of righteous behavior. It symbolizes your willingness to be cleansed by the purifying and refining influence of the indwelling Holy Spirit and is accomplished through your wholehearted and continuous repentance. This is the process of sanctification to make you holy and pure like Jesus Christ.

## The Purpose of Baptism

The purpose of baptism allows one to demonstrate their acceptance and faith in the death and resurrection of God's only Son Jesus. This ceremonial washing by water is symbolic of our being washed by the blood of Jesus and purified by the fire of the Holy Spirit. This cleansing heralds new birth and new life in the Kingdom of God. Paul stated in Titus *"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."* (Titus 3:5b) Paul elaborates further, by making baptism a symbol of participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus:

*"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."* (Romans 6:3-4)

Baptism in water must accompany, or rather, culminate in the inner act of repentance. It is the outward act of what Jesus accomplishes on the inside of us, by our being washed in His blood that He shed on the cross at Calvary. These two elements, blood and water, had long been known as purifying elements in the temple purification rituals. The third element of the cleansing trio would be fire, symbolized by the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It is done once in obedience to the letter of the Law, but it is the spirit of the Law that really matters. John first makes this purpose all too clear when he called on the people to prepare for the coming of the Messiah by repentance from sinful ways and water baptism. *"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance...The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."* (Matthew 3:8, 10) The Israelites would have been told to 'consecrate' by 'washing' themselves and their clothes before any appearance of the Lord. (Exodus 19:10-11) The appearance of the dove lighting on Jesus right after his baptism symbolized the coming of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:16-17; Acts 2:38; 3:19-20) Similarly, we prepare for the coming of the Holy Spirit by first consecrating ourselves through baptism in water.

Jesus then went on to command his disciples to baptize the new adherents to this New Covenant -- *"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you;"* (Matthew 28:19-20) and that, *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."* (Mark 16:16) Peter confirms this ordinance when he said, *"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 2:38) Then, again, *"Repent, then and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you, even Jesus."* (Acts 3:19-20) Paul succinctly states the case for repentance, personal transformation and covenant initiation when he said,

*"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also*

*circumcised, in the putting off the sinful chapter, not with a circumcision done by hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead." (Colossians.2:9-12)*

Baptism, as an act of cultic cleansing from sins, was an acknowledgement of the individual's commitment to repent of wrongdoing. This was the spirit of the Law. Baptism signified your commitment to deny yourself, pick up your cross of wrongdoing and follow Jesus all the way to crucifixion at Calvary.

Thus, in conclusion, **Jesus was Himself baptized** to demonstrate his allegiance to this new requirement. He said, *"...It is proper for us to do this in order to fulfill all righteousness."* (Matthew 3:15) In other words, Jesus is saying that baptism fulfills the requirement of righteousness. It is the right thing to do. And, to confirm the Father's pleasure in His Son's obedience, *"...the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my son, whom I love; in Him, I am well pleased."* (Matthew 3:16-17)

**He told his disciples to baptize new believers.** *"All authority in heaven and earth is given me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28: 18-20) He not only commanded His disciples to baptize new believers, but he also told them to teach them **everything that He** taught and demonstrated to them.

**Baptism came after believing and repenting.** When the jailer asked Paul and Silas, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* They replied, *"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved – you and your household ... then immediately he and his family were baptized."* (Acts 16:30-33) Again, while Peter was preaching the gospel to the household of the centurion Cornelius, in Caesarea,

*"...the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. (They) were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles for they heard those speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized in water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. So, he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."* (Acts 10:44-48)

**Should people baptized as infants or by other modes other than immersion be baptized again?** Loyalty to traditional creeds and doctrines has generally been an obstacle to Christian unity. Historically, this discussion over baptism has been a divisive issue among Christians. It is common knowledge that the Old Covenant required circumcision, which for most Jews, took place usually just eight days after birth. (Luke 2:21) This has been the main justification for the validity of infant-baptism. When the jailer was saved, he and his whole household -- if there could have been children under the age of understanding -- were baptized by Paul and Silas. (Acts 16:33b) The common tradition at the time was that children under the age of understanding i.e., *"before the child knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right."* (Isaiah 7:15)



could enter covenant with God by the decision of their parents. That could well be the reasoning behind the fact that this subject is never addressed directly in the New Testament.

When all these things are taken into consideration, it is plainly understandable that infant-baptism could be justified, as an exception to the rule. The baptism of a believer is plainly the main thrust of Jesus' and the apostles' teaching for the plain reason that entry into covenant requires one's understanding of, and agreement to, its terms. As Jesus did not give any other instruction other than to baptize in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, then those who were baptized as infants should not be required to be re-baptized, if they are following the Spirit of the Law.

**Baptism by Aspersion** – dipping in water and sprinkling the individual. This idea comes from the priestly practice of dipping his finger in water or blood and sprinkling people or things as a means of cultic purification or ritual cleansing. (Numbers 19:18; Lev.4:17)

**Baptism by Affusion** – water was poured out on the person's head while the person may or may not be standing in water. The idea of pouring comes from the common Jewish practice of pouring water on one's hands as part of washing and ritual cleansing that started in the temple and remained afterwards as a Jewish tradition. Peter also referred to the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a "*pouring out*" of the Spirit upon the person. "*In the last days I will pour out my Spirit on all people...*" (Acts 2:17, 18) and again, "*He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear*" (Acts 2:33); and, "*...the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles....*" (Acts 10:45, 47)

If we look carefully at the word *dipping*, baptism by immersion would be the acceptable mode. The argument, though, for the other modes would remain when viewed through the lens of actual Temple practices surrounding the central purpose of ritual cleansing or purification. Baptism or ceremonial cleansing of individuals was by total immersion. The priest '*dipped*' his finger in water or blood and '*sprinkled*' crowds of people and large objects, such as, houses and '*poured out*' water or blood on the earth in order to accomplish ritual purification.

The only direction we are given by Jesus was to baptize "*in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*" (Matthew 28:19) No other specific instructions were given because it would have been common knowledge regarding the whole area of ritual cleansing. The diversity of modes of baptism exists today because Jesus did not give any other instruction except what has just been mentioned. Jesus knew that ceremonial cleansing was practiced in the temple utilizing immersion, "*dipping and sprinkling*" and "*pouring out*" so he could have expanded it, if He thought it necessary. The fact that He only gave us that simple instruction is reason for me not to be intolerant of people who believe in the validity of modes other than immersion or require re-baptism. It would also have been acceptable to baptize children under the age of understanding when whole families were being initiated into the New Covenant like the practice of circumcision; and, not to require their re-baptism when they became of age.

Everyone knew that these only had cultic significance as no one expected *dipping*, or *sprinkling*, *washing* or *pouring out* of water to literally cleanse from sins. Actual cleansing was instead a legal and spiritual act of God. Only the blood of Jesus and baptism by the Holy Spirit

can cleanse a person from sin. In other words, it is the actions of Jesus and the Holy Spirit upon the person that save, not the act of baptism in water. The Holy Spirit convicts us and leads us to repent and follow Christ, which are our covenantal responsibilities. Our obedience and repentance are what constitutes the spirit of, and leads us to fulfill the purposes of, baptism. This is what matters to the Lord and pleases Him. Anything else is vanity.

Therefore, while a believer's baptism by total submersion in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is still the most comprehensive, whether you were baptized as an infant or by the other modes, we are all united in one family by one baptism and by One Spirit. The letter of the law, which is to be baptized in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, once fulfilled, does not need repeating. All that matters now is that you fulfill the spirit of the law which is to repent and be converted. This is the only thing that Jesus asks us to do and to teach. This is what unites the Body of Christ. Anything else is anathema. There will always be diversity of opinions, but this diversity must never come at the expense of our common unity or of the spirit of the law.

It is only after you have committed to denying yourself, picked up the cross of repentance and covenanted with Jesus Christ that you can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are ...

## **Enlivened**

At Gilgal, it was only after Israel had committed to enter God's divine order and fulfill their responsibilities in the covenant by being circumcised, that they heard the blockbuster statement: *"Today, I have rolled away the disgrace and shame of (your past) from over you."* This is an amazing statement. It is like the Judge saying, "You are free to go"; or the Physician declaring, "You are healed". When the fire from heaven comes, you are transformed from within. The Spirit of God comes upon you and you become a new person: *"I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit (attitude) in you. I'll remove the stony heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands."* (Ezekiel 36:26, MSG) You are no longer the same person made of body and soul. Now you are tripartite: body, soul and God's Holy Spirit. Look at this equation:

$$\text{(body + soul) You (y) + God (G) = Gy}$$

Neither you nor anyone else can declare that you are the same person as before because now you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, the House of the Living God. The previous person with its old labels is now joined to the Lord. Reject and take off the old labels as they no longer apply. The old person is no longer there but a new person has taken its place. The Word says explicitly, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."* (II Corinthians 5:17 ESV)

You are no more 'good for nothing', 'insignificant', 'will never amount to anything in life', 'wretched', 'pitiable', 'poor', 'blind', 'naked', 'prostitute', 'lazy', etc. You are now valuable, rich, with great potential, happy, content, well-adjusted, complete, healthy and peaceful

because of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you and makes you His. You can walk from Gilgal in newness of life, with a renewed sense of purpose, happy that you have been...

Freed,  
Rescued,  
Saved,  
Redeemed,  
Delivered,  
Restored,  
Healed, and  
Renewed.

You are...

Safe at home again,  
At peace,  
At rest, and  
Fortunate.

This is what Peter was referring to in his sermon when he said that “*times of refreshing*” will “*come from the presence of the Lord*” (Acts 3:19) and Mike W., as he publicly expressed his gratitude to the Lord in his testimony. The Lord’s plan is to refresh and renew our lives. I hope you are taking or have taken advantage of this amazing opportunity as I have.

## **My Story**

One beautiful Sunday morning in September 1972, I put on my short pants and T-shirt and went around the corner to my new-found friend Jolyon. As usual, it was shaping up to be one of those hot and humid days in Georgetown, Guyana. I was 12 years old and had just graduated to secondary school at one of the prestigious schools in Georgetown: Saint Stanislaus College. It was there I first met Jolyon as we both walked home and discovered that he lived just around the corner from me.

I had been hoping to play, but when I got to his house, he told me that he was going to the church next door. I was very disappointed, but as I did not want to waste my efforts of hanging out with my friend, I decided to hang around with him as he was awaiting the arrival of the Pastor. I recall sitting on the church doorstep waiting as people filed past me to enter the church. Soon the Pastor arrived and passed me by sitting there. Jolyon went inside and as I was about to get up to leave, the Pastor turned around and said, “*Won’t you like to come in?*”

I looked at him inquisitively at the same time pointing to my play clothes as if to say, “*I am not dressed appropriately for church.*”

He immediately said, “*Don’t worry, just come and join us*”.

So, I joined Jolyon as he sat in his Sunday School class and later, in the church service. I was so enraptured by this whole new experience. The pastor, his wife and the people looked so peaceful and kind. Everybody seemed to have a reason to smile. I had no reason except that I was happy to be there. I decided then and there to return the very next week. I did, but this time I was dressed for church.

I became a regular attendee at this little church, Bible Missionary Church, and was amazed at the things I was hearing. I came to the realization that I was not a part of God's covenant family. I had grown up as a baptized and confirmed Roman Catholic going to church probably twice a year but had no sense of commitment to God. Even at that age, I knew what it meant for someone to be my Lord. God was certainly not my Lord and that knowledge scared me. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I was not ready to hand over my life to God. *'What if I died and went to Hell?'* *'Well', I told myself, 'just before you die you can accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.* But, *'What if I died suddenly and didn't get a chance to pray?'* I struggled with all this, but still I was not willing to let the Lord of Heaven and Earth be my Lord. I couldn't give my all and I knew He wouldn't accept a partial surrender. So, I sat on my decision...

Then, one day, I came to church to hear the shocking news that the Pastor had died by drowning while fishing. I was shocked. I went home dazed after the service. I stayed home the next Sunday and the next and the next... This was my opportunity to avoid that nagging question: *"When are you going to accept Jesus as your Lord?"* I tried to push it out of my mind, but it was always there. I was anxious to go back, but at the same time, I was afraid -- very afraid of making the decision.

One Sunday morning I noticed a family passing by our home. I knew they were heading to the Bible Missionary Church because they were dressed in the same manner as the previous Pastor and his family. I quickly realized this was the new Pastor and he had a rather large family -- five or six children. I noticed a boy my size and a very pretty girl also my size. Excitement grew within me and I ran in, put my clothes on and ran to church. I became friends with Daniel and Judith Stracener, the Pastor's two oldest children -- Judith was so pretty. I tried as much as possible to be near her and visited their home often.

I became a regular attendee again, but still avoided answering that nagging question, until the 1974 Easter Week celebration. There was a special speaker giving a sermon series called *"Occupy until I come"*. I was so convicted by the message that I decided to answer the altar call and raised my hand. However, when he invited everyone who raised their hands to go up to the front to seal the deal, I couldn't, as I was too embarrassed to do so. I went home worried and scared.

That night, as I laid in bed, I felt as if the Lord was telling me it was okay to ask Jesus to be my Lord and Savior right there in bed. I didn't need to do it in church. So, I prayed and accepted Jesus as my own Lord and Savior. What a relief! Finally, I had done it. I went to bed that night very happy. The next Sunday, I felt no fear and I got up in church to tell the congregation that I had finally accepted Jesus. Everyone was overjoyed. I beamed from ear to ear. I was 14 years old.

However, I had a relapse sometime over the next few weeks, for the Lord confronted me that He was no longer the Lord of my life. It appeared that I had listened to a thought that said it was okay if I kept back some control of my life. I knew that I was not being sincere, but I thought it was still okay for him to have most of my life. I was not committed to Jesus being my Lord 24/7/366. In marriage, even if you are 99.9% committed, it means that you will have an affair once every 1000 days or three and a half years. If the airline industry had a similar commitment to quality, two major passenger airlines would be crashing at an international airport every day (Total Quality Ministry, p.13). This was unacceptable. I repented and re-

affirmed my commitment to my Lord. I was now 100% committed. Now that the Lord, the key stone of the solution, was occupying His rightful position in my life, He could now proceed with the rest of my treatment. I was fully committed to carefully listen to and obey every instruction. *"Not my will, Lord, but your will be done!"*

Over the next few weeks and months, I began to observe the changes in my life, the *"times of refreshing from the Lord."* I was happy, very happy. It seemed as if joy was oozing out of every pore in my body. I wasn't a criminal or had a vice, but I was an emotional wreck with constant nightmares; often getting up in the middle of the night crying and falling off my top bunk bed. So, I was pleasantly surprised when I noticed that there were no more nightmares. *'What happened to the nightmares?'* I thought to myself. *'Wow, they are gone! I don't have them anymore!'* I was a very anxious young man -- sweat would drip from my armpits, hands and feet. I often felt as if there was a bolus in my throat preventing me from breathing properly; and, my mind raced a lot. I recall once thinking and planning to commit suicide by drinking a poison we had in the home: Malathion. However, I was too afraid to carry it out.

I recall the first time the Lord confronted me about my 'baggage' of unforgiveness and hatred. I still hated my dad. The Holy Spirit convicted me that I could not be a part of His family if I chose to hate rather than love and I could not love without first forgiving. After much internal debating, I agreed to forgive my dad. However, there was still the matter of love. I told the Lord that I had no love for my dad. The Lord told me to ask Him for love. As I had no more excuses, I asked the Lord for forgiveness, forgave my Dad, and asked the Lord to pour out His unconditional love into my heart. As time passed, I noticed that I was becoming more loving, not only towards my Dad but to everyone, which spurred me to pray for him and others -- something I wasn't doing.

I also had very low self-esteem, especially, about my body image, which was a significant reason for my constant anxiety. I grew up in a poor and dysfunctional family. My dad, at the time, was addicted to gambling and would occasionally waste his entire paycheck on this vice. So, I was very skinny, not because I was anorexic, but because I did not have much to eat and, at the same time, I was a very active athlete, who was on the school's Track and Field team. I could not pass a mirror or shop window without stopping to look at myself; I hoped I would look 'fatter'. The Lord told me to ignore the urges and stop doing that. So, I made up my mind to obey and eventually stopped worrying about my body image. In summary, He helped me control the anxiety attacks by ignoring and disobeying the obsessive and compulsive urges, whether they were to hyperventilate to overcome the bolus in my chest or to look in the window to see if I was fatter. He reminded me that His Spirit within me was not *"a Spirit of fear but of power, love and a healthy mind."* (2 Timothy 1:7) He encouraged me to *"be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."* (Joshua 1:9) Whenever I condemned myself over some mistake, the Lord would remind me *"that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything"* (1 John 3:20). This would put my heart at ease. One 'sin' that the Lord confronted me with was rebellion. I knew I was a rebel, so when I read, *"Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft"*, (1Sam.15:23) I was immediately convicted, repented and renounced my rebellious attitude.

I loved to read, so as a new Christian believer, I read biographies of fellow believers. It is always amazing to read about and listen to the testimonies of this Gilgal phase. I can only imagine what the Israelites felt at that moment knowing what they had gone through. They were slaves and now they were FREE, at last!

## **What a New Beginning!**

The month of the first Passover was significant to Israel as it heralded a new life and a new beginning. This one was even more special as it was their 40<sup>th</sup>. The highlight of the Passover was the first night when they slaughtered the Passover lamb, roasting it and then eating it communally with '*the bread of haste*' (unleavened bread). That very night was when Israel was miraculously delivered from slavery. The Passover began a week of rest, hurrying and eating in a yeast-free environment. The cleansing trio of cultic washing, the blood of the lamb and the purification by fire were all present in this festival.

This same cleansing trio is symbolic of our salvation. We are baptized in water once and cleansed by the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross once and for all. The Holy Spirit's refining fire then proceeds to complete the process of purification. This process is ongoing, but the first week is crucial. Just as Israel celebrates the Passover for one week with '*the bread of haste*', we too must hurry to heed and follow every urge of the Holy Spirit in the first week of our conversion. Life ahead for you will then be amazing with a new Pilot in your life -- the Holy Spirit. He is Wonderful Counselor and King of Peace (Shalom). So, we must make up our minds to follow Him carefully and sincerely.

"*Follow me*" is the most important advice that Jesus Christ has given us all. As He is our Savior, we must follow His lead continuously for Him to save us. It's not just beginning the relationship; we must now maintain it to the end. As a physician, I know how important this detail is. I cannot help anyone who is not willing to **fully** collaborate with me until the healing is complete. "*Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*" (Matthew 5:48) The essence of the meaning of 'perfect' is complete. So, make His work easy by fully collaborating with Him till the end rather than resisting and quenching Him.

## **Tell Others about Your Decision**

Telling someone about your decision to follow Christ reinforces the decision in your mind. Your decision must be wholehearted, so do not refrain from telling someone about it, because of shame or embarrassment. "*Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.*" (Matthew 10:33; cf. Romans 10:9) The decision to follow Christ must be a firm, rock-solid decision, not subject to winds of change or popularity polls.

## **When the Celebration is Over**

Israel had experienced God's miraculous deliverance. When this happens to you, you become a changed person living in a completely new environment -- the Kingdom of God. When the celebration or 'honeymoon time' ends, expect the ecstatic joy that you felt at the

beginning to wane. That ardent desire and hunger to pray, to read your Bible and to congregate with other brothers and sisters may diminish. Now, you must continue to do those same things based on their rightness and necessity rather than on a perceived divine inspiration. Before, the indwelling Spirit moved you miraculously to 'bond' with your Lord and God, now you must develop the good habit of having daily devotional times -- reading the Scriptures, praying and meditating. It's not that the Holy Spirit is no longer moving you; He is always there doing just that. However, the first encounter one has with the Holy Spirit is always ecstatic and mind-boggling because it is so new; after all, it's the first one. It is almost like drinking coffee for the first time. Subsequent ones don't have the same effect as that first one.

Therefore, adapt to this new reality -- 'the old you' is gone. The new has begun. You are a totally new person led by the indwelling Holy Spirit. As He leads you, His refining fire will continue, and eventually complete, the process of purifying and sanctifying you so that you can be "*a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God*" (Romans 12:1) and fully integrated into the kingdom of God.

## **Celebrate the Anniversary of Your Salvation**

Passover was the celebration of Israel's deliverance and salvation. Every year, they celebrate its anniversary. At Easter, we remember, together as a Church, the Body of Christ, not only the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but our collective redemption and deliverance from slavery to sin. It's a celebration of the great things that the Lord has done for us. He did it for Israel and He did it for you and me. Therefore, celebrate the anniversary of your salvation and broadcast your testimony to as many as will listen. In so doing, you will be a blessing to '*all the families of the earth*'. Everyone must be encouraged to seek the Lord for their own salvation and deliverance. If He can do it for you, He can also do it for them.

This ushers in a new phase in your relationship with God. As you will see in the next Step, the Lord revealed to Elisha and to us, God's and our rights and responsibilities in this New Covenantal-paternalistic relationship.

## **CONCLUSION**

You have encountered the Savior, Yeshua, who has guided you out of the perilous 'minefield' of your life and given you a second chance at life. Life is fluid, not static, so you must always be moving forward to the goal. You must grasp God's vision of restoring you back to normal; not your idea of 'normal' but the true normal; that is, God's and nature's normal. Now that you have dealt adequately with your past and let go of your 'baggage', you can move on to the new things your Savior has planned for your life as well as conquer those things that have yet to be conquered. The future is bright now that you are no longer 'bogged down' by your past. Thanks be to God your Savior!

As you move forward, remember that your covenant with Christ gives you your new identity. Cherish and hold on tightly to it just as you cherish and hold tightly to your legal ID documents. Reject and take off the old labels, which are no longer applicable. You are a new person with new labels. Move on without looking back. Ignoring and disobeying the urges to do

so will help you overcome anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), OCD and other disorders. You may still need medical assistance, but don't be afraid to receive it, as we dwell in an unbalanced world which may never attain balance before Jesus returns to restore everything. Follow Him carefully as Gilgal is not the end of the journey; it is only the beginning.

Now, that God is repairing and placing your life back in the fold, He will continue to integrate you into His kingdom by revealing who He is and strengthening that relationship with you at Bethel. He will show you how to fulfill your original purpose in life at Jericho and teach you how to live and succeed at the Jordan River so that you never fail again.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Inner Healing -- An Important Resource of Churches Today**

The Israelites were abused physically and emotionally in Egypt and many of their friends and relatives had been killed. As they had all been slaves of the Egyptians, their self-esteem was low and shattered. Many would have suffered from emotional and/or mental illnesses, such as, PTSD, anxiety and mood disorders -- depression, unforgiveness, bitterness; as well as other physical ailments. They needed to not only be healed, physically and emotionally, from all those diseases, but they also needed to get rid of all the vices, bad labels and evil spirits that accompanied them.

Today, every believer, adherent and visitor to church comes with their own 'baggage' and, therefore, need healing, help and encouragement on their road to recovery. The Church must be prepared and have ministries in place that facilitate inner healing, which can enable congregants to close the chapter on their past. Then, they can join the community as physically and emotionally healthy people. No one can move on to becoming effective pastors, healers and leaders if they themselves have not first been healed.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Ministries that Facilitate Inner Healing:**

Eagle Worldwide Ministries  
Nicky Gumbel's Alpha and Beta/ Challenging Lifestyle Courses  
Neil Anderson's Beta Course  
Stephen Ministries  
Singing Waters  
Ellel Ministries  
Cleansing Streams  
Soulcare  
Dr. Grant Mullen's Transformation Series  
Encounter Retreat of G12 Movement  
Restoring the Foundations

