

Young Working Saints Outing

Oklahoma City, April 5-6, 2024

Eating the Lord



“And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and **there He put the man** whom He had formed.

And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the **tree of life** in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”
(Genesis 2:8-9)

“As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who **eats Me**, he also shall live because of Me.” (John 6:57)

P a r t i c i p a t e • E x e r c i s e • P r a c t i c e

Working Saints Outing

Oklahoma City, April 5-6, 2024

Eating the Lord & Being Vitalized

Participate • Exercise • Practice

Friday Evening

- 6:00 Dinner in the Meeting Hall (simultaneous meal for children in the Fellowship Hall)
- 6:45 Singing/Prayer/Pray-Reading
- 7:00 **Message 1, “The Bible Being a Book of Eating”** (45 minutes)
- 7:45 One-time prayer and one-time share with 3-4 around you (5 minutes)
- 7:50 **Group Fellowship 1, “The Four Steps of Vitalization”** – Read for approx. 20 minutes, then fellowship for 20 minutes, followed by prayer in a circle
- 8:30 Overflow together from message and group reading
- 9:00 Dismiss/pick up children

Saturday Morning

- 9:00 Refreshments
- 9:30 Singing/Prayer/Pray-reading
- 9:45 **Message 2, “The Lord Being for Man to Eat”** (45 minutes)
- 10:30 One-time prayer and one-time share with 3-4 around you (5 minutes)
- 10:35 **Group Fellowship 2, “Being Vitalized and Vitalizing Others”** – Read for approx. 20 minutes, then fellowship for 20 minutes, followed by prayer in a circle
- 11:15 Break
- 11:30 **Message 3, “Coming to the Feast, Keeping the Feast, and Two Kinds of Eating”** (45 minutes)
- 12:15 Overflow from any message or group times
- 12:30 Lunch

Message 1

THE BIBLE BEING A BOOK OF EATING

Scripture Reading: Gen. 2:8-9, 16; Exo. 12:6-8; Deut. 12:6-7; 15:19-20; 16:10-11, 15; John 6:35, 57, 63; Rev. 22:2, 14

I. The Bible is a Book of Eating:

Gen. 2:8 And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, ... and there He put the man whom He had formed. **9** And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden ...

- A. In the beginning, after God created man, He put man in a garden, and He placed man before the tree of life — Gen. 2:8-9, 16; Deut. 30:15; Jer. 21:8, Psa. 36:8-9.
- B. To eat is to grow, being nourished and supplied in life; just as babies, we must eat and grow — 1 Pet. 2:2-3; Psa. 34:8; Heb. 5:13-14; 1 Cor. 3:1-2.

Lam. 3:25a Jehovah is my portion ...

- C. We never “graduate” from eating – never age beyond needing to eat – He is new every morning — Lam. 3:22-25; Isa. 33:2; Psa. 119:90.

II. Reading The Bible Requires Us to Drop Our Old Concepts — Deut. 6:5-12; 12:7

Exo. 12:3b ... each man shall take a lamb according to his fathers’ house, a lamb for a household.

46a It shall be eaten in one house. You shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, ...

Deut. 6:6 And these words, which I command you today, shall be upon your heart; **7** And you shall repeat them to your children, and speak about them when you sit in your house and when you journey on the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up;

- A. The principle of eating being well-established in the Bible, and eating being a matter of the household — Deut. 12:7, 18, 14:23, 26, 29; Gen. 47:12; Exo. 12:3, 46; Numbers.

III. God’s Desire, as Seen in Genesis, is For Man to Eat the Tree of Life — Gen. 2:8-9,16.

Gen. 2:16 And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may eat...

IV. God’s Desire, as Seen in Exodus, is For Man to Eat the Lamb — Exo. 12:6-11, 46.

Exo. 12:8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread with bitter herbs. ... **9b** its head with its legs and with its inward parts.

10a And you shall not let any of it remain until the morning,

- A. God continually presents Himself, anew, to be more appealing and accessible (bite-size) to us:
 - 1. As a Lamb — Exo. 12:6-11, 46.
 - 2. As The Bread of Life — John 6:51.
 - 3. As Loaves and Fish — Matt. 14:15-21,16:9; Mark 6:36-44; 8:19; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:4-15.
 - 4. Even as crumbs under the table — Matt. 15:27; Mark 7:28.

V. Christ Coming For Us To Eat Him — John 6:57:

Deut. 15:19 All firstborn males that are brought forth in your herd and in your flock you shall sanctify to Jehovah your God; you shall not do work with your firstborn ox, nor shall you shear your firstborn sheep. **20** You and your household shall eat it before Jehovah your God year by year in the place which Jehovah will choose.

- A. The firstborn ox shall not do any work.
- B. The firstborn sheep shall not be shorn.
- C. Christ coming for man to eat.

John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst.

- D. In Exodus 12 the blood was on the outside of the house but on the inside they were feasting on the lamb.
- E. The purpose of redemption is to bring man back to the enjoyment of Christ as life.

VI. God's Desire, as Seen in Deuteronomy, is For Man to Eat the Produce of the Good Land (Canaan) — Deut. 16:10-11,15; 2 Chron. 31:5.

Deut. 16:15 All You shall keep the feast to Jehovah your God for seven days in the place which Jehovah will choose, for Jehovah your God will bless you in all your produce and in all your undertakings; therefore you shall be nothing but joyful.

2 Chron. 31:5 And when the commandment went out, the children of Israel gave in abundance the firstfruits of the grain [and] of the new wine and of the fresh oil and of the honey and of all the produce of the field; and they brought the tithe of everything in abundance.

- A. Although the offerings are for God, eventually they are for us to eat. We offer them to God, yet they become our food. Therefore, we must eat what we offer.
- B. Every church meeting is to keep the feast and to eat Christ.

VII. God's Desire, as Seen in Revelation, is For Man to Eat the Tree of Life — Rev. 22:2,14.

Rev. 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

- A. We see that eating and drinking the Lord is our destiny; this is God's ordination.
- B. Even from the foundation of the world we see that our future, our destiny would be to daily eat the Lord.
- C. What the Lord is recovering today is the matter of eating Him.
- D. Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life.

VIII. The Way To Eat

- A. The Lord whom we eat as our food is the Spirit, so we must use our spirit to eat Him.
- B. Calling on the Lord.

Message 2

THE LORD BEING FOR MAN TO EAT

I. Reading the bible to touch the life in it

John 10:10b I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall by no means hunger, and he who believes into Me shall by no means ever thirst. **51** I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever. **57** As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. **60** Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said, This word is hard; who can hear it? **63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

John 14:19b Because I live, you also shall live.

2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Rom 5:10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, **much more** we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life...

Luke 15:22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. **23** And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry.

Matt 4:4 Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.

Job 23:12b I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my apportioned food.

Jeremiah 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, and Your word became to me the gladness and joy of my heart...

II. The thought in the bible being to eat

Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit, **21** Being subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

1 Peter 2:1 Therefore putting away all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings, **2** As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation, **3** If you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Luke 14:16 And He said to him, A certain man was making a great dinner and invited many; **17** And he sent his slave at the dinner hour to say to those who had been invited, Come, for all things are now ready.

III. The lord being the children's bread for man to eat

Matthew 15:21 And Jesus went from there and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. **22** And behold, a Canaanite woman came out from those borders and cried out, saying, Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter suffers terribly from demon possession. **23** But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, Send her away, for she is crying out after us. **24** But He answered and said, I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **25** But she came and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me! **26** But He answered and said, It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs. **27** And she said, Yes, Lord, for even the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. **28** Then Jesus answered and said to her, O woman, great is your faith! Be it done to you as you wish. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

IV. The lord becoming small enough to enter into us

Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Galatians 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, **16** To reveal His Son in me...

Galatians 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you

Colossians 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory

Ephesians 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith...

V. Not merely asking the lord to do things for us but eating the lord

"Brothers and sisters, your family life has problems because you do not eat Jesus. When the wives eat Jesus, the husbands change for the better; when the husbands eat Jesus, the wives change for the better. When the children eat Jesus, the parents no longer are a problem. When the parents eat the Lord Jesus, the children have a turn. You need to take the Lord Jesus into you and let Him become your life, your food, and your everything; then your circumstances will change. Actually, we do not care whether our circumstances are good or bad; we only care to eat and enjoy the Lord. The Lord is for you to eat!" (Eating the Lord, WL)

Message 3

COMING TO THE FEAST AND KEEPING THE FEAST

Scripture Reading: Matt. 22:2-10; 26:26-29; John 6:53-68; 1 Cor. 10:17-21; 11:24-26; 5:8; Rev. 3:20; 19:7,9

I. Receiving the Gospel being to come to the feast.

- A. In God's view, His gospel is not focused on asking people to repent, to believe, or to join a religion. The gospel is focused on inviting people to the feast.
 - 1. "Go therefore to the crossroads, and as many as you find, call to the wedding feast". — Matt. 22:9
 - 2. "And those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both evil and good, and the wedding feast was filled with those reclining at table." — Matt. 22:10
- B. To receive the gospel is to receive the Lord into us that we may eat, drink and enjoy Him.

II. The Christian life being a life of keeping the feast.

- A. The word feast is carried over from the Old Testament where God wanted His people to keep the feasts.
- B. The feasts were a type fulfilled in the New Testament by and with Christ as our feast.
 - 1. "... for our Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed." — 1 Cor. 5:7
 - 2. "So then let us keep the feast..." — 1 Cor. 5:8
- C. The New Testament begins with a feast and ends with a feast.
 - 1. In Matthew 22, the Lord Jesus said that the kingdom of the heavens is likened to a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. — Matt. 22:2-10
 - 2. In Matthew 26, the Lord tells His disciples to each and drink of Him and that the Lord would drink with the disciples again in the kingdom of His Father.

"... until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father." — Matt. 26:29
 - 3. In Revelation, the marriage of the Lamb has come and there is a marriage feast.

"The marriage of the Lamb has come... Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb." — Rev. 19:7, 9
- D. Today, the Lord is knocking on the door, that we would open the door and let Him come in and dine with him.

III. Breaking of bread meeting being the Lord's feast.

- A. At the Lord's table (1 Cor.10:21), in this feast, we eat and drink the Lord. (John 6:53-63)
- B. At the Lord's table, in this feast, we break the bread and declare and testify that we are a group of Christians who live a life of daily feasting on Christ.
- C. This is the way we live every day - without rituals or regulations but opening to the Lord in our spirit to eat and drink Him continually. When we come together at the Lord's table, we continue the feast and display this feast testifying that this is the way that we spend our days.
- D. We are delivered from the world not by gnashing our teeth nor by listening to sermons nor by being exhorted nor by being regulated; **we are delivered from the world by being fed with Christ!**
- E. Every time we come together; the basic principle is that we are keeping the feast.

TWO KINDS OF EATING

EATING IN SOWING AND EATING IN HARVESTING

Scripture Reading: Deut. 12:5-9, 17-18; 14:22-23; 15:19-21; 16:9-10, 13-17

I. Needing to labor for a rich harvest

- A. Many of us are in the initial stage of enjoyment of the Lord and have not yet entered into the deeper enjoyment of a rich harvest.
 - 1. This initial stage is devoid of our toil and labor. It is the enjoyment of sowing but not the enjoyment of harvesting.
 - 2. The Lord is the bread of life and we simply need to eat Him. He is also food produced by our laboring. (Deut. 12,14,15)
- B. Learning and practicing to harvest (Toil and labor)
 - 1. Most of the seeds sown into you have no result.
 - a. After eating, drinking, and enjoying the Lord, you do not let Him grow, mature, and bear fruit in you.
 - b. We leave His presence and fail to labor to water the 'seeds' within us and bring them to maturity.
 - c. To enjoy the harvest involves toil and labor. The farmer labors to plow the field, remove the stones, eliminate the weeds, sow the seed, water the soil, fertilize, and even apply pesticides.
 - 2. In our experience if we do not labor on the Lord, our enjoyment 'dries up'.

II. A comparison between manna and the produce of Canaan

- A. Manna was given purely from heaven.
- B. To gain the produce of the land was entirely different.
- C. Which is better and higher, manna or the produce of the good land of Canaan?

III. Accepting the dealings in our life to have a rich harvest

- A. The Lord often raises up circumstances and allows many things to happen for our good so that the seed in us can grow and produce something.
- B. Do you know that once you accept the dealing and call on the Lord again, the taste will become so wonderful?
- C. Do you know that once you accept the dealing and call on the Lord again, the taste will become so wonderful? Whenever you call on Him, He comes. Then there is a harvest in you. Thus, you have an abundant supply of seeds to sow and of bread to eat.

IV. Laboring on Christ and the churchlife

- A. When you have an abundant harvest, you have enough not only to feed yourself but also for inviting brothers and sisters to eat with you.
- B. Moreover, you will have the topmost portion that can be brought to the meetings to offer to God. This is the genuine church life. This is the church meeting. This is our worship and the practical living and testimony of the church.
- C. The emphasis in the meeting is not on singing, praying, praising, speaking in tongues, or functioning; the emphasis is on bringing in the topmost portion of the Christ that you have produced. I bring my portion, and you bring yours. Apart from any forms, we all present our Christ.

Group Fellowship 1

THE FOUR STEPS OF VITALIZATION

According to our study, a great need in the churches today is the raising up of the vital groups and the blending of the churches. Nevertheless, I am concerned that although we may often use the expression the vital groups, we may not know how to be vital. We cannot produce vital groups simply by forming a group and calling it vital. In order to raise up the vital groups, we ourselves need to be vitalized.

Thorough Fellowship

Being vitalized involves four steps. ...First, the members of a vital group need to have intimate fellowship with one another so that they may know one another in a thorough way. For instance, they should know one another's full name, place of birth, number of children, and address. Because such fellowship requires a significant period of time, it cannot be accomplished in one meeting. Every time the members of the vital group come together, they should begin with genuine fellowship. By coming to know one another in a thorough way, they will be blended. Blending is needed not only by the churches but also by the members of the vital groups. However, in order for us to be blended, we must know one another. Our knowing one another in a thorough way is a factor of becoming vital.

Consecration with Repentance and Confession

Second, we need to thoroughly consecrate ourselves to the Lord (Rom. 12:1). On the one hand, all of us should personally consecrate ourselves to the Lord in a thorough way; on the other hand, we may corporately consecrate ourselves to Him with the members of our vital group. Consecration to the Lord involves repentance and confession (1 John 1:9). In order to consecrate ourselves thoroughly, we need to repent and confess in a detailed way. We should confess our sins, failures, trespasses, transgressions, shortcomings, defects, weaknesses, dispositional problems, and the peculiarities in our character to the Lord. Thorough confession cannot be accomplished in a few hours; it may require several days to complete.

Living a Life of Prayer

Third, we should learn to live a life of prayer (Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18). This requires us to set aside definite times for prayer (Dan. 6:10; cf. Acts 3:1; 10:9). For instance, we should set aside a time to contact the Lord in the morning. We may also need a time of prayer at noon, in the afternoon, in the evening, and at night before going to bed. We should use at least one or two of these times to spend a longer period with the Lord. In the longer periods we should pray for fifteen to thirty minutes. Setting aside half an hour for prayer is possible. Of course, a brother who works at a job may be unable to devote half an hour during the daytime for prayer, but he is able to do so in the early evening. Many saints are spiritually weak, indifferent, and lukewarm because they are short of prayer. In order to be vital, prayer is a necessity. Therefore, we should do our best to live a life of prayer.

Being Filled with the Spirit Essentially and Economically

Fourth, through prayer we enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is the unique way to contact the Spirit (Jude 20; cf. Rom. 1:9). To pray is to breathe in the Spirit (John 20:22). The more we pray, the more we breathe in the Spirit. When we breathe physically, we breathe out the negative elements

within us. Similarly, as we breathe in the Spirit, we breathe out the negative elements in our being. By spending twenty to thirty minutes for repentance and confession, we breathe out the negative elements and breathe in the Spirit.

If we live a life of prayer, we will enjoy the infilling and outpouring of the Spirit (7:37-39; Acts 2:2-4). We will sense that we are inwardly full of the Lord. Although we should not rely on our feelings, if we are filled with the Spirit essentially and economically, we will have a sense of joy, release, and encouragement. If we are filled with the Spirit, nothing will be able to suppress us or make us fearful. Furthermore, we will have boldness and impact in our gospel preaching. Boldness and encouragement are indications that one is experiencing the outpouring of the Spirit. Some in the Pentecostal movement teach that by fasting and praying, the believers may receive the outpouring of the Spirit in order to speak in tongues. However, this is a man-made concept that is not supported by the revelation in the Bible. Through our prayer we may experience genuine power without any need for speaking in tongues. In the book of Acts the prayer that took place before the day of Pentecost was not a performance. It was by praying in one accord for ten days that the one hundred and twenty disciples experienced the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (1:14; 2:1-4).

In order to be vital, we must practice these four steps. First, we should have thorough fellowship with the other members of our vital group. Second, we must consecrate ourselves to the Lord, repenting and confessing our sins, transgressions, and shortcomings. Third, we need to live a life of prayer. Fourth, based upon our prayer life we will enjoy the Spirit both essentially and economically and thus be filled with the Spirit both within and without.

Before contacting people for the raising up of a vital group, we need to spend much personal time with the Lord to allow Him to deal with us. Being vitalized requires that we deal with the Lord and allow Him to deal with us in a personal way. We should not be spiritually cold, loose, or indifferent (cf. Rev. 3:1-2, 15-17). We may love the Lord, treasure His recovery, and care for His testimony. However, after many years in the church life we may become loose, living a routine, habitual church life with no impact, goal, or burden for the Lord's move. The vital groups should not be a matter of terminology or performance; the vital groups must become our cause. We need the Lord to stir us up so that we may be vitalized. The Lord may lead us to pray with fasting concerning this matter. If we would be vitalized, we must be serious and sincere with the Lord concerning the raising up of the vital groups. (*CWWL*, 1993, Vol. 1: Southern California Elders' and Co-workers' Meetings, Ch. 2)

Since the Lord's recovery came to this country over thirty years ago, thousands of messages have been released through our ministry. Many of the saints in the recovery have received all the truths, yet they are short of the Spirit and of walking according to the spirit. Recently, we have been paying our attention to the vital groups, but according to our actual daily practice, we are not picking up God that much. This is why we need to have set times of prayer every day. We need to pray in the morning, and we should try to have another time of prayer during the day. We should make a decision that upon rising up early in the morning, we would not care for anything first except going to the Lord. We should also make a decision to go to the Lord in prayer at another time later in the day. This is a very difficult thing to do.

...Our lack of vitality in the Spirit is because of our lack of prayer. Most of us have read Romans 8:4, but how many of us really practice walking according to the spirit? We surely love Jesus and desire to exalt Jesus, but do we have our daily life according to the spirit? In order to experience and enjoy Jesus, Jehovah our Savior, we must practice doing everything according to the spirit. (*CWWL*, 1993, Vol. 1: The Move of God in Man, Ch. 2)

Group Fellowship 2

BEING VITAL AND VITALIZING OTHERS

BEING VITAL BY CONTACTING THE LORD AS THE SPIRIT

I have learned that if we would overcome dormancy, we must be vital by contacting the Spirit. We become vital not simply by gathering in small groups but by each member contacting the Spirit personally in order to be filled with Him.

We should avoid an outward promotion of the vital groups. Instead, we should go to the Lord personally and contact Him as the Spirit. Each one of us, whether we are a sinner or an apostle, should take the way of going to the Lord to contact Him as the Spirit. By touching the Lord as the Spirit, we will be vitalized to a certain extent and will acquire a taste of vitality. The Lord will then lead us to repent of our sins (Matt. 3:2; 1 John 1:9). We may need to tell the Lord that although we have a great deal of doctrinal knowledge, we are dead, old, lukewarm, powerless, and barren and that we need Him to have mercy on us (Rev. 3:1, 16-18; John 15:2). This kind of repenting prayer will bring us into the genuine experience of the Spirit. It will also cause us to reconsecrate ourselves to the Lord (Rom. 12:1).

VITALIZING OTHERS TO FORM VITAL GROUPS AND TO BEAR REMAINING FRUIT

If we become vitalized in this way, a brother who recognizes and appreciates our vitality may ask us how we became vital. When this brother hears our testimony, he also will be vitalized. Those who come into contact with us will be vitalized one by one, and some who have been vitalized will contact us for fellowship. As a result, we and other brothers and sisters who have been vitalized will form a vital group.

In raising up the vital groups, outward arrangement does not work. In principle, the elders should avoid assigning the saints to groups or promoting the vital groups in an outward way. Such groups may call themselves vital, yet they may not be vital in reality. To be vital means that we live and speak in our spirit.

If we would practice the vital groups, we need to have much prayer and fellowship with the members of our group and make a thorough personal confession of our sins to the Lord, reconsecrating ourselves to Him every day. Through such an experience we will be vital, living, and burning in our spirit (v. 11). When a number of brothers and sisters pass through the same process of being vitalized, they will be formed into a vital group.

We should gather together in groups of about seven to fourteen. A group of more than twenty may not be ideal. Hence, when the number of the saints in our group reaches twenty, we should consider splitting into two groups.

If we are vital, we will know how to vitalize others. We need both to be vitalized by contacting the Lord as the Spirit and to help others to be vitalized by contacting them one by one. This is the best way to raise up the vital groups. The Lord's word concerning the vital groups will not return to Him vainly (Isa. 55:11). In Isaiah 55:10-11 Jehovah says, "Just as the rain comes down / And the snow from heaven, / And does not return there, / Until it waters the earth / And makes it bear and sprout forth, / That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; / So will My word be which goes forth

from My mouth; / It will not return to Me vainly, / But it will accomplish what I delight in, / And it will prosper in the matter to which I have sent it." Based upon the Lord's promise that His word will not return to Him vainly, I have full assurance that sooner or later the vital groups will be raised up. Furthermore, I believe that eventually the practice of the vital groups will constitute the greater portion of the church life.

It is beneficial to develop the skill to contact, discern, and classify people for gospel preaching and to learn to use appropriate verses for each category of person. However, we will not be able to gain people for the building up of the Body of Christ if we are not vital. Contacting people requires that we first become vital. In the past we led a significant number of people to salvation and baptized them, yet not many of them remained in the church. In order to bear remaining fruit, it is not sufficient only to contact people by knocking on their door. Each of us must be vital. When we contact others as vitalized persons, we may be able to reap a harvest of ones who will remain in the church (John 15:16).

In the church life we have built up a particular culture that is not legal or artificial. For instance, although among the sisters there is a culture to not wear makeup as the women in the world do, this culture has developed not as a legality but because the sisters do not have the peace to wear makeup (cf. 1 Pet. 3:4). The way of the church is the way of life. Furthermore, taking the way of life requires that we become vital. If we become vital, those saved through us will experience a dynamic salvation, become vitalized, and forsake everything related to their former manner of life (Eph. 4:22).

Certain groups in organized Christianity may gain increase through worldly methods. This is to enter in through the wide gate and walk the broad way that leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13). We in the Lord's recovery, however, have entered through the narrow gate and are walking on the constricted way (v. 14). When we began to practice the church life in the United States, we were vital, and many of us experienced God's dynamic salvation. I am concerned, however, that we may have lost our vitality and thus lack the power to help others to be saved in a dynamic way.

In order to be vital, we should be willing to pay the price to have thorough fellowship with the saints, make a full confession of our oldness, coldness, and deadness to the Lord, and reconsecrate ourselves to the Lord. In order for their work to be vital, the co-workers need to be vitalized. Vitality issues from contacting the Lord personally to make a thorough confession of our condition. Just as no one can eat for us, so also no one can contact the Lord for us (cf. 25:9; Rev. 3:18). Every one of us must go to the Lord so that we may gain Him, He may gain us, and He may use us to vitalize others. This is the way that a vital group begins. Instead of remaining in dormancy, we should be desperate to be vital. We need to humble ourselves before the Lord to receive from Him the mercy to be vitalized (cf. Heb. 4:16; James 4:6). The messages released by the ministry in the Lord's recovery are quite convincing. However, if we are not vital by being filled with the Spirit, our respeaking of these messages will have no vitality, because it will not minister the Spirit into others. If we would be persons filled with the Spirit, we must mean business with the Lord and spend adequate time to contact Him in order to gain Him and allow Him to gain us, filling, saturating, and permeating us with Himself. When we come to the Lord to have thorough fellowship with Him, we should not hide anything from Him. We should tell Him, "Lord, I am here. I would like to have fellowship with You. I open myself to You." If we pray in this way, the Lord will fill us with Himself. Instead of expecting a quick result in the Lord's work, each one of us should take the way of seeking to be vitalized. When each of us is vital, the Lord will be able to have a good beginning among us in raising up vital groups. (*CWWL*, 1993, Vol. 1: Southern California Elders' and Co-workers' Meetings, Ch. 5)