



The Kingdom of God Under New Management

An Investigation of the New Testament
Epistles for Christians

S. Neil Von Fange

THE KINGDOM OF GOD UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT.
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PREVIEW EDITION

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

THE KINGDOM OF GOD UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT is for assemblies of Christians which have been entrusted with the formidable and urgent task of managing the kingdom of God.

The first century apostles were tasked with the reassignment of the hopes, dreams, and legacy of an unappreciative Israel. In subsequent generations and in all venues, the assemblies of Jesus Christ have been expected to take a fresh look at their mandate.

This book seeks to characterize the mandate and business of the assemblies as expressed by the first century apostles of Jesus Christ.

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He originally comes from Montclair, New Jersey and then Indianapolis, Indiana. He makes his home in southern Indiana, where he remediates long standing erosion on his property with gravel, rock, and the transplanting of much ground cover.

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Dedication

This book is in memory of the Christians of mainland China who have been persecuted by a heavy handed and atheistic government for many decades.

The 1993 book *Lilies Amongst Thorns* is a collection of accounts of local Christians by Danyun, a preacher from the southern coastal province of Zhejiang. His family traces a Christian heritage going back several generations.

Danyun tells an extended and marvelous story of a young woman who received the Lord as a teen, and who thereupon endured time in a women's prison with much suffering. During this period, she led many who had no hope to the Lord; and despite the significant efforts of prison authorities to stop such activities, they ended up confounded. When she was eventually released, the other inmates asked that they not be forgotten.

This book is dedicated to the memory of these and other marvelous stories related by the Holy Spirit during the Christian era, as a continuation of the legacy left by Israel. This book is meant to illustrate the New Testament epistles, with the book of Acts, and to give hope to the people of God as the end of the age approaches.

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Preface

My university years were in the early to mid 1970s. During this period, I experienced the gift of prophecy for the first time during a meeting of God's people. I believe an essential catalyst for this as well as later instances was prayer in the Spirit for as long as an hour prior to the meeting.

I was in my third year of university, and my studies were going well. My friends and I had traveled some distance in order to participate, and I still remember where I was sitting in the remodeled sheep barn. After a period of beautiful singing by the assembly, with no visual aids, there was a time of singing in the Spirit by the assembly for perhaps 30 seconds, and then an extended silence.

About this time, the anointing for prophecy came upon me, and was something like being kicked by a mule in the stomach, i.e. it was the formidable presence of the Holy Spirit demanding all of my attention. There was no microphone or other audio support, but the assembly was waiting for the Lord, and I knew I was expected to speak up, whereupon the Holy Spirit took over.

After this prophecy, no more than 30 seconds long, I was trembling but also relieved of the associated burden. I cannot imagine having to bear such an anointing for any length of time.

In the prophecy, the Holy Spirit quoted a passage from the gospels, which were the words of Jesus Christ. Decades later, I am still moved by how the Lord understood and spoke to the local context of the time in a penetrating manner.

Christians must consider that the traditions of Israel did not end with its final dispersal in the first century. The Most High still has an agenda, and is intent on its fulfilment by the assemblies of Jesus Christ.

This book is a component of my effort to recover this tradition. It is my hope that readers will benefit in their own lives as I have from this effort.

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Introduction

The mighty worldwide revivals of the past 100 plus years represent more recent efforts by the Holy Spirit to get the church moving after a very long dark age. To a significant degree, these efforts have taken place outside of institutional religion; have been among the poor and uneducated; and often have not been well documented.

By contrast, in recent decades, churches around the world are increasingly being minimized by a commercially oriented society which is full of itself to the brim.

In the book of Revelation (Rev. 2-3), Jesus Christ presents his view of a set of churches founded by Paul the apostle. This was revealed to John many years after Paul parted ways with the churches of Turkey with his note of his caution in Acts 20. While some of these churches received commendations, the Lord warned all the churches of his concerns about elitism at Ephesus; error and self-appointed ministry at Pergamos and Thyatira; deadness at Smyrna; and apathy at Laodicea.

The Lord's analysis was then followed in Rev. 4 with a preview of events which would lead to the end of the age. If the churches of the first century were cautioned about the impending return of Jesus Christ, the church today should be even more concerned. In order to fulfil its calling, the church still needs to regain its anointing and leadership which were prominent in the first century but only sometimes seen in subsequent centuries.

The first century apostles were tasked with transferring the hopes, dreams, and legacy of Israel to the church. The churches of subsequent generations were to take a fresh look at its mandate of managing the kingdom of God. This effort was to be made prayerfully based on an understanding of the word of God as well as an awareness of the contemporary surroundings.

This book seeks to identify examples from anointed ministry of the last 100 plus years which illustrate this mandate. It is intended to support word ministry, which is tasked with training the body of Christ for its own many sided ministries.

It is my hope that these pages will be helpful as points of reference, to assist in the evaluation and testing of both personal and public experiences of faith which relate to the business of the assemblies of Jesus Christ.

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Interlude – Rom. 11:19-22

You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

Chap.	Verse	Terse Summary	Epist. Cat.	Narr've	Inh'ce	Agenda	R'ships	Church	Base Subject	Base Ref.
11	11	Benefit to peoples makes Isr. jealous	A1.3		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	12	It speaks of glorious eventual return	A1.3		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	13	P. rubs it in to arouse Jews' jealousy	A1.1		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	14	P. rubs it in to arouse Jews' jealousy	A1.1		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	15	After long exile, Isr. return an event	A1.3		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	16	Grafting of wild branches onto tree	A1.3		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	17	Grafting of wild branches onto tree	A1.3		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	18	Church would be n.wh. but for Isr.	A2.2		x				Israel legacy fulfilled in JX	Ref. Rom. 8:18-19
	19	Church not to have big head on this	A1.1		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	20	Church not to have big head on this	A1.1		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	21	God can deal w/ church like Israel	A1.1		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	22	God capable of goodness or severity	A1.1		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	23	Isr. could be grafted in like nations	A1.3		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	24	More sense than grafting of wild	A1.3		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16

(Appendix A contains a list of categories relating to the epistles.)

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2 PET. 1:16-18

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.



A1.1 - SYNOPSIS:

The churches are now custodians of the kingdom of God, and have a mandate of tremendous gravity.

Epistles passages: Rom. 1, 3, 11-12; 1 Cor. 1; 2 Cor. 2, 5; 1 Thess. 1; Heb. 2, 12; 1 Tim. 1-3; 2 Pet. 1.

Other passages - Israel at Mt. Sinai (Exod. 19-20); mandate taken from Israel (Matt. 21).

DISCUSSION:

Tom Welch was Canadian born, and when 18 years old in 1924, moved to Oregon for a lumber company job. After his arrival, he attended and enjoyed some gospel meetings in the area, but had not made any life commitment as a Christian at the time.

On the first day of his work, atop a 55-foot trestle, he lost his footing. After falling backwards, his head and body were smashed by multiple timber beams on the way down to the four foot deep pond below. He lay in the water for about 20 to 30 minutes until other workmen could fish him out. Doctors later reported no water in his lungs, indicating that he had not been breathing.

During this period, he became aware of people he had known in previous years who had died in sin, and of a great lake of fire visible to all. Then he saw Jesus Christ in the far distance, walking away. Just before he went out of sight, he turned and looked. At that time, Tom awoke with a woman praying over him, whom he had known most of his life. She was praying that the Lord would not allow him to die in his present spiritual condition.

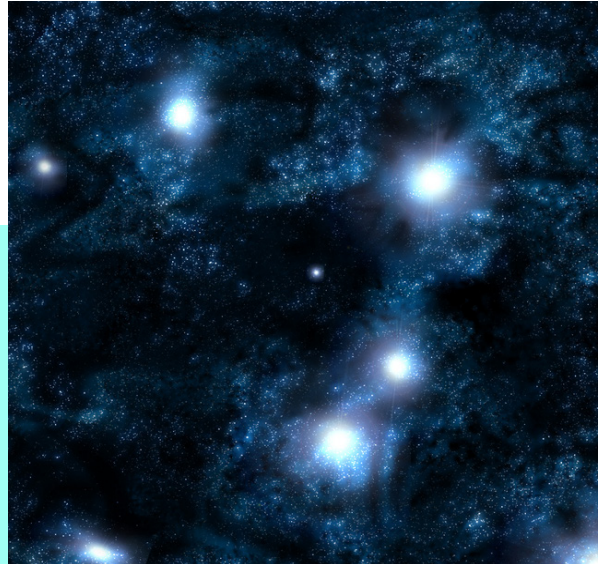
Within hours, he was in a hospital. During the next several days, the Holy Spirit asked him if he would preach, and he assented. In the aftermath, he was healed of his multiple and severe injuries, and left the hospital soon afterwards on his own. Welch later traveled with Gordon Lindsay, who published this story in his book God's 20th Century Barnabas.

Those who present the message of the kingdom are to do so with all good will, in that it is a message of great hope and promise for humanity. It is to be presented as long as allowed by the Holy Spirit, even in the face of stiff opposition. The business of the kingdom of God is entrusted to all of God's people, and it is a serious business indeed.

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ROM. 4:16-17

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed — God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; ..



A2.3 - SYNOPSIS:

God's people are aptly those who can believe the one man JX. Ability to believe God is by the one offering of JX, not by covenant performance.

Epistles passages: Acts 13, 15; Rom. 3-5, 9-10; 2 Cor. 3; Gal. 2-3, 5; Eph. 2; Phil. 3; Coloss. 2; Tit. 3; 1 John 4-5.

Other passages - Abram (Gen. 15); Psa. 50-51; Isa. 65-66.

DISCUSSION:

I grew up in the Lutheran church, Missouri synod, during the 1960s. I first remember the distinct presence of Jesus Christ during a message by Billy Graham in a football stadium, shortly after I graduated from high school. At this time, I knew that Jesus had to be my Lord. After the message, I further recognized a practice of unholiness that he wanted me to stop.

The invitation to the kingdom of God varies widely per individual. It remains striking to me that the God of the universe would approach me, as if tapping me on the shoulder, and telling me what he wanted me to do.

For those who are unable to identify a time for a clear conversion experience, I propose that a real concern about Jesus Christ is sufficient basis for an approach before the God of the universe. There is nothing to stop anyone, including a professing Christian, from making sure of his calling, wherever he is in life. While presenting oneself before a church body is one way to approach this, I would suggest a methodical and determined review of the scriptures, with the expectation of finding and verifying the dealings of Jesus Christ for the individual.

Being in the service of the kingdom of God does not depend on the positive attributes of a person, whether before or after conversion. As Christians become acquainted with the Lord's commands, including an appropriate level of application of the Law of Israel, they will be increasingly aware of their shortcomings and errors. Unholiness should be disturbing to all of God's people, because it is highly disturbing before the presence of the Most High.

The apostle Paul was tasked with managing a migration from a period when God's people were subject to the Jewish government. His message was that acceptability before God's presence is by a contrite heart before Jesus Christ, his word, and the real time direction of the Holy Spirit (Jerem. 7:23). See also section B1.1 thru B2.6 for further discussion of this vital point.

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ACTS 16:25-26

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.



D1.1 - SYNOPSIS:

The many-membered assembly is to be active in self-ministry as well as evangelism to the world.

Epistles passages: Acts 1-9, 11-21, 28; Rom. 10, 15-16; 1 Corinth. 1, 12, 14; Eph. 5; Philipp. 3; Coloss. 3; 1 Pet. 4-5; Jam. 3.

Other passages: Isa. 9, 29, 42-43, 49, 60, etc. (speaking of future anointed ministry).

DISCUSSION:

Larry Christenson was a Missouri Synod Lutheran pastor in California who returned to his home state of Minnesota in his latter years. He was a prominent spokesman for the baptism in the Holy Spirit among Lutherans beginning in the early 1960s. In his book *Welcome Holy Spirit*, Christenson examines Lutheran teachings in light of historic evidence for the baptism in the Spirit; and provides a detailed status of the world wide movement as seen by Lutherans up thru the 1980s. It was how he sought to reach people from his own background.

Christenson tells of a 1985 visit by a Lutheran pastor to the African country of Tanzania. During several days of inspired Bible study and worship, a number of Holy Spirit inspired visions were brought forward by individuals in the midst of the assembly. Like perhaps others, he wondered if they were for real. Then at the close of the meeting, a light brighter than noon day was witnessed for an extended period of time by many individuals, long enough for locals to gather groups of friends to see it.

One year, I attended a rally of Christian men in a large city at a downtown sports arena. I will never forget the sight of many thousands of men moving like a river and singing en route to the off site lunch site, and of a group of women watching from their far off business doorsteps.

When one of my nephews was in his early 20s, he went on a missions trip to southeast Asia. During this trip, he laid hands on and witnessed the healing of a deaf mute child. While such experiences can seem far and few between, these cannot be labeled as hoaxes. God introduces his people to the kingdom of God with instances of the gifts of the spirit, answered prayer, etc.

Notwithstanding the reality of the miraculous, Christians are to learn to function at the level of anointing allowed in their present life venue. It will take a serious effort in times of low anointing to maintain this mandate, and to not be disheartened (Mal. 3:13-16).

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1 COR. 11:21-22

For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.



D1.3 - SYNOPSIS:

Assembly meetings are to preserve dignity for all present, who will come from all walks of life.

Epistles passages: Acts 9; 1 Corinth. 11; Gal. 2; 1 Tim. 2; Jam. 2.

Other passages - foreigners included for Passover (Exod. 12, Num. 9); Hanna (1 Sam. 1); Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9); inclusion of unclean individuals by Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30).

DISCUSSION:

In the midst of his South African service, John G. Lake (section B2.3) had to stand up to vehement opposition upon the introduction of his black African assistant and eventual successor Letwaba. It should also be mentioned that not a few pentecostal ministers in the U.S. had to deal with racial prejudice (i.e. Jam. 2, 1 Cor. 11) during the early 1900s. This problem has occurred in other regions and periods of history as well.

It seems ingrained in the human race for certain local communities around the world to have strong feelings about those who should be regarded as second class citizens. Nonetheless, the kingdom of God allows no such distinctions. Assemblies of Christians are not tasked with regulating the world, however they can be a powerful influence by their practices.

In my early years as a Christian, I remember one mixed race marriage that was a real source of joy among acquaintances, notwithstanding the negative cultural views of the time. Some of the finest Christians I have known have come from other races or backgrounds.

It will take a particular effort by Christians to remain aware of this need. They will have to go out of their way to help individuals find acceptance in the assembly.

The concern of racism has been elevated in our time to a continual drumbeat, with attempts to utilize worldly methods, including appeals for government mandates, to address the need. Nonetheless, the real answer is to be found in the kingdom of God, and will in time be brought to earth in the millenium. For the present, the world has its own agenda, and will reject the message of the kingdom of God.

Chap.	Verse	Terse Summary	Epist. Cat.	Narr've	Inh'ce	Agenda	R'ships	Assem. Pract's	Base Subject	Base Ref.
1	1	Paul called as apostle + Sosthenes	A3.3		x				Word m'y assists assembly	Ref. Eph. 4:11-12
	2	Addressed to Corinth, all other Chr'ns	---	x					1st c'y greetings of Chr'ns	Ref. Rom. 16:21-23
	3	Blessing - trad'n of Num. 6:24-27	A2.2		x				Israel legacy fulfilled in JX	Ref. Rom. 8:18-19
	4	P. thankful for HS gifts among them	D1.1					x	Orderly mtgs, sponsored activ's	Ref. 1 Cor. 14:1f
	5	P. thankful for HS gifts among them	D1.1					x	Orderly mtgs, sponsored activ's	Ref. 1 Cor. 14:1f
	6	Is consistent with P. m'y + miracles	A3.1		x				Word m'y assists assembly	Ref. Eph. 4:11-12
	7	All gifts exp'cd = stance of readiness	B1.4			x			Addressing sin, jmt to come	Ref. 2 Pet. 1:2-4
	8	Lasting walk = fav. outcome at jmt	B1.4			x			Addressing sin, jmt to come	Ref. 2 Pet. 1:2-4
	9	Is about God's fflness in calling you	A1.2		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	10	Uniform viewpt req'd thru assemblies	D2.1					x	One goal vs. disruptive indiv'ls	Ref. 2 Pet. 2:1f
	11	P. has rec'd reports of contention	D2.1					x	One goal vs. disruptive indiv'ls	Ref. 2 Pet. 2:1f
	12	Contention about side-taking for 5FM	D2.1					x	One goal vs. disruptive indiv'ls	Ref. 2 Pet. 2:1f
	13	Km of God is not divided among m'y	D2.1					x	One goal vs. disruptive indiv'ls	Ref. 2 Pet. 2:1f
	14	P. glad only baptized a few people	D2.1					x	One goal vs. disruptive indiv'ls	Ref. 2 Pet. 2:1f
	15	Story might have been bapt. into P.	D2.1					x	One goal vs. disruptive indiv'ls	Ref. 2 Pet. 2:1f
	16	One more person P. can remember	D2.1					x	One goal vs. disruptive indiv'ls	Ref. 2 Pet. 2:1f
	17	Message not by eloqu'ce or charisma	A3.1		x				Word m'y assists assembly	Ref. Eph. 4:11-12
	18	Reject'n by world cf. gravity of msg	A1.1		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	19	Isa. 29:14 - a Div. point will be made	A1.4		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	20	Sophistic'd world made out as fools	A1.4		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	21	Div. pt. by rescue from perish msg	A1.4		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	22	World and religion look for s.th. else	A1.4		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	23	Marvelous msg is seen as absurd	A1.4		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	24	Msg about JX as God for all peoples	A1.3		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	25	Marvelous msg is capable of its job	A1.4		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	26	Call of God primarily rec'd by lowly	A1.3		x				Transfer of Divine mandate	Ref. Rom. 1:14-16
	27	Secular hum'n exposed by the lowly	B2.2			x			Business of the Km of God	Ref. 1 Cor. 15:58
	28	Secular hum'n exposed by the lowly	B2.2			x			Business of the Km of God	Ref. 1 Cor. 15:58
	29	It is to quell the boasting of humanity	B2.2			x			Business of the Km of God	Ref. 1 Cor. 15:58
	30	Is about present'n of JX by his people	A2.1		x				Israel legacy fulfilled in JX	Ref. Rom. 8:18-19