



ACOP Solemn Assembly

Calgary Full Gospel Church

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Prayer & Reflection:

Prayerfully read through Revelation 2 & 3

In these seven letters to seven the churches there is a generalized pattern of:

- Commendation
- Correction
- Promise

Please reflect on the commendation, the corrections and the promises made to these churches.

Listen to what is the Lord saying to you through these 7 letters.

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Introduction:

In the summer of 2021, I was doing some historical research for the **Legacy of ACOP** course that I taught for Eston College Online (ECO).

I was also reading a book by Dr. Ken Quick called **Healing the Heart of Your Church**.

Quick references those passages in Revelation 2 & 3 – and points out that book of Revelation was written in 95 AD – so at most these churches are 50 – 60 years old.

If there were things that needed to be set right after 50 or 60 years – there are probably somethings to set right in ACOP in our 101 years of.

Quick says that churches (and denominations) should prayerfully examine their history and consider what the Lord might commend them for and where the Lord would want to bring correction.

I shared what I was sensing with our National Apostolic Team and the Canadian Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees and they unanimously agreed that we should include a Solemn Assembly at this conference.

I believe that what we are going to do in these next hour and half will be very significant in the history of our movement.

God's people have often come together at historic moments in Solemn Assemblies:

- Mount Sinai – Giving of the Law
- Each year the Old Testament Feasts were times of Solemn Assembly
- Dedication of Solomon's Temple
- When they found the book of the law during King Josiah's Reign
- The Return from Captivity – Rebuilding of the Walls/Temple
- Day of Pentecost

Scriptures:

Joel 1:14

Declare a holy fast; call a solemn assembly.

Summon the elders and all who live in the land

to the house of the Lord your God,

and cry out to the Lord

Joel 2:12-14

*“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”*

Rend your heart and not your garments.

Return to the Lord your God,

*for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.*

Who knows? He may turn and relent

- leave behind a blessing—

grain offerings and drink offerings

for the Lord your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a solemn assembly

Gather the people,

consecrate the assembly;

bring together the elders,

gather the children,

those nursing at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room

and the bride her chamber

Psalms 79:8-9

“Do not hold against us the sins of past generations;

may your mercy come quickly to meet us,

for we are in desperate need.

Help us, God our Savior,

for the glory of your name;

deliver us and forgive our sins

for your name’s sake.”

Reflective and Introspective Worship

The posture of our heart should be “search me oh God.”

Identificational Repentance

We find lots of examples of identificational repentance in the scriptures; Moses

- David
- Daniel
- Ezra
- Nehemiah

I have asked Dale Anderson to bring a brief teaching on identificational repentance

Commendations:

As I reflected on what the Lord would commend ACOP for, the Holy Spirit brought the following things to my attention:

1. You have remained faithful to the Word of God, you have desired to know the scriptures and the power of God.

2. You have faithfully lifted up the name of Jesus.
3. You have championed the message of the Grace of God.
4. You have faithfully sent out missionaries and global workers, you have send out youth and young adults through Street Invaders and Life Force Teams.

If this resonates with your spirit, would you say a hearty – Amen!

Correction:

These points of correction should not be misinterpreted or misrepresented as a slight against our forefathers.

I am fully cognizant of the fact that some day future leaders of ACOP may stand in our place and repent for attitudes, decisions and the sins of our generation.

Having said that, I believe that the Holy Spirit wants to bring correction to these area as we begin our second century:

1. We need to repent for elevating a denominational distinctive above the mission.

Please listen carefully to the following historical narrative:

In April of 1919 Franklin Small the founder of ACOP was one of the 7 signatories on the charter of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

These signatories decided to set aside doctrinal differences and make the focus of this new organization – Fellowship and Cooperation. This was the statement that came out of the April 26, 1919, meeting:

“Be it resolved that we disapprove of making a doctrinal statement as the basis of fellowship and cooperation, but that we accept the Word of God in its entirety, conducting ourselves in harmony with its Divine principles and

Apostolic example ‘endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...until we come in the unity of the faith’” (Eph 4:3,13) ¹

In November 1919 the signatories of the charter came together to draft a constitution, and Franklin Small expressed his desire to include a strong doctrinal statement about the oneness of the Godhead and water baptism in the name of Jesus.

However, there was another member of the group, by the name of Robert (R.E.) McAllister who also had a oneness perspective on the Godhead² and believed in water baptism in Jesus’ name, and also the eternal security of the believer³ made this statement:

*“Whereas much contention and confusion has been caused over the issue of One God and Trinitarian views, also the Baptismal Formula, be it resolved that we disapprove... of all such issues that divide and confuse God’s people to no profit, and that **aggressive evangelism be our motto**. Whereas we recognize a three-fold relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit being clearly taught in the New Testament, be it resolved that we express ourselves in harmony with this truth. As to baptism, we feel like leaving the matter of formula with the individual.”⁴*

Six weeks later on January 1, 1920 Franklin Small withdrew from the PAOC, and the following year he founded ACOP.

As I reflected on this anecdote – it occurred to me that PAOC was founded on a **mission of aggressive evangelism**, and ACOP was founded on the **premise of a particular doctrine**.

It seems that **being right** was more important than the **mission**.

¹ Picture This Reflecting on 100 Years of the PAOC - Page 33

² Our Apostolic Heritage - Page 32, 85

³ Vision of the Disinherited - Page 172

⁴ Picture This Reflecting on 100 Years of the PAOC - Page 35

I have a friend who says *“you can be right or you can be married.”* (In other words being right isn’t always the most important thing – sometimes enjoying the relationship is better than being right.)

I would suggest that we took a denominational distinctive and made it a first order fundamental belief.

In my opinion which distinctive is immaterial – it was the fact that a distinctive was elevated over the mission of “aggressive evangelism” was wrong.

We failed to keep the main thing – the main thing.

I think that the conciliatory statement that R.E. McAllister made is one that most of us would embrace today. And in essence it is the position that ACOP accepted at the merger with **Evangelical Churches of Pentecost** in 1954.

Owen Scott once said to me “I am amazed that we (ACOP) can be so right and so small.”

I think that our founding on a doctrinal distinctive rather than mission, has led to sectarianism and spiritual pride.

And in some cases we have exported that sectarianism through our mission program.

I believe that we need to repent of this sin.

2. We need to Repent of our Independent & Insular attitude.

On two occasions Franklin Small had difficulties with church boards. These difficulties led to his departure as pastor of these churches.⁵

When Zion Apostolic Church was founded in 1932 – Franklin Small held the title to the building in his own name and had no official board all the time he was pastor.

⁵ Streams of Grace – Pages 36, 41-42

As a result, no model or template for local church governance was ever established in ACOP.

When it comes to local church governance in ACOP – we are like the book of judges – *“everyone does what’s right in their own eyes.”*

Some churches are governed by deacons, other by elders, others by directors and multitude other arrangements.

I believe that local churches should be self governing, self supporting and self propagating. However, I also believe that the New Testament pattern demonstrates that there were Apostolic voices, (from outside of the local church) speaking into the life of the local church.

I have been in leadership roles with ACOP for the past 30 years, I can tell you that most of the difficulties in local churches find their roots in governance issues. Not moral issues, not doctrinal issues – but governance issues.

When there is a common model of local church governance – there is an understanding of the authority of the pastor, the function of the lay leaders and the role of the congregation.

i.e. Many ACOP pastors have stepped on a “landmine” in a new church, because the governance model was different from their previous ACOP church

I believe that this vacuum in providing a governance model has resulted in the churches in our Fellowship being independent rather than interdependent.

In many ACOP churches today, we have become islands to our selves – and we are reaping the bad fruit of independence. We have sown the wind and are reaping the whirlwind.

For this I believe we must repent.

3. We need to repent for neglecting to prioritize evangelism and disciple making.

When I read through the annual reports that are submitted by ACOP churches, I am disappointed to discover how many churches record no conversions and no water baptisms year after year.

I am not sure why we have failed to prioritize Evangelism and Disciple Making, but the statistics says we have.

I'm not sure if we:

- Are using an outdated methods?
- Have failed to hold in proper tension the sovereignty of God and human responsibility?
- Are lukewarm or lazy ("When the heart no longer feels the truth of hell, the gospel passes from good news to simply news" – John Piper)

Whatever it is that has caused us to neglect prioritizing evangelism and disciple making, we need to repent.

We need to ask the Holy Spirit to stir up a fresh passion for the lost.

In the words of the late Reinhard Bonnke "We are to plunder hell to populate heaven for Calvary's stake"

4. We need to repent for the way we have handled sexual sin:

We as a Fellowship, have not always dealt with sexual sin appropriately.

Sometimes we were in denial that "ministers of the gospel" would engage in sexual sin.

There have been times when we swept sexual sin under the rug.

There have been times when we were more concerned with the reputation of the Fellowship, than the impact on the victim.

Because we as a Fellowship did not always deal with sexual sin properly, our churches have not always, dealt with it properly either.

This is not to say that there is no forgiveness or restoration from sexual sin, but we have sometimes neglected to deal sexual sin in a biblical manner.

For this I believe we need to repent.

5. We need to repent for Resisted the Work of the Holy Spirit:

In reaction to what we perceived to be excesses and extremes, we have sometimes resisted the work of the Holy Spirit and in so doing grieved and quenched the work of the Holy Spirit.

Whether this was because of ignorance, fear or pride – it was sinful for us to resist the Holy Spirit

For this I believe we need to repent.

Biblical repentance means to turn and to go a different direction

In this prayer of repentance there is confession, repentance and a resolve to go in a right direction.

Prayer of Repentance:

“Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying on behalf of the people of ACOP.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We confess that we have taken that which should have been a doctrinal distinctive and elevated it above the mission of the church. This has led to sectarianism and spiritual pride, for this we repent. We confess that we have also carried this sectarian spirit to other nations – for this we also repent. Lord, we humble ourselves and resolve to embrace your whole church.

We acknowledge that the kingdom of God prefers collaboration, interdependence and community. Whereas the kingdom of darkness prefers independence and individualism. We confess that too often we have chosen independence and individualism and done what was right in our own eyes, for this we repent. Lord, help us to recognize and demonstrate that we are better together.

We have not prioritized aggressive evangelism and disciple making as we should. We confess that too often, our altars have been barren and our baptismal tanks empty, for this we repent. Lord, we recommit ourselves to the great commission, and we ask that your Holy Spirit would give us a fresh passion for the lost.

We confess that we have sinned against one another and against you by not dealing redemptively with sexual sin. For this we repent and ask that by your grace you would enable us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present evil age.

We acknowledge we have not always welcomed the work of the Holy Spirit as we should. We confess that at times, we have reacted to excesses and extremes and in so doing we have grieved and quenched the genuine work of the Holy Spirit. For this we repent and ask with the Psalmist “Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?”

Lord, your word says if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Today, we have confessed and repented of our historic sins, and we stand on your promise that you will forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness, and we resolve that by God’s grace our future will be different from our past.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray.

AMEN

(Parts of this prayer were taken from: Nehemiah 1; Acts 26; II Timothy 2; Titus 2; Psalm 85, I John 1)

Communion

As you came in you were handed a communion package – could one of our ushers make them available at this time.

Through our confession and repentance and faith determinations – we have in effect renewed our covenant with the Lord.

So we want to seal this by sharing communion together.

On the night Jesus was betrayed he took bread and broke it and said this is my body which is broken for you – do this in remembrance of me.

Lets partake of the bread.

In the same manner he took the cup and said this is the new covenant in my blood do this in remembrance of me.

Let us partake of the cup.

Let's give thanks!

Promised Outcome

As you came in this morning – you were given a white stone – I would like you to take that in your hand.

Rev 2:17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

Who is ACOP?

We are ACOP!

What ACOP becomes in the second century is up to us.

ACOP has no destiny apart from our shared destiny.

In the past many of you have said to me: “I don’t know if I fit in ACOP....

- I didn’t grow up in ACOP
- I didn’t go to Eston College
- I was never part of Street Invaders
- I have not made a pilgrimage to the ACOP Office
- I have never been to Trossachs Camp
- The reasons go on and on...

In the past you may have thought your name was:

- Outsider
- Misfit
- Interloper
- Stranger
- Outlier
- Newbie

Names are about identity and identity brings purpose.

In this moment – would you allow the Holy Spirit to give you a new name?

What name is He writing on your white stone? Could it be:

- Accepted
- Partner
- Part of the Tribe
- Member in particular
- Man of God / Woman of God

- Warrior
- Man of Valour / Woman of valour
- Rock
- Pure in heart
- Homeboy

Others of you have been part of this Fellowship for a long time and maybe your name has been:

- Critic
- Pessimist
- Doubter
- Disengaged
- Detractor

In this moment – would you allow the Holy Spirit to give you a new name?

It could if be:

- Supporter
- Advocate
- Champion
- Committed
- Participator
- Contributor

It doesn't matter what your name has been in the past – this is a new day - Let Jesus give you a new name as we begin this second century.

I want you to take this stone home and put it in a place that will remind you of the new name, a new identity that the Lord gave you at this Solemn Assembly

Prayerfully live into that new name.

Worship

The worship team is going to lead us in a time of dedication

While they are doing that – I am going to invite you to the tables at the front.

I want to invite you to participate in two prophetic acts – to seal what we have done:

1. If you are in agreement with the prayer of confession, repentance, resolve I would like you to sign one of the sheets affirming your agreement.

There are copies of the prayer for you to take on these tables

We are going to enter this prayer and the signatures into our minutes at our business meeting on Friday. We will also frame it and the names of the signatories and have it on display at our office.

2. On a canvas at the middle table, I want you to write down the name that the Holy Spirit gave you on your white stone. I don't want you to link it to your personal name – just right down your name.