



# RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

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## Letters of Faith

February 2016

**“Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God.**

**“Speak kindly to the heart of Jerusalem...”**

Isaiah 40:1-2a (NASB)

Dearly Beloved,

Thirty-five or so years ago, God called us out of the relative comfort and security of ministering to our own charismatic fellowship into the broader Church world-wide. We had just completed our final meeting as a local fellowship, according to clearly confirmed directions from the Holy Spirit to close down the church He had asked us to start a mere six years earlier, and were wondering where—what—how we were going to continue our “ministry” when it appeared to us we no longer had a ministry.

We were still tearfully pondering this question as we entered our front door to be greeted by the sound of our phone ringing. It was one of our favorite local pastors with an urgent request for us to minister in his fellowship the next weekend. “I know you never leave your own pulpit on Sundays,” he said, “but my elders and I have a strong sense from the Holy Spirit that you are to minister to us next week.”

Trying to subdue the chuckles in our voices, we said we would love to minister in his sweet fellowship next week because as of two hours prior to his call we didn’t have a pulpit to leave. We explained God’s word to us to close the church: *“I called this fellowship into being for a reason and for a season.”* A new “season” of blessed ministry had just opened for us.

We had diligently pursued the reason He gave for pastoring a fellowship, but up to this point in our adventures with Jesus as our Lord and the Holy Spirit as our guide, we had never considered God doing things in “seasons.” After all, the ministry testimony books we had pored through always followed the same pattern: a word comes from God; the word is pursued (usually tremulously at first); multitudes are attracted as boldness and confidence rises in the new ministry; the scope of the ministry becomes worldwide and hugely successful financially; a whole new “non-denominational denomination” is established in the theology of Christendom to be analyzed, emulated, and (sometimes) idolized for generations to come.

To our surprise, as more and more ministry opportunities opened up, we were led to start nearly every new conference venue, training school session, or new fellowship with a teaching on how to comfort each other in the Body. We could practically hear the heart of Jesus crying out with the words: **“Comfort, O comfort My people...speak kindly—tenderly—to the heart of Jerusalem.”** To us, the heart of Jerusalem was the heart of the Church and the sweet hurting saints in it. Oh, how God’s comfort was needed!

Beloved, there is even more need in the Church today for this pastoral teaching than there was all those many years ago because the whole world is now in chronic need of *real comfort*, and the only source of true comfort is *the Comforter*—the Holy Spirit of Christ, the only hope of real glory and comfort and peace.

This month and next, I will review the basic teaching for us all to comfort ourselves and all of the saints who are so desperately in need of comforting. I pray you will be stimulated to start comforting!

**“Comfort, O comfort My people!” says your God. “Speak kindly to the heart of Jerusalem!”** Hear this cry in God’s heart as a plea to you and to all believers to comfort one another in His name, *and in His way!*

Listen to the heart cry of God's people that we "heard" as expressed in Psalm 69:20, "**Reproach has broken my heart, and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none.**" God intensely wants us all to be comforters to the Church today! Father God is calling out to you *to be discerning, sensitive, and available to those who need a comforting touch from Him through you.*

A woman wept quietly in the pew in front of us. Her husband shared that their 20 year-old daughter had died two years ago, but his wife was still grieving! And God said, "Comfort My people."

Our hearts cried out, "God, we don't know how to comfort Your people! Show us how, Father God!" His answer came through His word in 1 Thessalonians 5:11,14: "**...encourage one another, and build up one another...we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.**" And The Holy Spirit added, *Remember Isaiah 40, "...speak kindly, tenderly to the heart..."*

Then Hebrews 10:24-25 (AMPC), "**And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another...**"

Beloved, comfort flows from the Scriptures and comfort flows from the Comforter—the Holy Spirit of Christ—to and through each of us.

The main way we learn to comfort is by being comforted! "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of sympathy (...mercy) and the God [Who is the source] of every comfort (consolation and encouragement), Who comforts (consoles and encourages) us in every trouble (calamity and affliction), so that we may also be able to comfort (console and encourage) those who are in any kind of trouble or distress, with the comfort (consolation and encouragement) with which we ourselves are comforted (consoled and encouraged) by God.**" (2 Cor. 1:3-4 AMPC)

Our God is the Father of Mercies! The Jews had a special word for it: "Chesed" —*the God of mercy, loving-kindness, and covenant-keeping faithfulness.* We have a Chesed God Who is The God and the source of *all* comfort.

We must comfort tenderly—that's God's way of comforting, and to the heart (remembering Isaiah 40:2) — because that's God's place of comforting! Please note that the 2 Corinthians passage above says that once we have been comforted in *our* affliction by the Holy Spirit, we can comfort others in *any sort* of affliction. We do *not* have to suffer the same affliction in order to comfort someone else going through their particular affliction!

The translators of the King James Bible used just the word "comfort" to translate Greek words that mean console, encourage, or exhort. However, each of these words has a definite meaning, and taken together, they fully define the word "comfort." So let's learn what The Comforter has to teach us about comfort and comforting. Let us consider "console" here, and then consider "encourage" and "exhort" next month.

The psalmist shared with his Father in heaven in Psalm 94:19 that, "**When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Thy consolations delight my soul.**" The dictionary says the word "console" means: *To give strengthening aid [like hot Chicken soup]; To cheer up in time of grief, defeat, or trouble; To alleviate grief or sense of loss.* It is an active and dynamic word, it is deep, and it is directed to the heart!

Remember our story of the woman with the uncontrolled grief and weeping? We consoled her by sharing the pain of our mutual loss (the death of our 11-year-old son) and how God had

comforted us by His consoling. Gretel hugged her and blessed her as I quietly rebuked the spirit of grief that had captured her. We prayed for the healing of her broken heart, and she was beautifully set free from the bondage of grief!

That's just one example of how we can comfort the Body of Christ if we will just be alert to the opportunities the Holy Spirit gives us. I'll continue to share this call on all of us next month. Have a great February comforting God's kids!

Huge comforting hugs,



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