

# GOD IS NOWHERE

By Fr. Philip Eberhart

**Where, O Where?** “Where do you see God’s hand at work in Denver?” I was recently asked. At times it is a difficult question to answer; at other times you can’t make the list fast enough. Much depends on your eyes and how they see what they see. Jesus opened men’s eyes, both physically and spiritually, and in answering that question I’ve asked Him to do the same for me.

It is easy to look around at the vortex our culture seems to be in and ask, “Where is God?” The change that seems to be our single constant in America isn’t always headed in the direction that God seems to have indicated in his Word. Yet we do see hopeful signs – His fingerprints if you will – on people and at times when we are looking for them.

God is here and he is not silent nor is he inactive. God is doing what he has always done; quietly, in heavenly ways, moving in his people and in the world to do the work he has purposed through those who cooperate – who obey his Word and ways – to accomplish his purposes. That is not a cop out for this writer, it is the truth. God has always made applesauce out of bad apples; lemonade out of real lemons!

The question I believe we need to ask is, “What is God’s hand able to do in and through me?” It is there that the process of seeing and participating in God’s hand working in Denver begins.

**Giving or being given...** No, this isn’t about money, it’s about you. As the early community of followers of Jesus formed its life in the wake of Pentecost, Luke tells us in Acts 2:42 that they “gave themselves” to four things: “The apostles’ teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Obversely, when Paul wrote descriptively of the world’s sinful downward spiral to reprobation in Romans 1, he uttered the most fearful words of Holy Writ as he says, “God gave them over...” not once but multiple times!

It seems to me that we have a choice to make: To what, or moreover, to Whom, are we going to give ourselves? If to God through Jesus Christ, then a very specific and detailed way is outlined for those who are “Christ-followers.” Similarly for those who reject that Way – the One Jesus said He was – there is a very specific consequence and pathway that ensues.

The choice of whom and what we “give ourselves to” is ours to make - the consequences of that choice is not ours to have. So we must choose wisely, as the old knight guarding

the Holy Grail said to Indiana Jones! Everything that follows depends on our choice.

**The Fantastic Four:** The four things we “give ourselves” to in following Jesus: his Word, his community, his meal and prayer, his ongoing conversation, form the four foundational walls of a House that is not being built with our hands. A house built of what the Apostle Peter called “living stones.”

**His Word** ... duh! The most important and most neglected part of the foundation is the Word that God has already spoken to us. We run to and fro looking for a “new” word from God,

when we’ve ignored and neglected The Word that has already been spoken! How important is this Word? Its ‘living & active’ work in the ‘good soil’ of our hearts is what ‘bears fruit’ for God’s Kingdom. It bears creative power to effect change in circumstances, bring peace beyond our understanding, and instruct, rebuke, correct and train us in living with Jesus’ character and righteousness. Apart from Christ himself, who is the Chief Cornerstone, this wall cannot be build without the Word of God in its proper place in our lives. There is no substitute for planting the Word inside you, allowing its Life to grow up from “imperishable seed” into a life that is eternal, beginning now!

**His Community** – His Family!! John, the evangel, tells us that to those who “received

him, he gave the right to become children” – His children. We are commanded to love one another, to encourage one another, to be devoted to and honor one another, to serve one another, admonish and instruct one another, bear with and forgive one another, and finally, spur one another on to love and good works! Do you think there is a message here? We are part of God’s family, and it is here that we will experience the height, depth, width and length of His love, as in no other place. “O, how good it is,” David cried, “when brothers (and sisters) dwell together in unity... for there God commands His blessing – even life forevermore!”

**His Meal!** The Family Table – Communion and Common meals. Jesus was always at a banquet or on his way to or from one! Nothing, well almost nothing, symbolizes the

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life of the Kingdom for us all, as well as coming to a meal together. In fact, we are all headed to a “marriage supper” with Jesus! The foretaste of that heavenly meal is found in this age, in our sacramental meals, both formal and informal. I come from a liturgical tradition where the Eucharist is central to our weekly, for some daily, worship and life. It takes a less centrally featured place for others in the Body of Christ, but is no less a part of the foundational meaning of our common life. Whatever we believe and practice, the act of eating together at table, the Lord’s or our own, is basic to a common life lived in real homes and real lives in the world.

**And finally, Prayer** – though last in the list it is far from the least. Equally as important as all the rest, prayer is the family in conversation. It is here that we get “in touch” with God and, to our delight, with one another in ways that we cannot do any other way.

Personal and private, public and corporate, prayer is, alongside attending to The Word, the most actively relational thing we can do with or for God! Over and over we see this in that first community in Acts - in days, nights, even seasons of prayer. Prayer with fasting; Prayer in the Spirit; Prayer for

healing, direction, power, supply of need, and the list goes on and on and on. Nothing happened (or will happen) without it. Prayer is our essential partnership with God, to achieve his purposes in the earth through us, His Body.

*When you see  
the letters  
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what do you see?*

**Where, O Where? Really!** When you see the letters GODISNOWHERE what do you see? Paul prays for the Ephesian church that the “eyes of their hearts would be opened” and later as he wrote his letter to the Romans, he began the “to do list” in chapter 12 with a phrase captured well by J.B. Phillips, “I urge you, brothers, *with eyes wide open to the mercies of God*, to give yourselves as a living sacrifice!”

“God is nowhere” can become “**God is now here!**” The difference is the application of Romans 12:1-2. With “eyes wide open to his mercies” we present ourselves, our souls and bodies, as a living sacrifice to Him – it’s our reasonable act of worship. Then we choose His Word, His People, His Food and His Presence in Prayer, allowing ourselves to be “transformed by the renewing of our mind” that these things effect. It is here that God is at work in Denver. REALLY!

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