

CHURCH OF THE
E T E R N A L

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." – Matthew 24:14

July 21, 2014

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Now that we are in the midst of summertime in the northern hemisphere, many of us experience impressive lightning shows when thunderstorms roll through. Even though they can be dangerous, the display is fascinating to watch. It is amazing to think that mere clouds in the sky, consisting of droplets of water so tiny that they float in air, can build up an electric charge so great that hundreds of millions of volts of electricity are released in a moment. The potential energy of something so simple as a cloud is impressive.

While looking at a cloud, it is fascinating to reflect on all of the things it can do. A cloud can shade the sun, and bring down enough rain to flood streams. A cloud may let down hail large enough to destroy anything in its earthward path. In the right season, a cloud may precipitate a blizzard of snow, deep enough to bring entire cities to a standstill. All of these powerful events are the potential of a cloud, an innocent puffy thing that hangs in the sky.

As great as the unsuspected power that a cloud may have, it is nothing in comparison to the immense potential of man. The ultimate fulfillment of man's potential is something that the world finds foreign, yet the Bible has contained the truth in clear words for thousands of years. Jesus Christ Himself quotes the Scripture in John 10:34, "Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, 'You are gods'?"?"

What an inspiring and powerful revelation! A cloud may have the potential to bring down lightning but mankind has the potential to become part of the God Family, and thereby become God. As plain as this statement is, even the Scribes and Pharisees at Christ's time considered it blasphemy to say such a thing. Many today fail to believe this fact.

Just because the potential is there for all people to be begotten and born into the Family of God, it is not automatic. One must first be called, and then answer that call, by living a life that proves repentance. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born [better "begotten," compare New American Bible] of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments" (1 John 5:1-2).

If we are called and if we repent of our sins, then through baptism and the laying on of hands, God gives us His Holy Spirit. It is through His indwelling power that we are able to begin harnessing our ultimate potential.

Jesus Christ makes a peculiar statement that provides an interesting and almost shocking insight into what we might be able to do if we have faith enough to make use of our potential. In Matthew 17:20 Jesus says, "... for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." It is an impossible physical feat for man to move a mountain, but with the power of God, through faith, what can we say is really impossible?

Knowing that we have such a great potential at our disposal, both in the future, and right now, what are we doing with it? It may not be necessary to move physical mountains at this time, but we can be confronted with spiritual mountains which need to be moved. And we can and must certainly be doing something. We, as part of the Church, are part of a living Body. Each part of the Body plays an essential role. Our potential is to become part of God's Family in the future; our potential now is to harness the power of the Holy Spirit; but what is manifest now is our place in the Body of Christ. All of this taken together should serve to narrow our focus and define our purpose for being.

Some of these ideas might seem to be general, or abstract, or difficult to translate into practical terms. Still, we all need to feel empowered to participate in the Work of the Church, contributing in our way to help the Gospel to be preached to the world as a witness. Only you can judge how you are most able to contribute to the Work. However, one of the most powerful things we can do is call upon God in prayer to bless the Work and lead the ministry so that God may be glorified, and His Kingdom established. The potential of all mankind is very great, but it takes concrete action in accordance with God's Purpose right now so that it will be fulfilled.

With Christian love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Eric Rank".

Eric Rank