



Throughout this book, Asaph Borba, musician and composer, shows that his talents are not limited to poetry and melodies alone. Whoever is acquainted with him as a worship leader cannot but admire the energy and charisma evidenced as he plays his guitar and sings the praise songs he has composed. He carries along with him those who also have the glory of God as their priority. In this book readers can gain a better understanding of the secret to his life and gifts. There are few Brazilian evangelicals who haven't sung at least one or more of his creations.

This book has a unique message that resounds loud and clear: worship is not just a few moments devoted to a Sunday liturgical service, worship is a way of life. It has more to do with being than with doing. We were all created "*to the praise of the glory of His grace*" (Ephesians 1:6). Asaph thus motivates his readers both to live for and sing to the glory of God. The worship that God seeks, according to the author of this book, is the expression of

an intimate knowledge of God through Jesus Christ—a knowledge attained by the word of God and the Holy Spirit, as well as through fellowship with the body of Christ. God is intent on convincing us that idolatry robs Him of the worship due Him.

The fact is that in the church, often that which should be music and words to honor God becomes a mere show. Instead of people being drawn closer to the Father of glory, they are attracted by performances by famous singers. How many times do the lips make declarations of love to God while the heart is far from Him (Matthew 15:8)! According to the author, the true motivation for worship is love. The reality of that love, however, is demonstrated by true obedience and worship. We worship because we love and believe in the God of the Bible and trust His declarations and promises. All this is preparation for the worship that will last throughout eternity in the presence of other redeemed saints and the angels.

The true worship that God is searching for, then, involves the setting aside of self so that God can move without any hindrances. When the self is not denied, it demands worship. This happens even to one who acknowledges the dignity and majesty of God. Borba describes how all people in their inner beings are searching for God, even those who are idolaters or animists bowing down to the sun. He firmly believes that God created all human beings with a capacity for worship. Only those who are children of God, however, can be true worshippers. False worship is that which exalts the god of this world—the one who blinds the eyes of unbelievers so that they cannot see the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Asaph Borba is convinced that young people are attracted to that which is full of vitality. The danger of liturgy is that it lacks this basic element. This is made evident by the resulting lack of interest shown by those who cannot tolerate hypocrisy when

attempts at worship are made without enthusiasm or passionate feeling. No one who has participated in an event with Borba singing and playing and serving as worship leader can imagine a similar gathering without such passionate worship. These are just a few glimpses of the riches of the gold mine to be found in the pages of this book.

Borba has been diligent in his exposition of the elements that make up true biblical worship, adding the observations of numerous other authors to his own experiences. He makes his own valuable contributions as he reflects on and includes his own perspective.

In conclusion, I enthusiastically recommend this book, because it glorifies God.

To God be the glory!

RUSSELL SHEDD, PH.D.
São Paulo, October 2012

A LIFE OF
Worship

A LIFE OF
Worship

ASAPH BORBA



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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**A LIFE OF WORSHIP:
When Faith Becomes Love**

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Each day with you, Lord, is beautiful.
The sun in His brightness always shines –
Its rays of life and hope awaking
A new song in this heart of mine.
Deep within me, I feel the Spirit renewing
Such happiness and joy each day
That all I can do is praise you –
My faith turning to love always.

I'm determined to live for you, Lord –
Each moment and in every place,
To be your hand stretched out to a world
Lost in sin and needing your grace.
I see the smiles, the tears and the pain
Of those you bring close to my side;
And I reach out to them in their need,
When my faith becomes love that abides.

True worship springs from the heart
That seeks only God's glory and praise.
It's the fruit of communion with Him
In that hidden secret place.
There, my faith is transformed into love,
In that hidden secret place.
There, faith becomes enduring love
In my hidden secret place.
There, faith is transformed into love.

—"When Faith Becomes Love"
Asaph Borba



Dedication

To God the Father, to my beloved Lord Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit, eternal source of inspiration and truth.

To my father, Joaquim Roque de Souza (in memoriam), who taught me precious life principles.

To my mother, Eduvirges Borba de Souza, who sowed the Word of God in my heart when I was a child and who continuously intercedes for my life.

To my siblings: Débora, Ener, Carmélia, and Abner, for their lifelong patience.

To my wife, Lígia Rosana, whose love has been unlimited.

To my children, Aurora and André, beloved of my heart.

To my friend, closer than a brother, Don Stoll, whose life and time investments have been without measure, and who was also the first to share with me the vision of worship and praise.

To the presbyters and pastors of the church in Porto Alegre: Erasmo V. Ungaretti, Moysés C. de Moraes, Telmo Weber, Rogério Dietrich Rodrigues, João Nelson Otto, Ismael Ramos de Oliveira, Moacir Adornes, Otocar Wondracek, and Jan Gottfridsson—for their companionship, support, and love.

To pastor Bob Curry, who invested in, believed in, and prophesied over me.

To the worshippers of my generation, who have been and are a source of inspiration and companionship, and with whom I have had the joy of sharing these years of ministry: Adhemar de Campos, Alda Célia, Alexandre Malaquias, Alexandre Vieira, Amer Matalka, Alisson Ambrósio (in memoriam), Ana Paula Valadão Bessa, André Valadão, Antônio Cirilo, Atilano Muradas, Ayman Kafrouny, Bené Gomes, Carlinhos Félix, Christie Tristão, Chris Duran, Cláudio Claro, Daniel Souza, David Neutel, David Quinlan, Davi Silva, Don Moen, Don Stoll, Eyshila, Everton e Carmélia Tonin, Fernanda Brum, Fernandinho, Gerson Ortega, Gottfridssons, Guilherme Kerr, João Alexandre, João Batista dos Santos, João de Souza Filho, Juan Salinas, Laudvan Marques, Lou Saloum, Ludimila Ferber, Lydia Shadeed, Maged Adel, Marcelo Guimarães, Marcus Witt, Massao Suguihara, Mike Herron, Mike Coleman, Mike Shea, Moisés Malafaia (in memoriam), Nani Azevedo, Nelson Bomilcar, Nilson Ferreira, Nívea e Gustavo Soared, Nizar Ferez,

Paul Wilbur, Paulo César Brito, Paulo Figueiró, Phill Driscoll,
Pregador Luo, Sarah Sheeva, Salam Ameish, Sóstenes Mendes,
Sérgio Pimenta (in memoriam), Rodolfo Montosa, Ron Kenoly,
Rosana Borba, Ted Sandquist, and Williams Costa, Jr.



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Foreword by Donald Stoll

God, if it is your will that we work for you in Brazil, show me a sign. Change the five dollar bill in my shirt pocket into Brazilian currency.” That was in the summer of 1973. God’s response to that request was the start of an adventure that continues to this day.

In August of 1974 my wife Gail and I, along with our two children aged three and four, moved to Porto Alegre, Brazil. We moved by faith, fully convinced of God’s call. We lived with Bob and Joan Curry, experienced, loving, faith-filled American

missionaries. In the same month on the other side of Porto Alegre, a fifteen-year-old boy gave his life to Jesus. An unlikely boy...addicted to drugs, alcoholic father, stutterer, hippie, street musician, running from God. But the Holy Spirit wouldn't let his mother rest, and his mother wouldn't let her pastor rest, until Asaph Borba quit running from God and ran into the loving arms of Jesus.

It was six months later that Asaph and I were introduced at a church retreat. Soon after we found ourselves teaming up to minister in worship every Monday night, and that led to friendship, fellowship, discipleship, and seeking Jesus together. We were caught up in a powerful movement of God. Our part was to be available to the Holy Spirit to write, in musical form, what the Spirit was saying to the church and what the church was saying to God, and then, with that music, to lead the church into the glory and the unity of worship in the very presence of God.

Fast forward thirty-nine years of living in Jesus...Asaph's songs, over seven hundred of them, have become the hymnbook for many Christians in Brazil. He has blessed the church across the world with beautiful music that expresses the heart of God towards us and our hearts of worship to God. Behind the music there is a man with a servant's heart, a man filled with the Spirit of God, a tested man, a family man, a man under authority. In this book Asaph speaks of what he knows: worship, when faith becomes love.

May the Holy Spirit guide you as you read.

—DONALD STOLL
Erie, Illinois



Foreword by Moysés C. De Moraes

Dear reader, this is not just another book about worship and praise. As you read, you will have a special, enriching experience. God hasn't only anointed Asaph to compose music, sing and record songs, or even just to lead praises in the church in various parts of the world. What you have in your hands is a detailed, thorough guide to show the people of God how to worship, wherever they may be, in whatever corner of the earth. It is not some well-researched but intellectual and dry manual about worship and praise. Rather, it is a journey, a precious journey that

covers the whole divine purpose for worship—a journey unlike any other.

Asaph's lifetime of experience has added to his natural and supernatural gifts. These were placed at the service of a good heart and warmed by the flame of love for God. Knowing him as I have since he was sixteen years old, and having helped him for more than thirty years, I see in him a real miracle and give thanks to our Father!

Travelling into strange places, reaching thousands of people to tell them about the joy of worshipping God, and serving Him as a follower of his beloved Son, Asaph has broken paradigms and boundaries of dedication.

In the Middle East, in Turkey, in Egypt, in Europe and the Americas, wherever Asaph has gone, he has wisely surrounded himself with helpers and companions. Moving in great confidence in the Lord, he has courageously crossed thorny international boundaries. He has overcome obstacles, such as the lack of resources of every kind. Always carrying with him the longing to be home with his wife and children, he has still made the most of his experiences and shared his faith, recognizing the Lord and worshipping Him with fresh and joyous hymns and songs—for this is how he worships the One who saved him and continues to guide him.

It is a privilege to have shared life experiences with Asaph and to now present you with such a precious book.

I have learned much from Asaph, while helping him with life decisions and matters related to God's work. I pray that musicians, instrumentalists, singers and others that the Lord uses in worship and praise will be helped by a careful examination of this book, that they will give it much thought and prayer. I pray that it will give them a new and renewed vision of God's eternal purpose

in causing all things to converge and contribute to the glory of His beloved son, Jesus. To the praise of His glory.

—MOYSÉS C. DE MORAES
Porto Alegre, Brazil



Introduction

*My heart belongs to you
My heart belongs to you, my Lord,
My heart belongs to you.*

*"My Heart Belongs to You"
ASAPH BORBA—2006*

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
(John 4:23–24)

For many years I have heard, learned, and taught about worship. However, more and more I have seen that this is a subject about which God will always have much to minister to us, for its scope is unlimited. From the start of my ministry, ever since I came upon the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman in John 4, my heart was awakened by the Holy Spirit not just to understand the truth of these words, but to have a profound desire to live them out, believing that the Father's greatest pursuit is to find worshippers. God does not seek worship alone, for the heavens are filled with worship and praise. He searches the earth for worshippers. The Bible says, "*The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him*" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

This book does not pretend or attempt to be a final treatise on the subject, but rather to be the reflection of a heart that says each day to the Father: "Behold me here, Lord—I want to be one of those worshippers that you are searching for; I want to be found by You, O Father, in my life, in my home, in my day-to-day existence, wherever I may be—there you can count on me to be Your worshipper."

I also hope to share with all who work in praise and worship in the church my nearly forty years of experience as a worshipper, musician, producer, and composer in my local church and throughout the world. I consider it my personal calling to collaborate with the Holy Spirit and God's eternal purpose to form a family of children around the world who love and worship the

Father in spirit and in truth. I pray and work towards the goal that the eyes of the Lord, which run throughout the earth, might find in each of us a true worshipper.

This insight first took root in my heart in 1979, when a dear brother from the United States, Ern Baxter, was in Porto Alegre speaking on the subject of worship in a simple but profound manner. I was quite young, just taking my first steps into ministry, and his words had a great impact on me. That day I recognized in a strong and objective way the importance of worshipping as a lifestyle and not just a music style. That was when I decided to become one of those that the Father can always find. This decision changed my life and became a daily challenge for me. Today what I most desire is for God to find me as a true worshipper.

For God, ritual worship is on a secondary plane, as we see in 1 Samuel 15:22, "*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.*" Moysés Moraes states that obedience is God's favorite form of worship. The Holy Spirit shows us that this interior submission, which leads us to total submission to God, to Christ, and His word, is more important to God than songs or any other form of music.

The main theme of this book is worship as a way of life, as something much more than some musical style. That which is most important to God is the heart of each one of His children, with whom He desires to relate in an intense, ongoing way. Understanding that love is the language and essence of God, I can affirm that true worship is what happens when one's faith is transformed into love.

This book took almost two decades to write. In the middle of my work on it I enrolled in a journalism course at a university. During that course I began to change the whole manuscript, its language and its focus, giving it better organization and expression as well as a more comprehensive bibliography. In fact, I

rewrote everything. This long process, however, has allowed me to dig deeper into this subject. It has added new experiences that have widened my perspective and given more consistency to the project. While I know that as life goes on, I will still have much more to share—for the themes of adoration and worship of God are unlimited—I feel that this is the time to publish this book. And the best part in all this is that I have written about one of the things we can do on earth that we will continue to do in heaven: worship.

Many people think that what God wants most is an assortment of beliefs and actions, lots of music, festivals and celebrations that will be rewarded with blessings throughout life. I believe that God is interested in much more than that, as Amos 5:21–23 suggests:

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

I wrote this book to prevent that type of behavior, for God wants more from us. He desires a righteous, holy life and character.

I hope that this book helps all its readers to comprehend the fact that for the Father, the first, most important, and essential thing is being rather than doing. It is the heart and its motivation preceding any action that makes a person truthful, authentic, and transparent before the One who sees all.

May the reading of this book be as edifying and as challenging for you as it was for me to write each one of its lines.

Finally, it is my prayer that your life of worship will become the expression of the transformation of the seed of your faith into a profound, unbreakable love toward God—faith transformed into love.

God bless your reading!

Chapter One



Whom Do We Worship?

*Jesus in your presence, we are gathered here.
We contemplate Your face and surrender
ourselves to Thee.
For one day Your death brought life to us all
And gave us complete access to The Father's
heart.*

*"Jesus in Your Presence"
ASAPH BORBA—1986*

The first aspect to be addressed is: Who should be the object of our worship? The Bible tells us, “*Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shall swear by his name*” (Deuteronomy 6:13). Therefore, God the Father is the only One who merits all praise, honor and glory and we human beings were created “*unto the praise of his glory*” (Ephesians 1:14).

Since the beginning of time, all idolatry in the world has aimed at drawing man’s attention away from the true God, causing the identification between the Creator and His creatures to be interrupted by idols in the most varied forms. When man’s attention was drawn away and his heart stolen, worship of the true God was consequently stolen and turned aside. Not satisfied in deceiving mankind, Satan wanted to turn Jesus away from true worship. In the episode where he tempts Jesus, the real objective was to steal the glory of God. Deep down, the devil wanted the worship for himself—this worship that is a genuine expression mankind offers to God. In that moment, Jesus reminds the tempter of the commandment, “*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*” (Matthew 4:10).

Concepts of Worship

As a child, my mother went to the Christian Congregation of Brazil. My brothers and sisters and I accompanied her to the services, participating in an introductory part called “Time of Worship.” This was for those who arrived early. We would sing short, spontaneous songs. As time went by, these songs became so important in that denomination that they were printed in the official hymnal. All the churches could identify with those times of worship.

Meetings such as those influenced my concept of worship. To begin with, I formed the idea that praise was something that

happened in a particular place—in a church, a hill, a temple, a sanctuary—where people would go to worship at a particular time, and which had a beginning, middle, and end. Moreover, music was the center. Unfortunately, for a long time, not only I, but many believers thought that praise and worship had to do with music alone. Today, however, the Lord has shown us that worship is far more than music. Worship is a way of life and not just a type of music. As the British theologian Gerald Vann (1906–1963) said: “Worship, then, is not a part of the Christian life: it is the Christian life.”¹

True worship is the fruit of fellowship, of intimacy, and above all, of a covenant of continuous love with the Father, through which He makes Himself known each day to those who love Him and truly seek Him. “Worship begins in the presence of God, but it also begins because of God’s presence. Jesus understood that in order to know someone intimately, we need to share various life experiences with that person.”²

In John 4:22, Jesus declares that the Jews worshipped one that they knew not. Yes, we can only worship the one that we know. Without knowing God it is impossible to worship Him. The question at hand is whether it is possible for man to know God. Without a doubt, it is possible. Since the beginning, God has wanted to make Himself known to man. In the garden of Eden God walked in the afternoons, calling Adam and Eve to fellowship with Himself. Still today He seeks and will always be seeking those who desire a real and deep relationship with Him.

Another important aspect of our discussion is that the Father is not looking for worship. He is seeking out worshippers. Worship refers to a result, while a worshipper refers to the individual. It is the worshipper’s heart that the Father searches for and longs to find. Here are four steps to knowing God.

We Know God through Jesus

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12–13). The knowledge of God the Creator is the great quest of man’s spirit. Nearly all religions have this search as their main objective. All this seeking is to find access to God, to enjoy His presence and restore lost fellowship with Him, to know Him closely. Those who believe in the gospel know that the first step to real knowledge of God is to know Jesus. Many, however, seek God only to gain information, others seek Him only by using images, and others just want to develop their spirituality. But the Bible says that this knowledge is only through Christ. Yes, it is through Him that God made Himself known to us all. This is one of the most glorious aspects of His work. All those who know Jesus also know the Father. *“I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6). A pious man of God, J. C. Ryle, wrote: *“True worship must be through the mediation of Christ...Anyone who presumes to come to Him without an atonement and the Mediator whom He has appointed will find his worship unacceptable.”*³

I have personally witnessed a number of religions up close, and I would like to offer some observations. A certain religion preaches that man knows God by His actions in the world; another through one’s ancestors; another through an inner search; another through reincarnations; and others by giving offerings to spiritual beings. In many ways these religions deceive multitudes, leading them to spiritual death. The door of entrance to the knowledge of God is very simple: Christ Jesus. It was He himself who said: *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”* (John 14:9).

The Gospels say that when Jesus Christ died, the veil of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The reason for this fact, so little analyzed by the church, is that God did not need more than one temple, and even less, another place where He would be honored and worshipped. From that day on, God would let Himself be known only through the sacrifice of Jesus, the Holy Lamb. It is through His death on the cross that each person, by faith, may inherit eternal life. In this life they may truly know God and become His new dwelling place. *“For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people”* (2 Corinthians 6:16).

So to know God more we first need to know Jesus. Only then we can come into the marvelous presence of the Father. *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14).

We Know God through His Word

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart” (Psalm 119:11). The word of God was left in this world as God’s manual for directing, counseling, helping, and teaching people to do the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God for their lives. The Bible teaches us who God is, and it also reveals His character. Once a person comes to know God through faith in Jesus, he enters the door to the kingdom of God and begins to explore and discover His characteristics by knowing the content of the Bible.

In his book *Biblical Worship*, Dr. Russell Shedd helps us understand this:

We hear the voice of the Lord at the moment we are tuned into the voice of the prophets and apostles. God chose them to transmit His message. When God spoke to Moses, David, Daniel, Peter, John and Paul, His message was directed to a larger circle than just those first hearers, designated receptors or specific readers of the message. Imagine a father who makes a telephone call to his son. Another son, curious to know what the father is saying, silently begins to listen to the conversation that is directed to him as well. The same happens in our days, when we read what Jesus said to Peter. In a special way, the Spirit transforms this message into God's voice, speaking in a direct way to us, too.⁴

The person who submits his life in the smallest details to the Word of the Lord will surely come to know God better. He will become more and more like Jesus. There are many verses in the Word that give testimony to the Word itself and that motivate us to know God:

- *“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever”* (Isaiah 40:8). The Word of God is eternal.
- *“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven”* (Psalm 119:89). The Word of God is eternal and leads one to know eternity.
- *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path”* (Psalm 119:105). The Word of God is light for our pathway.
- *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a*

discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God is quick and powerful.

- ✦ *"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried; he is a buckler to all them that trust in him"* (2 Samuel 22:31). The Word of God is faithful.
- ✦ *"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"* (Ephesians 6:17). The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit.

Since ancient times, God put His Word in the heart of humankind. Each story was transmitted from father to son, until Moses compiled the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, which the Jews call the Torah. This Hebrew word *torah* means: instruction, teaching, direction, law, precept. Afterwards, through various men who heard and understood the voice of the Father, other books were written until the sixty-six books were completed that make up the Bible as we have it today.

We know God when we read the Word and perceive His hand in each fact therein. The importance of Bible reading is in the fact that while we are reading, the Holy Spirit draws essential parallels, motivating us to apply Bible concepts in a practical way. Gradually this process brings forth faith in our hearts. We know God when we interpret the Word. And the One who helps us to do this is the Holy Spirit Himself, causing Bible principles to become the foundation of our lives. The interpretation of the Bible takes more time, more analysis and even more help from other people than any other book. In this area I have always had the blessing of having two men of God by my side who constantly helped me understand the Holy Bible in a broader way. My faith thus has grown based on reliable interpretation and this has given me the foundation for my walk with the Lord.

We also know God when we believe in the power of the Word. It is a power that is unseen. When read, proclaimed, thought, or sung anywhere in the world, the Word of God does not return empty; it fulfills its goal of teaching the world the power of God. “*So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*” (Isaiah 55:11). The Word not returning empty means that it truly changes our lives. As Dwight L. Moody famously said, “The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.”⁵

There are many miracles associated with knowing God by the simple act of reading the Bible or parts of it. For example, a certain believer told me that in a rural area of Iran, a whole tribe came to know Jesus in a most unusual way. It all began when a package of Bibles was confiscated by the police and destroyed in a great bonfire at the edge of the road near the tribe. Days later, after a sandstorm, the village was buried in pages of the Bible written in their native language, with some pages partially burned. Everyone became interested in the writings brought by the windstorm and so they became acquainted with the Word of God. That is the supernatural and transforming power of the Word, which reveals itself in a page, a tract, a CD, or an app.

We Know God Through the Holy Spirit

Jesus revealed the promise of the Holy Spirit to His disciples with the following words: “*The Spirit of truth...will guide you into all truth*” (John 16:13). The principal truth that the Spirit reveals to us is that of God Himself. Only through Him, the Spirit, can we receive a larger revelation of things eternal and divine.

This happened to me before I had even surrendered my life to Christ and was still dependent on drugs. I remember I was over

at a friend's house, standing at the window watching the rain fall, when I was touched by something supernatural. I picked up my guitar and composed my first music for Christ:

*Christ, this rain that falls certainly must
be Your eyes,
That now weep because of all Your suffer-
ing,
That when forgotten by us, made You cry,
Christ, the cross of the past will not be
forgotten by me,
Because I will still proclaim Your Word
To all, to the world.*

"This Rain That Falls"

ASAPH BORBA—1973

To this day, when I remember that song, especially the words, I ask myself: Where did that music come from in my heart? At the time I was completely away from God, involved in drugs, and I had no faith. But all of a sudden in my spirit a flame was lit and a song was born. Today, I understand that the One who caused that to happen was the Holy Spirit, who, regardless of where we are or how we are, reveals the Father and Christ to us. The Spirit causes each of us to have a hunger and thirst for God. He moves throughout the Earth, preparing hearts to receive the revelation of God through the message of Christ. In different parts of the world, for example, we hear of people who simply dream about Christ and begin to search for Him with all their hearts. The Spirit of God manifests himself to these people, causing them to

have a desire to know Christ. When they meet a Christian, they tell of their dream and from then on they can be disciples in the knowledge of God.

For this reason, Jesus breathed the Spirit not only upon the disciples, but upon the world. Not only to the church, but to the whole earth, came the revelation and knowledge of God. That is why we are challenged by the apostle Paul to “*be filled with the Spirit*” (Ephesians 5:18). When the church is filled with the sublime presence of the Spirit, it rises to another level of knowledge of God which leads it, without a doubt, to a still greater spiritual realm. This leads to the experience of the incalculable riches of both wisdom and knowledge of the Eternal One.

Only the Holy Spirit can promote a true and deep fellowship between man and God. Jesus gave us the key when He taught the disciples to pray: “*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly*” (Matthew 6:6). The Father is waiting not only to hear the voice of His children, but to have them near, and to look into their hearts. He makes Himself more present in the secret place than anywhere else.

We Know God Through the Body of Christ

Each person who accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior becomes part of the church, which is called the “body of Christ.” In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul explains that we are all members of the same body—that is, each person is a small part of this body and has their own importance and value. The knowledge of God will never be complete without life in the body of Christ, without having fellowship with other believers. Many people think that they can have a complete revelation of the Father all by themselves.

This is a lie spread by the enemy. If there is no integration with members of the body, a person's comprehension of God will always be limited.

In the course of my missionary work, I have had opportunities to see this truth, not only in the local church but also worldwide. I have been greatly enriched by interacting with believers in the church of Porto Alegre (Brazil), then in the other states of Brazil and the Americas, reaching as far as the Middle East in a span of over thirty years.

Most of the knowledge I have of the love of God, I acquired in the church. I came to know His love as a Father, through the teaching of my spiritual fathers. I understood God as a friend, through my friendship with Don Stoll, a great companion at all times. I came to know God as family, living with my wife Rosana and my children, Aurora and André, as well as being with the believers in the church in Porto Alegre. In this way I began to recognize various facets of the character of God, through His church. In the life of each brother and sister there is a small part of God. The closer I am to other believers, the closer I will be to God.

In conclusion, here are three statements that complement one other: "The church is the Body of Christ; the body of a man has the same name as his head."⁶ "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it—not to condemn it. He does not hate the church, but nourishes and cherishes His church, for it is His own body" (adapted from Ephesians 5:25–33). "If we love the Lord, we also should love what He loves."⁷