

God Is Calling Hungry Hearts to the Altar in This Season

The monumental journey of writing this book began late one night roughly 20 years ago following a discussion about the altar. In May 1997, we were youth pastors at Calvary Assembly of God in Decatur, Alabama. The church and the youth ministry were in a state of revival. Brownsville Assembly of God, which was just a four-hour drive south of us in Pensacola, Florida, was also experiencing the winds of revival. Our senior pastors, George and Phyllis Sawyer, were desperate for more of God, and this passion had taken hold of the church staff as well. We were young pastors at the time, and we were zealous to see God pour out His Spirit in north Alabama. Secretly, though, something was stirring within us. We realized later that God was getting ready to move us to the next level, and part of His process was to create this stirring in our spirits. What used to satisfy our spirit just wasn't working anymore.

I (Pat) remember praying early one morning in the living room of our small condo. As I lay there, I suddenly saw a vision of King David carrying the ark of the covenant back to Israel. I said, "Lord, why am I seeing this?" He replied, "Son, I am asking you and Karen to carry My mercy seat back to America." I knew in that moment that God was calling us to be evangelists.

In fact, until 2015 our ministry was called Mercy Seat Ministries. We changed the name to Remnant Ministries International in 2015 after a new revelation came to us. As I lay on the floor praying that morning, our son, who was five at the time, came and lay on the floor beside me. "Daddy," he said, "why do you cry all the time?"

I smiled at him and replied, "Because Daddy hurts for this

generation.”

Suddenly the Lord spoke to me again. He said, “Son, you weep because you are mourning your own death.”

“Lord,” I replied, “what do You mean?”

“What I mean is this,” God replied. “If I am going to use you and Karen, you must die to everything. You must build Me an altar.”

Together we have traveled more than two million miles to the four corners of the earth. We have seen hundreds of thousands saved, renewed, filled with the Spirit and healed. It has not been easy, but we have been kept by God’s presence, which we experience only by being obedient to meet Him at the altar.

We are known for giving altar calls at our meetings, and we have seen thousands touched and transformed at the altar. Yet many have abandoned that place of surrender and obedience. The altars of our churches have become the steps by which man ascends the platform rather than the place to learn to walk in God’s steps! Sadly, we now live in a day when God would be treated as a stranger if He were to show up in many of our churches.

If we are to experience the transformative power of God, we must return to the altar. When Jesus stretched out His arms on the cross, He was telling mankind, “Now you can have access to meet with God!” Jesus’ entire ministry on earth was established so that we could have direct access to heaven.

Do not read this if you are satisfied with a life of spiritual mediocrity, which will, in turn, cause God to simply be a stranger when you arrive to meet Him in heaven. God’s call requires a response as it takes you on an adventure in faith, freedom, authority, wisdom, blessing, spiritual identity and dying to self. Although we will discuss the physical church altar, this call of God is about a personal and deep encounter

with the One who hung between the thieves. It is at the altar of the cross that we once again desire to see God more than we desire people, platforms or plaudits, where we become plaintiffs in the courts of heaven and not defendants in the inner circle of the religious.

This is not a call for the satisfied or those who recoil at the thought of God invading their space. It is a call to hungry hearts, a call to the realization that the ultimate altar was a cross that held the jewel of heaven (Heb. 10:12–13).

Are you willing to run, walk or even crawl back to the place where your freedom awaits, to lay aside the day-to-day, nonstop busyness and dust off the altar of encounter? If so, then you might just be a prime candidate to become what we call “the altared”—those who have realized that without a daily encounter with God, life will never be complete. The altared have experienced Psalm 32:7, and that is their cry: “You are my hiding place.” {eo}

Pat and Karen Schatzline are international evangelists and authors who co-lead Remnant Ministries International and the I Am Remnant Movement. They are known for their passion to lead people of all ages into deep encounters with God. They are frequent guests on Christian television and radio shows such as *The Jim Bakker Show*, *Sid Roth's It's Supernatural!*, and *Ask Dr. Brown*, as well as on networks such as Daystar, TBN, JCTV and GodTV. They have written several books, including *Why Is God So Mad at Me?*, *I Am Remnant*, *Dehydrated* and *Unqualified*. Married since 1990, they make their home in Birmingham, Alabama. This passage is an excerpt from their book *Rebuilding the Altar* (August 1, 2017).