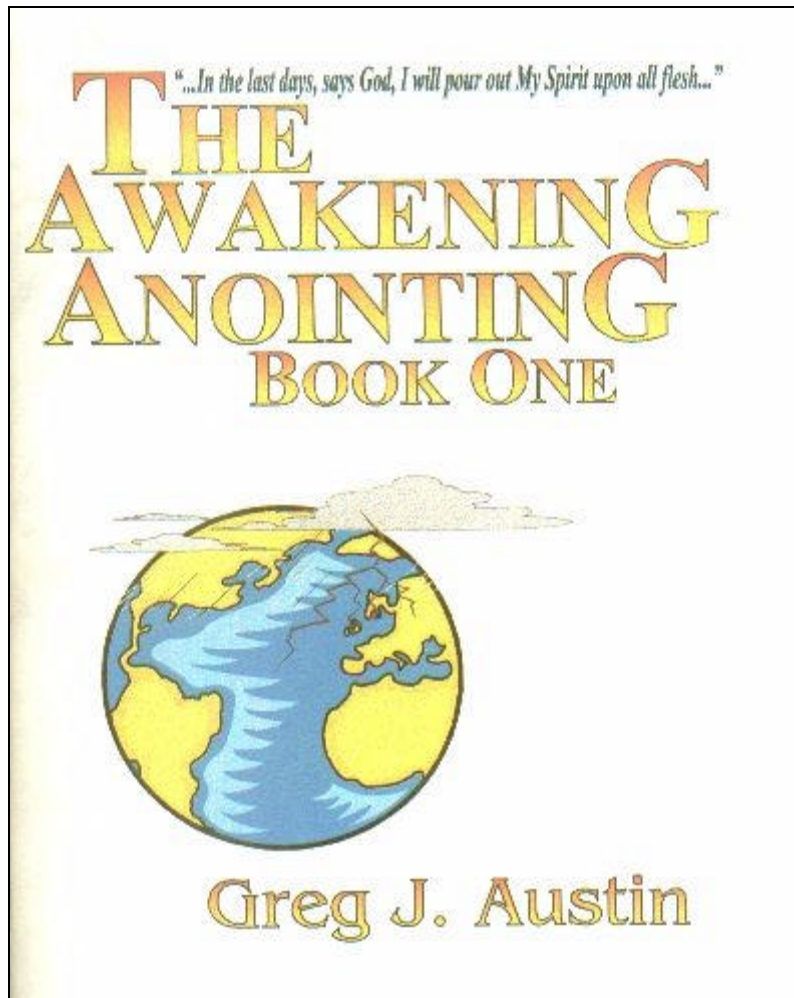


# THE AWAKENING ANOINTING

BOOK ONE

BY  
GREG J. AUSTIN



For Mrs. B and those precious and faithful intercessors — once known by the more primitive but accurate title "Prayer Warriors," who have consistently kept my name before the throne of God for more than twenty-seven years as I have struggled, stumbled, complained and sometimes grown and experienced success in the Spirit. Those times of victory have surely been the fruit and consequence of faithful Warriors. Any reward which is now received must now be theirs.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 THE EASTER SUNDAY MASSACRE
- 2 THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH THE ANOINTING
- 3 THE BATTLE AND THE ANOINTING
- 4 WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW: THE ANOINTING

## CHAPTER 1

### THE EASTER SUNDAY MASSACRE

Bodies were strewn across the floor as if bloodthirsty gangsters had stepped into the room with machine guns and mowed people down in their tracks.

It was just after three o'clock in the afternoon, and men, women and children who would normally have been relaxing in their homes or enjoying the early spring sunshine or returning from Sunday dinner in Portland, Oregon were instead laying on their faces or backs, stacked in aisles and walkways throughout the room.

Mixed sounds of laughter and weeping mingled with quiet music flowing from a sound system overhead. Muted conversation came from little groups of people scattered here and there through the room.

It was Easter Sunday. Normally a day to showcase the resurrection of Jesus — as much as a day to show off new suits, bright spring dresses and those incredible, flowery hats. This was anything but a normal Easter Sunday church service in our classical Pentecostal church in Southwest Washington.

All the pretty and stately trappings of Easter were absent. The sanctuary was a mess. For all the care people had taken in dressing for the Easter celebration, men lay unceremoniously on the floor, shirts wrinkled and ties askew. Ladies hair-dos, so carefully brushed and sprayed, had been lost to the experience of collapsing in the power of the Spirit on the floor. There was no semblance of sophistication anywhere.

I had finally prayed with the last person. I had ministered at the altars for so long I was physically exhausted. As I turned toward the back of the sanctuary, I saw him, arms folded over his chest, a steady gaze aimed directly at me.

"He" was the Superintendent of our denomination's District just south of us in Oregon, and I wasn't excited about hearing what he had to say about this most unusual Easter Sunday service.

For a couple of weeks before this service, our church had been transformed by a new, fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit. There was a dimension of God's presence in our services that I had never personally experienced, and when Easter rolled around a few Sundays later, I never stopped to consider that we should do anything but just let the Holy Spirit continue to do among us what He had been doing for those previous weeks.

It had all been awesome and wonderful, but now I was standing before the Superintendent. Wanting just to get it over with, I took a deep breath and ventured the best question I could formulate, given the circumstances (that is, the bodies laid out behind me, and in clear view of the Superintendent): "Well, Brother Gallaher, what do you think?"

His answer astonished me. Without a moment's hesitation he simply said, "Greg, it looks to me like you've got a move of God here."

With that ringing statement encouraging us to continue, I silently asked God to pour His anointing all over us without measure. It was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon. We had to hurry to get ready for the six o'clock service.

For those of us in that church that Easter Sunday in 1995, the adventure of our lives; an awakening beyond anything we had ever dared dream, had just begun.

We hadn't yet heard of Toronto. The Brownsville miracle hadn't happened yet, and all we knew was that a fresh wind was blowing through our church and that revelation and anointing was flowing like a river.

We had a lot to learn, and many challenges to conquer, but now, more than three years later, many of those same people who sprawled all over the sanctuary that day have been used of God to touch lives in Africa, India, El Salvador, Vietnam, Northern Ireland, and all across the United States.

As we grew in our understanding of what God was doing among us, we learned to recognize that a fresh anointing was awakening churches and believers all over the world.

You the reader, have either been personally transformed by this anointing, or you have been challenged by this awakening, or you know someone who has been touched and changed by God through this "thing" many have called "renewal."

Such is the magnitude of the current awakening. At this writing, the world is hurtling through space towards an appointment with the year 2000; the turning of a century and a millenium, and most certainly, we are headed for the return of Jesus Christ in answer of His promise that if He went away, He would come again to receive His church to Himself.

Jesus also promised that we, His church, would receive power to be His witnesses. Now, nearly two thousand years after He uttered those words, we are being re-awakened to our responsibility and our power.

From every city, every county, every corner of North America and the Continents of the world comes a continuing stream of testimony: An Awakening is taking place before our very eyes. We are being transformed by an Awakening Anointing.

## CHAPTER 2

**"AND HE SAID, PLEASE SHOW ME YOUR GLORY." EXODUS 33:18**

### **THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT**

*"In these last days"*

*And it shall come to pass in the last days says God, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on my menservants and on my maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy... And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:17-21)*

These matter of fact words were spoken by a former fisherman named Peter, who'd experienced a mid-life career change when Jesus called Him to become a fisher of men.

On that day Peter rose up in the midst of 120 followers of Jesus to answer the mystified crowds which had gathered in the street below an upper room in Jerusalem. They'd been drawn there by strange sounds and stranger sights on that Pentecost Day two thousand year ago. Early that morning in that upper room, 120 followers of Jesus Christ had experienced what their Master had called "the promise of the Father" and had been "baptized" in the Holy Spirit. They had spoken with "tongues" — other languages — but they also had appeared to be drunken to those who could not understand either the source by which they were able to speak those languages or the way they behaved — "drunken.

Peter, now anointed and empowered, in a complete reversal of his former unstable character, didn't hesitate as he defended the disciples' behavior and gave an unshakable and clear explanation of their incredible and obviously divine experience.

There is much we can learn today from the account of the first New Testament Pentecost Day and other Bible accounts of God's activity in the history of the church.

It's worth noting that whenever God has involved Himself in man's affairs, there has always been an increase in spiritual events which few if any men have ever seen before. Consider the following, partial list of wonders throughout biblical history:

- When God intervened in human affairs during the time of Noah the earth was covered with a floor of water.
- At Babel when men's tongues were confused, and their languages separated.
- In Egypt with the plagues and a series of incredible miracles.
- At the dedication of Solomon's temple when the priests could not stand or minister because of the glory of the Lord.
- At the birth of Jesus with the manifestation of angels and a strange star appearing in the eastern sky.
- As Jesus prepared for the cross, when Elijah and Moses appeared to Peter, James and John.
- At the death of Jesus when saints, long dead and buried, rose from their graves and were seen walking through the holy city.

- At the Day of Pentecost when a "rushing, mighty wind" from heaven, accompanied by visible "clover tongues of fire" suddenly appeared.

Virtually every evangelical theologian, every conservative biblical scholar agrees that we are at the very door of entrance into God's next intervention in the affairs of humanity: We are about to witness the most incredible act of not only this century, but of all time since the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Jesus is about to return in the clouds of the air to receive His bride to Himself. Every prophecy which must be fulfilled in order for His return to take place has occurred with the exception of the publishing of the gospel to all nations. And we are nearing that milestone as well.

Does it not stand to reason that as the activity of heaven increases in preparation for this great event, that signs and wonders, miracles and spiritual manifestations should also increase, as they have in every generation when God has moved mightily in the earth?

I believe that what we are witnessing in renewal, with unexplainable manifestations, is the direct result of the Holy Spirit touching, healing, preparing God's people to complete the task of reaching the entire planet with the message of salvation through the blood of Jesus.

### **EXPLAINING WHAT WE HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED**

Many Christians find it difficult if not impossible to understand or accept much of the phenomenal manifestations associated with renewal or the Toronto Blessing. In my own observations, I've noticed that a lot of the rejection of renewal and the manifestations such as laughter, drunkenness, shaking, etc. comes from Christians who have not experienced these things.

On the surface this would seem to be an obvious statement, but a deeper look reveals that it is the absence of willingness to allow God to do what He wants in our lives that precludes many from experiencing any manifestations.

When a believer does not experience the manifestations, he is left to determine one of two things: Either he is spiritually attuned and the manifestations are not legitimate products of the ministry of the Spirit, or the manifestations are indeed the by-product of the Spirit and he is not open to the moving of the Holy Spirit in his life. Human nature too often prevails, and the non-experiencing Christian determines that he is indeed spiritual, therefore the manifestations are not legitimate. After all, if renewal were truly a move of God, wouldn't I be touched by that move? So we denounce what we cannot accept, and attempt to explain, in human terms, that which we cannot understand. We explain with great accuracy what we have not experienced.

Imagine the absurdity of trying to explain to a mountain villager from Tibet who has never even seen an electric lightbulb, the view of the Titanic, sunk eighty years ago that you have seen on television, taken from within a deep sea submersible as the ship sits on the bottom of the ocean. What the Tibetan villager has not experienced, he cannot understand, embrace or believe.

Renewal and its strange manifestations is indeed difficult to believe if it is examined with the human mind and human reasoning alone. Yet for those who will look,

not with the natural eye, but with the eye of faith, there is the unmistakable imprint of the Divine stamped on the life of every one touched by this current manifestation of God's presence in the earth.

### **THEY'RE EVERYWHERE, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!**

When we think about the phenomenon known commonly as the Toronto Blessing or renewal, and recognize that this "blessing" is being experienced literally in every corner of the world, there are important factors to take into consideration.

If only North America, or Argentina or Brazil, or Great Britain and Ireland, or the European continent were experiencing this blessing — if renewal were occurring only in modern, television cable-accessible cities we might discount its' legitimacy as a movement of God.

Certainly any manifestation may be imitated. But there is also first hand evidence that in the remote reaches of northern Burma, in Nepal, at the foot of the Himalaya, in the jungle mountains of Vietnam, in the rice fields of Thailand, and in other isolated and modern-world-quarantined places, the same spiritual activity is present as has been experienced in North America. It is immediately obvious that this is not a "learned" behavior, people are not simply mimicking what others are doing. Nor is renewal merely an obvious display of unfettered emotionalism. The Montangard tribes of the Anamese Cordillera in Vietnam are not imitating what is happening in Toronto, because they have never heard of Toronto, or New York, or Buenos Aires, or London. The conclusion the honest mind must finally arrive at is that God is manifesting His Spirit among mankind in the last days of earth's history, just as He declared He would, first through the prophet Joel, and then through the voice of Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-21).

God has never required man's understanding or approval of the ways He chooses to accomplish His design in creation, or to reveal His glory among men. God has simply spoken, acted, moved, and said, "...believe."

This book is not an attempt to chronicle the current worldwide awakening. Enough has been written by others to both record and establish the merits of current renewal. Suffice it to say here that something significant is happening in North America and around the world, and that something has everything to do with the conclusion of God's eternal plan for planet earth.

I have however sought to capture in these pages the character of what is happening in churches around the world as the result of this fresh outpouring and anointing of the Spirit. The resulting energizing of ministry, zeal for reaching the lost, feeding the hungry, interceding for the world, taking back territory — neighborhoods, schools, homes — which Satan had long laid claim to, all these are what this book is about.

There is a new zeal among Christian people to study their Bibles, pray without ceasing, travel to mission fields, spend huge amounts of time talking about the things of God rather than things which once occupied their minds. Priorities are shifting, sometimes evaporating, to make room for the chief priority of life, which is to bring glory to the Father and His Son, Jesus. The reason for these incredible changes, in my view, is simply this: An anointing from heaven has touched and transformed millions.

I have personally concluded that whatever is causing the incredible changes both in the activity and structure of the Christian church we are now experiencing, Satan would not and could not achieve these victories; the flesh — human willpower, mental discipline, the strongest determination, cannot do what is being done.

The only possible explanation I have found for such powerful testimonies and such radically changed lives, is that the Holy Spirit of God has moved upon these tens of thousands of lives and forcefully changed and filled them with His power, His unction, direction and anointing.

As God has begun to sweep through His church with holy fire, those elements of Christian religion which have been created by man and not by God are being challenged and consumed. Elements of worship which have held sacred position but which were man-made and not God-ordained are being replaced by the components of grace, love and mercy.

A more "authentic" Christianity is appearing among more and more churches around the world. Believers are divorcing, wholesale, every vestige of dead tradition and empty religion. The words of Jesus are being discovered to be true in the late 1990's:

"...The traditions of men have made My law of none effect" (Mk. 7) But, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made (us) free from the law of sin and death" (Ro. 8:2)

It is my fervent and heartfelt prayer that every tradition born of man will finally give way to the free and full presence of the Spirit of God in our churches — and that the Church of Jesus Christ will at last experience and share His freedom, liberty and grace with a hungry and desperate world.

I want to personally invite you — no matter where you've come from, no matter your basis of understanding — to join with me in the Spirit of God, on a journey into the flames of God's holy presence, and then into victory.

**HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, PARTNER IN CREATION, COMPANION OF THE REDEEMED, SOURCE OF STRENGTH AND UNDERSTANDING AND VICTORY: TOUCH, TRANSFORM, TRANSFIGURE THIS PRECIOUS READER NOW, IN THE NAME OF JESUS, THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.**

**INUNDATE SOULS; OVERFLOW LIVES, RADICALLY INFECT HEARTS WITH THE VIRUS OF LOVE; REVEAL POTENTIAL, KILL DOUBT, HEAL DISCOURAGEMENT, RESTORE HOPE, BRING THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD INTO THIS LIFE, AND ESTABLISH YOUR COMPLETE WILL, THAT DESTINY WILL BE FULFILLED. IN JESUS' MIGHT NAME, AMEN.**

Will you allow me to pray for you now, just before you begin to read the Awakening Anointing?

**FATHER, WONDERFUL, PRECIOUS HEARTS ARE REACHING OUT TO YOU, SEEKING TRUTH AND LIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING. I ASK YOU TO OPEN EYES TO SEE YOUR TRUTH, CLEAR MINDS OF THE DISTORTIONS AND DECEPTIONS OF MAN AND DEVIL, OPEN HEARTS TO THE REALITY OF YOUR SPIRIT AND YOUR ANOINTING. LIFT THE SCALES AND LET US SEE YOUR GLORY, YOUR BEAUTY, YOUR GRACE, IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.**

## CHAPTER 3

### THE BATTLE AND THE ANOINTING

**THERE IS NO VICTORY WITHOUT CONFLICT; NO REWARD WITHOUT RISK. THE WAR NEVER WAS WON THAT COST NO BLOOD, NOR HEART, NOR LIFE. GREG J. AUSTIN**

Outside Jersalem, Israel  
AD 33

Into the parched soil of the craggy hilltop which had absorbed the blood of countless men before this day, the crimson life-flow of yet another dying man began to trickle.

*Golgotha* — the very name gave men pause. It was known locally as "the place of the skull" because when observed from a distance, its shape bore an uncanny resemblance to the grotesque shape of a bleached human skull. How appropriate was the geography of the place to its use by man.

It was here that the greatest battle of all time raged before a frenzied and insensible crowd. They had come out for the warped sport of watching criminals die: The morbid pastime of numb and callous men. To them it was just another Friday's entertainment, and the Romans were putting on another gruesome and perversely amusing show.

Yet in the heavenlies, this Friday was anything but just another day of struggle and pain and death. This was the culmination of the very war of the worlds. The Son of God, born into the world to save all mankind from its rebellions, was dramatically completing a strategy born in the heart of an eternal God, Who chose to reveal Himself as "Father" to His creation. God would become "flesh" and dwell among mankind. He would live a perfect, unblemished life, fulfill all the requirements of a holy law, then selflessly lay down His life to satisfy the consequence of our rebellion and our disobedience, and establish for us a way to be "born again" and to be reunited in fellowship with God, which had been broken by our first father, Adam.

#### **A BATTLE ENDED, BUT ENDURING**

But in spite of the great victory won by heaven that day, a battle continues until now. Though he was crushed at Calvary, Satan, the prince of the power of the air, has never relinquished full control of planet earth. It's true, the "title deed" to our lives was purchased by Christ's obedience to the Father. But just as there is often a time period set between the signing of a contract and the execution of the agreement by buyers and sellers, so there is an interval between the defeat of Satan and the full completion of that defeat. In earthly terms, a contract may go into effect in thirty, sixty or ninety days. In eternal terms, the period of time between the defeat of Satan and his final destruction has been nearly two thousand years, and still Satan is alive and active in human lives and affairs.

The final defeat of Satan's kingdom will take place when Jesus Christ returns again to the earth and once and for all vanquishes our enemy, and casts him into the blackness and isolation of eternity.

Until then, you and I are involved in a real, life and death struggle for our very souls, and just as importantly, for the souls of billions of people held captive by the devil around the world.

This battle for the eternal souls of men is the most violent, vicious and consequential war that will ever be fought in the history of the earth. Yet for too many, it is an invisible and almost non-existent war. Incredibly, Christians by the tens of thousands live their lives blissfully oblivious — ignorant and uninformed that a real enemy is stalking and systematically destroying humanity in his quest to destroy the work and plan of God.

But for a new generation of believer in Christ Jesus, the schemes and designs of the devil are obvious. This new brand of believer is not ignorant of the devices Satan has successfully used to weaken and limit the effectiveness of the church. This new kind of Christian understands the enemy's strategy as well as the authority of his Commanding General, Jesus, and the weapons necessary for the ultimate victory of the church to be won.

I am greatly encouraged every time I meet one of these new "warriors." Interestingly, some of them are very young — as young as teenagers or pre-teenagers. Some are white haired and wrinkled, bearing the marks of sixty or seventy years of life. Some of these new warriors sport brightly dyed, hair, green or orange or red. Young men wear ear rings and young women might have diamond stud in their noses. Some are newly born into the kingdom and others have been saved for decades. The thing that marks them as warriors for me is the fierce flame I can see burning in their eyes, reflecting a fire shut up in their bones that cries out for someone in command to give them the green light to take the field and defeat the enemy on his own turf. These new-breed warriors take seriously the words of Jesus, "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Mt. 11:12). They believe they are part of the generation which will, by force, take back what the enemy has stolen from generations of men and women around the world.

When I see these soldiers I bless them, pray for them and encourage them to take the anointing of the Spirit of God and literally rip hell into pieces in the name of the Lord.

While I was ministering in Belfast, Northern Ireland, I spotted several "new-breed warriors." They were thirteen to seventeen year old young men and women, and I went into the congregation, leaving the prayer line behind, and spoke to these young people individually. To each of them I said, "I'm giving you permission to do what God has put in your heart to do." I looked them in the eyes and seeing the fire there, said, "Go for it!"

I knew that many of them have been called of god to use dance — not the polite, sweet dance of former generations, but their own dance — to reach lost teenagers. I knew that many of them have wild and extremely non-conventional ideas of ministry. I simply gave them permission and encouragement to do what God has called them to do. These kids live in a war zone. They have grown up with the daily reality of car bombings, shootings, and military patrols in their streets. The kind of Christianity most Americans are familiar with won't wash in Belfast. But increasingly, the streets of America are becoming like the streets of Belfast.

I was holding meetings in Vancouver, Washington just a couple of days before making another flight to Northern Ireland. After the Friday night service, one of the ladies was driving home when out of the blackness a bullet leaped from the barrel of a gun and the driver's side window, just two inches behind her head exploded. Someone has taken a random shot and missed her by two inches! If we're going to make any difference for Christ in this generation in America, in Belfast, in the world, we're going to need to adopt a violent, Holy Spirit-generated attitude to do it.

### **SPECIAL FORCES FOR SPECIAL TIMES**

Military strategists recognize the value and effectiveness of "unconventional warfare" in winning major campaigns. Yet for all their capabilities, many conventional military units neither understand nor appreciate the people who operate as Special Operations Forces. While they are seldom valued, the fact is that modern warfare relies heavily on "special operations" units which possess special abilities to destroy and defeat the enemy using small, highly trained and dedicated troops.

During the Gulf War, one of the strategies of Saddam Hussein was to provoke Israel into entering the war by lofting scud missiles into her cities. If Israel could be brought into the war, Hussein theorized, the Arab coalition would disintegrate and would unite to attack the Jews, and Israel's chief ally, America.

One of the main reasons that Israel agreed to stay out of the war was because allied Special Operations units were able to infiltrate into Iraq and covertly locate and destroy Saddam Hussein's Scud launchers.

What I see God doing in these days is assembling, training and releasing small, powerful and extremely anointed "armies" of spiritual warriors. Gideon's Army is arising in the anointing to win the day.

Like military Special Forces, these armies may not be understood or even appreciated by the conventional, traditional church. Yet like their counterparts in the military, these spiritual armies will be the key to victory in these closing days of time on the earth.

### **WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE**

Much of the language of the New Testament is borrowed from military terms. The image of a soldier is firmly rooted in the mind of Paul the Apostle throughout his writings.

Writing to the Philippian church he speaks of "Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier..." (Phil. 2:25). He tells Timothy to "endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3), and calls Archippus a "fellow soldier" (Phil. 1:2). In 2 Corinthians, Paul talks about the weapons of our warfare (10:4).

The Christian community at large has wrongly believed that the Christian faith is a peaceful, quiet and non-confrontive society of sweet, harmless believers.

This milque-toast image of Christianity is not only terribly false, it is also incredibly dangerous. The last thing the devil wants you to discover is that God has called you as a soldier in His army and equipped you with deadly and effective weapons!

But God *has* placed mighty weapons in your hands. He *has* called you to the battle lines. He *is* ready to lead you into the fray to win a mighty victory over all the host of hell if you will learn first how to use these weapons effectively and strategically.

It would be suicidal for an army to march into battle without proper weapons. Governments spend billions of dollars annually to insure that their soldiers, sailors and airmen have the best, most modern and most effective weapons at their disposal should they be called upon to enter into harm's way. But the sad reality in too many Christian churches and Christian lives is that while Satan's army understands well the need for powerful spiritual weapons in its struggle against the Kingdom of God, God's army appears all too often to be ignorant to the need and even the reality of spiritual weapons. The results of that ignorance in the church throughout history have been devastating. Church closures, devastated pastors, ruined lives, broken dreams, discouraged church members, all scatter the landscape of Christian battlefields. This is dreadful evidence of both a lack of understanding of the necessity and the availability of spiritual weapons which God has provided to destroy the works of the devil in the earth.

Christians complain, "the devil doesn't play fair." Listen: Satan is a deceiver, the "father of lies;" he is a thief who does not come except to "steal, kill and destroy." Face it: the devil doesn't — and never will — play fair.

And the landscape of the church is littered with the wounded, bleeding and dying victims of Satan's attacks. The countless casualties of this warfare bear somber witness to the ruthless effectiveness of the enemy's weapons. As our losses mount, we find ourselves crediting the devil with almost omnipotent qualities, while God continues to offer to us "power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all power of the devil" if only we would receive it.

## **ARMED AND DANGEROUS**

The truth is, and you must get this down into your spirit: As a believer in Christ you have not been left to fend for yourself, and you are never alone in the struggle between heaven and hell. God has not left you to devise your own weapons. The Bible speaks of your armament:

*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God, for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...* (2 Cor. 10:4,5).

The verse just before these declares "though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh" (2 Cor. 10:3). The biblical opposite of the "flesh" (here, Greek *sarx* or the external, human nature) is "spirit." This verse teaches us that we "war according to the spirit."

Our battle, our warfare, is spiritual in nature rather than fleshly. Far too many Christians have lost brutal encounters with the enemy because they have attempted to confront him with natural weapons. Whenever we use our own wisdom or intellect to battle the enemy, whenever we use anger or vengeance or our own emotions to fight a spiritual battle, we will always lose. Because we are engaged in a spiritual struggle, the weapons used must also be spiritual in nature.

The next verse explains further, "...the weapons of our warfare are not carnal..." The Greek word for "carnal" here is *Sarkikos* which, like the Greek word "*sarx*," (flesh), has to do with the temporal, material part of man's nature. We now understand that the weapons of our warfare are "spiritual," and that they are "mighty" or "powerful" "in God." The word "powerful" comes from the Greek word "*dunamis*," which is used to describe the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus promised His disciples that they would receive "power" after the Holy Spirit had come upon them. The word Jesus used in the statement is *dunamis*, from which our English word "dynamite" comes. Now, allow me one more regression to the Greek — and this is important in order to understand the basis or effectiveness of the spiritual weapons we have been issued by heaven to use in battle with the enemy.

(If all this is becoming too heavy, just stop for a moment, lay your book down, close your eyes, take a deep, slow breath and as you exhale, just whisper, "More, Lord." Do it again, "More, Lord." Now repeat after me: "Christ in me is the hope of glory." Now remember, the title "Christ" means "anointed one." So you're literally saying, "The anointed One in me is the hope of the very nature of God, and I want more of Him, more of His anointing, more of His power in my life." Feel better now? OK, then, let's go on).

The word "anointing" comes from the Greek *chrisma*, which means an "endowment of the Spirit." Remember, Jesus promised His followers, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8). The language used by Jesus in this verse parallels the word "endowment." To endue means "to invest or endow with some gift, quality, or faculty." It also means "to clothe." When the anointing of the Holy Spirit touches our lives, God is actually "investing" in us a gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is "clothing" us with His Spirit.

The anointing of the holy Spirit is the ingredient that actualizes or make effective the "mighty weapons" we have received.

So we know that the natural "weapons" that the man or woman outside of Christ uses to win conflicts, or to conquer enemies or compete for greater status, or a higher position, will inevitably fail us in spiritual combat. For the child of God, all our weapons are spiritual.

## **FRIENDLY FIRE, ISN'T FRIENDLY**

But it's never enough merely to understand the nature of our weapons, or to brandish these weapons without direction. The weapons we have been given are powerful. They have the ability to destroy not only the enemy, but anyone who gets in the way as we wield them.

The military uses a term called "Friendly Fire" to designate the accidental firing of weapons by one's own army into his own troops. To those who have experienced such tragic misfortune, and have lived to tell about it, another term is common: "Friendly fire — isn't!"

Retired Lt. Commander Roy Boehm, who saw combat in three wars, describes the following scene aboard the destroyer, *U.S.S. Duncan* during the battle for Guadalcanal during World War II. Boehm could just as easily be describing the spiritual war many of us perpetually fight:

"Alone and trapped between friendly and enemy guns, *Duncan*, became a lightning rod attracting fire from both sides. Riding her felt like a great wolf was attacking and shaking her to break her back. There were blinding flashes as explosions rippled along her sides where she was being torn."

This is a graphic picture in the natural, of what happens to too many believers in the spiritual.

### **THIS SIDE TOWARDS ENEMY**

Over the years I've witnessed the terrible carnage left in the wake of Christians who have carried the powerful weapons of the Spirit into churches, and have used them on God's own people. The tragic reality is that countless thousands of precious believers have been injured, maimed, and even destroyed by inconsiderate, insensitive "friends," firing in their direction. It's true: As Christians, we have often been guilty of "killing" our own!

When I served in the military, I became familiar with a very effective weapon known as the Claymore Mine. This powerful anti-personnel mine is a convex shaped piece of metal containing hundreds of steel ball bearings, which are propelled outward by a sheet of C4 plastic explosive. When the weapon is armed, a "clacker" firing device sends an electrical current down the wire to the mine, detonating the claymore with violent force. Literally anything in the path of the mine will be cut down instantly.

There are little fold down legs on one side of the mine, and on the other are printed the words, "THIS SIDE TOWARDS ENEMY." The first time I saw one of these mines, I laughed at those words. "How could anybody be so stupid as to aim a Claymore at themselves, then detonate it," I thought. Images of Wile E. Coyote and Road Runner came to my mind, but later I learned that some people were so absent-minded, forgetful, tired or frightened to properly position the mine, and the printing on the face of the Claymore actually has saved lives in combat!

When it comes to spiritual warfare, maybe we Christians needs to have emblazoned on our weapons, "THIS SIDE TOWARD ENEMY." Then we need to remember that the enemy is the devil and not our own Christian brothers and sisters!

### **THE ANOINTING ACTIVATES THE POWER**

The secret to the proper use of spiritual weapons is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The reason the church has experienced so many defeats throughout her history, the reason she has won so few victories, and suffered so much disappointment, frustration, and failure, is that we have carried the powerful weapons of the Spirit into battle, but we have employed them against the enemy "in the flesh."

To rightly use the weapons God has placed in our hands, we must reject and renounce the flesh and move forward in battle "in" the Spirit, with a rich anointing of the Spirit upon us.

## DAVID AND GOLIATH: A STUDY IN SPIRIT VS. FLESH

One of the greatest lessons in spiritual warfare can be learned by studying the battle between David and Goliath. When David confronted the giant in the valley (see I Samuel 17), it was not David, the young man, the son of Jesse who went out to meet Goliath in the valley, but it was literally the Spirit of the Lord, the anointing, which confronted the very personage of the devil in that towering giant's form.

God merely used the body of "flesh" called David to carry the anointing, the powerful weapon of the Spirit into battle that day. The true Warrior that stood before Goliath that day was none other than the Holy Spirit of God! ***In a literal sense, David became the scabbard that held the sword of the Lord which destroyed God's enemy.***

Goliath's mistake was in his assumption that David would fight him on his own terms — that he would fight according to the flesh. Obviously, David was no match in a "flesh" battle with this immense monster. Goliath taunted David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field" (v. 44).

What Goliath could not understand was that David's "flesh" had nothing to do with the conflict. David was not coming to the giant in his "flesh," but rather he came in the power of the Spirit of the Lord. That's great news for us today! We are overwhelmed, outnumbered, overshadowed and outsized so often by the enemy, but we come "in the power of the Spirit, and not in the strength (or weakness) of the flesh!"

### TESTED ARMOR

Notice also in this story that King Saul attempted to clothe David with his own armor, but the armor of Saul only made David clumsy and unable to walk. David said to the King, "I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested them" (v. 39). David hadn't tested the King's armor, but he had definitely tested the armor of the King of Kings, the clothing of the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God!

As he spoke to Saul, David recounted those "testings" with a lion and a bear which he killed by the anointing of the Spirit. So David said, "I can't walk with them." To walk into the valley dressed in the king's armor would have been for David to walk in the flesh. As David walked out to meet the giant, he walked in the anointing and the anointing activated the *dunamis*, the power of the Holy Spirit.

Remember, this encounter took place after David had been anointed to be king. After the anointing comes, we will have the courage, the boldness, the strength and the grace to stand and declare, "You have come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (1 Samuel 17:45).

### WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

David is a picture of the anointing of the Spirit, while Goliath is a picture of the flesh.

Dr. Richard M. Riss has written concerning the experience of Oliver Cromwell's "New Model Army" during the British civil war more than 300 years ago. Riss states that in the year 1645, Cromwell, a Puritan, fought for other Puritans who were being

persecuted during the reigns of James I and Charles I. Cromwell led his army against the forces of King Charles I at a place known as Naseby. This battle was the decisive victory which brought the King to surrender. The following is a statement from Riss' report, "The Manifestations Throughout History":

Oliver Cromwell was originally a Colonel of a troop of cavalry on the side of Parliament during this civil war known as Cromwell's Ironsides, which had so much success that an army of twenty-one thousand men was organized, and patterned after it, called the New Model Army. This army was composed almost entirely of people known as "men of religion." They did not swear or drink, and they advanced to the charge singing psalms.

At the Battle of Naseby, the King's forces were scattered as chaff before the wind, and the king surrendered. It was just prior to this decisive Battle of Naseby that Oliver Cromwell was filled with holy laughter and was drunken in the Spirit. Here's a quote from George Lavington's book, *THE ENTHUSIASM OF METHODISTS AND PAPISTS COMPARED*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Printed for J. And P. Knapton in Ludgate-Street, 1749), vol. 2, pp72-73:

*...Mr. Aubry, in his MISCELLANIES (Page 117), relates the same thing of Oliver Cromwell. "Oliver, says he, had certainly this afflatus. One that was at the Battle of Dunbar told me that Oliver was carried on with a divine impulse: he did laugh so excessively as if he had been drunk. The same fit of laughter seized him just before the battle of Naseby."*

(Used by permission, Richard R. Riss, Toronto, Ontario, Canada)

History documents the reality of the "David-Spirit" and "Goliath-flesh" concept. As Riss says, "At the Battle of Naseby, the King's forces were scattered as chaff before the wind, and the king surrendered." When we move to the battle-field clothed in the anointing of the Spirit, the enemies of the Kingdom of God scatter "as chaff before the wind," and the devil surrenders.

## **OUR OWN MODERN GOLIATHS**

I was preaching during a Sunday evening service when I noticed a woman seated in the center of the auditorium, her eyes boring into me as I walked through the crowd and spoke. I took note of this woman, but continued to preach my message. During the ministry time which followed, the Lord spoke a word to someone in the church who had been involved in witchcraft, and who had actually sold themselves to the devil. God said, "If you will come to Me tonight, I will set you free."

Moments later, two ladies from our ministry team came to me with the woman I had noticed earlier. One lady said to me "this is the woman God is speaking to."

I laid my hands on the woman (we later learned that her name is Maxine), and she fell backwards to the floor. As she lay there, her body began to shake and convulse violently as the woman cried out, "it hurts, it hurts!" Just then her body quieted, and a look of calm came over her face. I instructed another ministry team member to lead the

woman in prayer for salvation. As she concluded the prayer, we were astonished to hear the woman begin speaking in a beautiful, flowing language — a language of the Spirit. I stood her up and noticing the change in her countenance, asked her to go to a restroom and look in the mirror. I said, "you look 20 years younger than when we prayed for you!"

Now here's the good part: Maxine told us she had been a practicing witch, and that she had gone to various churches to disrupt their services. This Sunday night however, she found herself unable to speak, unable to interrupt. God had frustrated her plans completely.

Later that night I learned that not only had Maxine been delivered from several demons which had possessed her, and that Jesus had saved her, and filled her with His Spirit, but she also had experienced a complete healing of an ear which had been completely deaf!

During the first night of a series of meetings in another city, I became aware of several witches in the service. I tend to become agitated when there is demonic activity in our services, and usually address the situation publicly. This night I said, "You witches have come on a good night. I'm feeling benevolent tonight. I'm going to give you a chance right now. You can either run out of the church and stay bound by the devil, or you can stay. But if you stay, we're going to cast the devil out of you and set you free!"

As I spoke those words, a couple of people stood up and ran out the doors of the church! I guess they realized I was serious, and that they were no match for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Those who stayed in the service were, in fact, set free at the end of that night's meeting.

While we were praying for people in Belfast, Northern Ireland, I was interrupted by loud groanings, snarls and the sound of retching. Turning to locate the offensive sounds, I was met by one of our ministry team members, asking me to help them with the man making the sounds.

"We can't do anything with him," the team member said. "We can't cast the thing out!"

Quickly, I gave a brief teaching to the team members gathered around the man. I told them that they indeed *could* cast the devil out of this man. I reminded them that Jesus has given us authority to trample on serpents and on scorpions and over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19). I reminded them that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

Then I turned to the demon-possessed man, who by now was writhing and twisting and gagging on the floor. I simply said, "By the authority of Jesus of Nazareth, I bind you and cast you out into the pit to wait for the day of judgment." The man arched his back, his face turned beet red, his eyes rolled up in his head, he jerked and coughed and vomited, and it was over. God continued to minister to him, filling him with the Holy Spirit. We watched him lay there and laugh with joy at being set free.

The "Goliath" of demon possession, the "Goliath" of witchcraft is impotent in the presence of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. With David, we can say to the Goliaths we encounter, "You have come to me with the sword and spear from hell, but I come to you in the Name and in the anointing of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied!"

The weapons of our warfare aren't material, natural, or physical. When we fight, we fight in the Name of the Lord, *endued* with dynamite power to overcome and destroy all of the power of the enemy. No wonder Jesus could promise to us, "Nothing by any means shall hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

The battle rages today all across the world for the souls of billions of lives. Although the victory has been assured through the death and resurrection of Jesus, you and I are called to walk onto the battlefield, clothed in the armor of the anointing of the Spirit, armed with the weapons of our warfare, which are might in God, and claim the victory which already has been won.

As the fire of the Holy Spirit burns hotly among us, we are experiencing a new boldness, a new ability to stand before the giants of unbelief and drug addiction and AIDS and spiritual bondage, and religious traditions and cold, dead formalism, and irrelevant religion, and all the host of wicked spirits loosed into the world. We declare with authority, "This day the Lord will deliver you into our hands, and we will strike you and take your head from you. For the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands!"

**Holy Spirit, reveal to me that I do not fight against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this age. Reveal to me the power of Your holy arsenal of weapons. Place in my hands the sword of the Spirit and give to me the ability, the understanding and the boldness to defeat the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places so that souls may be liberated, and Jesus may be glorified. In Jesus' name, Amen!**

**WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS — DESPERATELY NEEDS, IS NOT MORE INVENTIONS; NOT FASTER COMPUTERS; NOT BETTER COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS OR MORE LEISURE TIME. WHAT THE WORLD CRIES FOR IN THIS CRITICAL HOUR IS TO SEE THE VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF THE RISEN CHRIST — THE ANOINTING IN US.**  
**GREG J. AUSTIN**

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW: THE ANOINTING**

I stood in my hotel room high above the city of San Salvador, El Salvador gazing out over the floodlit sprawl of high rise buildings and simple, Central American homes all crowded together as if designed by some mad, scatterbrained architect. It was late — too late to be awake and roaming around my room.

I was scheduled to take part in an anniversary service in a great church in the city the following day and I needed sleep after a long and uncomfortable flight from Seattle, Washington to Los Angeles, then on to San Salvador. But sleep wouldn't come. I found my heart aching as my mind raced through the scenes and sounds I had witnessed just hours before.

El Salvador was just recovering from a long, bloody and devastating war which had exhausted the economy and the strength of the nation. I had spent the afternoon wandering through the streets of the city, and had talked with shopkeepers, taxi drivers, street venders and policemen, learning along the way that virtually nobody in El Salvador had escaped the loss of some family member or close friend to the terrors of civil war.

The country was rebuilding itself now, climbing slowly out of the ruins of war. Destruction could be seen everywhere — the walls of the hotel where I was staying were pockmarked from rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. Soldiers still patrolled along the highways, ever vigilant against possible ambush by the remnants of rebel opposition.

As desperately as I longed for sleep, sleep wouldn't come. My heart had been deeply touched as I had talked with all those people in the streets. I had sensed the pain, the loss, the hopelessness all around me in the city. I found myself wanting to reach out and embrace these precious people, to lift them up and encourage them. More than anything, I knew that what El Salvador needed was the very person the name of their nation spoke of: El Salvador — "The Savior." I knew also that the only way I could ever hope to touch these hurting people was by a powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit.

As my sleep robbed eyes looked out at the lights of the city, my heart began to lead me into prayer. "Oh, God," I prayed, "as the lights of this city chase away the darkness, let Your anointing drive the darkness from El Salvador. Let Your anointing open blinded eyes. Let the oil of Your anointing touch the hurt, the pain, the loss and bring healing and hope to these wounded and broken people."

Finally I returned to my bed, and a peace overwhelmed me, carrying me off to sleep. I could not possibly imagine what God was about to do in response to that simple prayer.

The evening service the following day was explosive.

As our car wound its way from our hotel to the church, God instructed me to preach a message on the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I suddenly had an idea to illustrate the anointing by asking the soundmen to switch off the auditorium lights for a moment, using the darkness to explain what it's like to operate without the anointing. We would be able to move through the building, but we would be at a great disadvantage because we couldn't see without light.

I thought this would be a great way to illustrate the need for the anointing, but then discarded my idea because I feared the soundmen might become confused and not turn the lights off and back on at the right time. I would simply tell the people what I've just told you, and they would get the idea. However, to my absolute astonishment that night, when I came to the place to explain the darkness — no anointing; and light — the anointing, a miraculous thing happened: The power in the church failed at that very exact moment, plunging the room into darkness, and more graphically, cutting the sound system out.

Now standing on a darkened stage, without the aid of the microphone, I was forced to strain my voice to be heard. Just as quickly as I explained my illustration, bang, the power came back on, illuminating the auditorium and broadcasting my voice. This experience not only shocked me, but gave me confidence and I preached with increased energy. As I concluded my message, hundreds of people literally fell to the floor of the church under the awesome power of the Holy Spirit. Broken hearts and spirits were healed, the entire leadership of the church lay on the floor, weeping as God healed them and restored their hearts.

Standing on the platform as God continued to touch lives, I looked out over the auditorium remembering the night before as I had stood gazing out over the city. The thought struck me deeply. Truly, what El Salvador — *what the whole needs is the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God*. More than political solutions or economic improvements, the world around us desperately needs Jesus, and the only thing that can make Him real to millions of people is Holy Spirit anointed eyes and hearts.

## **THE ANOINTING — WHAT IT ISN'T**

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is preached about, talked about and written about, yet for all the attention the subject is given, the anointing is one of the least understood and least experienced gifts which God has made available to every believer in Jesus Christ.

Probably the most common misunderstanding I have observed relating to the anointing is the belief that God only give the anointing to a few, select individuals in the body of Christ. Another common misunderstanding is that the anointing of the Holy Spirit comes on men and women for brief moments, then mysteriously disappears until another time when it is needed. The truth is, the anointing is not imparted only to the leaders of the church; God intends the anointing of the Holy Spirit to become an indispensable part of every Christian's life and ministry. A part of your life, no matter who you are, or what function you perform in the body of Christ. The church custodian needs the anointing as much as the pastor needs it. The bud driver and the receptionist need the anointing. The nursery worker and the usher, the lady who duplicates audio tapes, and the maintenance man all need to experience and possess the precious anointing

of the Holy Spirit if they are to function to the degree God intends them to minister in the body of Christ. The police officer walking his beat, needs to walk in the anointing of the Spirit. As violence increases in our school systems across America, what we need is Spirit anointed teachers, to provide a solution to this demonic rage in our communities.

I am personally convinced that all the gun control laws, all the policies school boards make, all the hoping and wishing of every candlelight vigil will do nothing to change the youth of a nation without the presence of God in our schools. And His presence is embodied in the anointing.

And not in our schools only is the anointing essential. All of us need the anointing all day long, every day of the year if we are to function as God intends us to.

The Apostle John writes about the anointing in his first letter to the church, and says in part: *"...but the anointing which you received from him abides in you,"* (1 John 2:26). The J. B. Phillips translation of the Bible renders the same verse *"Yet I know that the touch of his Spirit never leaves you."*

The "touch" of His Spirit, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is made available to us and is given to remain with us at all times — not just when we "feel" or "sense" the anointing. The anointing "abides" in us. That's important to recognize. An anointing that doesn't depend on our physical location — in church for instance, or what is going on around us. We don't need to be in the company of other anointed people to experience the anointing. The anointing "abides" or dwells in us and not just with or on us. The Holy Spirit, and His anointing is an internal and not an external experience and possession.

## **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

The current world-wide visitation of the Holy Spirit, which many of us call "renewal," has focussed our attention on the anointing of the Spirit, but all our understanding about the subject must begin with and be directed by God's word.

The Bible is our only sure guide, map and compass in everything we believe, teach and practice. If we place our own personal experiences over the supreme and preeminent teaching of the Bible to understand what God is doing in us, we threaten to destroy the fruit the Spirit of God has caused to grow on the branches or renewal.

## **LATTER RAIN**

In 1943, a new anointing was experienced at Sharon Orphanage and Schools in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada. The "awakening" that began in almost the geographic center of Canada was soon coined the "Latter Rain" movement. Thousands of believers were touched by this display of God's power and presence. Whole churches were transformed almost overnight.

The movement spread quickly across Canada and into the United States. In a very short period of time though, the movement began to slide down the slippery slope of error, picking up speed as it raced toward the cliffs of confusion, division and destruction. Many churches were torn apart, thousands of Christian people experienced personal, spiritual disaster, and the testimony of the "Latter Rain" was severely damaged. (It needs to be remembered, however, that with all the stories of hurt and destruction surrounding

the Latter Rain movement, there are also tremendous spiritual victories and legacies in the church because of this move of God).

When I first went to the church body to which I am accountable to report the new fire God had begun in our midst, I was greeted with mixed attitudes. Some of my friends in that meeting were less than enthusiastic about what I had to say. Some of the men seemed genuinely glad that the Holy Spirit was moving powerfully in our church. Others were openly suspicious, and even adamant in their renunciation of my claims that God was the operative power I was describing.

One older minister that day recalled the Latter Rain movement. He said, "I was just beginning in ministry when the Latter Rain movement began. I was told that it only took three weeks for (the movement) to get off base and into error."

While I could understand this man's statement as negative, I chose instead to receive it in a positive way. The truth is, the Latter Rain movement was a genuine awakening, birthed by the Holy Spirit. The error in the movement — indeed in any revival, renewal, refreshing or visitation by the Holy Spirit throughout history, was due largely to a lack of counsel and direction, which should have been provided by those who were spiritually mature and doctrinally wise. If spiritual leadership had given direction to help the Latter Rain movement steer away from fanaticism and error instead of criticizing and condemning, who knows what the eventual impact of the movement would have been? I pray that the lessons learned through the Latter Rain movement will not be lost on leadership in Renewal today.

One strong key to remember is this: Anything God does in His church, whether it is specifically spelled out in His word or not, will always agree with the whole counsel and the guiding principles of His word.

If the Bible is silent on the subject of any particular manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the manifestation is not necessarily evil or false, but the manifestation, if from God, will be in harmony with the teaching of Scripture.

If someone came into our church and began to coil in the form of a snake and hiss in front of the church, and then began to prophesy, we would immediately know that this was not a biblical manifestation and reject it outright, based on its inconsistency with the nature and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

If on the other hand, someone came to church and began to roar like a lion and prophesy, we could not immediately discard or dismiss what was being said as either fleshly or demonic, on the basis that we had never seen or heard of such a thing happening, since the *principle* of a lion roaring is consistent with the word of God. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*. One of the word pictures of the characteristics of Jesus is that of the lion: Fierce, powerful, aggressive, mighty, the "king." Even though the Bible does not list "roaring like a lion" as a gift of the Spirit or as a practice of the New Testament church, it cannot be rejected simply on account of its absence in Scripture or because of a lack of precedence in church history is the *principle* is contained in the word of God.

Two examples of truth from the Bible are the occasion when Peter's shadow, falling on sick people, produced healing, and the anointing of handkerchiefs by the Apostle Paul. Neither of these methods of ministering to the sick is found in the gospels. Nowhere do we read of Jesus healing through handkerchiefs or by His shadow. Nothing like these things had ever happened before. According to some of the arguments we hear

against the current revival, we should throw out Peter's and Paul's experiences because they were not ministries "common" to New Testament practice. Listen to the following account from Acts 19 concerning Paul's ministry: *"Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them"* (Acts 19:11,12).

The anointing of handkerchiefs and aprons is not a common, accepted practice of the church today, because we recognize that this was something *"unusual"* (verse 11), that God chose to do in Paul's ministry for a divinely determined period of time. Why is it difficult to understand that God is able to choose particular times to do unusual things, when the precedent for the unusual exists in His word?

However, we must, if we will see this modern day renewal grow to the place God intends it, heed the warnings of past error, and move cautiously into the new, unknown territory God is leading into.

Trying the spirits, using godly discernment, asking questions, inquiring of the Lord, searching the Scriptures — all are vital actions if we are to remain authentic in our faith and practice.

To the body of Christ around the world, the Spirit of God sounds this solemn warning: *The decline and virtual disappearance of the current move of the Holy Spirit in the church will occur if we neglect the truths revealed in God's word for the tantalizing prospect of seeking fleshly manifestations over the solid, foundational revelation of the eternal truth of God's word.*

## **VISITATION PRODUCES TRANSFORMATION**

Many people, by their very nature are thrill-seekers. Billions of dollars are generated every year out of our love for stimulation and excitement. When God invades the atmosphere of His church, there is true excitement and exhilaration. There is a definite stimulation of the emotions which follows the moving of the Holy Spirit in human lives. It would be incredible to think that God could come into a sanctuary and move in hearts, and the only reaction would be quiet "amen" from some deeply spiritual saint.

Yet it must be said that the present renewal, with its various physical manifestations, is not intended by God to replace or to become the means of sanctification, which is another word for "becoming godly," or "like God." Falling down won't make you holy: Walking in the Spirit will. Laughter can't replace crucifying the flesh. Shaking won't make a person mature in spiritual things.

Having said all that, I also would say that tremendous, obvious and lasting healing is taking place in the lives of those upon whom the Spirit of God is moving within this phenomenal hour of revival. Thousands of strong testimonies have been given in the past four years which declare the positive, life-giving effect of renewal in lives.

Focussing on manifestations and ignoring the purpose and the fruit of those manifestations — the change which is taking place in lives — is like complaining that the space shuttle Atlantis is too noisy on take-off, while ignoring the importance of the shuttle's mission.

Not long ago I was praying for the sick at the altar, and God was moving powerfully upon those receiving. As I approached each individual and began to pray, the

Spirit of God would come on them, and without touching them in any way, each of them fell to the floor as God accomplished a healing in their bodies. In that group of people was a woman I had never seen before. As I approached her, I immediately sensed that Christ, in me, was literally rising, standing up inside my spirit and towering over the woman's physical condition. As I began to pray, I felt a release concerning her sickness, and at that precise moment, she began to exude an unexplainable joy. I found myself encouraging her by saying "rejoice, because your deliverance has come!" With that exclamation, the woman began to shout loudly, exhibiting what some would term "extreme emotional behavior."

As she worshipped the Lord, my spirit pictured another scene, and I "saw" another woman approach Jesus with an alabaster box of fragrant oil, and standing before Him, she washed Jesus' feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair, and kissed His feet and anointed them with the oil contained in her alabaster box.

When the Pharisees objected to her radical behavior, Jesus responded by saying *her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little*" (See Luke 7:36-50).

What Jesus is saying here is that a person's love of God, and even his emotional reaction will be in direct proportion to the compelling love and thankfulness he feels toward the Lord.

So there is nothing wrong with physical manifestations which result from the Spirit's presence among His church. But an "anything goes" attitude, which neglects the principles of the Word of God will destroy that which is genuine, precious, and so desperately needed in the world around us.

Much has been made of the unusual and sometimes bizarre behavior which has been witnessed in renewal. A lot of divisiveness has resulted from one group claiming that manifestations such as "holy laughter," weeping, trembling, falling to the floor, and even the appearance of animal sounds, is the direct result of the influence of the Holy Spirit, while another group insists this behavior is fleshly at best, and demonic at worst.

Charges and counter-charges cloud the atmosphere of the church, frustrating the work of grace God would do if we would all, regardless of our personal feelings and understandings of God, simply agree to trust God fully, and allow Him to sort us out as He sees fit. We must stop calling one another "devils" and "deceivers" and begin walking in a spirit of love, unity and cooperation.

That is not to say that we should not be discerning and cautious, but when we hurl accusations against our own brothers and sisters in the household of faith, the world sits back and enjoys a good laugh at our expense. Worse, the world, which must be reached with the gospel, is still unreached while we feud over the actions or inaction of our neighbors in the church.

### **WAIT AND SEE WHAT'S ON THE TREE!**

It is wisdom to "judge nothing before the time," and to recognize that "by their fruits you shall know them." I lived for a time in the most productive apple and cherry growing valley in America. Our home was located directly across the street from a large orchard. We moved in during winter, and the branches of the trees were bare. One day I was looking at the orchard, and wondered whether these were cherry trees or apple trees.

Out of my curiosity, I asked one of the men in our church who owns a large apple and cherry orchard how to identify these trees. I was amazed to discover that even expert fruit growers found it difficult to know what kind of fruit a tree will produce *before* the fruit appears. A man could pull up a chair and sit near those fruit trees in February and wait a long time to accurately predict the fruit which will not appear until summer. Watching barren branches, or observing the budding activity of early spring is a ridiculous method of judging fruit. If even the most experienced apple and cherry grower cannot tell what sort of fruit will be harvested *until he sees it*, and the fruit is not seen until the precise amount of time required for its' growth and development has passed, how can we know with certainty what the nature of a believer's fruit is until the fruit appears?

So, concerning the physical manifestations appearing in renewal, we must not judge the branch or the bud, but wait until the full fruit has formed. When the fruit arrives, God invites us all to become "fruit inspectors."

### **VIOLENT WIND, OR GENTLE BREEZE?**

We must be careful how we speak, how we pray and what we desire in prayer. Many believers today talk about wanting "the wind of the Holy Spirit to blow once again." Yet in my experience, what most Christians mean by that statement is that they want the *breeze* and not the *wind* of the Spirit to blow. A gentle summer breeze soothes, caresses and feels so good as it touches us. The breeze is symbolic of self-centered, "bless me" yearning. The wind, on the other hand, blows violently across the landscape. Sailors are familiar with the "Beaufort Scale," which predicts the effect of various wind speeds on sailing vessels. According to this nautical scale, a breeze consists of air movement in the range of 4 to 7 miles per hour.

The breeze refreshes and invigorates sailors when the sun beats down hotly upon them. But when the air speed increases to 25 miles per hour, the category of a wind, there are whitecaps everywhere, spray streams across the ship's decks, and waves crash against the bow. In the galley, containers may be upset by the tossing and pitching of the craft. On deck, there must be an adjustment of sails to accommodate the increased wind velocity. As the wind speed increases to 40 and 50 miles per hour, gale conditions begin. At 47 to 54 miles per hour, seas begin to roll, dense streaks of foam appear, visibility is reduced because of the constant spray. Beginning at a wind speed of 64 miles per hour, a Violent Storm is produced. This is the kind of "violent storm" which occurred on the Day of Pentecost when the church was filled with the Holy Spirit.

*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a **rushing mighty wind**, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2) (Emphasis, mine).*

On shore, we know that a breeze is most welcomed, while a wind will upset the landscape. Trees are uprooted, loose objects are tossed here and there, *everything of an impermanent nature is dislodged*. That's what the wind will always do. I am convinced that most people who pray for a "wind" really mean they want a "breeze" to blow. But God is not in the "breeze business." God sent a "mighty rushing wind" on the Day of Pentecost. This wind was not gentle and quiet. It had the effect of upsetting the entire city. It called attention to an Upper Room. It caused confusion among the masses. It disrupted the day's schedule. It stopped people in their tracks. This wind was created by

God Himself, and was necessary as an accompaniment to the "Promise of the Father" which the 120 gathered in that Upper Room were receiving.

We want a God Who moves gently and quietly, but the God Who has revealed Himself as the "I Am" is anything but a quiet, gentle force when he moves in human affairs.

Because of the violence of the wind now blowing across the landscape of the church, many inquirers are watching the wild and violently shaking branches, and judging them to be too turbulent to have come from God. The wise observer would do well to look to the fruit dropping from these violently shaking branches before making broad assumptions as to the origin of the wind.

One final thought about the wind, and its effects. There is a word we use: "Windfall." The dictionary tells us that "windfall" means "something blown down by the wind, as fruit." The history of this word however, has to do with an ancient custom or law, which declared that whatever fruit was blown from the branches of trees during a wind storm became the property of the commoners, the poor, ordinary folks who could not afford to own the trees which produced the fruit. In the context of the Wind of the Spirit, we are literally seeing a "windfall;" wonderful fruit is being blown from the trees, and common, ordinary believers are rushing to gladly pick up the fruit and be blessed.

## **JEALOUSY AND THE ANOINTING**

Luke 9 records an incredible irony among Jesus' disciples and the earth-shaking events occurring around them. In this chapter, Jesus sends His twelve disciples out, giving them "power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1,2). To fully understand the irony contained here, remember that Jesus gave His disciples "authority over all demons..." More about that later.

When they returned from their mission, the disciples watched Jesus miraculously feed five thousand hungry stomachs near Bethsaida. Following this scene, Peter makes the great confession that Jesus is "The Christ of God" (9:20). The Lord then speaks of His death and resurrection, and just over a week later, is transfigured on the Mount before Peter, James and John. Again, to get the full impact of contradiction, remember that John is at the center of all these activities. He was among those who had been given authority over demons. He was involved in the feeding of the five thousand. He heard Peter declare Christ's identity. And Jesus speak of His death. And John was one of three men chosen to experience the "transfiguration" of Jesus on the mount.

Now when the four return from the mountain of transfiguration, a boy is brought to Jesus by his father, and is delivered from an evil spirit, after which Jesus repeats His warning that He is about to die.

The statements which now follow are almost unbelievable: Following these recent miracles and display of God's love, the disciples begin to argue about who will be the greatest, the biggest and the best among them.

Jesus no sooner settles this issue when John, the "apostle of love" declares, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because *he does not follow with us*" (italics mine) (9:49).

Can you imagine the absurdity of this scene? Jesus had just sent these men out to cast out devils, and in at least one case, they had failed miserably in their attempt to accomplish anything (v. 40). Now, somebody else is seen doing the very thing the disciples themselves have failed at doing, and these "holy" followers of Jesus *rebuke and stop this man from doing what they themselves couldn't do!*

That's a picture of what is happening in the church today. Those who are void of the power of God to touch and change lives have grown jealous of those who are actively involved in setting men and women free. The old adage is true: "Men will always criticize what they cannot understand." And men will not understand because they attempt to perceive in their natural minds what can only be discerned by the Spirit.

I join a rising crescendo of voices in this critical hour in pleading with the body of Christ: "Wait until you see the result before judging what is happening." Jesus taught us that a good tree does not produce corrupt fruit; neither does a corrupt tree produce good fruit. "For every tree is known by its own fruit" (Luke 6:43,44).

My files are jammed with written testimonies, and there are countless others whose transformed lives have been displayed publicly to affirm and establish the source of this current visitation of the Spirit of God. It is surely sad significantly telling that the detractors of the current river of renewal staunchly avoid examining the fruit of renewal when they use their broad brushes of criticism to paint renewal as counterfeit or phony.

#### **INVESTIGATION INVITED**

Waiting for results of a movement does not prevent honest investigation of the foundations and the principles upon which a movement is built. There are those within the "renewal" element of the church who have become defensive and openly critical of anyone who questions any or all of the actions of "renewal" churches.

If this renewal is a genuine visitation of the Holy Spirit, the movement will bear examination and continue to move forward. While honest investigation is always appropriate, I am most assuredly here not appealing for self-styled spiritual "private eyes" to scrutinize every detail of this movement. The kind of activity is destructive and divisive in the body, and is a waste of precious time which ought to be used to win the lost to Christ.

Years ago I determined that God had not called me to be His personal "Charismatic Cop," whose mission in life it was to "blow the whistle" on every mistake, foible and failure in the church. My calling and task is to preach the good news; to "convince, rebuke, and exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). Having communicated the word, impregnated with the Spirit of God through prayer, it is then the task of the Spirit of God to bring conviction to the heart and to deal with men and women on a personal and individual basis.

Scripture speaks plainly about the mistakes of men, and in many cases, men who we consider today to be heroes of the faith. All of us will make mistakes, and the best among us lack complete knowledge. There are errors of judgment, weaknesses of discernment and failures of performance. But these human and universal lapses do not invalidate the genuine work of the Spirit in our lives.

God has called His people to labor together to reach the world for His Son. If we are not careful, the church will become so involved with trying to uncover and root out

every phantom devil in the church that the real enemy will take a horrible toll of human souls outside the church. We need to expend more energies in winning the lost than in criticizing the saved.

Increasingly, the Spirit of God is anointing hearts which have surrendered their own agendas and opinions, and have simply said, "We are Yours, Lord. Use us as You please to touch and transform this world for Your glory."

Renewal, while it began within the walls of the church, with tremendous healing of Christian's hearts, was never meant to remain enclosed by church walls. God has always intended this awakening to live in the streets of our cities, and in the hallways of our schools and in hospital rooms and living rooms.

More desperately than any preceding generation on the earth, what the world needs now, truly, is the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God...the anointing residing even now in your own life.

**FATHER GOD, BREATHE INTO THE SOUL OF THIS PRECIOUS READING THE WIND OF YOUR ANOINTING WHICH WILL LEAD THEM OUT OF THE CONFINES AND COMFORTS OF CHURCH, AND INTO THE DESPERATE WORLD OF HURTING PEOPLE. PEOPLE HUNGRY, STARVING, DYING TO KNOW THE TOUCH OF YOUR HAND, THE BREATH OF YOUR MOUTH, THE COMPASSION OF YOUR HEART. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.**