

# SOAR LIKE THE EAGLE

*Reaching Your Destiny in Christ*

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## Chapter One

### FLYING HIGH

What a wonderful picture God gives to us through the prophet Isaiah as recorded in Chapter 40 vv.28-31:

*Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that hath no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; **they shall mount up with wings as eagles**; they shall run and not grow weary; and they shall walk and not faint.*

*[The words 'wait upon' in the last verse would be better translated as 'abide in' ('entwined in') as the root meaning of the Heb.word qavah. (See Strong's #6960)]*

The Psalmist David writes in Psalm 103:1-5:

*Bless the Lord O my soul: and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy soul from destruction; Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed **like the eagle's**.*

I have watched a squadron of Canada Geese as they flew in formation overhead; I have seen a flock of pelicans rising from the waters of a turbulent lake; I have observed an army of vultures descend on a rotting carcass, but I have never seen anything as impressive as a mature eagle soaring on high, far above all other birds, ruler of all it surveys. It is little wonder that the Romans of old and the Americans of today, should take it as a symbol of their great nations.

One of the most wonderful days of my life was spent on Saturna Island just off the western coast of Canada where, with three friends visiting me from Wales, I stood on the top of a high hill among six or seven eagles swooping down into the valley below us and then soaring into

the sky above, passing within a few feet of our outstretched hands. They seemed to make little effort, no wings were busily flapping as they rode the air currents rising up the steep slopes to that high ground.

It is God's desire that His people become all they should be - as eagles soaring into heavenly places with Him. However, so many of us have never learned to fly, being content instead to stay in the comfort of our nests, digesting the latest Sunday morning pulpit meal. Some have tried to flap their wings, to rise above the mundane, as they have seen or heard of other believers soaring on high, enjoying the rich blessings of their Lord as they rise on the wind of the Spirit. They have 'stepped out in faith' or taken a risk, with the frequent result of disappointment and hurt as they come crashing back to earth.

Our churches are full of people who find themselves more like the farmyard chicken than the soaring eagle! They are content to cluck-cluck as they peck for grains of blessings amid the smorgasbord of church programs, designed for their benefit. Why does it seem to be so difficult to fly like the eagle if that is God's will for us and the desire of our hearts? Someone has cynically suggested that 'it's hard to fly like an eagle when you're surrounded by turkeys!' but I suggest there are more fundamental reasons.

### **Some Reasons Many Fail To Fly.**

#### **1. They are born 'wounded'.**

When we were born again of the Spirit of God, our **spirits** became alive to God, we were transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, taken from death to life. We were made new creatures, *'old things passed away, all things became new'*<sup>1</sup>. Theologians call that *justification* - salvation for the spirit - a past work of the Holy Spirit by which we were saved from the penalty of sin.

However, our **bodies** did not suddenly change - they are still dying, one day at a time, and the physical results of sin continue in our bodies. The scars of previous wounds remain, we still need glasses to read, our hair continues to fall out and the gaps in our teeth are not being filled with shiny new enamels. Evidently, our bodies were not 'a new creation'! Praise God, one day they will be made new when *this corruption shall put on incorruption and this mortality will put on immortality*<sup>2</sup>. We call that *glorification* - salvation for the body - a future work of the Holy Spirit by which we shall be saved from the presence of sin.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:53

Similarly, our **souls** were not instantly healed from the wounds they had suffered; wounds such as rejection, abandonment, verbal and physical assaults leading to inferiority complex, insecurity and fear; wounds often deep within the subconscious. If you are the child of a divorce, you are carrying wounds. If there was sexual intercourse outside of the marriage bonds, you are carrying wounds. If your parents were unable to pour into you the love that is evidenced in security, self esteem, and emotional well-being, you are carrying wounds. Satan knows the many wounds we carry and is quick to aggravate them whenever we attempt to do great things for God. The good news is that there is healing and wholeness found, even for these wounds, in the atoning work of the cross. We call that *sanctification* - salvation for the soul - a present, ongoing work of the Holy Spirit by which we are being saved from the power of sin. Until these wounds are dealt with - in a spiritual way - our 'flying' will be limited. (See my other book ***The Key in My Hand***.)

*“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup>*

## **2. We have made decisions contrary to God's principles of life.**

Many of those decisions have life-long consequences. For example, we are taught not to be '*unequally yoked with an unbeliever*' but there are many believers who have married non-believing spouses. Though the Lord might have called them to a great destiny in His service, their number one responsibility now is to be a witness to their unbelieving partner. Of course, the Lord may bring the unbelieving partner to Himself, though that is not usual, and both can then learn to fly. He can still use such people even if the partner remains uncommitted, but 'flying' is strictly limited and the decision cannot be reversed.

Other decisions can be reversed however, and must be, if one wants to fly like the eagle. Many are *living in debt*, so contrary to God's word, not realising that they are now serving Mammon, an alien God! I am utterly amazed when I see so many Christian leaders and churches commit themselves to a heavy debt load which, when they become unable to meet the demands of their creditors, brings them into a bondage never intended for them by the Lord. The Lord cannot release them into greatness in His service while they are potentially subject to the demands of their creditors.

Many are carrying *unforgiveness* in their hearts towards others, thereby giving Satan his opportunity, while still more are carrying *offenses and prejudices*. All of these are decisions they have made though they would prefer to blame another. When someone has wronged

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:23

you, the Lord has promised you grace sufficient to bear that wrong and to forgive. When someone offends you by their actions, personality or words, you can choose not to allow that monkey to sit on your shoulders! If it remains, the offense is yours! Prejudices are those negative attitudes we have to others, usually based on ignorance. Remember, you will never know how another man feels until you have walked some miles in his shoes!

The Lord can still use all these people in ministry but 'flying' is limited.

*"Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."<sup>4</sup>*

### **3. We have never understood that we should be flying!**

We have become so satisfied with the normalcy of our Christian life that we have never questioned if there is something more. We are content to be fed each Sunday by a pulpit message, augmented by some nice 'worship' music on our car radio and a serendipity book by the latest Christian celebrity. Surely this is abnormal - subnormal to the abundant life that the Lord intended for us! We have been so desensitised by the weak, materialistic Christianity of much of the western world, that we can no longer hear our bridegroom say, *Arise my love and come away*<sup>5</sup>. His voice has become the voice of a stranger and the bride has forgotten its sweet tone. She has loved this world too much and its cares and dirt have weighed her down. If one would seek to hear the Lord's voice, to draw close to Him, he is derisively called a 'mystic' (as I once was by a senior pastor!) We no longer care nor expect to hear the Shepherd's voice.

Many of our churches have become places where we go so that we might *feel good*, rather than places to worship God and to learn about His demands upon our lives. We do not like to hear His voice in case it brings conviction. Whenever someone tells me of a 'great' church they attend, I seek to know, non provocatively, what they mean by 'great'. Often they mean that the numbers are up, Jesus is lifted-up, hands are up-in-the-air, the singing is upbeat and sermons are only up to twenty five minutes, on some unchallenging topic! We want to be in a church that is upwardly mobile! I am struck that Evan Roberts, God's instrument in the great Welsh revival of 1904, learned to fly like the eagle by praying, "Lord, bend me down, bend me lower!"

It further seems to me that many of our 'great' churches are such because of the charisma of the leader, not the charismata of the Holy Spirit. The leader would be just as successful in

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<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 12:1

<sup>5</sup> Song of Solomon 2:10

building a business empire as he has been in building his personal church empire. He has learned all the techniques of the business world in controlling those who work for him, and has established a firm 'flow chart' of authority and responsibility. Similarly, at the other end of the spectrum, many of our smaller churches remain such because of the insecurity and control of its leader.

*Don't push me too hard! I'm happy to just rest here in my nest!*

#### **4. We have had our wings clipped so that we should not fly too high!**

Many of our leaders have not understood their responsibility to teach their people to fly. Instead, many churches and parachurch organisations are run in a way similar to the systems of the world, where the organisational structure is pyramidal with power emanating from the top downwards and the operative word is *control*. Jesus said "*You are not to be like that!*"<sup>6</sup> As a pastor, I am greatly challenged that my work is to "*equip the saints for the work of the ministry.*"<sup>7</sup> i.e.; to teach them to fly! I am called to make disciples, not build bigger nests! - and disciples should fly as God intended them to do. The eagle does not rest until it sees its offspring rise to soar above all the other birds in the vast expanse of the heavens. O that pastors had this desire - to feed, teach and release their people so that each might reach their highest destiny in Christ. Instead, we often see them clip their people's wings so that they do not disturb the comfort of 'their' church.

*Whose church is it anyway?*

I was at a pastor's home in Australia where my host had invited a number of friends around for an evening of fellowship with his Canadian visitor. He introduced me briefly, asking that I share with his guests anything the Lord might have laid on my heart. I started by enlarging his introduction. "I am a pastor, not currently in charge of a church, but nevertheless one according to Ephesians 4:11, knowing my calling and the ministry the Lord has placed before me." Immediately a middle-aged woman present said, in a voice loud enough to be heard by all, "I suppose we are going to get our wings clipped again!" I could only assume that her experience of pastors was that they constantly hindered her in what she considered God's calling on her life to be. I am glad to be able to say that, by the end of the evening, she and I were 'best of mates'! She even had a hearty "Amen" when I finished.

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<sup>6</sup> Mark 10:42,43

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 4:12

I must add that at that same meeting I met one of those most obnoxious of Christians, the self-appointed “watchman on the wall” whose role in life is to critique everything the pastor or visitor might say, that might be construed to mean something dangerous (according to the watchman) to the saints, - usually something the speaker never intended at all. A good pastor would certainly need to clip those wings!

We have many young people in our churches who have not yet caught the sickness of indolence so common among the older members, and who have dreams and ideas of serving the Lord. “Why don’t we start a coffee shop? Can the young people lead the worship one Sunday? Can we hold an open-air meeting? I want to go on a Missions trip with Youth With A Mission or Campus Crusade. Can we plan a barbecue for the street kids with their coloured hair and rings in their noses? Can we form a youth choir, all dressed in rugby tops and blue jeans?” We admire their enthusiasm but are quick to discourage them with a hundred and one excuses. We don’t want our ‘boat to be rocked’. After all, ours is a respectable church and we’ve got everything ‘under control’. We really don’t need any more programs, especially not ones of which the world might take notice, such as suggested above. After all, its the pastor’s job to know what programs God wants in His church, isn’t it? Isn’t it ???

If my opinions expressed above are true, then it is no wonder there are so many believers no longer in good fellowship with a local church due to disillusionment, frustration and wounds.

The burden on my heart is for the **hurting church**, especially for those pastors and missionaries ‘on the front lines’ who are suffering from wrongs and wounds done against them, usually, and sadly, by other members of *the Body of Christ*. However in my travels, I am coming across more and more disillusioned believers, both clergy and laity, who have lost their joy and purpose in serving the Lord. Many have burned out carrying ministries God never intended for them to bear.

## Chapter Two

### LOVE GIFTS

I was recently in my home land of Wales, listening to my brother-in-law Vivian, as he was telling some of the stories he knew concerning the Welsh revival of 1904. I had with me a Canadian friend who was visiting Great Britain for the first time and was eager to hear reports of that revival from people who had some connection with it. Vivian's grandfather was a convert from those days, and Vivian himself was raised in a chapel birthed at that time, in the very village where Evan Roberts began his ministry. My friend's eyes were filling with tears as she listened to the stories, but my attention was captivated by the expression on Vivian's face. A deep well of longing within him seemed to be bubbling up to the surface. His face shone as he recalled the stories from his grandfather telling of the awesome presence of God that everyone felt, sinner and saint alike, as they lived through those anointed days. He remembered the stories of wonderful miracles, of lives gloriously changed, of churches packed out an hour before the time appointed for the services to commence, of miners going down the pit an hour early so they could spend time in worship and song before digging out the black gold. His grandfather had told him all of those. However, it was the deep sense of the presence of God that struck most deeply into Vivian's heart.

#### **What is anointing?**

My wife Anne and I were visiting friends in New Zealand after a ministry tour in Australia. As we drove through a small town of the North Island, early one Saturday evening, we noticed a sign advertising the meetings of the Elim church. Before emigrating to Canada in 1975 we had been members of the Elim denomination in Wales but had not attended an Elim church since, so we thought it would be nice to visit these brethren in New Zealand. We found the church, located in a local school. As we arrived, blackboards were being cleaned, desks were being stacked against a wall and chairs were being set out sufficient for the forty or so people they anticipated (including children). A young man approached us and welcomed us to the church. "I'm sorry that the pastor is not here this morning" he said. "You will have to put up with me instead!" That did not greatly dismay us as we had spent many years working with young people and were quite aware that the Lord can speak through them just as well as through more mature members of the church. The service was typical for a small, family congregation,

until the young man spoke. For forty minutes he opened the Scriptures to us basing his thoughts on Phil. 1:6

*"I am sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus."*

As he finished I turned to Anne and asked "What did you think of that?" She replied, "I have not heard such anointed preaching for twenty years!" I hope she was wrong as she has heard me preach many times in those years, but the sentiment was shared by myself also. He had not only spoken to our minds and souls but the Holy Spirit had used him to minister to our spirits. We felt as though we had been fed from the riches of the promised land, sweet grapes and honey, and not the stale manna of the wilderness. He was anointed. God the Holy Spirit was in that service using one of His chosen vessels to bless us as He taught us through him. **We knew His presence in our midst.**

Surely, anointing is God putting His seal, His approval upon the person or ministry, so that there is an *eternal* impact on the (spiritual) lives of those being ministered to. Anointing ministers to the spirit as well as to the body and soul.

O how I long to see men and women ministering under the anointing of the Spirit! I have experienced such many times but too infrequently. Having sat under such ministry, nothing else can now satisfy.

I remember when Ann Jones would recite her poetry and not one eye would be dry as she painted a word picture of the Lord, His work, His suffering and His glory. My poetry never moved men like that!

I remember when uneducated Harty Warrens rose to pray in the church. It seemed as if the Lord suddenly came into our presence and all other voices were hushed. I could never pray like that!

I remember when stammering Yorrie Richards determined to give a public testimony of his Lord against the advice of his friends, myself included. We were sure he would bring great embarrassment to himself and us. Instead we listened in awe as God anointed his tongue to give a clear, unstammering, powerful witness that resulted in many coming to faith in the Saviour!

I remember walking into the filth of the walled city of Kowloon, Hong Kong with my young friend who was determined to be a witness for the Lord among the drug addicts and prostitutes who lived there. I saw her weakness and heard her express her fears, but today the name of

Jacky Pullinger is known throughout the world because of the anointing that was on her in that dangerous work.

I remember listening to Dr Martin Lloyd Jones in his weekly Bible studies, Rev Eric Dando of The Assemblies of God, Major Alistair Smith of the Salvation Army as they preached on the Glory of God and the Power of the cross. None of us wanted to leave our hard wooden pews, **for God was present.**

I remember a young Brazilian working for Mercy Ships as they visited Poland in 1991. Though in his early twenties, there was good evidence of the Lord's anointing upon Him as he spoke to large congregations in the Catholic Church. I have just returned to Canada after ten weeks in Fortaleza, Brazil, watching as he drew together pastors from about 400 churches in a great evangelistic campaign resulting in more than 35,000 'decisions for Christ'.

"What more shall I say? Time would fail me to tell of ....."

O how the Lord longs to see His bride ministering under the anointing of the Spirit! **Such anointing can be yours,** and must be if you would fly like the eagle.

**The secret is this: God will only put His anointing on those men and women that are ministering in the role that He has called them to and equipped them for.** Why should He put His anointing on those functioning outside His plan and purposes?

We have our churches so well organised that God has no part to play in our services. We put people into roles and ministries that God has not prepared or equipped them for. They pass through Bible School, on to Theological College and then into a church. If the church is large, they automatically take the position of the lowest pastor, ie; Youth pastor. Whether God has called them to minister to youth or be a pastor is unimportant. We need to fill that position to keep our church programs functioning! Of course, one day he will graduate to become the (senior) pastor, though there is little evidence of God's anointing on him as a pastor at all.

Maybe he is a faithful member of the church, successful in business, so we make him an elder - with little consideration as to whether he is 'apt to teach'<sup>8</sup>. He leads a small group in serendipity studies and wonders why his people starve for meat when all he can give them is milk.

We have counseling needs so we appoint a full-time psychiatrist to our staff and justify it by saying that he is a Christian. That does not mean that he is gifted to teach and minister in Biblical counseling *with anointing*. So much church counseling today is no different to the counseling of the world with its twelve-step program. Look at the book shelves of your local

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<sup>8</sup> 1 Timothy 3:2

Christian book shop to see how many such books are now available under the guise of Christian counseling. The twelve-step program has as its goal, to give the dysfunctional person some ability to maintain a balanced life. They offer a crutch to enable you to get through life without too much stumbling. Of course, there are many in our churches who need psychiatric counseling for their sickness, as in all of society. However, many have spiritual sicknesses that can never be healed by psychiatric means. True Christian counseling offers full healing from spiritual wounds through the shed blood of the cross<sup>9</sup>. Oh how we've watered that blood down, robbing it of its efficacy! Jesus did not die to give us a crutch - he died that we might be made whole!

*"God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired."<sup>10</sup>  
"God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles ..."<sup>11</sup>  
"To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. .... He ascended on high and gave gifts to men ... He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers."<sup>12</sup>  
"Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly."<sup>13</sup>*

However, we read these four portions of Scripture and their context, we cannot escape the fact that it is God who sets us in the church with our different gifts and ministries. We should be eager to determine our own gift and to minister in that gifting. If we are church leaders, we should be zealous to discover the gifts of others and to release them into ministries accordingly.

Where are the apostles and prophets that "God has set in the church" to declare the voice of God and to call us back to the fundamentals of the Kingdom - to the unity Jesus prays for, to the life-style He demanded of us ? Where are those servant leaders willing to be the last and the least, as the younger and as a child , knowing that such are the great ones in the Kingdom of God<sup>14</sup> ?

When that great prophet Elijah was taken up into heaven, his mantle fell on his young follower, Elisha, who cried out, "Where is the God of Elijah?" Today, we might more appropriately cry "Where are the Elijahs of God ?" Too often, they have had their wings clipped and their mantles torn.

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<sup>9</sup> Refer again to my book **The Key in My Hand**.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:18

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:28

<sup>12</sup> Ephesians 4:7-11

<sup>13</sup> Romans 12:6

<sup>14</sup> Mark 10:42,43; Mark 9:35; Luke 9:48; Luke 22:26; Matthew 18:4

I remember attending a conference on how to make my church grow. Most of the teaching was excellent, practical advice. Especially of value to my situation was the recognition of the importance of the gift of an administrator to work alongside the pastor. I had such a man in my church and saw the evidence of God's anointing as we worked together. Then we were told that, if we wanted to be successful, we had to stop thinking like pastors and start thinking like ranchers! I'm sure there are people in the Body of Christ whom God has 'called' to be ranchers, but that is not a choice I can make. Until HE calls me to another ministry, I shall endeavour to be faithful as a pastor/teacher.

## Chapter Three

### DOING IT GOD'S WAY

It had not been a good day! The armies of Israel had been full of confidence that morning as they marched out against the Philistines; full of faith that Jahweh was with them and they could not possibly lose this battle. All the omens had been good, for a new prophet had risen in the land, God was in His place and all was well on Earth. Even the location was propitious for though the enemy had *a strong fortress* (meaning of Heb..*Aphek*), the armies of Israel occupied *Ebenezer* (Heb.-*the rock our help*)<sup>15</sup>.

However, something had gone horribly wrong. As the blood-red sun sank beyond the hills and both battle-weary armies retreated to their respective camps, carrying their wounded and dying, an uneasy murmur ran through the ranks of the Israelites. An estimated four thousand of their comrades lay in the gory field, never to return to their homes and loved ones. The officers conferred together and, as men are prone to do when things aren't going their way, they began to question why the Lord had failed them.

Surely the prophet should have foreseen these calamities! Surely the priests of Jahweh could have guaranteed victory! Surely our faith in Jahweh being with us should have brought the desired result!

"I have a suggestion." said one of the elders. "Why don't we send some men back to Shiloh to ask the priests to bring the Lord here to the battle fields? Maybe He is unaware of what we are going through as He resides there in the tabernacle."

It had been three hundred years since the tabernacle had been set up in Shiloh, a city of Ephraim, and many generations of priests had ministered there. Worship had degenerated until all manner of perversions were allowed within its courts. However, the people were aware that once a year the High Priest would enter into its holiest quarters so he could meet the Lord on behalf of all the people. They had lost all understanding of the significance or manner of this meeting and the other priests had no fear about entering that forbidden place. The common people, who had no right to enter the tabernacle itself, had developed all sorts of superstitious beliefs, encouraged by tales readily told by the priests. "There is a golden box called the Ark, standing in the holiest place, and the Lord sits upon this box between two

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Samuel 4

golden angels.” Just as the Samaritan woman who later met Jesus at the well, God was only to be found in a particular place, currently sitting between the cherubim in the shady confines of a tabernacle tent in Shiloh.

“God got us into this mess. Let’s bring Him here so He can get us out! Send for the ark!” On the battle field of Ebenezer, the suggestion was eagerly received.

The messengers found it easy to persuade Hophni and Phineas, sons of the old High Priest Eli, that they should bring the ark to the battle field. They even came themselves with the ark so that none may have any doubt as to their authority. As the ark was seen being borne on to the battle field, all the Israelites gave such a great shout that it brought fear to the hearts of their enemy. “Woe unto us,” they cried, “for the mighty gods that slew the Egyptians and delivered the Israelites from bondage, have come among us!” They had more respect and fear of God than His own people, the Jews did!

As the Israelites resumed the battle with their presumption unweakened, the Philistines fought as men destined to die - and Israel was “smitten with a great slaughter, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.” The ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli were slain.

When Phineas’ wife heard of her husband’s death, she delivered the baby she was carrying, dying in the process, but not before naming the child **Ichabod**, meaning *The Glory has departed*.

It would be a long, hard one hundred years before the ark - representing God’s presence and His covenant promises - would be restored to its rightful place in Israel.

It had stayed among the Philistines only a few months before they wanted to return it, as there had been many deaths among them wherever the ark had been taken. As the deaths mounted, it became more than a sneaking suspicion that there was a connection between these deaths and the presence of the ark, so a plan was formed to both check out the suspicion and to get rid of the problem. Two cows were obtained which had just borne calves. They were to be harnessed together to pull a new wooden cart, something with which they were totally unfamiliar. The suspect box was placed on the new cart together with a ‘peace’ offering of golden ornaments, and the cows were pointed in the direction of the Israeli border. Their normal motherly instinct would be to seek out their calves, indicating that the Israeli god wasn’t much interested in having his box back, and that the deaths in Philistia were a coincidence rather than a judgment. However, should the cows ignore their offspring and head straight toward Israel, it would be evidence sufficient to show that the Philistines were being wise in returning the box - and God - to His rightful place!

They were wise! The cows went straight to the Israeli border, neither turning to the left or the right, until they crossed into the fields of Bethshemesh. The people there rejoiced at seeing the ark, lighting a fire with the wood from the cart and sacrificing the two cows upon it as an offering of thanksgiving to Jahweh. The ark was taken by the local Levite priests and set upon a large stone where it became a spectacle for all the people, until there were some, more inquisitive than the rest, who lifted its lid to look inside. I'm sure they could have justified their actions. "We were only checking to see if Aaron's rod, the stones of the commandments and the pot of manna were still there!" they might have claimed. However, their voices are mute for immediately, they and over fifty thousand other men of that district died as judgment from God. He had been silent for many years while His tabernacle was being polluted by a corrupt priesthood; He had showed Himself to be powerful when the Philistines paraded Him throughout their country; He showed Himself to be full of grace and mercy when the Philistines manhandled the ark onto a cart drawn by unclean cows; but He showed Himself awful in holiness when His own covenant people trespassed into irreverence.

The remaining people wept. "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God - and to whom shall He go from us?" The men of Kirjath-jearim came and collected the ark, bearing it to the house of one, Abinadab, whose son they sanctified as priest to care for the ark. For many years it remained there, all of Israel mourning for its situation but fearful to do anything about it.

During that time the people demanded of the prophet Samuel, that he dedicate for them a king, so that they could be like the surrounding nations. "If God is not present among us, and the priesthood is ended, even though we have His prophet we need a king to govern us" they said. With God's permission Samuel anoints Saul the first king of Israel - a man who stood head and shoulders above other men. Great in the eyes of men but one who proved to be weak before God. Truly, during his reign the people were ruled by human thoughts and not by divine wisdom. There was little anointing for God was not (active) among His people - and the ark remained at Kirjath-jearim.

Saul reigned for forty years before being replaced by God's choice, David the giant slayer, David the psalmist. The ark has been hidden away for over eighty years when he ascends the throne and it is to be another fourteen years before he will attempt its restoration to Jerusalem, the new Shiloh. For almost one hundred years the faithful of Israel had mourned its absence.

"Come" said the king to a large gathering of his chosen men. "Let us go up to Kirjath-jearim and bring the ark back to its rightful place in Jerusalem." "It has been away far too long and we must bring it back so that we may worship in the Lord's presence again." Who could argue with those sentiments? Everyone knew that the Lord would be pleased and would honour them in this venture. "How shall we carry it?" asked one of the more practical followers.

Someone remembered the story of how the Philistines had sent the ark back to Israel on a cart drawn behind two cows, and suggested that that evidently was an easy method of conveying the ark. However, they are more wise than the Philistines so they have two trained oxen, rather than two milk cows. Soon they brought the ark out of the house of Abinadab and set it upon a new cart, a much improved version of the old Philistine wagon, attached the two oxen and started the journey back to Jerusalem. Oh how they celebrated! David and his friends danced and played upon their instruments, waved their hands in the air and felt 'real good!' The only one who wasn't pleased was the Lord Himself! They had not gone far when the trained oxen slipped, the ark almost fell and an innocent priest reached out his hand to steady it - instantly dying at the hand of a holy God!<sup>16</sup>

Instead of being brought back to Jerusalem with joy, the ark was taken aside into the house of Obededom, a Gittite, where it was to remain for another three months while David sat at home in a sea of moodiness. At first he was very angry with the Lord and His apparent injustice. Then, as he began to meditate and seek the Lord he was led to read the scriptures of Moses regarding the ark, its making, its use and how it was to be carried from place to place. *"These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation"*.<sup>17</sup>

David then prepared a place where the ark should rest in Jerusalem, and prepared a people to carry the ark from the home of Obededom, as the Scriptures had said. The Levites of the family of Kohath were set aside and sanctified for the task of bearing the ark upon their shoulders, carrying it all the way to its designated resting place. This was not a task for oxen and cart - as the worldly Philistines had used - but a ministry determined by God Himself. Finally the people could rejoice, for the ark - symbol of the Lord's presence, His anointing - was once more among His people.

**What can we learn from this story?** Surely one thing stands out clearly, and is just as necessary today as it was in the days of Samuel, Saul and David. **When you want to do God's work, you had better do it His way!** He had given clear instructions to His people and they disobeyed at their own peril. The Philistines might experience His mercy as they acted irreverently with the ark, but God's people had no excuse so they could only experience His judgement.

So today, we are too quick to follow the ideas and methods of the world because they seem to work, while God withdraws His anointing, waiting for us to understand that He has already

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<sup>16</sup> 1 Chronicles 13

<sup>17</sup> Numbers 4:15

ordained His ways of working. He has appointed men and women to different roles in the church and has given them His charismata (from the Greek, meaning *Grace gifts* - holy abilities freely given).

There are many good leadership techniques applied by the world in its business dealings. However, having the secular ability to lead or rule does not mean that one has the charismatic gift of leadership<sup>18</sup> necessary for ruling in the church. One can be trained to be a good (secular) teacher but this does not mean he is “apt to teach” - a requirement for eldership<sup>19</sup>. One can be highly qualified as a psychologist but that does not give him or her the ability to give Biblical counseling. I believe there are many in our churches that need psychiatric counseling, but such counseling can never bring healing to spiritual sicknesses.<sup>20</sup>

We are very good at planning all sorts of evangelical outreaches with our “4 Spiritual Laws”, “The Romans Road”, “Friendship Evangelism”, etc. while neglecting the method that Jesus laid out for us the night before He died.

*“Father, I pray for all those in (your church, your city) who will come to believe on me. I pray that they all may be one, as thou, Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me ..... that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.”<sup>21</sup>*

Until we are serious about our Unity in the Body of Christ (not our uniformity nor our Lowest Common Factor serendipity doctrine), all our evangelism programs will be of human design with little reason why the Lord should pour out His anointing.

The Lord has set in His church the burdens, giftings and ministries necessary to build such a church that the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it. We change His purposes, imposing our own plans and programs at our peril and at great cost to this lost world.

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<sup>18</sup> Romans 12:8

<sup>19</sup> 1 Timothy 3:2

<sup>20</sup> See my book *The Key in My Hand*

<sup>21</sup> John 17:21-23

## Chapter Four

# REACHING YOUR DESTINY

You **can** fly like the eagle! That is the destiny **God planned for you** but you will only know its delight as you follow His plans, do it His way as clearly outlined in the Scriptures.

We shall consider six steps to reaching your destiny in Christ, and use as a guideline the story told in 2 Kings 4: 1 - 7.

*The wife of one of the prophets came to Elisha and said to him, "Your servant, my husband is dead. He feared the Lord but left us with great debts that I cannot pay, and now the creditors have come to take my two children away to be slaves." Elisha said to her, "What can I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?" "Nothing," she replied, "except a small bottle of oil." Then he said, "Go out and borrow every vessel you can from all your neighbours. Any shape or size but empty vessels, as many as possible. Then go into your home, shut the door, and pour the oil out of your small bottle into each of your neighbours' vessels. When one is full, set it aside." She went and did what he told her, pouring the oil into each vessel until it was full. Finally there were no more vessels to fill and the oil stopped flowing. She came and told the prophet Elisha what had happened. "Go, sell the oil," he said, "pay your debts and then you and your children can live on the proceeds for the rest of your lives."*

The outlook was very bleak for this widow. She could see no way out of her dilemma for circumstances had overwhelmed her. All she could see was hopeless darkness. There appeared to be no way out of her valley. She needed a new **VISION**.

*Two men in a prison cell, staring through the bars  
One only saw the darkness, the other saw the stars!*

Both men had the same scene before them but they had different vision! Their circumstances were the same but they had different attitudes.

The widow's heart was heavy as she was about to lose her two sons to the creditors. She carried a burden that weighed her down. She needed a different **BURDEN**.

*A boy was seen climbing a hill with a crippled lad on his back. A passer-by remarked, "My, you have a heavy burden there!" The boy replied, "That's no burden! That's my brother!"*

Jesus wants us to carry a burden - His burden which is light. The burden you carry will only be heavy if it is not the one He has planned for you (and you for!)

The prophet seemed to ignore her circumstances when he asked her what she had in her possession. "Only a small bottle of oil!" She did not realise that that small bottle held all was necessary to meet her great need. What is in your hand - your **GIFTING**?

*"What do you have in your hand, Moses?" God asked. "Only a shepherd's staff," his servant replied. "That's enough," said God, "for I want you to lead a flock of My sheep out of their bondage in Egypt"*

God always puts in our possession, the abilities and gifts we need to carry His burden.

The prophet then gave the widow a task to do - a ministry to all her neighbours. It seemed a foolish thing to do. Why bring in so many pots and pans, buckets and basins? All she had was a *small* bottle of oil, - but she did what she was asked to do. Each one of us needs a **MINISTRY**.

*"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God, got up from supper, .... and washed His disciples feet."*

Jesus said that He did not come to be served but to serve - and He expects the same from His disciples.

As the widow poured out the oil an amazing thing happened! Can you imagine the look on their faces as the pots and pans were being filled to overflowing from the small pot of oil? God had blessed her obedience with His **ANOINTING**!

*“Lord, all we have is five loaves and two fish!” “Distribute them to the multitude” said the Master. They all ate and were filled - and they took up of the fragments, twelve baskets full!*

The widow and her two sons sold all the oil to their neighbours. There was sufficient money to pay off all the debts and for them to live comfortably off the excess for the rest of their lives. They were blessed, their neighbours were blessed and God was honoured.

They had learned to live in their true **DESTINY** - the freedom and blessings of God - flying like the eagle.

*The apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Philippi:*

*“I am confident in this, that He who began a good work in you, will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*

So we outline **SIX STEPS: VISION**

**BURDEN**

**GIFTING**

**MINISTRY**

**ANOINTING**

**FLYING!**

We shall consider these in more depth in the coming chapters.

## Chapter Five

# VISION

If we are to reach our life-destiny in Christ it is essential that we have a vision that sees beyond our circumstances. Our viewpoint is going to affect the way we live, whether it is a view of self (the inward look), our view of the world (the outward look), or our view of the Lord (the upward look).

### **The inward look**

It has been said that ‘what you think you are, you are.’ This isn’t true, of course, for those who are deluded in sickness. Maybe you heard the story about the two inmates of an asylum.

*“Hi” said one, “Who are you?”*

*“I’m Napoleon” his friend replied.*

*“No, you’re not.”*

*“Yes I am.”*

*“No you’re not!”*

*“Yes, I am!”*

*“Who told you that?”*

*“God did!”*

*“No, I didn’t!!!”*

Sadly there are many in the Christian church just as blind to their true identity as those unfortunate inmates. However, it is not only visions of grandeur or pride that we must deal with, but also the opposite feelings of low self esteem. The quotation above is certainly true in this negative arena. When we think self-demeaning thoughts, we live in the same valley as

those low thoughts. We point to the man with high opinions of himself and we call him “proud”, one whom God will surely bring down. However, we are quick to defend ourselves against accusations that we are too self demeaning, adding (with a little pride?) that we are called to be “humble”. All this does is to show an ignorance of what humility is. It is not the opposite of pride - that is *false* humility - and is a sickness just as bad as its antithesis.

We are called to be ‘as humble as little children’ if we would be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. Children may play games and put on costumes and masks, but when bedtime comes, they take off the playthings and crawl beneath the blankets, once again weak and tired and needing a father’s cuddle and a mother to tuck them in. They revert to being ‘*just themselves*’. It’s only adults who keep the costumes and masks on, for we do not want others to see us as we know ourselves to be. The Bible calls that hypocrisy (Greek = *acting as another character*).

Think on this; the most humble statement in the Bible came from God Himself! When Moses asked Him, “Whom shall I say sent me when I talk to the Children of Israel?” the Eternal One replied, “ **I AM that I AM!** Tell them that the **I AM** has sent you!”

Humility is knowing - and being - who you really are. No more, no less.

### **So who are you?**

Assuming you are a Christian believer, one who is born again of the Spirit of God, the Bible has many wonderful things to say about you. Read the New Testament looking for the multitude of glorious things that are said to be the common riches of all believers. Many of these riches are dependent on some action of ours but most have little to do with our ability or maturity, but rather have everything to do with what Jesus has won for us on the cross, which the Father is glad to bestow upon us simply because He loves the Son.

I believe that every new believer should be taught the first chapter of the book of Ephesians early in his new life, so that he might know of his position “in Christ”.

We are chosen in Him, we have been adopted into God’s family, we are accepted because the Father loves Him. We are ‘seated in heavenly places’ in Him, far above all principalities and powers (of evil). Stop believing the lies of Satan about yourself and start believing what God says about you!

I was a sinner but the Bible tells me I am now a saint!

I was a slave to sin but I am now a son of God!

My sins are forgiven and I can call Him “Father!”

I once walked in darkness but now I walk in light!

I was dead but now I'm alive!

I was lost but now I am found - I belong!

I am a new creation(spirit), old things have passed away, all things have become new.

-- not because of anything in me, but because I am *in Him*.

Shout it from the housetops! Lift up your heads and sing! We're children of the KING, Hallelujah! This life is but a short-term boot-camp preparing us to reign with our king and we can overcome because He lives in us, *Christ in us, our guarantee of glory*<sup>22</sup>.

Satan will accuse you, bringing feelings of guilt and condemnation, but the truth declares that "nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus."<sup>23</sup> Whom are you going to believe - Satan, the father of lies, or the Holy Spirit, author of God's Word?

Circumstances may weigh you down but you can be "more than conqueror through Christ who strengthens you"<sup>24</sup>. Do you believe this or do you prefer to believe your enemy, Satan?

One of the greatest tragedies in the Christian church is the number of believers who do not know who they are (in Christ) and who spend much time trying to justify themselves to God and to others. This is most sad when seen among leaders who are insecure in their position (often because God has not called them to be there), and who need to play the politics of church to hold on to their status. For such people it is very difficult to be the servant that the Master called us all to be. Instead they cling on to their 'power', often hurting other believers in the process. There is a Bible verse that has always struck me as being very important, yet when I have quoted it and asked my listeners where it is found in Scripture, none has been able to answer me. It reads as follows.

*"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God ...."* (In other words, *"Jesus knowing who He was, where He had come from, what He was doing and where He was going ...."* ) Do you know what comes next? (Don't you hate it when someone puts you on-the-spot like this??) Look it up for yourself in John's Gospel, chapter 13! He was secure in Himself and in His calling. We need to be

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<sup>22</sup> Colossians 1:27

<sup>23</sup> Romans 8:39

<sup>24</sup> Philippians 4:13

similarly secure if we would be all the Lord wants us to be - flying like the eagle. It is easy to serve others when you know who and where you are yourself.

### The Outward Look

What do you see when you look at human society - what is your world-view? When all around you seems to be in disarray, why are you surprised? You must recognise that this is the way of the world. It is a tired old creation, groaning and travailing in pain, under the leading of blind men, waiting for the day when its creator will return, bringing with Him the Sons of God.<sup>25</sup>

In the meantime, it will follow the religion of secular humanism, where man is the centre of his own universe and God has been banished to its circumference. Indeed in the post-Christian society we now live in, many would join with the liberal theologians of the early twentieth century, claiming that God is dead! Without the absolutes of accountability to One outside himself, man becomes the arbitrator of morals -what is right or wrong - and society wobbles from crisis to crisis.

I was in Scotland co-hosting a prayer concert with Ian and Peter, two Church of Scotland pastors. Ian's spirit was very sombre during the evening so I asked him the reason. That day, the synod of the national church had voted to ordain homosexual men, something that both Ian and Peter believed to be contrary to Scripture. They, with many others were permitted to record their dissent on the official records but the motion had carried. I then asked Peter why he was not similarly cast down in spirit. His answer was enlightening. It was the parable of the glass half full - or half empty - of water. "When I arrived in this city twenty years ago," he said, "you could find maybe two or three of our churches where the Gospel was faithfully preached. Today there are twenty-two!" "There is a polarisation taking place. Where there is greater darkness, there is also greater light." He did not let his vision of the world rob him of his vision of the Lord.

At this moment, you and I are in this world but we are not of it. Do not expect it to accommodate you. Just as it didn't receive the Lord Jesus, so it cannot accept you. However, the Lord has not chosen to take us from this world because He wants us to be His witnesses in the world. He knows that will be difficult for we have an active enemy, but He has prayed, and still does pray for us. "Father, I do not pray that You take them from the world, but that **You should keep them** from the evil *one*, for they are not of the world even as I am not of the world"<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Romans 8:19

<sup>26</sup> St John 17:15,16

Of course, believers should be involved in many aspects of the world - as salt to savour its unpleasantness and to oppose its evil; as a light to reveal its sickness and point the way to life. There will be some who will *fly like the eagle* in a God-given ministry within the institutions and organisations of the world. However, our **primary concern** is not this world, but His Kingdom among the peoples of this world.

*We are not called to stand in the world giving witness of Christ; we are called to stand in Christ giving witness to the world!*

Jesus spoke of five kinds of people whom He considers great in His kingdom. They are *servants, as children*, willing to be *last or least* and as the *younger*.<sup>27</sup> Have you ever considered what it means to be 'as the younger'? In the days of Jesus all the father's property was passed on to the eldest son. His was the farm and all the cattle. The younger son could carry all his inheritance upon his shoulder such as the prodigal did when leaving home<sup>28</sup>. On his repentance and return to his father's home, he considered himself not worthy to be his father's son, but the old man received him with an embrace of love, new shoes, a coat and a feast. At this the elder son was angry. "Why have you killed the fatted calf for this waster?" he demanded. In reply, the father pointed out that all the fatted calves belonged to the eldest son. In fact all the farm was his. He owned the lot! In truth however, the farm owned him! He was not interested in repentance and forgiveness; his only interest was in what he owned. This is my farm! Don't touch it!

(Do you hear the echos? This is my ministry/ my church/ my program/ my choir! These are my sheep! Don't rock the boat!) **Whose church is it, anyway?**

Being 'as the younger' means that we do not allow this world to own us, neither its positions, its possessions, its popularity, its fame nor its goals. We are 'not of this world', we are not 'attached', for we are ambassadors of another, higher world. This does not mean that we must not own property or accept honours when given to us. Indeed, the Christian should stand out above the crowd as one who does his work well and is worthy of honour, even by the world's standards. However, though we might own the world, it must not own us and we hold on to it very lightly, so that when the Master calls us away, our attachment does not hold us back. When He calls us to fly like the eagle, we are not 'grounded' by attachments, commitments, 'ropes' woven over many years intercourse with the world and its ways.

We need to understand that this life - in this world - is only the boot-camp God has designed to perfect us for the real world of Eternity. He is looking for a people who will overcome in this life so that they might reign with Him in the next. We do not find it strange that men should

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<sup>27</sup> Mark 9:35; Matthew 18:4; Luke 9:48; Luke 22:26.

<sup>28</sup> Luke 15:11f

suffer great stress and personal indignities when they are in training to become Marines, but we often begin to complain when our Master allows difficulties and a roaring lion<sup>29</sup> to assault us in our training. We are too ready to compromise our preparation by seeking friendship with the world. However, when we are what the Lord has called us to become, we shall be overcomers, even in this world, and His Kingdom will be established *on Earth as in Heaven*. He will build His church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.

By the way, a 'miawing' cat will never catch its prey; a roaring lion is just as incompetent, except when we give him power by allowing his roar to affect our emotions and paralyze our actions. He uses fear, embarrassment, jealousy, envy, anger and like negative emotions to rob us of our victory. We need to learn to recognise his tactics and determine not to let these emotions hinder us. I spent a very enjoyable month in Nepal conducting a number of seminars for missionaries, and travelling across much of the country. In the city of Dharan, I was introduced to an elderly man who had been a pastor there for many years during the time when there was great persecution upon the churches. He had been arrested more than twenty five times and had been imprisoned seven times, the longest term being for eight years. Immediately upon his release from prison he would return to his village and begin to preach the Gospel once again. I asked him, "Weren't you afraid of being arrested again?" His reply was "Why should I be afraid? The lion has roared its loudest!" He had the right vision - 20/20 eyesight in spiritual things!

It was Jim Elliot, one of five young men martyred in the jungles of Equador in 1959 who wrote shortly before his death, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose!" Evidently, this world did not own him for he had a vision much higher than this world.

Jesus knew what the future of man on earth would be so He tells us that "when you see these things, **look up** for your redemption is near"<sup>30</sup>. Our vision needs to be upward.

### **The Upward Look**

The world may claim in its blindness that 'God is dead' but the citizens of the Heavenly kingdom know a different reality. God is still on the throne and bringing all things to a climax, that *in the fullness of time He might gather them together in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on Earth*.<sup>31</sup> He will fulfill His purposes.

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<sup>29</sup> I Peter 5:8

<sup>30</sup> Luke 21:28

<sup>31</sup> Ephesians 1:10

In 2 Kings 6 we read of some trouble that the prophet Elisha experienced after informing his king concerning the plans being made by the Syrians to invade Israel. The Syrian king sent a great army to capture the prophet at the city of Dothan. When the sun was rising, the prophet's servant rose from his bed and opened the windows to welcome the new day. Imagine his surprise and horror when he saw the city surrounded by the Syrian army. Circumstances were not very promising! The outlook was black. All the world seemed arrayed against the man of God.

"Alas, master! What can we do?" cried the servant.

Elisha rose from his bed, strolled to the window, viewed the enemy and prayed. No words of distress, no pleading for deliverance, no questions asked of God. Just a simple prayer, "Lord, open his eyes!"

*And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw that the mountains around the city were covered with the horses and chariots of fire of the army of God.* The King of Syria might send his great army but they would be no match for the man of God. With God we are always 'more than conqueror'<sup>32</sup> over all that the enemy or the world can throw against us. We need to look up to see that the hills surrounding our circumstances are filled with the armies of the Lord, just waiting His command to be released into the situation.

King David faced many days when everything seemed to be against him. King Saul had tried to kill him several times and had hunted him down after he had left the palace in Jerusalem so that, for years he had lived the life of a outcast. However, among the saddest days of his life was when he realised that his son Absalom was raising an army to depose his father from the throne of Israel. David records the evolution of his feelings in Psalm 3. - from the bleak outlook of v 1 ('O Lord, I have so many enemies') to the confidence of v 8 ('The Lord is my deliverer!'). We must note v3 to see how this change of attitude came about. *"But you are a shield around me, O Lord, my Glory and the lifter of my head."* Later he would write *"I will lift up my eyes unto the hills from whence my help comes. My help comes from the Lord!"*<sup>33</sup>

Whatever your circumstances, however the enemy may accuse you, however the world may offend you, lift up your eyes and focus on the realities of the Heavens. Your bridegroom is waiting, the banquet table is laid and we shall soon hear the trumpet blast inviting us to the marriage supper with the Lamb. Your Lord is in control and you can be confident *that 'He who began a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ'*<sup>34</sup>. This is not positive thinking but a clear statement of our hope (ie; *an eager expectation of that which is certain.*)

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<sup>32</sup> Romans 8:37

<sup>33</sup> Psalm 121:1

<sup>34</sup> Philippians 1:6

Until then, He wants us to fly like the eagle!

You may have a healthy view of yourself, a realistic view of the world and a eager hope in the Lord, but what is your view of the church? Is she weak and ineffective; having little impact on your world? Has she become an organisation rather than an organism - the living Body of Christ? Is she program oriented rather than people conscious?

One of the great privileges I have, is to travel to many countries to minister to youth and church leaders. I want to shout it loud and clear that the church of Jesus Christ is alive and well, in many places. Everywhere I go I meet men and women who are accomplishing great things for God, though, of course, the secular media does not tell us much about these believers who are changing their world. What they have in common is a burden, and a great vision of what God can do through them.

As a young man, Loren Cunningham had a vision. It was of waves of young people being released and arriving like the waves of the sea upon the shores of the world. He believed that God could motivate multitudes to go out with the two hands of the Gospel. They were to both speak out the good news and demonstrate the nature of Jesus by their actions. Today, Youth With A Mission is known throughout the world, having a mission force of about eight thousand staff serving in over fifty nations and having ministered in every country recognised by the United Nations.

So what is your vision?

## Chapter Six

# BURDEN

I well remember the evening when I asked the Lord to give me a burden for young people. I was a school teacher with the British Forces in Germany and felt the inadequacy of my verbal witness to the students, so cried out in prayer for the burden that I assumed would give me the motivation to witness more. I saw no immediate response but did exercise more courage in speaking to some of them.

Three years later, we were back in our home in Wales and I was teaching at a local Grammar School. Some teenage girls used to call in at our home on their way home from school, so Anne suggested that she should do a little Bible study with them once a week. They eagerly agreed, and soon the group included boys and had grown to double figures, so I found myself taking over the leadership, preparing Bible studies and planning other activities. Two years later, we had seen many young adults between the ages of eighteen and twenty eight, come to faith in the Lord,. Two churches in our city had been revitalised and the impact on the surrounding community was considerable. It was not that I was an evangelist - far from it, but the young people led their friends to faith in Christ and I simply 'pastored' them, with a *carte blanche* given me by the elders of our church. Some years later, one of those young men, now in full-time ministry for the Lord, said "We were in revival and we didn't recognise it!" It was normal for us to see new believers most weeks. I ate, drank, slept and lived, youth work, every spare moment of my day, - and I never got weary! - (and I never felt the need to be paid!)

When I became a pastor many years later, Anne was asked what the differences were in being a pastor's wife now, having been a teacher's wife for so long. Her reply was that I was now doing full-time what I had spent all my spare time doing before!

There would be times when, after a tiring day at work, I would be called from my bed in the early hours of the morning because one of the young people were going through some trouble and needed help - now! I would put my trousers over my pajamas, get in my car and find the troubled youth, arriving back home some hours later, to crawl into bed for a brief sleep before leaving for school. The amazing thing was that, next evening I was not tired and did not feel any need to go to bed early to catch up on sleep. This happened a few times until we recognised it as an unusual refreshing from the Lord.

Jesus said “Come unto me all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”<sup>35</sup>

I was to speak for four evenings at a large church in Brazil. My host pastor came to the YWAM compound where I was staying, in order to drive me to his church. He was about half my age, very personable and spoke English very well.

“Pastor Gareth” he said, “How do you keep going as actively as you do?” “You seem to have boundless energy while I am exhausted leading my church.” He went on to tell how he was at the church every morning at 6.30am for prayer and did not arrive home each evening until after 11pm, having locked up the building following the (nightly) meeting.

Having assured him that I also get weary so need to rest during the day, I asked him whose church He was building. “Why, the Lord’s of course!” he replied. I suggested that it wasn’t the Lord’s church that he was building, but *his own* for the Lord Himself has said, that ‘*My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*’ I do not understand how so many pastors have physical breakdowns when they are co-workers with Christ - yoked to Him - and His burden is light! Please don’t tell me that it is *always* because Satan attacks them just because of their position as pastors! He doesn’t need to come against them when they are trying to build God’s kingdom by their own strength and programs. He is not afraid of such a church! He only fears the church of which Jesus said, “I will build MY church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it!”

I suggested to my Brazilian friend that he would be better occupied releasing others in his congregation to help carry the load as the Lord had equipped them and intended them to do. By doing all the work himself, he was thwarting the purposes of the Lord for that congregation. His own personal burden and obvious gifting was as a worship leader, but the constraints of all the other work he felt he must do as pastor, robbed him of the joy that he would have had ministering in his gifting, and robbed the church of an *anointed* access into the presence of the Lord through praise and worship.

When we are yoked together with him, we share His burden. His burden for me was youth ministry; for the apostle Paul it was preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles; for Jacky Pullinger it was the drug addicts of The Walled City, Kowloon; for Hudson Taylor it was the heathen of China; for John Wesley it was the unchurched of England; for Chuck Colson it was the inmates of American prisons; for .....

What is His burden for YOU?

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<sup>35</sup> Matthew 11:29

He has a burden for you and is waiting for you to take it up. Sadly, many who have deep burdens in the Lord's work often expect others to carry them. "That's the pastor's job! Why isn't he doing something about it? There's a terrible problem in this city with youth gangs. Why isn't the church doing something about it?" Why aren't you? Certainly we are to 'carry one another's burdens' (Gal 6:2) when those burdens are some weight of grief, but when the burden is a ministry burden from the Lord, 'let every man carry his own burden' (Gal 6:5). When we try to put our burdens on others we are acting just like the Pharisees of Jesus' day. They were always telling others what they should be doing, so that Jesus said of them, "They tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders."<sup>36</sup> When another person puts his/her ministry burden upon you, it can become very heavy; only the burden that Jesus has for you, will be 'light'.

How sad it is that we who are church leaders are often the first to put 'our burden' on others, sometimes using manipulation, flattery or guilt to get them to do our will.

"John, we need another Sunday school teacher and I believe you're just the right man for the job!" If John is 'just the right man', he should also have a burden for that work.

"Mary, a group of the ladies are starting to do house-to-house visitation to invite people to our services. I'm sure we can count on you not to let us down."

Of course, if John and Mary are asked to do these 'ministries', they can always agree to do so, even without a 'burden', as an act of faithfulness in serving the church (and hopefully, the Lord), but they must make sure they do not tie themselves into commitments which might be a barrier to the Lord's calling them into some other ministry which is His true burden and purpose for them. John might answer, "Yes, pastor, I'll be willing to teach a Sunday school class for a while. I shall commit myself for the next three months, repeatable for other three month periods, until the Lord makes it clear to me that He has another ministry more appropriate to my burden". Sadly, many pastors see this as a lack of commitment! To whom?

Jim was a young man with a burden. Every weekend, he and two friends would pray through the entire Friday night before spending the next day on the streets of our city, witnessing to whomever they could engage in conversation. The pastors respected Jim's work and were happy to allow him to attend their monthly ministerium meetings, even though he neither belonged to nor attended a local church. In fact he was quite a cynic when it came to speaking about the churches of our city. "They're all playing games! None of them are serious about the real work of prayer, intercession and evangelism!" he would often say to whomever would listen to him.

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<sup>36</sup> Matthew 23:4

One Sunday, Roger came to our Sunday morning service. He didn't know much about the 'niceties' of church meetings but radiated warmth in his brand new relationship with the Lord. "Jim led me to Christ last night," he told me, "and insisted that I attend this church to get disciplined!" I explained the difference between being disciplined and being disciplined.

When I next saw Jim, I commented on Roger, adding, with a grin, that it seemed that Jim was now in the business of producing illegitimate children, fathering them on the street, but expecting others to bring them up! This obviously got beneath Jim's skin, for the next Sunday he was in our church service. He was there for the next five weeks until, one day we met for lunch.

"What's on your heart these days?" I asked.

"Same as always - prayer and intercession" he replied.

"What do you think about our church's prayer life?" "Not much! No one there seems interested in prevailing prayer!" "Oh" I said, "I know a man in our church who has a real burden for prayer. He's almost two meters tall, has blond hair, is ....." Jim scratched his head as I continued the description, trying to think who this man might be, until I added that he had a small business as a commercial artist. "But that's me!" he said, looking at me as though I was losing my sanity.

"That's right!" I exclaimed. "So it is! Tell me Jim, why is it that God has given you this burden but you want me to carry it? I have my own burden to bear in the work of the Lord, and I need you to be carrying your burden of prayer for me, so that I can more effectively carry my burden."

"What should I do, then?" asked Jim.

"You should be telling me, not me telling you. You're the one with the burden, and if that burden is truly from the Lord, He is the one to tell us how you are to carry it!"

"People need to be taught how to pray."

"So, when are you going to do it?"

"What? me?"

"Yes, you! You're the one with the burden! When are you going to start teaching the people to pray?"

"Next week?"

“OK!”

The following week Jim started a class, made up of a nucleus of my congregation and some students from the local University, who had heard of the teachings being advertised on campus. After the teaching, people began to pray and intercede in earnest, according to the ‘pattern’ that Jim had introduced to them. We were coming into an intimacy with the Lord and hearing the Spirit’s voice, leading us into prayer for the things upon the Lord’s heart. Within a year, the congregation had doubled, the elders had appointed an assistant pastor, a brand new building had been completed to seat nearly three hundred people and was almost completely paid for! My denomination leaders think I did a great job at that church, which had had a history of small numbers in attendance for several years, but I know what happened - and now you do. All I had done was release an eagle to fly!

The Lord had put His burden on Jim because He wanted to use him for the building up of His people. When he was released into ministry, God anointed the work.

### ***Your Burden***

What is heaviest upon your heart? Only you can tell the answer to that question though others may enable you to clearly define it. If you do not have a burden relating to the work of the Kingdom, please pray for the Lord to give you one and to make it known to you. When I asked the Lord for my burden for youth, I did not have the understanding that I do now concerning His burden being ‘light’. My prayer included the statement that I did not ask to be happy carrying the burden but only to know that, when my journey on earth is over, I will hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” I did not find a continuous happiness - in fact there were many unhappy experiences - but I certainly did find joy and fulfillment in that burden.

As I look at the ministry of Jesus it is evident that His burden is *relational* - it is for people. He said He had been anointed to preach to the poor, release the captives, give sight to the blind, set free the downtrodden and preach reconciliation or God’s favour upon the people.<sup>37</sup> Since those days, of course, we have developed the church to a place where we have beautiful buildings to maintain and so many well organised programs that it is easy for people to become less important than these things. Sadly, many of our ministries are so task-oriented that people are often considered expendable and many carry deep wounds from their experiences.

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<sup>37</sup> Luke 4:18

Far be it from me to suggest that you should not have the burden to maintain a beautiful sanctuary, but remember that its purpose must always be to bring men and women into a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Here is a list of some burdens, one of which the Lord might place upon you.

**Within the congregation:** Bible teaching; children; church building; cleaning; dance; diaconate; eldership; evangelism; finances; flowers; marrieds; missions; music; new believers; outreach; praise & worship; prayer & intercession; seniors; singles; small group; Sunday school; unity; ushering; youth; ....

**In Society:** ; Victims of abortion; local businesses; coffee shop; environment; your family; provincial or federal government; minorities; prostitution; local schools; sports; street people; soup kitchens; women's rights; the workplace; ....

.... add your own.

## Chapter Seven

### GIFTINGS

I well remember a time of frustration I experienced while leading the youth work in Wales.

Our numbers had grown and we were considering purchasing a public house (beer saloon) next door to the church, to use as a youth centre. As the financial underwriting for this would have to come from the church, a congregational meeting was held. It was encouraging to see the support from all sections of the church. One of our members was training to become a lawyer so the legal aspects of the purchase were put in his hands. Another member owned a small building company so the responsibility for checking out the building's safety and renovation needs were made his responsibility. No one questioned these 'appointments' - they were considered obvious.

That part of the congregational meeting was concluded satisfactorily, so the pastor took the opportunity to raise another concern. The Sunday School was needing teachers. When it became obvious that there would not be sufficient volunteers for the assumed vacancies, it was suggested, and heartily accepted, that the teenage children could listen to audio taped lessons! I strongly opposed this, knowing from my teaching experience that only a small percentage of what we learn enters our comprehension and memory through the 'ear-gate'. A much larger portion enters through the 'eye-gate' while most comes through a hands-on experiencing.

It was not sufficient that I was 'on top' of my profession in teaching, having been elected staff president by my colleagues, serving on the Board of Governors, was home room teacher for the school senior class and on a select panel of teachers developing the national curriculum for my subject, Physics. No one knew much about the legal aspects of buying a public house, so they were glad to pass that on to the 'expert'. No one knew much about house structure and repair, so they passed that on. However, it seemed that everyone in that congregational meeting thought they knew how to teach and my opinion was just that - another opinion, of no more weight than any other. If everyone can teach, why are there so many poor teachers in our school classrooms?

The same principle applies in the church. God has placed different gifts, talents, abilities in the church and we would be wise to discover these in our people. For example, the only real

distinction between an elder and a deacon is that the former is “apt to teach”<sup>38</sup>. This is neither a matter of being ‘more spiritual’ nor higher in rank, but is a different gifting. That does not mean that the elder should be a Sunday School teacher, teaching a set curriculum, but that whenever he approaches a situation in the church or in a person’s life, it is *second nature* to him to turn to the Bible to teach a Biblical principle. Should some church members have financial difficulties, the elder would probably direct them to the Scriptures to show how we hinder God’s work in our lives whenever we allow ourselves to be in debt. He might then indicate a Biblical attitude to finances, before pointing them to a person more knowledgeable about financial counseling. That second person might well be a deacon, ministering in church finances. How sad it is to see ‘elders’ operating in a hierarchic church structure, directing the church but with little aptitude to present Biblical patterns and doctrine. Many have been elected to that position as a promotion for faithful diaconate service or because of business acumen, political savvy or personal charisma, with little recognition of Biblical requirements.

I was recently involved in a major ministry in a South American country, where all the staff had to wear name-tags so they might be easily recognised by visitors to the office where we worked. Mine said *Pastor Gareth Evans*. I put it on my lapel and wore it for a while, until I noticed that many others were also called ‘pastor’, though hardly any of them had ever functioned in that role. It was explained to me that as they were all in some kind of ministry, they were all pastors. Just as everyone in my church in Wales thought that they could teach, it now seemed that everyone in that office thought they could pastor! I quietly took my name-tag off and replaced it with one that simply said, *Gareth Evans*.

When we call people *pastors* or *elders* though the Lord has not appointed them so, we weaken the authority of that position and risk losing its anointing. No wonder that the people they lead are often starved of the meat of God’s Word and grow up on its milk sop.

The **Lord** “*gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

These five ministry gifts are but a small part of the varied gifts and talents that the Lord has placed in the church, His *body*. The apostle Paul uses the analogy of a body to describe the relationship that should exist in the unity of all believers. We are one body of which Christ is the head.

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<sup>38</sup> 1 Timothy 3:2

*(Aside: I am often asked which part of the body I am. With a grin I reply, "I am a 'big toe'!" When asked to explain, I remind my listeners that like the big toe, a pastor often works in the 'dark, smelly places' of people's lives. He is also constantly 'under pressure' but the #1 reason I consider myself a 'big toe' is that I want to bring **balance** to the Body of Christ.)*

It is noteworthy that the three contexts in which Paul writes about the body of Christ, are also the same three places where he emphasises the giftings of the Holy Spirit. As we study these, it becomes apparent that the giftings of the Spirit are for the benefit of the church, His body, not the individual.

### **Ephesians 4 quoted above.**

vv 4 - 7 One body ...

linking verse, v7 *"But to each of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift."*

vv 11-13 Five gifts for equipping.

### **Romans 12**

vv 4 - 5 Many members in one body and all do not have the same function.

linking verse, v6 *"And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them accordingly:"*

vv 6 - 8 Prophecy, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, mercy.

### **1 Corinthians 12**

vv 12 - 27 By one Spirit we were baptised into one body ... the body is not one member but many ..... the ear cannot say to the eye 'I have no need of you' .... But now God has placed the members in the body, just as He desired.

linking verses, vv4 - 7 *"There are varieties of gifts .... varieties of ministries .... varieties of effects .... to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*

vv 8 - 11 word of wisdom, word of knowledge, (gift of) faith, gifts of healing, effecting of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, various kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues.

vv 28 - 30      apostles, prophets, teachers (also in Ephesians 4) miracles, healings, tongues (also earlier in this chapter), helps, administrations, (also in Romans 12 - serving, leading)

It is not important how many giftings there are, or to be able to clearly define just what each gifting involves. What is important is to realise that the Holy Trinity has appointed these gifts, not man. (1 Cor 12: 28 - *“God has appointed..”*; 1 Cor 12: 11 - *“The Spirit distributes ..”*; Eph 4:11 - *“He who ascended .. gave ..”*)

**The Lord gives gifts, talents, abilities to His people to enable them to carry the burden He has placed upon them. They make the yoke ‘easy’ and the burden ‘light’.**

He also wants to use our ‘natural’ abilities and talents, and may put His anointing upon them when used in conjunction with the spiritual gifts.

When God called **Moses** to lead His people out of their bondage in Egypt, His servant expressed apprehension. “They will not believe me,” he said. “they will not recognise that you have sent me.” In other words, they would doubt his authority.

The Lord said, “What is that in your hand?”

“Only my shepherd’s staff.” “This is all I have for I have been tending sheep for the past forty years.”

“Exactly,” the Lord might have replied. “That is a token of your authority as a shepherd. A shepherd whom I have been training and molding for the past forty years, so that you might be the anointed instrument through whom I shall lead a million, bleating two-legged sheep for the next forty years!”

“**David**, what do you have in your pocket?”

“Only a sling for chasing off bears and lions” the shepherd boy replied.

“Good! That will be sufficient to defeat this giant, Goliath, for I have been training you for this day!”

“**Widow woman**, what do you have in your house?”

“Only a small pot of oil.”

“Collect all the pots and pans you can. We’re going to bless all your neighbours!”

**“Peter,** what do you have in your boat?”

“Only my fisherman’s net.”

“Cast it out on the other side of the boat so you will haul in a great catch.”

**“Paul,** what is that document you guard so well?”

“It’s my certificate of Roman citizenship.”

“You need that for I’m taking you to Rome to be my witness in this world’s capital city.”

I was presenting this material to about fifty men at a weekend retreat. At this point in the teaching one of the company stood up and asked if he might tell a story. “I never thought I had any gift to offer to the Lord,” he began. “until, one day in church I noticed that a young lady who regularly sat in front of me, was missing from the service. The next week I had opportunity to speak to her, so I told her that she had been missed. She informed me that she had not been able to come to the service, because her car was needing new brake shoes and she could not afford to have it done. A friend had brought her this day and the car remained unusable. That week I took her car to a friend who owned a garage, and asked him if he would replace the shoes as a favour to me, and I would pay him. He agreed but insisted that he would also be part of blessing this young lady by charging me only the cost of the parts. When we saw the smile on her face as the car was returned to her, we both received a great blessing. Little did we know what the Lord was planning. I began to look around the church at others whom I might help in such a way, especially young people who had little experience with keeping their cars in good, working order, something I knew how to do quite well. Each weekend my friend and I would work together on someone else’s old jalopy, until one day I was called before the senior pastor. ‘I am not pleased that the two of you are blessing our young people so much!’ he said. I was taken aback until he added, ‘Everyone is talking about you, and many new people are coming into the church because they have heard from these young people, how much this church cares for them. But you are not allowing us to share this blessing with you! I want you to continue seeking out needs, recruit others to help you and charge the costs to the church!’ We have been so blessed as we have seen many of our men released into a ministry of helps!”

What a wise pastor! No wonder that church is growing in numbers and impact in that community!

That brother offered his ability and finances (secular gifts) but the Lord had given him a spiritual gift of 'helps' to augment them. When he ministered in his burden, anointing came upon him and the church.

**"Paul,** why do you travel and write so much?"

"Because the Lord has given to me the gift of apostleship to the Gentiles.<sup>39</sup>"

**"Philip,** why did you go to the desert to speak to that Ethiopian eunuch?<sup>40</sup>"

"Because the Spirit of the Lord led me and told me what to say."

"Henceforth you will be known as Philip the Evangelist."

**"Timothy,** what is the secret of your ministry?<sup>41</sup>"

"It is the gift of faith I received through the laying on of (Paul's) hands."

"Then kindle it afresh for you have not received a spirit of timidity, but of power, love and discipline." (2 Tim 1:6,7)

**"My child,** what do you have in your soul?"

"I have my 'pot of oil' - the presence of your Holy Spirit." (throughout the Scriptures, oil always speaks of the Holy Spirit).

"He has come to give you the gifts I want you to have in order for you to carry my burden, to set the captives free, to defeat the giants, to bless your neighbours, to be a fisherman of men and to be my witness in your Jerusalem, Samaria and Judea and to the uttermost parts of the earth."

### ***Your gifting***

So what gifts has the Lord given you that He can use in His kingdom?

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Ask other mature believers if they see evidence of any spiritual gifting in you. You should define your burden but others need to define your gift. There are natural gifts, talents or abilities which the Lord can use as you offer them to Him. He may well put a special anointing upon them but is under no obligation to do so. However, He will *always* put His anointing upon the humble man or woman who is ministering in their burden, exercising the spiritual gifts which He has given for that purpose.

Here is a list of some other gifts:

**Spiritual** (*my pot of oil*): deacon; gentleness; goodness; government; helps; hope; joy; love; meekness or teachableness; showing mercy; peace; self control or temperance; ....

**Secular** (*the rod in my hand*): airman or mariner; business ability or position; catering; computer and media; driving and piloting; education; experience; finances; hospitality; languages; good marriage; nursing; office work; science; some other specialised knowledge; sport; teaching; travel and literature; ....

.... write your own.

## Chapter Eight

### MINISTRY

Wherever did we get the idea from that 'ministry' is the responsibility of ordained clergy and that the laity are to help them in that ministry? It certainly wasn't that way in the early church! There, everyone had all things in common as they fellowshiped in community, and they supported one another as the gifts of ministry became evident. When the emperor Constantine declared that Christianity would be the religion of the Roman empire, Christendom was born with its hierarchic structure, soon to be led by popes, cardinals, et.al. - and the dark ages fell upon the world. The reformation of the C16th brought light to the church but its pyramidic leadership was so well established that the protestant churches adopted the same leadership style. Martin Luther's **95 Theses** of 1517 was a presentation against the use of indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church, but they were birthed out of a natural reaction against so much that was wrong in the church. Years later, in 1530, he made a cool, non-controversial explanation of his views, seeking to be a peacemaker in the growing protests being heard throughout Europe. However, by this time his movement was splitting Europe in two, giving rise to the churches known as *evangelical* or *protestant*. Three main groups emerged: the Lutheran (in Germany and Scandanavia); the Zwinglian and Calvinist (in Switzerland, France, Holland and Scotland) and the Church of England. Do not be fooled by the name *evangelical* - these churches were often no different to the mother church, more political than spiritual. The word *evangelical* referred more to their emphasis on the *evangel* (the Gospel - ie. the Bible) as being their authority rather than the pope and cardinals of the Catholic Church.

As each of these groups tried to establish themselves, the politics of warfare was the instrument used and much bloodshed occurred. To maintain control over their lands and people, church leaders made it mandatory to belong to the 'state' church, on pain of excommunication from society, non ability to obtain or keep employment and even death. Fortunately, time has brought some measure of release from such ungodly bondage, though church structure often remains pyramidic in form with power emanating from the few (ordained clergy) at the 'top'.

It is not until the latter part of this century that a major move away from such authoritarian leadership has led to the formation of many house churches and independent assemblies. Sadly, even in this new reactionary movement, oftentimes a leader has risen with his own charisma, to become another self-appointed authority.

I had been invited to London to spend a few weeks travelling around the different small groups of believers who were employees of the National Westminster Bank. There are several of these groups in the City - as the London business centre is known - who meet once or twice a month for mutual encouragement and fellowship. My time in England would end with a weekend retreat at Haythrope Hall, the country mansion in Oxfordshire, belonging to the NatWest bank.

My first lunchtime meeting was with about a dozen bankers of the Square Mile group, very near the Bank of England. I spoke as a pastor for the twenty minutes allotted to me and felt positive about the meeting. Five weeks later, nearing the end of my time in England, I returned to the Square Mile for a second meeting, but this time, I apologised to my listeners. "When I spoke to you five weeks ago," I said, "I had no idea of the stress under which you work. My teaching must have seemed very superficial to you and with little relevance to your situation. Have you ever brought your pastor to see what you do in a normal day's work?" I went on to encourage them to invite their church leaders to spend some time with them at work, just to see the pressures under which many of them operate.

I had discovered that many of the younger employees work for ten hours or more a day, in a room filled with over two hundred other employees, all eyes glued to their computer monitors and afraid to leave their chairs too early lest they be the next one to receive a redundancy notice! More senior executives often work even longer hours to keep up with the demands of their employment. On weekends they are often too tired to be actively involved in their churches and I suspect that their pastors consider them as having little commitment to *the work of the Lord*.

I would suggest that they, as all 'laity', are the real ministers of the church, working on its front lines in the battle against the darkness of the world, and the pastors' responsibility is to equip them to handle the stress and to be as light in the midst of that darkness. Pastors, let me encourage you to take time to visit your parishioners at work and see for yourselves where the real witness is seen.

Alan works in the bank on one of its busiest floors. A year ago he was very frustrated by his church as he felt a 'call' into the full-time ministry as a pastor. This he had interpreted as being in the pulpit of a local church but his denomination did not believe in releasing lay men into such an *important* position and there were few opportunities in other churches.

He spoke with the leader of his local believers' small group who suggested to him that there was great need for a pastor to minister to the many people surrounding him at work.

“Look at that lady” he said, “She has just lost her husband. And that man has just been given a redundancy notice after working here for twelve years. The lady sitting at that desk has a child who is dying with cancer, and the man next to her is going through a divorce.”

Suddenly Peter saw with a new vision. This was the field where he was supposed to be a shepherd. He began to approach those whom he discovered were hurting and was amazed as they began to open up to him and allow him to speak into their sorrows. Surely the Lord was opening people’s hearts to him! A year later he has no desire to leave that work but is truly fulfilled in the pastoral ministry in which *the Lord has ordained* him.

It is your responsibility to define your burden; your friends and counselors will define your gifts but your ministry should be defined by the church leadership, pastors and elders. Not chosen or appointed but defined! The leader’s first responsibility is to recognise the ministry that **the Lord has prepared** each of His sheep for. This is where the process of being disciplined to reach your destiny as flying eagles usually breaks down, leading to frustrated, often bitter and cynical believers.

When a mother eagle knows it is time for her young to leave the nest, she removes all the soft down and feathers with which the nest had been lined and then nudges the eaglet to its edge. With a none-too-gentle push the youngster is launched into space! Inexperience - and the Law of Gravity - causes the young bird to fall toward the ground, flapping its wings in a futile attempt to regain the comfort of the nest. Before it reaches the ground, however, the mother eagle swoops down and catches her offspring on her wings, bearing it up again to the heights! There is no safety there, for just as suddenly as it was saved from being dashed on the ground, the youngster is once again cast off into space and begins to fall. This is repeated until the young bird begins to feel the wind under its wings bearing it up so that it would not fall to the ground. Finally, the mother eagle returns to her nest to stand and proudly watch, as her youngster begins to know the delight of soaring upon the wind into the heights of the heavens.

The role of a pastor is just like that of the mother eagle. We are called to ‘equip the saints for the work of ministry’. We are to seek out those in our congregations who display the gifts necessary to carry their expressed burden, and then set a ministry before them that will enable them to learn to fly on the anointing winds of the Holy Spirit. This is a risky business! It may mean that they will fail and cause people to question our judgment; or it may mean they will succeed and surpass us in prominence and achievement. Only those pastors who are secure in their own calling, who know their own blessing of fulfillment in ministry, are able to freely release others. This releasing is not a one-time thing; it requires a commitment to nurture, support, defend, guide until they begin to fly.

It is because pastors and church leaders have failed to release their people, that so many have branched off and 'done their own thing' with little support from the church and little anointing on their work. I have had to deal with many young people who had a burden for missions and who displayed evident calling and gifting for such work, but who struggled financially and with little or no prayer support from their home church, because the church had a set missions program - or none at all - and that church member didn't fit into their plans. I have also seen many who should never have been released into missions work but came with an attitude of rebellion. This introduces us to the whole area of authority, responsibility and accountability within the church.

I have had many sad experiences counseling those who have been hurt by a wrong exercise of authority in church or parachurch leadership. Being the pastor or an elder in the church does not give one authority to dictate to others - our calling is that of a servant and what servant exercises dictatorial authority? **The authority lies not in the position but in the anointed gifting of the ministry.**

Jesus came among men as a humble servant but when He spoke, the people remarked that He spoke as one with authority. The Roman Centurion was the most powerful man in his district, but when his son was ill, he came to Jesus and asked that He might exercise that authority and heal his son.<sup>42</sup> He was a humble itinerant teacher who surrounded Himself with the outcasts of society and had received no mandate from the Sanhedrin or the High Priest. Yet the centurion had the insight to see His authority. People will gladly follow a pastor in whom they see the anointing of a shepherd's heart but they will not readily allow a man to rule over them who has the title but does not display such gifting. They will be eager to learn from an anointed teacher, but will reject the authority of one who is unable to lead them into the deep truths of the Word, even though he has the title of elder.

Though I was the pastor, I was glad to sit under the ministry of Jim (Ch.6) as he led us into meaningful prayer and intercession, for he was the one with anointing and authority in that area. However, he also displayed a recognition of my authority as one, called by God to be his pastor, and would often question me as to the things he was teaching. Were they Biblically correct and edifying to the church? He knew that my responsibility was to safeguard the spiritual health of our congregation, so was careful not to cause offense. I gave him a measure of authority and he made himself accountable to me. Authority should never be exercised by one who is not also under authority.

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<sup>42</sup> Luke 7:8

Before I became a pastor I served as an elder in a Toronto church. One day, while we were without a pastor, two ladies came to the church seeking advice concerning a loved one whom they thought to be demon possessed. This was not something I knew much about but we did have a man in the congregation who was very wise in this area. Ron was going through a messy divorce at the time and could not serve as one of our elders, though he was, without doubt, well versed in the Scriptures and 'apt to teach'. I asked him to speak to the two ladies in one of our classrooms while I sat in and listened. I was well aware that whatever Ron told them, it would be understood as being the counsel of our church. Ron was teaching with the authority of my eldership, and I, not he, would be accountable to the other elders for whatever was said. He was being released to exercise a ministry that I was incapable of performing. I gave him a measure of authority but the responsibility remained mine.

Oftentimes we give a person responsibility for a ministry within the church but we do not give him the authority to carry out that ministry. You cannot delegate responsibility; it always remains yours. Only authority can be delegated and that means giving the freedom to make mistakes. Of course there are many levels of authority, dependent on the maturity of the disciple, our eagle learning to fly, and a wise servant-leader will nurture those he releases into ministry by giving just the right amount of authority with the appropriate accountability.

These three terms, authority, accountability and responsibility can never be separated. You should never have one without the others. (See Appendix 1 for more on Authority, etc.)

I believe that every meeting of the church elders should have these two items on the agenda. Prayer, to seek the mind of God, and a time of asking 'who in our congregation is ready to be released into their ministry?' People should be encouraged to express the burdens upon their hearts, and leaders should be constantly watching to see if there is evidence of giftings appropriate to that burden. Not everyone who has a burden should be immediately released - there is need for growth in maturity, in the fruit of the Spirit. However, God is still ready to take the weak and foolish things of this world to confound the wise and strong.<sup>43</sup> He is usually far more willing to use a weak vessel than we as pastors are to release them.

I was walking out with a young pastor who was expressing much interest in this teaching. I asked him, "Whom do you have in your church who has a real burden from the Lord?" "That's easy," he said, "Peter does, but we cannot help him because he has a street ministry in our city centre and our church is in the suburbs."

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<sup>43</sup> ! Corinthians 1:26f

“Evidently God has made a mistake” I said, “for He has sent Peter to your church and not to an inner city church! Why don’t you ask Peter how your church can help him carry his burden?”

Peter had come to the Lord just two years earlier while he was living as a society dropout and a rebel. He stood out as someone different in this suburban church, as he shaved his head and wore an earring. However, no one could deny that his love for the Lord was genuine and he was growing daily in his Christian walk. He wanted to go back to his old haunts to share his good news with former colleagues on the street.

The pastor went to see Peter and asked him to explain his burden again and to tell him how the church might be able to help. “Pastor, what I really need is an old van. It seems that every time anyone stops to talk with me, we are interrupted by someone else. It would be good if I could take them somewhere private, like a van, where I could keep some booklets and good coffee.” This was presented to the elders, an old van was purchased and renovated, another brother in the church volunteered to man the coffee pot in the separated front of the van, and Peter had his ministry. And the Lord anointed the work! Some years later when I next visited that city, I saw Peter’s van at the back of the church, so asked where I might find him. I was told that he was away at Bible School. Later still, on another visit to that place, I visited Peter at his work – leading an inner-city church ministering among the people he loved – and for whom he had a divine burden.

## Chapter Nine

# ANOINTING

In Chapter Two I defined anointing as *God putting His seal, His approval upon a person or ministry, so that there is an eternal impact on the lives of those being ministered to.*

There is no question that He anoints some ministries and amazing results are seen which no man could have engineered. At this moment (in 1999) for example, there is a Reconciliation Walk taking place where small numbers of believers are retracing the steps that the Crusaders took nine hundred years ago. Those early *Christians* are remembered for the murder, rape and thievery that they conducted on their march across Europe en route to Jerusalem to set the Holy City free from the Muslims. Almost every Muslim or Jew they could capture was put to death. They sowed the seeds for the hatred and misunderstanding that the Muslim of today has for the Christian. The present day pilgrims have a very different agenda. Everywhere they go, they approach the Muslim leaders with a written apology which is read in Arabic, English and the local language. There are no strings attached, just a humble identification and recognition of the wrongs done so long ago under the banner of the cross. At the end of 1999, they anticipate arriving at Jerusalem with their message of repentance and reconciliation. The response of the imams and mosque leaders has been one of amazement and acceptance, some even likening the coming of these Christians as an *epiphany* - a public visitation of God to His people. National newspapers, television and radio have carried many positive reports to all the people of their countries.

There are men and women whose names are associated with this wonderful event but they are all eager to stay in the background as God moves upon the hearts of the Muslim peoples of Europe. Truly His anointing is upon this ministry.

I'm sure you can also think of ministries where God's pleasure is evident and where great eternal impact is being made. However, there are so many other programs, birthed not in the heart of God but in the mind of man. The initiator may be sincere and earnest in his commitment to this work - and God may give a measure of *success* to honour his faithfulness - but there is little or no anointing. I have even been part of large ministries where I saw so many examples of unethical conduct and humanistic thinking, all in the name of promoting the Gospel. Political pressure was brought to bear on people, jobs were threatened, circumstances were manipulated, half truths were told (they're no different than lies!), just so that we could continue our program without too many hitches. Souls were saved - isn't God's grace wonderful? - but then men believed that the ends justified the means, and continued to plan

their next program on the same, shaky foundation. How much more of God's grace might we have seen if we had maintained integrity and humility before Him? There are many people today with large 'ministries' who would have been just as successful if they had initiated a secular business. The ministry is built on their charisma or business acumen, rather than on the charismata and unction of God. This is surely one of the key reasons why so many in our churches are superficial in their faith and failing to be the overcomers that Jesus calls, and expects, us to be; why so many churches and pastors are struggling and why the gates of Hell are prevailing against much of what we call church; why such little impact is being made on the secular humanistic thinking of our governments.

We desperately need men, women and programs with God's anointing. ***Why should He anoint those programs which He has not initiated, and those people whom He has not equipped and released into the ministry in which they are involved?*** He has burdened people, has equipped them and is waiting for them to be released into His ministry so that He can demonstrate His glory through them in great anointing.

Sometimes it is not the laity who need to be released, but the clergy! I visited the home of Jim and Cathy, a young couple in Queensland, Australia. Jim was a consultant for small businesses who were thinking of expansion and who needed an expert insight into potential dangers of such a move. He told me how that for a few years they had struggled financially, as some companies would not use him due to his refusal to be involved in 'greasing the palms' of company directors. Jim and Cathy attended a church where the attendance rarely topped forty people. One year he and his pastor took a missions trip to Papua New Guinea, the nearest undeveloped nation, off the north east coast of Australia. On returning home, Jim was exuberant in telling the stories of how the Lord had anointed their ministry, especially that of their pastor.

"Cathy," he said, "our pastor had a great anointing on him while ministering to the people of Papua New Guinea. The Spirit of the Lord wonderfully used him and many people came to faith in Christ. We need to send him there more often but I know that he cannot afford it and neither can the church at present. Can we stretch our income to put some money away each month, in order to build a fund for sending pastor on a mission trip more often?"

This they agreed to do. They would release their pastor into his appointed ministry. When Jim told me this story one year later, he added an amazing postscript. In that one year, his business had received income *ten times* what they had received in any previous year and not only had they been able to send their pastor a few times to Papua New Guinea but had also

been able to fund several others from the church to accompany him in ministry! The work load for Jim was just the same but the companies that now employed him paid commissions far greater than he had ever received before. Not only was God anointing their pastor's ministry but He was also anointing Jim and Cathy's ministry of 'giving with liberality'.<sup>44</sup> Jim might never be a preacher or an evangelist but he has found his ministry and is greatly fulfilled, flying like the eagle. The story was even more amazing the next time I visited Jim and Cathy. He told me how his income had doubled each year since I was there so he was now receiving eight times what he had been earning. "However" he added, "you will see that I still live in the same house and have the same (small) car in my driveway. That is because, over the last four years we have sent every member of our church to the mission field, some several times. Why should we want a larger house or better car when we are having so much fun serving the Lord!"

Jesus was 'born of the Holy Spirit' unlike any of us who need to be 'born again' of that same Spirit so that we, like He, might be called sons of God. The Spirit of God dwelt in the man Jesus. Truly He was the incarnate Son of God. The *Word* (God's revelation of Himself) had become flesh and dwelt among us. One day, Jesus came to his cousin, John who was baptising people in the Jordan. His was not a baptism of regeneration, nor of public confession of faith, but of repentance and returning to the orthodoxy of the Law.

"Baptise me, John," said Jesus.

"I cannot baptise *you*, Jesus. It is you who must baptise me!" said John.

"Baptise me, John," Jesus said again, "So that all righteousness might be fulfilled."

So John baptised Him.

*"and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove and a voice came out of Heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."*<sup>45</sup>

Immediately He was led *by the Spirit* into the wilderness where he was to spend forty *silent* days. They are silent only in that we have no record of what happened until He is tempted by Satan at the end of that time. Speculation does no harm unless we make it doctrine, but I have often wondered why the Holy Spirit should so lead Him. I have come to believe that the forty days were spent in communion with His Father, where He learned of the path that was set before Him, the journey via Gethsemene and Calvary which alone could purchase our redemption. He was given His *ministry*.

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<sup>44</sup> Romans 12:8

<sup>45</sup> Matthew 3:16,17

On returning to his home town of Nazareth, Jesus entered the synagogue, took up the Scriptures and read,

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because **He has anointed Me***

*to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me*

*to proclaim release to the captives,*

*and recovery of sight to the blind,*

*to set free those who are downtrodden,*

*to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord.”<sup>46</sup>*

... and this He began to do. He did not allow Himself to be sidetracked by the demands and wishes of others.

When John was cast into the dungeons beneath Herod’s palace, he anticipated that his cousin Jesus would do something about it. After all, wasn’t He going to set up His kingdom on earth? Wasn’t He going to overthrow the Roman empire with its Herods? Wasn’t He going to set the captives free? After a short time it became evident to the Baptist that Jesus was not going to come - indeed, He didn’t even send a get-out-soon card to His imprisoned relative! John called some of his own disciples and asked them to search for Jesus and when they found Him to ask Him this question. “Are you really the Messiah or should we look for another?”

John really must have been peeved at Jesus’ apparent lack of concern, for no one could have been more assured that John himself that Jesus is the Messiah. He had prophesied, had seen the dove and had heard the voice declaring Him so. Note the reply that Jesus sent to John.<sup>47</sup>

*“Go and tell John what you hear and see.*

*the blind receive sight and the lame walk,*

*the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear,*

*the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.*

*.... and blessed is he who is not offended by Me!”*

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<sup>46</sup> Luke 4:18f

<sup>47</sup> Matthew 11:4-6

In other words, "I am doing exactly what I was called, equipped and anointed to do!"

If Jesus needed to be anointed to carry out His ministry, **how much more so do we?**

He was *filled* with the Holy Spirit from birth, but needed the *anointing* of the Spirit before He would start His ministry!

There is a major difference between these two experiences of the Holy Spirit, and we fail to understand it to the weakening of the ministry of the Body of Christ.

At the New Birth we were 'baptised *by the Spirit into the Body of Christ*.'<sup>48</sup>

This first happened to the disciples three days after Calvary when Jesus came to them in a locked room and *breathed upon them*, saying, "Receive the Holy Ghost!" (Greek *arist imperative tense*, demanding immediate effect). They were 'born again' as I was nearly two millenia later at the age of seventeen, when the same Holy Spirit entered my life. This is what we call justification.

John told the people of One coming after him who would baptise them with the Holy Ghost and fire. This had been the promise of the Father to which Jesus referred as He instructed His disciples to "tarry in Jerusalem until you receive power from on high"<sup>49</sup>. This first happened on the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Calvary, when the one hundred and twenty gathered in the Upper Room were mightily empowered when the glorified Jesus baptised them with the Holy Spirit. This baptism is *by Jesus into the Holy Spirit*. Clearly the Scriptures are speaking of two different experiences.

It is God's will for every believer to be filled with the Spirit. This is both a crisis and an ongoing experience subsequent to conversion.

We are exhorted by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5: 18 to 'keep on being filled with the Spirit'. Evidently, though the baptism (initial filling) of the Holy Spirit is a sovereign act of the Lord, we are responsible for the continuing filling. There is something *we can do*.

Paul continues with what are three evidences of the Spirit-filled life:

v19: a worshipping attitude;

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<sup>48</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:13

<sup>49</sup> Acts 1:4,5

v20: a thankful attitude;

v21: a servant attitude.

The rest of chapter 5 and most of 6, are examples of how to live out this Spirit-filled life in our relationships with our spouses, children and fellow workers.

Sadly, we have mistaken this filling (or baptism) with the Holy Spirit for the anointing of the Spirit. The former is a filling - within you; the latter is an empowering - upon you. The former is the equipping in preparation for service; the latter comes after releasing into service. The former now depends upon our attitudes and openness; the latter is still sovereign.

There is a move in the church today, to once again recognise the ministry gifts of New Testament times such as the apostle and prophet. We have had no difficulty calling men evangelists, pastors or teachers but these other two recorded in Ephesians 4 have caused us some more concern. It is my belief that these ministries should be present in the church and evident by their anointing. Sadly however, I have been present too often when a speaker has ended his pulpit time by speaking out publicly, targeting individuals in the congregation with futuristic prophecies. Many of these have never come to pass and no one has held the prophet accountable for his wrong statements. As a pastor I have had to deal with several sad situations brought about in individual lives, by acting upon the prophetic advice of another. In Old Testament days, if the word of the prophet was not true, he was put to death! He spoke only when he knew he had God's anointing!

In parenthesis, I must commend the brother who had visited a town for ministry, leaving it with a strong word of a mighty outpouring of God's Spirit about to fall upon the churches. "If I were a pastor here, I would cancel my holidays" he said, "so that I might be available to the many who will come into my church in the coming months." Some pastors did just that, leaving their wives and children to go on holidays alone. However, as the year drew to a close it was obvious that nothing special had happened, so the local pastors' representatives sent a polite letter to the *prophet* asking if they had done something to divert God's blessing from their town. His reply was humbling, confessing that he had 'blown it' and had, as a consequence, cancelled other prophetic meetings for several months, placing himself under the discipline of his local church leaders. He asked for their forgiveness.

The best advice I ever heard about prophecy came from Floyd McClung of Youth With A Mission. He said, "if ever someone gives you a prophetic word, put it in the bottom drawer of your cupboard and lock the drawer. It was not given to you for present-day direction, but as a future encouragement." He went on to explain that, if the prophecy is from God, there will come a time when you may be in a situation where you need assurance. Then you will

remember the prophecy which told you this would happen, with the result that you will have increased confidence that God has led you here.

The fulfilment of the prophecy is the only evidence of its anointing.

People are quick to claim anointing without regarding the cost of a lack of anointing. If false Old Testament prophets were put to death, one wonders how the Lord regards false New Testament prophets. How much of His best blessing do they forfeit?

A similar concern may be expressed about teachers. Paul constantly warned the early church about 'false' teachers, and how men would *"not endure sound doctrine but would want their ears tickled, accumulating to themselves teachers according to their own desires."*

I have spent some time in Latin America where certain North American teachers are very popular, having many books and videos translated into Spanish and Portuguese. I have watched videos with my latino friends, where the teacher has made authoritative statements, not having biblical support. He makes five statements, the first three of which are biblically sound, but the last two are of his own imagination. His audience, however, are receiving all five as being biblical, and many pastors, not being experienced in personal study and biblical scholarship, are receiving this teaching as their doctrinal foundation. Influence a pastor and you influence a church - for good or for bad.

I have written earlier that the characteristic of an elder that differentiates him from a deacon is that he is 'apt to teach' (able and quick to apply the Word). An elder who teaches well is to be considered worthy of 'double honour'<sup>50</sup>. His ministry is considered to be so valuable that the church places it above all others with 'double honour'. Why?

Let us also add before answering the question, that elders (pastors and teachers) who fail in their ministry are to be disciplined in front of all the church!<sup>51</sup> Double honour, double jeopardy. This does not apply to any other position in the church!

Let us return to the question. Why should a teacher receive double honour and not the prophet or the evangelist, or any other?

Let me suggest that the reason may be explained by the following examples.

If an evangelist does his work well, he will bring many new believers into the church. If he does his work poorly, he will add no new believers to the church. It is a *zero or many* result and is additive.

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<sup>50</sup> 1 Timothy 5:17

<sup>51</sup> 1 Timothy 5:20

If a teacher does his work well, he will produce many disciples who will multiply themselves. If he does his work poorly, he will also produce many disciples, bad disciples who will multiply themselves. The result is many positive or many negative, both having potential to multiply.

“God has appointed teachers” wrote Paul. He went on to ask, “All are not teachers, are they?” We need teachers who are anointed by the Spirit to teach the hidden riches of Christ. Do not claim for yourself any of the ministry callings of the church such as pastor, teacher or prophet unless you have been released into such a ministry by others, recognising the evident burden and gifting you have received from the Lord. It is a dangerous thing to claim anointing where there is none. That is not faith - it is presumption, a sin.

There is a move today among disillusioned believers to start house churches. They are fed up with the hierarchal structure of their denominational church, believing it to be unbiblical and controlling. Sadly, too many of these churches end up in the same mold as the former church as authoritative, controlling ‘leaders’ come to the top. It is human nature to be controlling of those we consider weaker or less competent than ourselves. When the apostle Paul planted house churches in Asia Minor he appointed elders to oversee these fledgling congregations. That is a God-given ministry. The authority of the leader is not in his title but in his anointing as an elder. When he truly satisfies the Biblical requirements of an elder as found in Titus and 1 Timothy, there is great potential for that house church to grow under the Lord’s anointing.

## Chapter Ten

### FLYING

When God puts His anointing upon a person's ministry, he or she will experience what it is to 'mount up with wings as the eagle'. He will feel the winds of the Spirit bearing him up, soaring high above the mundane lives so many other believers are living. The yoke will be easy and the burden light.

I have related many stories in previous chapters referring to some of those whose lives I have been privileged to know. I have caught some of their excitement, felt some of their anointing and now can be satisfied with nothing less for my own ministry. There is nothing so satisfying, so fulfilling to me than to spend time with hungry young believers, seeking a deeper walk with the Lord. If I can lead them into a healthy Christian lifestyle, free from the hurts and wounds carried by so many, and ministering in their gifting, I know a joy that is 'unspeakable, full of glory!'<sup>52</sup> There, I am experiencing the closeness of being yoked together with the Lord, for it is His burden I am carrying, the one He has given me to bear with Him.

Let me tell you of others whom I have met. Some of the names you will know, others are strangers to you but not to the Lord.

#### ***Jackie Pullinger.***

When I knew Jackie in 1967-69 we were both young teachers in Hong Kong. On two occasions I went into the 'dragon's den' ( Kowloon's infamous walled city) with her as she conducted children's meetings. It was not an easy situation and few others would ever venture there with her. We would walk in the narrow streets taking great care not to step in the sewage that flowed along the centre of the pathway. On one occasion, we came across a man lying in the sewage, 'stoned' on heroin. I helped Jackie prop him against the wall and then watched as she washed his face with her clean handkerchief. At that time I considered her no different than many other young women who wanted to serve the Lord. She might have a little more courage than most - or foolishness as many other missionaries thought - but she was just another 'weak

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<sup>52</sup> 1 Peter 1:8

and foolish thing<sup>53</sup>, that the Lord would use. I saw her frustration and prayed with her for the 'hopeless' condition of so many she longed to introduce to her Saviour. There is not a young woman or man reading this book who does not have the same potential 'in Christ' to change this world as Jackie Pullinger has. She would be quick to acknowledge that it was not her but "Christ in her" who brought the victory.

Many years later as I read Jackie's book *Chasing The Dragon* I noted how she said that she had never felt afraid in that evil place, even when threatened with rape and death by the addicts and gang leaders who dwelt there. This was strange to her and incomprehensible to others, but a sure evidence of God's anointing on her ministry, a fact now recognised by all the Christian world.

### **Major A.S.**

Major S. was with the Salvation Army, known more for its humanitarian work than for its great preachers. However, during my graduation year from University, he came to our town for a week of meetings at the local army citadel. After the first evening, the meetings were switched to the Apostolic Church as the citadel was too small for the numbers of people who attended. Though he was unknown to most outside the S.A., word of mouth spread the news of great anointing and soon there were many more attending the meetings. By the middle of the week, the Apostolic Church was too small and the venue had to be changed again!

I was studying for my final exams so was unable to attend many meetings. However, I was present on the Thursday evening when Major S. stopped speaking, glanced at his watch, took a second long look and exclaimed, "I am so sorry! I had no idea that my time had already gone. Please forgive me for keeping you here so late. I know that many of you have busses to catch so I will close now and continue this theme tomorrow evening." No one moved and there was silence until a man in the congregation got up and said, "Sir, you cannot leave us here! We are in the presence of the Lord. Please continue."

Major S. invited all who had to leave to do so, but as no one moved, he continued speaking for about another half hour. There would be many calling for taxis or having lifts home with friends that evening as the last busses had already gone.

In these days when people want 'serendipity' sermons and few preachers can keep their congregation if they preach for longer than forty minutes, we might ask what Major S. had that held us enthralled for well over ninety minutes. The answer is anointing.

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<sup>53</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:27

### ***Dr Martin Lloyd Jones***

No one who had the privilege of sitting under the ministry of this great preacher can doubt his anointing. I have watched him on midweek evenings as he taught from the *Book of Romans* to a congregation made up mostly of University students from the various colleges of the University of London. An estimate would be about five thousand listeners as he stood in his elevated pulpit in Westminster Chapel and spoke the Word. I am not sure if he used a public address system, so essential today even in the smallest of church buildings, but he had such a resonant voice that I doubt its necessity. He had little body action, nothing flamboyant in dress or style, little charisma but undoubted charismata - and anointing.

### ***Y. R.***

Y. stammered so badly that it was impossible to hold a conversation with him. As a young man he was charged with theft and was awaiting his trial with other gang members, when he gave his life to the Lord. His colleagues were all sent to juvenile remand homes but Y., though the gang leader, was released to the custody of a local pastor. That wise judge knew that God was far more able to reform a wasted life than years spent in a prison. One day, a couple of years later during which time he and I had become good friends, Y. wanted me to arrange a meeting for him in his home town so that he could tell everyone what the Lord had done for him. Though I tried to dissuade him because of his stammering tongue, he insisted and I had to stand back in awe as the Lord took that weak vessel, spoke through him with clarity and anointed his ministry. I learned his secret shortly afterwards, for almost every evening he would retire to a garden shed where he had a table, chair, light and Bible. Though not having had an advanced education, Y. became a student at the feet of Jesus. He became a regular speaker on the lay preachers' circuit and large crowds would come out to hear his anointed preaching. He has twice travelled to minister in Canada and has had to turn down invitations to pastor there and in Great Britain.

### ***A.J.***

A. was in teacher training school when the pressure of all the work and her lack of close friendships drove her to consider suicide. As she walked along the beach one day, she saw a piece of paper blowing across the sands. It was a gospel tract and as she read it, the Spirit of the Lord moved upon her soul until she knelt there on the beach and weeping, asked the Lord

to save her. She began to attend our church. Shortly afterwards she asked if she might recite a poem at the Sunday service. The pastor agreed, a little tentatively as this was not a normal occurrence in the church, but we are so grateful that he did. Every heart was touched and warm tears of joy were upon each face as A. took us into a new experience with the Lord through her anointed words. I like to recite poetry but I could never move people like that! We looked forward to each time that A. would minister in that anointing.

### **H. W.**

H. came to the Lord in his teens after being involved in a street fight where he thought he had killed a man. Happily his apprehension was unfounded but, in his fear, he came to our church next morning, heard the Gospel for the first time and yielded himself to the Lord. He had no understanding of doctrines or denominations so would go from church to church wherever he saw an open door, entering in to join whatever meeting was in progress. If it was a prayer meeting, it would not be long before he would be on his feet praying. I have sat in many a meeting, as dry as dust, until H. stood up to pray. Then the heavens opened and God made His presence known among us. There was an anointing upon the prayers of this simple man that I never knew on my prayers, for he could move heaven with just a few words.

### **C.Mc.**

I have sat in many a meeting and listened to the singing being led by the *Praise & Worship Team*. I was instructed when to clap hands and when to sit or stand, told to sing louder or when to listen to the instruments only. Sometimes I have been able to join in when the words have been known to me, but I confess that is becoming more and more rare. P&W meant little more than having a singalong in which, those who were worshippers could worship privately (if they were able to shut out the *noise* which often surrounded them!) However, when C. sat at the piano and *led* us into worship, knowing all the words was not necessary as he took us into the presence of the Lord and we were 'lost in wonder, love and praise'<sup>54</sup>. He worshipped and we worshipped. He did not choose songs because of their musical style, chord structures or rhythm but because they pointed us to Jesus. He did not play us on a yo-yo by alternating songs of testimony or warfare with those of adoration, interchanging between the horizontal (singing to one another) and the vertical (addressing the Lord). His ministry of leading worship was anointed and all present knew it. If I was to speak, I would usually do so early in the meeting so that we could come to worship at the end, when no one had to leave until they felt

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<sup>54</sup> From the hymn *Love Divine all Loves Excelling* - Chas Wesley

it was time. In many a meeting, there would be several people remaining long after others had left, needing to remain in the divine presence. The contrast between his anointed worship and much of what I have experienced elsewhere, leads me to believe that the Lord is *still seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth*<sup>55</sup>.

### **C.N.**

I was in my first year as a church pastor and was anxious to prepare good spiritual food for my people each week. I did not want to be locked into a teaching routine that could be predicted several weeks in advance, but would seek the Lord for fresh material for each sermon. Therefore, each Wednesday I would lock the door of my office, unplug the phone and spend time studying the Word, seeking what the Lord had for my people.

The elders had scheduled one hour of the service for the teaching of the Word so they expected some 'meat' in the sermon each Sunday. Many times I entered the pulpit confident that I had His Word but there were also many times that I was apprehensive.

C., one of the elders, would often stand in the earlier part of the service, as was his custom, to read a portion of Scripture. Several times, often when I was unsure that I had heard from the Lord that week, C. would announce his reading and I would sit back in amazement as he read the context of my text for that morning! You can imagine the confidence that gave me to know that I had indeed heard from the Lord and that I did have His message for that morning. There is no way that C. could have known my theme or text each week, but he had heard the voice of the Lord directing him to the Scriptures for that day. That is anointing.

### **A.A.**

I had the privilege of working with A., an African brother, while I was pastor on board the Mercy Ship M/V Anastasis between 1991 and 1994. His responsibility was to make sure the water on board ship was always drinkable and not contaminated by the bacteria common in African waters. On Tuesday evenings I held a small class for those who wanted to spend time preparing themselves for a possible future pastoral ministry, and A. was a keen member of the group. However, whenever he spoke I listened as though he were the teacher and I the student, for his comments were rich with the understanding of one who has immersed himself in the Word.

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<sup>55</sup> John 4:23

On one of our mission trips to West Africa, A. was asked to help in crowd control at the field dental clinic set up by Mercy Ships. He did his work diligently, often presenting the Gospel to the Muslim people patiently waiting their turn to be seen by our dentists. The Muslims of West Africa are not militants and most have very little understanding of the tenets of Islam, so they honour any *holy man*, be he Muslim, Christian or the animistic witch doctor. One day A. was asked to pray for two old men, both with crippling diseases, so he did as they requested, emphasising to them that he would only pray 'in the name of Jesus'. Both were instantly healed and were quick to acknowledge that their healing was from the Lord, with the result that the chief of that village declared it to be henceforth a "Jesus village". This was not a rare occurrence for A. and there were several similar examples demonstrating God's anointing on his ministry.

### **I & A**

I performed the wedding service for I. and A. with little expectation that the Lord could use them in any 'real' ministry. They were a simple couple who wanted to live a life uncluttered by worldly position, possessions or pressure, so they had retired to their home near the coast. I did not see them again for several years and knew little of their lifestyle, until a friend visited me and began to tell of the wonderful ministry of counseling and inner healing he had recently received. He talked of a man and woman who had helped him so much with their gifts of discernment and words of wisdom, and had challenged him by pointing to things in his life that needed to be changed. He was amazed as he listened and was aware that they were being led by the Lord. He continued to tell me that, though they were not part of any church or parachurch ministry, they received telephone calls from around the country from people seeking their counsel and prayers.

I expressed my desire to meet this remarkable couple but was astonished when he told me their names. "Surely not!" I exclaimed, "I did their wedding and never dreamed of the great potential they had in serving the Lord!" But the Lord did - and His anointing is upon them!

### **M.M.**

I was talking with a pastor friend about the theme of this book, when he related the following story.

He was serving a church in the prairie provinces of Canada when he received a telephone call that one of his parishioners was sick. He immediately went to visit the sick man and was able to

give him some comfort. As he left the room, he commented on the lovely small bouquet of wild flowers standing in a vase beside the bed. He was told that “M. sent them around earlier this afternoon”.

Some weeks later, my friend visited another home and was eating some cake which had been offered to him. He commended his hostess only to be told that “M. brought it to me this afternoon.”

After several similar instances, the pastor was struck by the repetition of M.’s name. She was an elderly spinster in his church who could easily go unnoticed in any gathering. She never said anything and was very retiring in her manner. He decided to visit M. to find out how she was aware of people’s sickness in the church even before he had been informed by the family. At first she was a little apprehensive thinking that the pastor was reprimanding her for her forwardness in telephoning the sick, visiting them or sending flowers and cakes, but he quickly assured her that was not so.

M. told him how she would pray each evening for every person in the church, naming them in her prayers. On one occasion, the name of an elderly widower kept coming to her mind with the thought that she should call him. Of course, she hesitated to do so thinking that her actions might be misunderstood, but the thought was persistent. Finally, after much procrastination and several hours of disquiet, she had picked up the telephone and called him. When she got through it was evident that the widower was in some distress and sounded very confused. He had fallen and hurt himself but in his anxiety and confusion, did not know what to do or what telephone numbers to call. M. said something to encourage him and then called the doctor who quickly went to the house and was able to assist the old man. She regretted the long hours she had procrastinated and determined that in future, whenever the Lord prompted her, she would respond immediately by telephoning or visiting whomever the Lord spoke to her about.

My pastor friend was thrilled that M. had found her ministry and he was very supportive, encouraging her to continue the good work, saying that she should never be afraid to bill the church for any costs involved in purchasing flowers, baking cakes, etc.

She had found her ministry and the Lord was anointing it.

### **S.B.**

S. served time in prison for drug related offenses. Even though he had become a Christian some years earlier he had not lived for the Lord and was addicted to hard drugs as well as

alcohol and cigarettes. He had considered suicide as the only way out of the mess his life had become. On release from prison he attended AA meetings and there made a recommitment of his life to Christ. Over a short period of time after his conversion, God changed this man and gave him victory over all the addictions. He came to believe that he had no need for a crutch to help him maintain his sobriety but that the Lord had fully healed him - the work was complete. He began a new work as a support group for addicts, based on the promise of the Word that "it is for freedom that Christ has set us free."<sup>56</sup> At the time of this writing, his ministry *Connection To Freedom* is beginning to make a major impact among the addicts, convicts and ex-convicts of my home city and there is an evident anointing upon the work as the Lord is opening doors into lives and places where the church-at-large is unable to penetrate. S. is quick to acknowledge that the Lord is doing amazing things among us, and knows how important it is to remain in a place of His pleasure and anointing.

I have deliberately coded the names of most of these people but they are all well-known to me. There are many others whose lives bear similar testimony of the Lord's anointing, though they are not clerics, famous or honoured by the world. I am sure that you, my reader, could add several other testimonies to this list. Their power, authority, ministry is not due to personal charisma (pop singers have that) nor ability to make a good public presentation (politicians have that), nor wise leadership techniques (successful businessmen have that), but to God's calling, equipping and anointing.

You may have heard the story of the famous actor who attended a church fete. He was invited to present some monologues for the enjoyment of all and proceeded so to do. After each presentation there was enthusiastic clapping, not least when he concluded by quoting the great shepherd psalm, Psalm 23.

When the applause had died down, an elderly man got up from his chair, walked to the microphone and repeated the same psalm, word for word. This time, there was no applause when he finished but many were wiping tears from their eyes and others were bowing their heads. The actor approached the old man.

"I have spent thousands of pounds in schooling and have risen to the top of my profession," he said, "but I have never been able to move my audience as you have just done. What is your secret?"

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<sup>56</sup> Galatians 5:1

The old man replied, "You know the psalm - but I know the Shepherd!"

That is the secret of anointing - being linked with the Shepherd. Being yoked with Him as you carry His burden (for you) together.

## Chapter 11

### HOW TO RELEASE YOUR PEOPLE

We who are called to be pastors and elders in the church must understand some biblical truths about our ministry. We ARE called to equip the saints that they might do the work of ministry. We are NOT in the front line of the battle - they are! For too long we have taught our people to 'pray for your pastor as he is in the front line of the battle against evil and Satan wants to attack him!' The truth is that I can go day after day without rubbing shoulders with a non believer, I can spend quality time in the Word and in prayer, most of the people of my congregation cannot. I am called to be the refreshment tent, the nursing station, the armament supply, far behind the front lines, while they are in the trenches day after day. I must equip them well if they are to be overcomers in the battle. Not only does the Lord expect them to overcome, He also expects them to be His witnesses in this world. He has burdened (many of) them, gifted them and now waits to anoint them as they step out to serve Him.

I believe that every church elders' board meeting should have two essential components. Firstly prayer to commune with the Lord. This would involve both talking to God and waiting in quietness for Him to talk to us. Secondly, a time to discuss who in the church is expressing a burden, or is displaying the giftings to carry such a burden, or is now ready to be released into a ministry.

A typical situation might be like this:

*Pastor:            Anyone you recognise as being ready to be released into ministry?*

*Elder(s):            We've been watching Mary a lot since our last meeting. She evidently has a great interest in missions and her prayers for the lost show a deep concern. She is a committed believer, faithful in her financial support and attendance. We'd like the board to invite her to express to us her burden with a proposal for us to see how we, as a church family, can respond to that proposal.*

When Mary appears before the elders with her proposal, it may be possible to develop a ministry to support her burden.

Another scenario:

*Pastor: How do you see John developing as a potential elder?*

*Elder(s): He certainly has a great respect among most people in the church. I know that many of them go to him for advice and that his counsel is sound. He has a good grasp of the Word and lives a life in accordance with its precepts.*

*Pastor: Does he 'qualify' as far as the Scriptures are concerned?*

*(Titus and 1 Timothy)*

*Elder(s): We believe so.*

*Pastor: Then let us invite him to the next board meeting and put him 'on probation' as an elder for the next six months. Jim, will you take him alongside you and be his mentor? If he proves his calling, we'll present him to the congregation at the next annual meeting.*

The possible scenarios are many - as many as the different people in your church whom the Lord would release into *His* ministry.

## **Listen**

It is essential that we who are pastors **listen** to our people as they express their burdens. We should be able to help them clarify their vision a little so that they can truly recognise and define that burden. Prompt them, encourage them but, above all, listen to them. It is their burden from the Lord that we are interested in, not our burden which we would like them to help us carry. Help them to verbalise the burden.

## **Affirm their giftings**

When the burden is clear, seek to know from others if the abilities, talents and spiritual **giftings** needed to carry that burden in ministry, are present in this member's life.. To assist in this, one could use one of the many questionnaires on *giftings and personality profiles* commonly

available today. Of course, we should not expect to see anointing or maturity of leadership in 'an eagle who has not yet been released to fly!' They will be nervous and you will have apprehension, but what mother doesn't when she sees her children make those first feeble, stumbling steps? Does she then wrap her child up again and refuse to let them risk walking in case they stumble? Of course not! Neither should you, who are called to nurture *His* sheep.

### **Begin the release**

When a healthy believer has a clear burden and the evidence of abilities and giftings is present and confirmed by many, it is time to release the eagle. Set aside some quality time to be with him/her. You should have no preplans for this meeting and no intent to put your burden upon his shoulders. It is essential that this meeting should centre around the member and his walk with the Lord, not around the church and its programs. If your church programs are from the Lord, He is perfectly capable of preparing the leaders necessary by putting the appropriate burden upon them - *His* light burden. At the end of this meeting, both you and the member should have clear understanding of the burden and the ministry desire that is on the member's heart. It may not be possible to meet all his desires for ministry - they may be beyond what the church can do, or not practical in terms of personnel or finances. However, you both now have something to work with.

### **The Ministry Covenant**

If you see a possible ministry that be opened for the young eagle, discuss that with him/her to see if there is agreement.

I suggest that you then develop a *Ministry Covenant* in dialogue with the member. This could take a couple of weeks to formulate before both he and you (the elders) have full agreement. You might well have a small group of people whose ministry is to write up such ministry covenants for yours, and the young eagle's approval. The *Ministry Covenant* should clearly state the ministry parameters, the delegated authority and accountability. A simple example follows:

Susan has been telling her friends that she wishes to go to a Discipleship Training School with Youth With A Mission (for example) and she is busy talking to individuals in the church trying to raise financial support for the anticipated six months she will be away. You are not very happy about this as you believe some people in the congregation may be transferring some of their

offerings from the church's programs to support Susan. Do you go to them privately and tell them not to support her? Do you call her into your office and forbid her to ask members for support? Do you preach an even stronger sermon on faithful giving to your own church? Or do you ask yourself, "How can I help this young eaglet to fly?" Who knows, maybe she will become a great missionary one day, winning many for the Lord and bringing great honour to His name - flying like the eagle as the Lord planned for her.

You could call her into the office, give her quality time and listen as she unloads her burden. She doesn't really know much about missions nor about YWAM but she does have a yearning to serve the Lord in a missions setting and realises the need to be trained for that. It has become evident to you that Susan has a good education and is a dedicated believer with a heart of compassion for the lost. You might suggest that she makes herself more familiar with YWAM and other possible schools, while you seek insight into her personality and gifting. Then the following ministry covenant could be presented.

#### **Ministry Covenant - Susan Smith**

*Recognising that the Lord has called us to go into all the world to preach the Gospel, that missions is close to His heart and the fields are white unto harvest but the reapers are few,*

*we, the elders of Westside Evangelical Church, Yourtown, make this Ministry Covenant with Susan Smith, member of this church.*

*Susan will attend a Discipleship Training School with YWAM in the city of Theirtown for the six months of January to June, 1999. We understand that the total cost of this school will be approximately \$5000, including accomodation, tuition, personal needs and outreach expenses.*

*Prior to attending the school, Susan will be given fifteen minutes at a Sunday morning service to tell the congregation of her plans. A love offering will be received for her at the end of that service. The church will add to this, sufficient funds to enable her to pay for her transport to Theirtown.*

*While at school, Susan will send an audiotape (or a letter) back to the church each month to keep us informed of her progress and prayer needs. A small part of that tape will be played to the congregation during the morning service once a month and prayer will then be made on her behalf. Each church prayer group will be encouraged to make prayer for Susan a regular part of their meetings.*

*Any photos or newsletters that Susan sends home will be posted on the church missions board.*

*The church will send \$200 each month to Susan plus any monies collected for her through other outside-of-church activites conducted by our members.*

*We will not forget that Susan is still a member of our congregation though far away for these six months, and the elders pledge themselves to be available to her for any crisis or counseling needs she might have while away.*

*On completing her six months' school, Susan will return to this church before committing herself to any other ministry, with YWAM or any other organisation. She will be accountable to the pastor to demonstrate the progress she has made as a disciple through the DTS school. She will be required to meet with the pastor, or a delegated elder, once a month for the next six months. At the end of that time, this Ministry Covenant ceases.*

*Agreed: Signed: Susan Smith*

*John Williams (elder) - on behalf of the elders' board*

*Peter Smith (pastor)*

\* Other sample Ministry Covenants may be found in Appendix 2

### **Continue to nurture**

When Susan leaves to go to her school - or subsequent ministry - the work of the pastor is not over. He must continue to mentor, to nurture her. His expressed interest in all she is doing will make a profound impact on her, and will build into her a healthy attitude to the church and its appointed leadership. There will be times when she will feel despair and will need the pastor to lift her spirit up again. She will need advice as she struggles to meet her burden. She may need a steady hand to stop her falling headlong into danger or foolishness. She *needs* her pastor - her father eagle - until she has learned to fly under the anointing of the Spirit. If at all possible, visit her at her place of ministry, observe what she is doing in her daily life, try to understand the battle she faces, encourage her, *wash her feet*.

## Chapter Twelve

### BEING RELEASED

If you are carrying a burden that you believe is from the Lord, but are not currently ministering in that burden, maybe you should be seeking release and support from your church. As you have read so far in this book, you are beginning to recognise that ache within you as being His burden and you are now wondering what to do about it.

This chapter is for you.

1. The first thing you must do is **clarify the burden**. It is no use speaking to others about it when you cannot tell them just what you feel and mean. “I feel very sad about the prostitutes on our streets” doesn’t really say whether you have *His* burden for them. Do you mean that you wish the authorities would stop the prostitutes being seen in public? Do you mean that you cannot walk downtown with your children in the evening? Do you mean that you feel ashamed because friends know your town as a place where there are prostitutes? Or do you mean that you want to reach out to them to show them the better life found in Christ? Does this sadness, this yearning, penetrate your mind much of the time or does it only come to the surface whenever you might be ‘downtown’? In other words, is the burden within you or does it come upon you only when external circumstances remind you? A true burden from the Lord will dominate your thinking, rob you of sleep and energise you into action.

2. **Ask yourself some questions.**

“Am I *already doing* all that is within my ability to meet this need?”

If, for example, you find it very difficult to speak to the women of the streets, the support of your church is not going to make it any easier!

“Do I know that I have gifts and abilities appropriate to the ministry I seek?”

“Have others affirmed those gifts in me?”

“How would release by the church make my ministry more effective?”

“Is the church already ministering in this area?”

If so, why are you not part of that ministry? Would your release augment that work or counteract it?

“Do the spiritual leaders of my church know me well enough to recognise my burden and giftings as being from the Lord?”

Do not expect to be released into a ministry by your church leaders if you have not proven yourself to be faithful in serving within the church, committed to the fellowship of the church, honouring to the church leadership and recognising the spiritual giftings and ministry of others. Why should the church leaders release you into a ministry if you have not honoured their authority in leadership? They also (should) have a ministry for which the Lord has prepared and equipped them. If you do not recognise that, why are you in that church?

I am reminded of the time that David spent running away from the mad king Saul. David knew that God had anointed him to be king over Israel, he had been brought into the palace and must have been amazed at how the Lord was preparing the way before him. However, Saul remained as king even though it was obvious to all that he had lost the favour of God and was approaching madness. On two occasions David had an easy opportunity to kill his pursuer but, each time held back his arm declaring, *“Even though my leader is wrong and seeks to destroy me, even though God has called me to be the leader of this people, I will not lay my hand against the Lord’s elect!”* (italics mine). He knew that, if it was God’s will for David to take the throne, He was perfectly able to bring it about without David’s interference!

How much church warfare would cease, how much shame to the body of Christ would be avoided, if we recognised the same principle. If you do not believe that the Lord has ‘elected’ your pastor to the position he holds, why do you remain in that church? He is either God’s ‘elect’ ministering where the Lord wants him (even though he makes mistakes and does not do everything you think he should), or he is a false shepherd leading you astray! Be careful how you judge him!

**3. Understand the leadership structure of your church.** Do you know who is your ‘spiritual covering’? In a large church, for example, it is impossible for the senior pastor to know everyone, so the shepherding ministry is usually delegated to the elders or small group leaders. Does your elder/small group leader have delegated authority to speak on your behalf to those in church leadership who might release you? Does he have the authority himself to release you into a ministry? If you made your presentation to him, would he be able to present it, and you, to those who do?

**4. Write out a statement regarding your vision and burden** so that the church leadership will understand just how you feel. This should be sent or presented to the leadership together with a letter asking for an opportunity to meet with them. If you are not experienced in expressing yourself clearly by letter, ask a wise friend to proofread the papers and to give you advice on their content.

The statement should also include some suggestions as to what form any ministry might take.

You might want to include a copy of this book so that the leaders will understand just where you are coming from! To so many of them, this would be a novel approach as they have never considered their responsibility to 'equip the saints for the work of the ministry'. They have never thought about releasing you to fly like the eagle. They were taught that the work of ministry belongs to the clergy. How sad! How unbiblical!

**5. Seek to work with your church leaders** in developing your ministry with accountability. It is only as you accept accountability to those the Lord has set in the Body of Christ to be your equippers, that He can give you the authority of His anointing. Remember that accountability means being willing to accept a 'No' answer as well as a 'Yes'! Your leaders may be acting very responsibly when they say 'No' to your request because they believe you are not yet ready to be released. You have yet to prove yourself faithful in small things, unwavering in purpose, displaying the character and giftings necessary. They are not going to push you out of the nest if they detect that you are still carrying wounds and attitudes that would hinder your flying!

Only if the leaders of your church do not accept the responsibility of equipping and releasing, are you free to take step 6!

#### **6. Step out of the nest!**

Without the support of your church, this can be rather daunting. If your burden is not from the Lord you will become frustrated and weary as you struggle in your own effort to *make this ministry work*. You will be tempted to employ worldly methods to gain 'success' and cynicism will rob you of the joy of serving. Finances you deem as necessary will not be readily forthcoming and the burden will become heavy. It's time to quit!

However if the burden is from Him, you will find doors opening before you and a ministry developing, even though your church leadership did not *act responsibly* to release you. You

must not add your wrong to theirs by becoming a *lone ranger*. It is imperative that you gather round you, mature wise Christians who can give you sound counsel and to whom you must make yourself accountable.

You want God's anointing? Then do it God's way!

## Appendix 1A ACCOUNTABILITY, AUTHORITY & RESPONSIBILITY.

In ministry, the only true authority we have is from the Lord. It is NOT an authority due to our position or title, but is an authority evident in our anointing.

There is however, a delegated authority that also needs to be recognised. For example, when a pastor is ordained and placed over a congregation, he has an authority delegated to him both by his denomination leaders and by the church elders who received him.

This often leads to a dilemma, for to whom is he now accountable? His position tends to become political as he acts as liaison between the church and its governing body. Whose interests does he pursue when those of the local church come in conflict with those of the denomination? In almost all cases neither the denomination nor the church have sufficient power to absolutely force their will upon the pastor. No one is really certain to whom he is actually accountable. So, when conflicts arise, pastors tend to become their own man, exercising a false authority – a lone ranger!

Why is it we are so quick to demand our rights, our authority? Maybe we should be emphasising our responsibilities, our accountabilities rather than our authority. **For all three are interdependent.** There is no authority, whether from God or delegated by man, without responsibility and accountability. Many leaders make the mistake of thinking they can delegate responsibility without authority. When a man is given responsibility, he must always be given the authority to carry it out, with power to make decisions – and mistakes. **You cannot delegate responsibility – it always remains yours – but you can delegate authority.**

A pastor has a delegated authority which brings with it a responsibility and an accountability to both his elders and his District Superintendent (or equivalent). His elders have a similar responsibility and accountability to their pastor and to their congregation.

**Accountability is a two-way street – both to those who gave us authority and to those to whom we gave authority.**

When working with volunteers, it is a good policy to make a clear statement of authority granted with its associated accountability and responsibility. E.g.: a Ministry Covenant (see Appendix 2).

## Appendix 1B      PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

### **A.      WHAT YOU CANNOT DELEGATE**

1. Your job. Therefore you need a clear definition of your own job.
2. What only you can do

### **B.      WHAT YOU SHOULD DELEGATE**

1. What you can't do.
2. What others can do better
3. What you are training others to do.
4. What is not part of your goals and calling.

### **C.      PITFALLS TO DELEGATION**

1. Make sure that the one to whom you are delegating knows he is responsible to do the job.
2. Make sure your instructions are clear and that the task is well defined.
3. Make sure he can do the job, OR, that you are willing to let him fail.
4. Make sure you have given all the needed authority, as well as the responsibility. (It's still yours too!)
5. Try to put what is wanted in the form of a 'goal' which he can own.

### **D.      LEVELS OF DELEGATION - Make it clear.**

1. Do it - and do not report back.
2. Do it - and let me know what you did.
3. Let me know what you intend to do, and go ahead and do it until you hear from me.
4. Let me know what you intend to do, but do not go ahead until you hear from me.
5. Investigate all the available alternatives, and make a recommendation to me about what should be done.
6. Give me all the information available, and I will make a decision.

### **E.      COMMON REASONS FOR FAILING TO DELEGATE**

1. You believe the person will not be able to handle the assignment.
2. You feel you will not have the time to turn over the work and provide the necessary training.
3. You fear competition from the person.
4. You are afraid of losing recognition.
5. You are fearful your weaknesses will be exposed.

## Appendix 2      MINISTRY COVENANT SAMPLES - Elders

### 1. This is a Ministry Covenant we used for our CHURCH ELDERS.

*{Preamble: (This was a statement concerning the Constitution and By-Laws of the local church and its Statement of Faith. Naturally all elders would be expected to recognise and support these.)}*

**Biblical Qualifications:** These are to be mostly found in 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and Titus 1: 5-9.

We would recognise that:

It is good for a man to desire such an office. 1 Tim.3:1

Such office is 'God-given'. 1 Cor.12:28

Should be recognised by current pastor/eldership. 1 John 4:1

Approved by congregation (election). 1 Tim. 3:7

On being appointed to the office of elder, the undersigned is accepting the above statements and the following authority/responsibility as a Ministry Covenant commitment.

✂ To make his primary spiritual concern that of his own personal growth and meeting the biblical standards of eldership.

✂ To make his primary spiritual ministry that of serving as elder at this church.

✂ To honour the confidentiality of the Elders' Board.

✂ To recognise the office of other elders and their right to disagree.

✂ To publicly support the pastor at all times.

✂ To publicly support the corporate decisions of the Elders' Board.

✂ To voice any disagreements with other elders' actions/ministry, only to that elder directly or at the regular Elders' Board meeting.

✂ To carry one's own personal ministry burden and to actively encourage others in carrying theirs.

✂ To shepherd those under his care – to seek reconciliation where necessary – to maintain the unity of believers – to encourage commitment to church ministries.

✂ Not to grant confidentiality where it would impair the effective functioning of the Elders' Board. The Elder's Board must have open communication. When members desire such confidentiality, they must be referred to the pastor.

✂ Not to initiate any meetings without prior consultation with the Elders' Board.

✂ To work with the pastor in interviewing and approving potential new members.

⚡ To act with the Elders' Board in disciplining members/adherents where necessary. This must be along biblical guidelines. (One should note that the disciplining of an elder is a serious matter and will be public before the membership – 1 Tim. 5: 1,2,19,20)

**Relationship with Pastor**

Having been responsible for the pastor's 'call' the Elders' Board is responsible for his welfare and support. Each elder should make it his responsibility to encourage the pastor (and his family). He does this by evident support, by praying for him, by acting as a buffer/liaison between him and the congregation, by safeguarding his privacy, days-off, etc., by willingness to serve and active participation in church ministries.

**Relationship with the Congregation**

Eldership is primarily 'serving'. LEADING BY SERVING should be our goal, not serving by leading.

Without the recognition and support of the congregation (preferably 100%) there is no such office as elder. We hold this position just so long as we are considered worthy to carry it. However, one should zealously guard the office at all times, lest the Lord should remove that 'calling' and give it to another.

**Relationship with other Elders**

"In love, honouring one another" (Romans 12:19). As men called together in responsibility, we need to strive for the 'unity of the Spirit'.(See Philippians 2: 1-8) We cannot expect the church to be more unified, burdened, blessed, Christlike, etc., than we are as its elders are! No church can advance beyond the maturity of its elders!

Being appointed as an elder at \*\*\*\*\* church, I have read and accept the above document with its authority/responsibility.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ ;

Sec. Elders' Board: \_\_\_\_\_;

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_ ;

Date:\_\_\_\_\_.

## Appendix 3      MINISTRY COVENANT SAMPLES - Youth Leader

### Recognising

- the need for a young adult to lead our church Youth Work,
- that John Doe has expressed a burden for such work,
- that he has shown evidence of being gifted for such work,

we, the elders of \*\*\*\*\* church release John Doe into this ministry, by appointing him official **YOUTH LEADER** of this congregation.

### **Authority:**

- He shall be authorised to make all decisions regarding the corporate activities of our youth, subject to informing the Elders' Board in writing at least one week before the activities.
- He can invite others from outside our congregation to minister to our youth subject to informing the Elders' Board before confirming the arrangement with said 'outsider', unless it is known that he already meets with the elders' approval.
- He can interrelate with the youth leaders and youth of other congregations in our city, so long as he safeguards the teachings of this church among our own youth.
- He can appoint co-workers from our church subject to informing the Elders' Board before such appointments are confirmed.
- He shall be granted an annual budget of \$2000, issued in monthly amounts not exceeding \$300. Should he desire more as a one-time payment, (eg; as an honorarium guarantee), he must seek prior Elders' Board approval.

### **Responsibility:**

- He shall make a written report to the Elders' Board of all Youth activities once every three months. This shall be a review and a preview. At this time he shall present a balanced account of all monies received and spent.
- He shall seek to bring understanding and reconciliation when there is tension between our youth. He shall act as liaison whenever such tension is with parents or other non-youth.
- He shall develop and promote youth Bible Study and Youth Prayer groups.
- He shall actively seek to disciple our youth by personal encouragement in spiritual disciplines.

- He shall develop a missions awareness and evangelism outreach among our youth.
- He must at all times, be a positive witness for His Lord and for this congregation.

**Accountability:**

- He shall be personally accountable to A.N.Other as representative of the Elders' Board.
- This Ministry Covenant is to be reviewed annually with A.N.Other and the Pastor.

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Having read the Ministry Covenant and having discussed it with A.N.Other and the Pastor, I \_\_\_\_\_ (John Doe) accept the position of Youth Leader subject to the above Authority, Responsibility and Accountability.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (John Doe)

Elders' Board: \_\_\_\_\_ (A.N.Other)

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Soar Like The Eagle Diagram



FLYING LIKE THE EAGLE . . .

**Your Potential:**  
what God wants to make you; what God wants to do through you.

FOR ALL WHO WALK 'BY FAITH',  
BEING FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS,  
GOD WANTS TO BRING THEM  
TO A PLACE OF  
GREAT MINISTRY.

DESTINY

"Eye hath not seen,  
nor ear heard,.....  
all God has prepared  
for those that love Him"  
1 Corinthians 2:9

God's enabling upon your ministry.

The role of leaders is to recognise 'anointing' in those who work for them and to 'release' them into their God-given ministry.

ANOINTING

"WITNESS OF THE BRETHREN." THE 'BURDEN' IS LIGHT AND FRUIT IS EVIDENT.

"Without Me, you can do nothing" John 15:5

What you are currently doing.



MINISTRY

IF YOUR MINISTRY IS NOT YOUR BURDEN, THERE WILL BE LITTLE ANOINTING - BUT MAY BE BURN-OUT.

"Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me" Matthew 11:29

God's Equipping: both natural and spiritual 'talents'.

GIFTING

Whose burden are you carrying? You may choose to carry another's but do so lightly! Do it as a faithful servant, not out of guilt or manipulation.

"What do you have in your hand?" Exodus 4:2

What you feel most intensely.

SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS VISION AND CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE.

BURDEN



"Each one shall carry his own burden" Galatians 6:5

Your 'World-View': What needs to be done.

WE NEED TO SEE THRU GOD'S EYES! OUR WORLD-VIEW WILL BE VERY LIMITED, OR HUMANISTIC OTHERWISE.

VISION

"Lift up your eyes..." John 4:35  
"I lift my eyes up to the hills..." Psalm 121:1

