

WHEN THE CHURCH WENT OFF TRACK - MANY YEARS AGO

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As I walked into the building I felt it shake slightly. There was a lot of movement above me and as I mounted the stairs the noise got louder and louder. I stepped over a couple of people laying on the floor, outside the door of the meeting room. When I stepped into the room I felt as if I were hit with a bolt of electricity. The whole place was in high praise and the presence of God was powerful. With some difficulty, I found a seat in the crowded room and joined in the worship. There was no "front," the seats were arranged in a square. The musicians sat among the people and followed the leading of the Spirit like everyone else. The Pastors were prepared to speak or not, depending on what happened in the meeting.

IT'S GOD'S BUSINESS

What happened and when it happened we reckoned was not our business but God's.

People were led by the Holy Spirit and gave out of heartfelt gratitude and abundance of joy. As the meeting continued various members contributed. Words of knowledge, tongues and interpretations, prophetic words and visions, intermittent praise and spontaneous worship songs were sung as God spoke through various members. At some point an elder preached for a while. The Bible says that when the prophets minister " . . . *the secrets of men's hearts are made manifest and falling down - they will say 'Of a truth God is in this place. '* " (1 Cor:14,24,25)

This was the truth; the people, children and teens included, learned to hear from God in a remarkable way. Bankers, bakers, housewives, students, clerks, laborers, storekeepers - all ministered under the anointing. Why? you may ask. Well, they were expected to. We didn't encourage spectators - we didn't see spectators in the New Testament Church. In the famous 1 Corinthians, chapters 12,13,14 it is clear that when early church had a get together they were not sitting neatly in rows like potatoes on a shelf.

I remember one Sunday morning during the service. A young boy got up in the meeting. Steven was his name. He placed his Bible on the floor and stood on it (because he had read something about standing on the Word). He put a handkerchief on his head (not sure why) and then started to sing a scripture chorus. "*I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continuously be in my mouth..*" All of a sudden a wind seemed to rush into the building and next thing about 200 people were on the floor.

THE PARTY

In this revival, the Holy Spirit moved and had His own meetings - we simply joined in and got to be a part. It didn't matter where you sat, there was no back! The person next to you was likely to tell you your name and address and answer your un-asked question! Many needs were met in a supernatural way as the Body ministered to and edified itself, as in Ephesians 4:16.

I guess the whole thing was like a kind of floating party. From house to house, it picked up new participants every time. Those unsaved, got saved by the end of the meeting- those not healed got healed, those un-anointed got anointed. By the Man in the front?- No, through the ministry of the Body - the "church."

THE STARS

God was the star of the show, so everyone in Him was also a star of the show. So then, how did the early church get from the "every joint supplying" kind of meetings to the clergy-laity form which are now in most churches? How did the church get from a boisterous family atmosphere to the song sandwich (songs - sermon-prayer-song -end of service) that we see in most churches today? As the church grew in various cities, it ceased to become a "family" and turned into a kind of "establishment." The final nail in the church coffin was the fact that Emperor Constantine kindly issued the Edict of Milan, officially ending the persecutions and tolerating the church. Then came "US" and "THEM", priest and laity.

The problem was that 98% of the church was "them". and so the professionals took over. The rest learned to sit and be quiet and join in singing when told to.

They learned to add something to the meeting- afterwards- at home or in the foyer, but not in the meeting. Whereas before, everyone could contribute to the meeting as the Holy Spirit moved upon them. Later on the Holy Spirit was only allowed to move on the platform and in the pulpit.

At first everyone could get into the act, prophecies, healings, tongues and interpretations. revelations, spiritual songs, words of knowledge flowed through "whosoever." Now, usually the service is open for the "Body" to share and minister for about 10 minutes-if you're lucky. Where did our present form of order of service come from? Probably from the church down the road, because they got theirs from the church round the corner and so we all ended up with a tradition, whether evangelical, Pentecostal, or liturgical. Sharing to be done outside.

OLD PATTERNS

In actual fact if you look at it, our present form comes from the O.T. pattern. The priest went in to the Holy of Holies on behalf of the people. It was the priest who had the ear of God plus of course God's special leaders like Moses, David, Joshua etc.

Many Christians seem to have simply transferred these roles to the pastor or minister, especially for the church services. After all, he gets paid to seek the Lord and come and deliver the message to the people, just like Moses going up the mountain. Most people see the worship team as people who lead them into the presence of God, instead of people to supply some good sounds to the worship arising from the Body.

A TIME FOR TEACHING - OR NOT

Does that mean there is not a place for teaching and special ministry and ministers? No, of course not, when the Apostles and teachers came to town - everyone sat and listened for a long time, or so it would seem from reading the Acts of the Apostles - at one meeting someone eventually fell asleep and fell right out of the window. Not to fear - there were miracles on hand to deal with such untoward circumstances. Our church in the south of London, England, also had times of training and teaching and evangelism (Spirit-filled evangelism), as they did in the early church.

WE DON'T HAVE TO QUALIFY

Why is it that so many of God's children are not moving in the power and anointing of God that is available through the Spirit? One BIG reason is that most feel they are not qualified. There is a place at the back of the mind where there is a "feeling" of not being good enough to be powerful in God. We weren't "good enough" to be saved - so why do we expect to be good enough to minister? Jesus qualified us 100% - by His death on the cross and resurrection. *"He is able to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy"* (Jude 24). In Galatians, chapter three. Paul, the Apostle, reprimands the Galatian church. He calls them foolish and then accuses them of being bewitched or enchanted. That's pretty strong! But it is actually a serious blight on the revelation of the death of Christ. If our salvation was purchased for us freely - then why did the Galatians turn back to works? Paul says they must be bewitched or enchanted. Having begun in the Spirit, the Galatians were now striving to perfect their salvation with religious works. I love these scriptures in the Message Bible. Paul asks the Galatians if they've gone crazy!

BACK UNDER THE LAW -UGH!

To put ourselves back under the law is to put ourselves back under a curse - for in verse ten of the same chapter it says, *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse....cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."* In Galatians chapter three, it says *"..Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?"* and in verse five, *"He therefore that ministers to you the Spirit and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?"*

Religious works, however well intentioned or good will never accomplish anything in the Spirit realm. We are not called to the works of the flesh, not even the religious flesh -we are called to walk in the Spirit.

OUR INHERITANCE

Jesus left us an inheritance - His Life, His quality of Life, Spirit-Led life, Spirit-filled life. " It's the same Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead which dwells in our mortal Bodies (see Rom 8:11). The gifts of the Spirit are for the work of the ministry. Do we have to qualify to have the gifts of the spirit in operation in our lives and ministries?" No way! *"We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God"* (1 Cor. 2: 10). We are given favor and Sonship not because of what we have done, but according to His mercy and loving-kindness. What was given to us freely we cannot make perfect by the works of the law. What begins in the Spirit must also end in the Spirit - because if we presume to do only what God is able to do - we make ourselves equal with God - that's pride.

YOU CAN'T CHANGE YOURSELF

A lot of ministry is geared to make people try and change themselves. People are indirectly encouraged sometimes for years, to change the old man. Did you realize that Jesus never did come and die on a cross to change the old man? In Romans chapter 6, it clearly states that the old man was crucified with Christ. *"Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.."* When Christ died on the cross - He took with him the old man - that old man WAS CRUCIFIED. By faith we should walk in the new man, that sin should not have dominion over us, (Rom 6 :14)

For many years I tried (in vain) to walk in the Spirit. I read a scripture that said, "If you walk in the Spirit you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh"(Galatians 5:16). I struggled hard not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh in order to "qualify" to walk in the Spirit. When I was Baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1969 I got a revelation. "If you walk in the Spirit (by faith), you WILL NOT fulfill the lusts of the flesh." The greater includes the lesser as the saying goes. If we walk in the Spirit, the fleshy stuff doesn't hold a whole lot of interest for us.

The adventurous life of the Spirit makes the offerings of the world seem dull and lifeless.

THE ANOINTING IS FOR KIDS TOO

When we used to travel with our teenage daughters we sometimes would send them along to the youth group to see what happening-often they would report back, *" It's kind of strange, they didn't talk about Jesus much, they talked a lot about why we shouldn't do drugs and have sex. Why are they talking about that?"* They couldn't understand it.

If we don't give the children and youth the exciting life of God and walking with Him, they are going to be bored, and look for something else. It's a shame that so many

children and youth are given rules, entertainment and stories, instead of the real Holy Ghost equipping.

Signs, wonders, healing, miracles, happen all the time when my husband has the kids ministering to those in need. They don't have a junior Holy Spirit. It's the work of a religious spirit that keep the children out of the anointing.

WALKING BY FAITH

We are called to walk by faith - in the Spirit. It is a gift - the Spirit realm is our inheritance, our down payment, the earnest of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:13,14). Our salvation doesn't begin with Jesus and end with us. It begins with Him and ends with Him.

He is the one who is going to present us faultless - not ourselves, not our prayer partner, not our close friends, or our parents. Even the Pastor does not have this prerogative. It is reserved for Jesus alone. For, we are His workmanship, created in Him. *"For by grace are you saved by faith: and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them."* (Ephesians 2:8-10). When we get a revelation that salvation is all of Him, salvation, redemption, healing, deliverance, sanctification, then we can enter into the rest of God. How can the unsanctified flesh, religious or otherwise sanctify our lives? Only the Spirit Himself can sanctify us. Our faith for these things is a gift from God - it is not initiated from us.

THE SPIRIT OF RELIGION WANTS YOU TO DO IT YOURSELF

The spirit of religion always makes people try to accomplish that which only God Himself can do. Therefore the religious spirits introduces us to striving.

Much ministry is geared to getting people to change themselves - friend it can't be done - it is a useless waste of energy, setting people up for disappointment. Look at 2 Corinthians 3:17,18 *"Where the Spirit of the Lord, is there is liberty, or freedom."* Freedom from what? Oh freedom from the penalty of sin. Freedom from the power of sin, freedom from sin-consciousness, (the Spirit makes us Jesus conscience) and freedom from self-consciousness. Religious spirits always make you try and do what only God can do

"But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the SPIRIT OF THE LORD." It is the work of the Spirit to do the changing - our trying and striving will not do a thing except bring condemnation. *"He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 1:6).

THE VISITATION

A few years ago I had a great visitation from the Lord . Every day for 3 ½ weeks I was lifted into heaven. I saw a continuing story of Jesus and His relationship with the betrothed (that's you and me). One day during one of these times of visitation I was taken into a very light and bright room. I saw a beautiful young women, the betrothed, standing, and three angels were near her. Jesus walked into the room and the three angels began to sing to her. *"Isn't He beautiful, beautiful isn't He?"* to the tune of well known song. The young women also joined in and they were all singing the song to Jesus. He was smiling, and then suddenly he turned around to the young woman and began to sing to her *"Yes you are beautiful, beautiful, yes you are."* When I saw this scene I melted, in fact I wept for about an hour as my physical body couldn't really comprehend that look of complete and perfect love and devotion on His face when He gazed at His love. But, something else happened too! As the young women, who represented the church, spent time with Him, observing How he was, hanging out with Him. She saw His graciousness, loving-kindness, mercy, patience and tenderness she fell so in love with Him, Jesus. And as she fell in love with him, His wonderful grace fell upon her and she became just like him. No effort, no striving, no trying, it just happened- it was His presence that changed her.

A PLACE OF REST

What a restful place to be! In Hebrews 4: 9,10 it says *"There remains therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into His rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from His."* It's not our works, but His works. It's not trying, it's yielding. God does not anoint our works, He anoints His works.

Think about Jesus ministry - how simple but yet how powerful it was? What was his secret? Jesus said, "The son can do nothing of Himself," but then He proceeded to do everything (John 5:19). Jesus was Spirit-filled, spirit-led. Jesus really only did three things in His whole life. He did what the Father told Him to do, He went where the Father told Him to go. He said what the Father told Him to say. That's it!

When Jesus was informed that his friend Lazarus was dying, he did not respond to Lazarus need- it was two days before he went to minister to Lazarus. He went when the Father told Him to go - He actually went to Bethany to visit a tomb. And He said what the Father told Him to say, *"Lazarus, come forth."* If Jesus hadn't said, "Lazarus" then everyone would have gotten up and there would have been a lot of confusion that day in Bethany!

Jesus ministered to the Father, as a byproduct, many needs were met, but He was not motivated by need - but by the voice of His heavenly Father. That is rest - it is not us doing things for God- it is God doing His works through us.

Jesus said, *"My yoke is easy and my burden is light and delightful "* We have to remember it's Jesus yoke - we are His sheep- the sheep of his pasture. In Psalm 23 it speaks of the still water - the water of rest. The power of God is in what He does, He issues an invitation to us - to participate in His ways, His plans, His Life.

THE NEW COVENANT PROMISE

The New Covenant Promise is *"A new heart and a new spirit I will put within them."* When you nestle up to Jesus, He puts His desires in your heart, so that when you fulfill the will of God in your life, it's delightful, its joyful, because it's in your heart. If you are doing something in the way of serving God today and it's not delightful, forget it-its just works and God loves you to pieces but He's not interested in your works. He IS interested in His works though. His works manifesting through you! It's not your ability God is looking for, It's a yielded vessel that allows His ability to flow through.

Religious spirits rob us of intimacy with the Lord. They rob us of the power of the spirit. Paul said, *"I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling and my speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God"* (1 Cor 2:3 -5).

THE REAL THING

Religion makes us behave differently in church than when we are out in the world. One time when I was walking in the street singing, the Holy Spirit said to me, *"When you are in the meeting you put your hands in the air and sing that really loud. Why don't you do that now?"* I thought that was obvious - I was very embarrassed to be singing in the street really loud (on my own). But I wanted to be the same in the street as I was in the church so I did it! The devil doesn't care if we have books full of religious sounding words and phrases, as long as we don't actually accomplish anything.

We can attend 10 Bible Studies every week, and go to as many prayer-meetings, if we are not in the anointing of God, the devil could care less. Because we will have no affect at all on his kingdom. We will have no effect for God's kingdom either.

Paul did not rely on his ability -he was dependant on the Spirit -JUST LIKE JESUS WAS, the power of God.

The religious spirit is a fake- it has no "bite" except to deceive us into thinking we have something merely because we know about it. If you have ever been window shopping you will know that it's great to see all the goods in the store window. But just because you saw them doesn't mean they are yours. *"Buy the truth and sell it not"* the Bible says.

To buy the truth and make it your own you have to 1) Embrace it and 2) Act on it under the leading of the spirit.

INTERESTING RELIGIOUS INFORMATION

If there is no anointing on the truth you hear - it is merely interesting religious information. The Word (Bible) is our anchor, but we are to live in the proceeding word, as Jesus said in Matthew chapter four. The word that is coming from heaven right now.

To know the scriptures is not enough to have life. The Devil knows the scriptures very well, he also knows how to turn them around and use them against us
Jesus once said of the religious leaders " *You search the scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life, but they are they which testify of Me, and you won't come to ME - that you might have life.*" The Bible is God inspired, but the book is to tell us about the life we have and what Jesus has made available for us .

Then we have to receive that life. Like the Pharisees, who knew what the scriptures said, but didn't do what the scriptures said, or know really who the Bible was telling about, therefore they had no life.

THE DEVIL CAN QUOTE SCRIPTURE

THE GYPSY GOT SET FREE

At one time when we were praying for someone in our house for deliverance, a gypsy man, who was just in the process of giving his life to the Lord Jesus, began to manifest some strong spirits. As these spirits started to get unnerved because of the prayers and commands to go, the demon in the man began to quote all kinds of scriptures in defense of it's position and stand in the man's life.

When my husband commanded the demon to go, the demon yelled at us, "*I am not going to leave because this kind only comes out by prayer and fasting and you haven't fasted enough.*" Being fairly new at this, we were shocked. But we collected our thoughts and quoted, "*In My Name they shall cast out devils.*" Do you know what the evil spirit said then? "*You can't quote that, it's not in the original, Schofield said so!*"

Then the spirit began to quote all kinds of scriptures and before it finally left it offered to sing us a song from the Broadway musical, Jesus Christ Superstar! Religious spirits don't mind us knowing about Jesus, or knowing the Bible, as long as it doesn't come out of the book and become part of our lives. Mere Religion is always offended by grace. It will make you "perform."

FALSE STANDARDS

Satan hates the cross and therefore will make people behave as though it never happened. How is that? you might ask. Well it will make you try and qualify for the grace and gifts of God. It brings you into works - not the works that are the fruit of the Spirit, but dead works initiated by the religious flesh. False standards are deposited by religion - false standards of holiness and legalistic outward "holiness." Traditional rules of dress,

hair, behavior etc. Instead of being affected by that which is working inside - we are confirmed to that which is merely outward appearance.

When I was first filled with the Holy Spirit, several things (demonic spirits) came to the light. Dryness came as a result of hearing the word for so long without the Spirit or anointing. Very wonderful religious teaching could not take the place of the anointed word, confirmed by the Spirit. The signs and wonders that the Holy spirit produces are to confirm the word as in Hebrews chapter two.

False responsibility insists on making God's people feel responsible for things they can do nothing about. Other people for example. We cannot change another person's heart however much we may desire to. Situations beyond our control; Nevertheless people feel guilty or weighed down because of them. It is God's right hand and holy arm that has gotten us the victory, not ours. The arm of the flesh does nothing except get in the way.

TRYING CAN BE VERY TRYING

"It's not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord. A scripture everyone knows - but not so many really know. God told Moses at the Red Sea Crossing, *"Stand still and see the salvation of God."* To most of us that means Pray, stand still for a few minutes and then start swimming.

Why do we find it so hard to let God be God? The religious flesh cannot bear the fact that it can do nothing - it's unacceptable -. Why is it easier to DO something, rather than simply believe? Jesus instructed us *"When you pray, believe.."* not "when you pray, wait and see, do something and then believe."

THE GLORY IS GOD'S BECAUSE HE DOES ALL THE WORK

An old friend of mine, Arthur Burt, a man who has been in the ministry for over 82 years says this, *"If God wants all the glory, He has to do all the work."* If we do some of the work, then we are entitled to some of the glory right! But all the glory is His alone. As we release our faith and come under the anointing of the Spirit and move under the direction of that anointing, it is God who does the work.

THE WORKS OF THE SPIRIT ARE INITIATED BY THE SPIRIT

The works of the spirit are initiated by the Spirit, it's not trying, it's yielding. If we learn to yield to the Spirit, then we allow Him to do the work. Works is another religious spirit.

Good can be the enemy of God, because the good things can keep you from the God things. The religious spirit keeps people busy in order to keep them from intimacy with Jesus. The flesh can produce something good. Remember that the tree of knowledge,

which is still forbidden, is the tree of the knowledge of good as well as evil. When Jesus ministered around Jerusalem, He did not try and meet every need. He was in touch with the Father - and He did only what He saw the Father do.

PRIDE, ELITISM AND FALSE SHEPHERDING

The spirit of pride is always waiting in the wings - for an opportunity to make an entrance. How does he do that? Firstly. It begins to speak to us, sometimes in our thoughts and often through other people. The spirit of pride whispers "you are special" you have a special call, your church has a "special" anointing, a "special" calling. I'm sure we all know the story of Lucifer's fall- he thought he was like God - and tried to act like God. But it began in his thoughts, the Bible says in Isaiah 14:12, 13 *"For you (Lucifer) have said in your heart 'I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of congregation.....I will be like the most high."*

With pride comes deception and then control and manipulation follows. Religious pride, out of its 'special' appointment begins to put itself above everyone else. Special revelation lifts people up and then affects others around it. Disobedience or even disagreement in relationship to those caught in this spirit is then likened to displeasing God Himself.

Sometimes people are excommunicated because they disagree with the leader - If you disagreed with Calvin you could be murdered. That's the extreme of the spirit of control. Luther was a Jew hater- why does the church worship these harsh religious people?

"Neither being as lord's over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock, And when the chief Shepherd shall appear you shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away" (1 Peter 5:3,4).

I was shocked one time when God told me to remind a pastor to be careful how he treated God's anointed. I had only heard that verse of scripture being applied in relative way to leaders - *"...touch mine anointed and do My prophets no harm"* (Psalm 105:15). Although it certainly does apply to leaders and Pastors, it also applies to the flock, the Body of Christ - they are His anointed too!

A false shepherding spirits hooks people, because it seems to have a sense of purpose and people are drawn to it. The Bible says that *"God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble."* (1 Peter 5:5) When a man gets into pride, God lifts his grace and then any one of us will fall into the first hole we come to- We are kept by His grace. *"Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling."* (Jude 24).

PRIDE

A young man was in my home years ago. It was after a great meeting in our church in Orlando. Arthur Burt, a minister from England was also there chatting with some others

from the meeting. The young man, Jeremy, suddenly asked Arthur, *"Do you know an evangelist called Tom Smith? (not real name) He was having awesome meetings in the U K, and that is where I was saved."* Arthur looked up and replied, *"Yes, as matter of fact I do know him,"* and carried on his conversation with the lady sitting next to him. .

Jeremy was excited, *"Arthur, do you know where he is? I would love to get in touch with him."* Again, Arthur looked up for a moment and said, *"Yes, I do know where he is,"* and then turned away. Both Jeremy and I thought Arthur was behaving very strangely! Jeremy was beside himself and very frustrated. *"Arthur, where is he?"* Jeremy was adamant - determined to get an answer. *"If you must know brother, the man is in jail."*

Arthur once again turned back to the other conversation. Poor Jeremy almost fell out of the chair. *"Whaaat, what do you mean? Why is he in jail, I can't believe it."* *"Well brother, replied Arthur Burt, "If you must know he is in jail for child pornography."*

Seeing the shock on poor Jeremy's face, Arthur went ahead and answered the obvious question. *"When a man gets into pride, God lifts His grace and then he falls into the first hole he comes to. A man can hide his sin, but not his pride, so if you see pride then there is sin."*

The first thing is not moral failure, but pride. And a forgetfulness of our dependency upon the grace and mercy of God.

HUMILITY

Humble yourself therefore under the mighty hand of God and He will exalt you in due time (1 Peter 5:6) That means remember that everything you have and are, are given solely and only by the wonderful and amazing grace of God

GET FREE FROM FORMALISM (Religious spirits)

Dryness, Dead words, dead letters, false standards, false yokes, false submission, false humility, tradition, works, unfruitfulness are all manifestations of the religious spirit. It was not until I got delivered from these that I really began to experience the anointing of God in my life. The realm of the Spirit, the supernatural realm of the spirit, the angels, heavenly visitations are meant to be the norm for every believer. Jesus did not sacrifice Himself in order that we learn some scriptures and just attend Sunday church. He died to open the eternal spiritual realm to us, that we might live as He lived and walk as He walked-in fellowship with the God of Heaven and earth - and through Jesus we can call Him Abba (daddy)- Father.