

INTRODUCTION TO SIGNS & WONDERS

There is nothing more tragic than to see the people of God living their lives devoid of the presence and power of God, believing that is the norm. It is sad to see churches that have gotten so used to having services without the manifest presence of God and the intervention of the Holy Spirit, that if God removed His Spirit from their midst, they would have a hard time telling the difference.

There is no shortage of skeptics and critics who continually take poke shots at the few who lay down their lives and are bold enough to exercise their faith and manifest the power and the glory of God on the earth. To these cynical intellectual people, the supernatural power of God and signs and wonders are nothing more than extreme, unnecessary emotional outbursts of uncultured, ignorant people who need a place to vent their frustrations and help them cope with their personal problems in life.

These cotton candy, user friendly, people pleasing "*preachers*", who are no more than shrewd administrators, businessmen and eloquent entertainers; who are quick to criticize, judge and ridicule the power of God and those who have paid the price and forsaken everything to follow the Lamb and manifest His glory, speak evil of things they know not of, and are the same ones that Jude calls waterless clouds, fruitless trees and wandering stars (Jude 1:12).

Yet, a distant rumbling is being heard by those servants to whom God, in His divine sovereignty, has chosen to reveal it to. Perhaps the sound of the approaching storm, an outpouring of the Spirit of such dramatic proportions that will cause the greatest ingathering of souls this world has ever seen. This period will coincide with increasing turbulent times and horrible events that will cause the courage of many to falter. Millions will flock to the churches seeking help for multitudes of needs, but the church in its present condition cannot handle what is coming.

These are just some of the reasons why I wrote this book. I am only one of many God is raising up at this time to speak out and bring clarity to some important areas that have been ignored, rejected and neglected by the present day church leadership. The ministries of the apostle and prophet, which are being restored to their original place and function in the church, will bring healing and restoration to the Bride of Christ preparing her to take her rightful place in the world, as the glory of God is manifested on the earth. As this army of remnant believers is raised up, trained, prepared and released into the great harvest, a revival of gigantic proportions will take place, sweeping masses of people into the kingdom of God. The transformation of the church from its present condition will be astounding.

This New Wine of the Holy Spirit will not be poured into old, dry, cracked wineskins. They cannot contain what the Lord wants to give them. This necessitates the formation of new wineskins and the reformation of old ones. This is going to require that pastors start shifting their thinking from a sermon mindset to a training mindset. Pastors alone cannot do this training. That is why Ephesians 4:11-16 mentions five ministries that the Lord uses to equip and train the saints.

I understand that not every pastor or leader is ready and willing to step into what the Lord is doing. Many are afraid, confused, lacking understanding of what to do and how to do it. There is a lot of distrust among five-fold ministries. There may be some pride and jealousy involved that makes things more difficult. Pastors do not trust prophets, and think of them as radical and strange, as many churches have been hurt before; prophets do not trust pastors, seeing them as dogmatic and controlling, having been hurt and rejected by them.

We are creatures of habits and old habits are very hard to break. After all, what worked for the last twenty years should work today, right? Wrong. Change is not comfortable but necessary, and involves a long process of adjustment, correction and reform in our lifestyles, but especially in the way we think about church. We are in the middle of an apostolic reformation, a paradigm shift that will redefine our concept of what Church is. In times past every time God was about to do something new, it necessitated a change, a re-formation in the structure (wineskin) of the existing system or church (Luke 5:37).

Apostles and prophets are an integral part of the training that must take place in the local church in these last days in order to receive the coming outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. Many pastors are truly apostolic but are still operating under a pastoral anointing. They too must be willing to be trained and developed to step into the apostolic anointing God has for them. It is not enough for one man to operate in supernatural signs and wonders, the prophetic and deliverance anymore. The Lord wants His whole Church to be able to flow in this way. In order to do this, the foundation of the local church needs to be re-structured and re-formed. Two years ago God gave us the mandate to begin training the leaders and saints in churches here and overseas.

A wineskin or structure that was once acceptable is now being replaced by a new one that will allow us to receive the coming outpouring and reap the harvest of souls. Right now the Lord is releasing new blueprints that are being implemented in many churches in the Kingdom of God. The blueprints are being designed and released by apostles and prophets under divine inspiration and in accordance to God's Word for the benefit of the Church.

The Church was ordained by the Lord to be the spiritual scaffold whereby His body is taught, trained, disciplined and then released into their callings and ministries by the presbytery of the local church. Churches need to be spiritually connected with true apostles and prophets that can be part of the local church presbytery and release the anointings and ministries in the house.

Pastors and church leaders need to lay aside personal agendas and desires, suspicions, fear, jealousies, doubts and unbelief and try to work together giving God a chance to do whatever He wants to do, with whoever He wants to use, in whatever way He desires to do it. We need to be flexible and willing to try new methods, ideas and things even if at first we don't like them or believe they won't work. We need to change some of the ways we do things, conduct services, and use ministries.

We are living in a time when the consciousness of the believers needs to be raised to a higher level where they are able to understand their role and purpose in God's kingdom, and then trained and released to operate in it. On the other hand, pastors need to understand that it is a corruption of the Body of Jesus Christ to just have believers sitting in the churches doing nothing, while the pastor or some visiting minister does all the ministry. God is now releasing the end-time ministries to prepare and train the body of Christ and set it in place so it is able to operate as it should. This will require the gathering of apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists and teachers to have open and honest discussions about some real issues we are facing and different ways to resolve them.

We are in a transitional period of change right now and we are looking through a glass darkly. The Church Age is coming to a close as we are entering the dispensation of the Kingdom Age, where Jesus will return to establish His millennial Kingdom on the earth. Horrible events are about to take place, but an unseen hand is holding back the storm a while longer for some reason.

God is bestowing upon mankind a last act of grace, a sovereign move of His Holy Spirit upon all mankind; a last chance to heed His call; earth's last opportunity, God's last call. Can a world that has rejected God, and is rushing head on into judgment expect to see revival fires? Strange as it may seem, the greatest revivals and reformations have always come at the darkest hour.

The rain of the Spirit has fallen at different times intermittently until now, but the Lord has reserved the best wine for last. More people have been saved and converted to Christianity in the last decade than in the previous two thousand years combined. A church within a church is rising up; a remnant group of believers that were hidden for a season, while they were being trained and tested in the fires of affliction. These dread warriors will make the powers of darkness tremble, turning the world upside down as the harvest of souls takes place.

These are the Moses and Elijah Company (apostles and prophets) that the Bible prophesied would appear on earth prior to the Day of the Lord. They will carry upon them the true anointing, power and authority of God. Their seal of authenticity will be their humility, compassion and godly wisdom. They will be loved by those who love righteousness and justice, but dreaded and hated by the religious and the corrupt. They will purge sin from Zion and cause the fear of the Lord to come upon people, while they also heal and restore the body of Christ (Malachi 4:1-6).

"Truly the signs of an apostle were done among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2 Corinthians 12:12).

God has always used miracles, signs and wonders to distinguish a person, a thing, or event from others. These supernatural signs are His signature attesting to the authenticity of a ministry or message as was the case with the apostle Paul. Signs and wonders are foundational to the Christian faith and desperately needed in the church today. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is supposed to be preached with signs and wonders following, as it was in the early church. Signs and wonders are for the unbelievers; they do not save, but they cause people to pay attention to and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If there ever was a preacher who could have been successful without signs and wonders, it was Jesus. He was not only a great leader, but an eloquent, compassionate teacher. Yet when the apostle Peter referred to Jesus in Acts 2, he used miracles, signs and wonders to describe God's stamp of approval upon His life and ministry. Jesus was known for the signs, wonders and miracles that followed Him. Another preacher who could have had a great ministry without signs and wonders was the apostle Paul, yet we see in 1 Corinthians 2:4 that he summarizes and describes his ministry as one of demonstration of the spirit and of power.

There is a divine call from the throne of God to all believers to come out of their comfort zones, and allow God to use them to manifest the kingdom of God on the earth. The first step to accomplish this is to understand that you have gifts and talents from God which He expects you to develop and use to bless others in this world. One of the names the Bible calls the Church is *the Body of Christ*, meaning that it is composed of many different parts functioning together to achieve God's will upon the earth. Christians were never intended to be mere spectators who come to church once a week to hear a sermon, and watch one man do the entire ministry.

The word *ministry*, as written in Romans 12:7, means *service*. In other words, if you have received a ministry of service, you should exercise that gift in the service of other people. In the Christian circles, ministry has been equated with standing behind the pulpit and preaching the Word of God. In other groups, the ministry is allowed to pray for the needs of the people right there in the church. And even in smaller groups, people are allowed to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church.

The ministry of Romans 12:7 and Ephesians 4:12 should not be confused with the ascension gifts of Ephesians 4:11, namely apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists, and teachers. These were given to perfect the church saints for the work of the ministry (service), for the edifying of the body of Christ. When we see divine healing and the gifts of the Spirit as part of the normal life of believers, we are set free from elevating one person above another. Seen in this light, healing prayer is simply a way of showing God's love to people.

Healings, physical and otherwise, are the natural outflow of compassion. Scripture teaches us that God is all-loving, all-powerful, and all-healing. He takes delight in His people preferring that people be healthy, rather than sick. God demonstrated His nature best through Jesus, who was full of grace and truth. Jesus went about doing good, healing the sick, casting out devils, feeding the hungry, tearing down the kingdom of Satan, and establishing the kingdom of God upon the earth. After we are saved, we are to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. That means that we are supposed to change and become more and more like Him; act like Him, think like Him, and talk like Him (2 Corinthians 3:18).

We are called to manifest the love of God in this world, and to share the Good News of the Gospel. What better way to manifest the love of God than to heal the sick, set people free from the powers of darkness, feed the hungry and clothe the naked? This is done best when you allow God to use you through the power of His Spirit. As you make yourself available to Him, His love will flow through you in the form of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Jesus embodied the kingdom of God, saving and healing people. He also trained His disciples to heal, and to operate in the power of His Spirit, that they might effectively advance the kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-11; 10:1-24 and Mark 16:14-20).

During the first hundred years of the church, healing was a common activity in Christian life. In fact, signs and wonders help explain the remarkable growth of Christianity during this period. One of the reasons for praying for the sick is that healing aids the evangelism of souls. It is a *gospel advancer* as reported by third world Christian churches that have experienced staggering church and spiritual growth in the last several years. It is easier to pray for people's healing than to tell them about Christ. In fact, it is reported from third world countries that it is easier to tell people about Jesus after they have been healed. This is verified by the Scriptures. Notice how Jesus frequently first healed the sick, then proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Most Christians are hesitant, even fearful to pray for other people to be healed because they misunderstand God's compassion and mercy. The goal of the church is to produce mature Christians who are like Jesus, and who do the same works that He did. This can only be accomplished when each of the ministries learns to focus on its own job, without trying to do the job given to others. No one ministry can do this alone. We all need each other, and we need all of the people doing the ministries that they have been called to do. The Church will only become the mighty, powerful glorious force on this earth that it was called to be, when each member of the Body is set in place, as God ordained it before the foundation of the earth.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans (power over the laity; Revelation 2:6; 15), which was already operating in the days of John the Apostle, has become entrenched in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord wants His house to be a training center for His people, where they are perfected, trained and released for the work of the ministry (service). A paradigm shift in our thinking has to take place. Pastors and leaders must transition from: just preaching/teaching to equipping; developing programs to developing leaders; investing in programs to investing in people; focusing only in the needs of their church to focusing in the needs of their community.

The Lord wants His church back, and He is calling all of His people to find their place in ministry. Every believer is called to ministry (to serve), but it is going to take godly leaders, who are not afraid or intimidated by the visions, dreams, anointing and abilities of others, to place each person in their set place, develop the gifting and callings inside of them, teach them how to function and then release them to operate there (Ephesians 4:11-16).

The full revelation of Christ through His body will only come as we begin to function in unity as a body; each believer doing what he has been gifted to do by the Lord. Because God has chosen earthen vessels to manifest His glory and power on the earth, it behooves us to learn and understand Him, His kingdom, His power and His glory, and how He desires to reveal it through us. There are too many people out of place in the Church. People with no anointing, doing things they were never called by God to do, and highly anointed godly vessels sitting in the pews doing nothing. Every ministry and every believer needs to become aligned with God's will for their lives so as to maximize their fruitfulness and usefulness. None of us is worthy to be used of God in this manner, but we understand that it is only by the grace of God that He uses us. Therefore, our focus must always be on Him, and not ourselves.

In the coming years, there will be an unprecedented number of signs and wonders happening all over the world, as the end time harvest of souls is taking place. Maybe you are one of those that God is going to use mightily in the coming years. It is my prayer that this book will help you to understand, discover, and operate in the power of the Holy Spirit, as you grow and develop in the ministry that God intended for you to do on this earth from the foundation of the earth.