

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!'¹ 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 and foolish thing'² 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

¹ 1 Peter 1:8

² 1 Corinthians 1:27

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.

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'³. 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 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*⁴.

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.

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

³ From the hymn *Love Divine all Loves Excelling* - Chas Wesley

⁴ John 4:23

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 counselling 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 para-church 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."⁵ 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

⁵ Galatians 5:1

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?”

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.