

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'¹. 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 counselling 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 counselling *with anointing*. So much church counselling today is no different to the counselling of the world with its twelve-step program. Look at the book shelves of your local Christian book shop to see how many such books are now available under the guise of Christian counselling. The twelve-step program has as its goal, to give the disfunctional 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 counselling for their sickness, as in all of society. However, many have spiritual sicknesses that can never be healed by psychiatric means. True Christian counselling offers full healing from spiritual wounds through the shed blood of the cross². 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."³

"God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles ..."⁴

"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."⁵

"Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly."⁶

¹ 1 Timothy 3:2

² Refer again to my book **The Key in My Hand**.

³ 1 Corinthians 12:18

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:28

⁵ Ephesians 4:7-11

⁶ Romans 12:6

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 God⁷ ?

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.

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.

⁷ Mark 10:42,43; Mark 9:35; Luke 9:48; Luke 22:26; Matthew 18:4