

Prayer Transformation Ministries Email Newsletter – Teaching for 3/21/07

The Power of His Presence

We just need to endure until the Lord returns! That seems to be the mindset of many in the Church, especially in light of a growing sense of hopelessness around us. Terrorism and the threats of nuclear war are very present dangers on a global scale. Crime and lawlessness are on the increase in our cities. Politicians are mired in turf wars and grabbing for power, while at the same time declaring that social programs will be the cure-all. The ills of society continue to grow, and the Church is realizing her relative ineffectiveness in ministering to the overwhelming needs.

As the threats and challenges grow, many in the Church believe that Jesus' soon return is the only answer. This has been called a *theology of resignation*. It is a general sense of resignation and hopelessness that gives up and declares that everything will soon be over if we can just endure.

In such times throughout history, however, God's people have begun to cry out in desperation, brokenness, and repentance. In answer to the desperate cries of His people, God not only answered—He came down in His powerful and transforming presence! The manifest presence of God invaded entire communities, bringing conviction of sin while at the same time transforming the very fabric of society. It has happened in the past. It is happening today. It is the power of Presence-based transformation.

Being Broken Before God

In a recent past generation, a very dramatic example of the powerful manifest presence of God was experienced in the Hebrides Islands off the coast of Scotland. In the late 1940s and early '50s, people in the Hebrides were brokenhearted over the condition of their land and communities. In one community, a pastor and seven elders began to pray and seek the Lord in accordance with 2 Chronicles 7:14. Their prayers were preceded by years of faithful crying out to the Lord by two elderly sisters who sought God for a move of His Spirit in repentance and revival. When these church leaders finally reached the place of brokenness, they began to meet through the night in desperate prayer, confessing first their own sins.

In the book, *The Fire of God's Presence*, the author recounts the stories of what happened as God came in answer to their prayers. Describing the presence of God in the communities, he writes: "The fire of God's manifest presence and the revelation of His holiness were pervasive. The supreme feature of this spiritual awakening was unquestionably the deep consciousness of God's presence and holiness that was everywhere evident among the people. People were so overwhelmed at times that they were afraid to open their mouths for fear that they might utter words that would bring on them the judgments of God. Sinners, over-awed by God's presence, would fall helplessly, crying out for mercy" (pg. 37).

People were drawn to meetings—not by publicity, but by the magnetism of the manifest presence of God. People driving to the meetings were overwhelmed by the presence of God and had to pull over to the side of the road, kneeling in the road to cry out to God for mercy. It is described this way: "The Hebrides revival was truly a public manifestation of God's presence. Something greater than organization, something more wonderful than a new approach in dynamic evangelism—this was God Himself in action! The magnetism of His awesome presence worked independently of special personalities" (*The Fire of God's Presence*, pg. 45).

The vast majority of us living in the United States have never experienced such a powerful presence of God, especially on a community-wide scale. But that does not mean that He is not willing to come to us today in the same way. Duncan Campbell, whom God used mightily in the Hebrides revival, wrote these words that still ring true for us today: "When you return to America, rouse the people; tell them what God is doing! I believe every church can have what we are having in the Hebrides. There is no *mystery*, but there is a *secret*."

If God can find a people over there, prepared to *pay the price* as they have over here, He will visit them in the same revival of power” (*The Fire of God’s Presence*, pg. 21)!

The secret is out! God wants to move in our own communities and nation just as He did in the Hebrides. Are you willing to be the one who pays the price of desperation, brokenness, humility, and repentance in persistent prayer?