

Dear Friends,

Thanks for your interest in downloading this PDF. I'm presenting several short testimonies of miracles illustrating the Power of the Holy Spirit — true stories from another publication I wrote.

I'll begin with a quick testimony of a personal miracle ("The Sally Miracle") and what God did in response to Praying in the Spirit (a gift that commonly accompanies being Baptized in the Holy Spirit).

Following that is a testimony of what happened in our church in California — a stunning corporate miracle.

The goal of these testimonies is to encourage your faith and underscore how eager God is to answer our prayers and display His power wherever people are hungry for Him to show up.

The Sally Miracle — *answered prayer*

As my wife was driving throughout the city running errands, I was working on a project at home. Suddenly, a sense of impending disaster struck me — a deep impression in my spirit that I couldn't shake. I tried to discern if this was just a "fiery dart" of fear from the spiritual dark side, or if it was a legitimate "warning flare." It seemed to be the latter.

I began praying in my Spiritual language hoping a sense of resolve would come soon. But the warning persisted and intensified; it felt like something tragic was about to happen.

By the way, this is the beauty and power of Spiritual language: the Holy Spirit joins with our spirit and uses our tongue to pray even though our minds are not involved. The Omniscient One — God Who knows everything — prays beyond our limited knowledge and wisdom.

What a gift! (1 Cor. 14:2, 15, 18; Rom. 8:26-27).

Not knowing what it was all about, I figured I'd better keep praying until I sensed some sort of peace. I ended up praying for about 50 minutes when suddenly that long-awaited sense of peace came as quickly as the dire warning had come.

I sat there trying to discern if the all-clear signal was real and if it was "okay" to stop praying. Yep, all clear.

About a half hour later, my wife returned home. I greeted her and she said, "Well, I just about got killed!"

She proceeded to tell me the story. Right about the time I was ending my long prayer, she was at a red light waiting behind several cars at an intersection. She glanced up to her rearview mirror and was horrified to see another car speeding right toward the rear of her car at about 50 MPH. My wife could do nothing. Literally at the last second, that driver suddenly saw the impending collision and veered inches away from my wife's bumper — careening into the shoulder, flying through the intersection, and barely missing other collisions.

We marveled that God gave a prayer warning in advance, and we thanked Him for such a dramatic deliverance from disaster!

Angels We Have Heard On High

— *answered prayer*

"Learn to worship God as the God who does wonders, who wishes to prove in you that He can do something supernatural and divine."

— *Andrew Murray*

Choral conducting is one of the many talents my wife has been blessed with (in addition to composing music).

When we were attending a small California church with about 300 members, Sally directed the choir and worked with a group of dancers — six women from the congregation. An elder's wife, Carol Romeo, choreographed the dances to express what the choir was singing as a powerful way to amplify and inspire worship on many occasions. (Their Easter production of the Resurrection still gives me chills.)

During one particular service that was focused on re-dedicating the church building after some renovations, we were “pulling out the stops” with a wide array of choral music and dancing. There were 25 of us in the choir. The author was in the tenor section.

Not only were we re-dedicating the facility, but we were also re-dedicating ourselves to the Lord, so we prayed before the event that God would fill the service with His Presence. Little did we know that Heaven was literally about to visit us (even though that line item was not listed in the program bulletin).

The hymn that ushered in a supernatural visitation was “Crown Him with Many Crowns.” At verse four, the plan was for half the choir to sing the regular tune while the other half sang the descant, a complimentary counter melody Sally had composed.

As we sang, the sanctuary was suddenly filled with at least 500 angelic voices that surrounded the choir and the entire sanctuary, and we were only on verse two! Sally and Pastor Ken Pientka looked at each other, bug-eyed, as those of us in the choir were stealing glances at each other in shock from the glorious-but-thunderous voices emanating from the rafters. Pastor Ken waved his hand to keep it going, so we sang on. (It was fascinating how the angels knew the descant Sally had

composed for the fourth verse!) The pastor guided us to repeat the whole hymn and, of course, the angels stayed right with us.

When the final verse ended, applause and shouts of praise erupted, and we joined in with joyful amazement. There were many elated conversations among the choir and staff after the event!

Cut to the scene in the Anderson residence after we returned home from church...

The phone rang and Sally answered. It was our good friend Michael Omartian calling. He had been in that service, seated in the fourth row, center aisle. Michael is a 3-time Grammy winner, the first producer in recording history to have number-one records in three separate decades: 70s, 80s, and 90s. He has produced albums for a long list of top talent like Rod Stewart and Donna Summer, as well as arranged and played keyboards for stars like Michael Jackson and Barbara Streisand. He knows music.

His first words to Sally were: “You had some help today!”

Sally asked him excitedly: “Michael, what did you hear?”

Michael: “The overtones of angel voices were all over the place! It was like harmony stacked to infinity in highs and lows!”

They continued to talk excitedly about how the acoustics in the room suddenly and completely changed, sounding like we were in a huge cathedral (not the humble A-frame building we were actually in).

So, a battalion of angels was sent from Heaven to Crescenta Valley Foursquare Church to join 25 choir members and a small congregation during a special worship service. It was confirmed by those present as well as a Grammy-winning music producer. How cool is that?

Prayer Amid Tragedy

When people pray, a perfectly desirable outcome is not instantly guaranteed. Prayer can often take the form of spiritual warfare. Before a war can ultimately be won, many battles occur and casualties are suffered. Most battles involve seizing gains yard-by-yard, and over time mile-by-mile. Consequently, battles are rarely convenient victories in which all things are suddenly fixed and all is good.

On March 27, 2023, a heavily armed woman shot her way through an exterior door at Covenant School in Nashville with the intent of killing children and teachers. Our grandson, Harrison, attended that school, and by the mercy of God he was not one of the casualties.

Quick backstory: The week before the shootings, I had a sudden impression (or vision, if you will) of a shadowy human figure secretly making its way up a staircase and along walls trying to stay hidden. I didn't know any details of what this was about — when, where, or who — but I knew this shadow signified raw evil. So, I focused prayers against whatever that shadow represented and that it would be defeated.

As a result of the horrible shooting at Covenant School, six precious lives were lost. We soon discovered that the assailant spent most of her time shooting constant rounds into the door of our grandson's room trying to get in. The teacher had wisely placed all the children with their backs against the wall which avoided the shooter's sightline through the door's small window. Harrison was one of the children closest to the door, and he later said it seemed like "one hundred bullets" came ripping through that door.

Even though the shooter was able to get into the building through a heavy exterior door, she could not get past that particular classroom door that she was so determined to break

through. The lives that were lost that day happened at other places on the campus, but not inside Harrison's classroom.

Within 14 minutes after the first 911 call, the Metro Police took down the assailant.

A person critical of prayer might hurl out a barbed challenge such as: "Okay, you prayed! So, why didn't your prayers protect the other six people who died?" There is no fix-all maxim that satisfies all questions following a tragedy, but one must keep in mind what IS known...

- As I mentioned, intercessory prayer is often warfare; it's not an ATM machine with instant payouts.
- I believe the outcome that day would have been far worse if there hadn't been so much ongoing prayer from parents in that church and school community. Case in point...
- The shooter was a former student of this school, familiar with the campus and its schedules. It's a miracle she was delayed from arriving at the campus 90 minutes earlier when all the students and teachers would have been gathered together in the chapel — easy soft targets all in one place.
- The shooter could not, for some reason, get into our grandson's room; consequently, every child inside of that room was safe.
- When bad things happen, we must hang onto the countless miracles and answers to prayer we've experienced throughout our lifetimes. Even though many questions remain unanswered in the aftermath of horrible events, we cling to God Who is a Redeemer.
- Even though God is sovereign, He says we are supposed to pray without ceasing. He has commissioned us to be

co-laborers with Him, and we are called to pursue and steward the spiritual gifts He has given us including prayer, praying in the Spirit, words of knowledge, visions, dreams, and prophetic insights, etc. (1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Cor. 12:31,14:5) This pursuit is not selfish; spiritual gifts are to benefit other people — not just us.

- Walking with Jesus is not passive. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4). Praying without ceasing is a strategic way to wage preemptive strikes against spiritual forces determined to bring destruction — even before they happen. “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Speak to the Tree — *answered prayer*

Some years ago, we experienced a “perfect storm” of financial adversity in the aftermath of the 2008 crash: an uncharacteristic dry patch of no work for an extended season, a series of medical crises, two cars imploding beyond repair, and many other trials. It was insane.

In spite of considering myself to be a “prayer guy,” I felt like my faith was the weakest it had been in quite some time having been relentlessly buffeted and pounded by one crisis after another.

Our vintage cottage home with a country French motif was built in 1940 in an upscale neighborhood across from a country club golf course, and it was in an officially listed ‘Historic’ area.

The house was charming and the resale value great, but the unusable old wooden detached garage was a liability. It had fallen into great disrepair on the inside. (Unknown to us, a power-line

crew had evidently smashed the back-quarter portion of the roof — not visible from the front — and never reported it. Consequently, we couldn't prove their responsibility once we finally discovered the giant hole and rotting wood throughout).

At that point, our prevailing circumstantial distress kept us from doing much of anything. We were financially unable to have the garage razed and removed if we wanted to sell our house, and we were hindered from expanding our business.

One evening, I walked outside to pray while gazing up at the stars. I needed air, and we really needed a miraculous breakthrough — a financial windfall to deal with our immediate situation. I was laboring under a lot of heaviness, so I prayed in the Spirit. My prayers in English were more of an intermittent whisper, words coming slowly and with effort.

I remember leaning my back against the old garage and sighing heavily. Fairly soon, a breeze picked up causing tree leaves to flutter. Before long, the breeze grew a little more making tree branches gently sway against the clear sky.

Just before going back into the house, I felt prompted to pray: "Maybe a strong wind will uproot that tree, make it smash the garage and insurance money will give us some relief." I was looking at our neighbor's nearby tree. It was over 100 years-old and towered a good 75'.

With those words, I went inside.

Five hours later, a huge crash shook the ground. We all jumped out of bed and realized the power was out.

We looked outside and that giant tree had fallen exactly on, perfectly on... that old garage!

It took God five whole hours to answer my limp, slow, one-sentence prayer, and He honored it with a crashing response — our garage was surgically annihilated!

Think of the incredible odds. For more than 100 years, that tree didn't fall. Five hours after my praying in the Spirit and suggesting to God a fallen tree would help us — it fell. And the tree had the choice of falling in any direction within a 360° radius — but it fell exactly as needed. Being so tall with such massive, unearthed roots, it was obvious that the force required to topple that tree was staggering. And yet, there was no storm, no hurricane, no tornado that night.

The tree had grown on an empty lot next to our house, owned by our neighbor who gladly paid for the tree to be sawed up and removed. During that process, I had a chance to count the rings inside the exposed trunk. It was well beyond 100 years old.

The insurance company was quick to pay, and it provided the financial bridge we desperately needed to get back on our feet again.

As I decided to include this story in this post, I wondered what the calculated mathematical odds would be for this tree to suddenly fall within all the parameters mentioned. So, I used an AI-assisted app that I've been using which has been fabulous for calculating complex math problems. I input all the data including:

- Natural frequency of trees falling
- Directional probability
- Time frame
- No storm that night
- Independence of events, etc.

The app got to work, and the rapid scroll of calculations was long and complex that finally brought forth the results: the odds of this happening by chance was 1 in 627,000,000,000!

God has the freedom to answer our prayers immediately in spectacular ways against incredible odds even when we are at our weakest!

“All I know is that when I pray, ‘coincidences’ happen; and when I don't pray, they don't happen.” — *Dan Hayes*

“The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, ‘O God, forgive me,’ or ‘Help me.’ ”

— Billy Graham

The Bigger Picture

There are a few more short stories to follow that show God's miraculous power at work, but first I'd like to explain my initial motivation for writing this lengthy blog. A few weeks ago, Sally and I had a lively conversation about how desperately America needs a spiritual revival, especially because it's being quickly dismantled by many forces on so many levels.

We also talked about how our Nation previously went through a similar state of rapid decline during the last half of the 1960s, at which time our Nation was entering a very dark era. (Remember the hit song back in 1965 by Barry McGuire, “Eve of Destruction”?)

But God...

By the end of the 60s, the Lord brought about an astounding move of His Spirit commonly known as the [“Jesus People Revolution”](#). Healing waters flowed across the planet as God did many miracles. One of several miracles we personally experienced at that time happened when my friend and I were helping lay pipes at an orphanage in Tijuana. Later in this article, I'll describe what God did — it's mind-blowing!

At the core of this international revival was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as seen in Acts 2. God's gift of immersing His people in the Holy Spirit is separate and beyond entering salvation. And it's directly related to miracles happening, faith in the church being dramatically increased, the impact of believers on our culture being multiplied and church growth exploding.

As refreshing and revitalizing as the move of God was throughout the 70s and 80s, with countless people coming to faith in Christ, some prominent church leaders thundered judgments against the revival, calling it "heresy" and "charismania."

In recent years, resistance to the EXPERIENCE of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit has become less contentious. However, in place of public accusations, there's an observable growing complacency spreading throughout churchdom — with a very strange twist.

Here's the twist we've seen...

Sally and I have visited, listened to and/or attended numerous churches over the past few decades. And what we've noticed is that many pastors (not all) teach on the Holy Spirit and the Book Acts (some with truly excellent teachings) — and yet, they FAIL to provide a direct invitation for people to come forward and RECEIVE the EXPERIENCE of being Baptized in the Holy Spirit...

- No altar call for receiving this Biblical infilling,
- No instruction for a person to act on their own in seeking this experience,
- No teaching on the Spiritual Gifts (the "scary" ones — like prophesying and praying in a Spiritual language, etc.).

It's increasingly difficult to find churches with HUNGER for God's manifest PRESENCE and POWER. It's as if teaching alone is enough. Too often, pastors simply move on from their teachings on the Book of Acts to the next sermon topic the following week without encouraging their congregations to EXPERIENCE what Acts is primarily about: the greatest Gift Jesus purchased for us outside of Salvation.

- Box checked.
- Topic covered.
- Moving on.

How frustrating. How unfortunate.

In one such case at a large church we attended, the pastor brought an entire series on the Book of Acts, expertly taught, and yet (amazingly) he totally SKIPPED OVER the 2nd chapter of Acts — the very chapter that presents Pentecost and God baptizing believers in the Holy Spirit! One week we were being taught from chapter 1, and the following week we were suddenly in chapter 3. He said chapter 2 was being covered in home group gatherings by an associate pastor. But there was such an outcry from the congregation that the pastor had to apologize and return to chapter 2, teaching it in the main church meetings.

What was he thinking?

Following this strange omission, I wrote a respectful letter to that pastor explaining our surprise that the EXPERIENCE of the Holy Spirit baptism was blatantly absent from the life of our church, even in the midst of such a MASTERFUL TEACHING on the Book of Acts.

We experienced this identical scenario two decades earlier at another large church where a different pastor gave a brilliant teaching on Acts, then failed to escort the congregation into the very power of God about which he so skillfully taught. As far as we know that church never gave room for the Baptism of the Spirit to be experienced by the congregation at any other time, nor were the Spiritual gifts ever acknowledged.

Back to the letter I sent to our pastor, it's included below, and I've concealed actual names and identities.

One side note: the letter that I mailed to our pastor was also sent to all the church elders. About a month later, we heard a message from one of the beloved “spiritual fathers” in Nashville (a proponent of the Charismatic experience). He actually quoted an

excerpt from my letter as he publicly exhorted churches to “cross over the threshold” from merely TEACHING about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit to actually EXPERIENCING it. Apparently, my letter was valued enough by a renown spiritual father to quote from it.

Does this post seem like a pointless rant? Am I splitting hairs over a mere technicality?

Because we lived through the 60s and the subsequent outpouring of God’s Spirit which brought radical healing to America, we’re convinced that the ABSENCE of a similar intervention of God NOW could ultimately result in America’s demise. Corruption is accelerating exponentially. Who is supposed to save us? Politicians? The mainstream media? Artificial Intelligence?

All we need for spiritual darkness to overtake our Nation is for the Church to lose its salt, power and influence. Even though churches may hear TEACHING about God’s Power and the Holy Spirit, if they aren’t being escorted across the threshold of EXPERIENCE, what we end up with is teaching in our heads, instead of FIRE in our hearts that drive us to tenaciously pursue God to manifest Heaven on Earth as He did in the Book of Acts and as He did in the 70s and 80s...

- to shake things up...
- to empower people to prophesy, have dreams and visions, heal the sick... even raise the dead. (They’re raising the dead in Mozambique, by the way — not hours dead, but days dead)...
- and to give us a spiritual language by the Holy Spirit so that our tongues burn with nuclear-powered intercession according to the mind of God for our family, friends, the Nation, the lost, and the urgent needs we can’t even foresee with our mere 3 lb. brains of clay. Allowing God to pray through us is an amazing opportunity to make a difference on Earth beyond what our mere human efforts can achieve.

And now, here is the letter I promised. (Again, names and references have been changed.)

The context of the following letter will help explain why it opens the way it does. Our pastor at the time, a truly excellent teacher, had invited those of us in his congregation to send him a letter expressing our personal “Great Hope” for what we wanted see God do in our church. This invitation came in the middle of his extended teaching series on the Book of Acts.

Dear Pastor Joe,

In response to your request, here is the “Great Hope” my wife and I share regarding our church...

“Our hope is that the *Book of Acts* series you’re teaching will conclude with the Ministry Team and Pastoral Staff calling forward anyone who wants to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands.”

[NOTE: At the end of the teaching series, this did NOT happen. The series on Acts concluded, and the next topical series began without any opportunity for people to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and without any instruction on how to pursue it.

My letter to our pastor continues...]

Let me quickly add that it’s possible that our Great Hope mentioned above doesn’t require any explanation whatsoever — this activity may already be planned. But then again, it’s possible that this Hope is puzzling. So, thank you in advance for your patience as we supply some clarification — just in case it might be helpful:

Pastor, you are an excellent teacher, and we enthusiastically agree with your recent sermon containing

profound points, three of which are quoted here:

- “Without the Holy Spirit we are toast.”
- “The Baptism of the Holy Spirit often goes missing in the life of many churches.”
- “What we need is not more information but more application of what we already know.”

To amplify your last excellent point, there are two Greek nouns for “knowledge” presented in Vine’s *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.

The first is “gnosis” which pertains to facts or information including spiritual truth.

The second is “epignosis” which pertains to experiential knowledge. Vine says *epignosis* is: “a greater participation by the knower in the object known, thus more powerfully influencing him.”

It would be a real loss if we were only given *gnosis* about the Holy Spirit at our church (no matter how excellent the teaching is) if we were to miss the opportunity to gain *epignosis*—the experience of the Holy Spirit Baptism— especially because it is both empowering and also an intimate encounter with the actual Person Who brings us closer to Jesus.

You mentioned two “ditches” that churches often fall into regarding this topic. You said one ditch is “charismania” and the other is to become “the frozen chosen.” The inference was that there are two extremes on either side of the spiritual spectrum, and we at our church must avoid these two extremes by remaining safely balanced in the middle of that spectrum. However, we would submit the possibility that the most dangerous ditch of all lies hidden in the middle of that spectrum, not far from the feet of any church.

This subtle-but-deep ditch involves merely teaching about the Holy Spirit without aggressively pursuing Him and thereby crossing a definitive threshold that leads to being flooded with Him, i.e., baptized. In other words, proactively asking Jesus to Baptize us in the Holy Spirit (most commonly through the laying on of hands but not exclusively so) is crossing such a threshold — as opposed to merely proclaiming that we need the Holy Spirit.

The Book of Acts categorically identifies those who had received the Holy Spirit and those who had not yet, even though they had already accepted Christ (note: Acts 8:14-17, 19:1-6).

If any church fails to cross the very specific threshold of taking action in response to Scripture, then by default, they are passively rejecting the very thing they preach — choosing to give lip service to a truth they avoid or refuse to experience (*epignosis*).

You mentioned that seeking “spiritual experiences” can be a distraction to our faith walk, and that’s certainly true. But we would submit that experiencing the Holy Spirit Baptism, and thereby embracing all the spiritual gifts such as prophecy and spiritual language, are not distractions — they are expressions and enhancements of the very relationship we all seek.

For example, marital sex is a sought-after experience of intimacy with one’s spouse — yet it’s hardly a “distraction” in a marital relationship! Making love is treasured by a husband and wife not simply by talking about it, but experiencing it (cf. Song Of Solomon, et al.)

My wife and I are not experts in all things spiritual by any means. But one thing we do have is mileage. We grew

up in the “Jesus People” movement of the 70s and have enjoyed many church cultures throughout the decades.

We were enriched by churches that consistently embraced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit experientially — places that include Calvary Chapel with Chuck Smith, the Church On The Way with Dr. Jack Hayford (where I was on Pastoral Staff), and then there was my Bible College culture, formerly known as “L.I.F.E” (now known as Life Pacific University), where Chuck Smith also attended. It was founded by Aimee Semple McPherson who established the Church of the Foursquare Gospel. [Their little-known core belief expresses four aspects of Jesus’ Ministry: Savior, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Healer and Soon Coming King.]

You asked a great question in your recent sermon. You said if we are supposed to do greater works than Jesus, “what does that look like?” Fabulous question! One example might be *Iris Global* in Mozambique. Years ago, we had the privilege of hearing Heidi Baker (wife of Rolland Baker). They have helped establish more than 2,000 churches in Mozambique. To name just a few miracles that have been experienced there: they and their discipleship graduates have raised the dead (dead-for-days not just dead-for-hours), and they have seen the Lord suddenly feed thousands of people in the wilderness by multiplying a few pots of food that never ran out. (I experienced this on a smaller scale when the Lord multiplied bags of groceries in the trunk of my car after I shopped for food to feed orphans in Tijuana.)

In short, epic miracles like these (and many more not mentioned) have happened in Mozambique because, years prior, Heidi was radically transformed by the Holy Spirit Baptism. And that is what eventually led her to “do greater works” in Mozambique. She would tell you that to

your face. Just as we see in *The Book of Acts* — the Pentecost experience is what made possible all the other miracles that followed which multiplied the faith and exponential growth of the early Church.

Our church mission statement, glowing in letters high above the platform, begins with the word “Equipping.” If “equipping” only means receiving teaching, training, and a mere pronouncement that the Holy Spirit is upon us, and yet omits receiving the actual experience of the Holy Spirit Baptism which gives us true power exceeding all human effort and the limitations of physics, then the “equipping” word is incomplete.

Consequentially, our mission will lack the full power-potential available from God, and thereby our mission will become more of a DIY Christian effort, regardless of how diligent and fruitful it may be. What will be forfeited isn’t even visible: we’ll never see the enormity of what could have been if we had been fully open conduits of God’s Spirit.

With Sally’s and my 50+ years of spiritual mileage with Jesus, we’ve seen a full spiritual spectrum within a wide range of church cultures. Gladly, we’ve enjoyed a handful of congregations that had an “Open Heaven,” so to speak, that fully embraced the Holy Spirit Baptism and the full range of spiritual gifts. We believe THIS is what our church hungers for! But only the leadership can decide if we will cross that critical threshold into actual experience.

Blessings!

-- Bob and Sally Anderson

FYI: Heidi and Rolland Baker’s website at Iris Global:
<https://www.irisglobal.org/about/the-iris-story>

That concludes the letter I sent to the pastor of the church we used to attend. And I probably should bring this long article to a close... BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE! Because you've read this far, I'm tossing in a few more short stories.

I became a follower of Christ at age 19 after going through a horrendous experience in Eastern mysticism. Below is my encounter with Christian teachers who denied the power of the Holy Spirit. Because I had already suffered from dark spiritual forces in the Eastern cult, I was desperately hungry for God's manifest power. And then I got Baptized in the Holy Spirit, and all Heaven broke loose! Here's the story...

God in a Box

While attending a number of classes and seminars, I soon noticed a curious thing. Among the various Bible teachers and skilled instructors I was privileged to sit under, two presented a theme that surfaced repeatedly. In essence, that theme was that God no longer does miracles or awesome things as we read about in the Bible — especially the spectacular things found in the Book of Acts.

These two teachers stressed that since we now have the Bible, we no longer need God to act like God in powerful ways anymore. We no longer need spiritual gifts like prophecy, they said. Miracles were for an earlier era, they said.

Week after week, these two highly respected Bible teachers kept drilling home their dogmatic position that God's miracles are no longer available, and that the expression of God's power has somehow expired like a carton of milk.

They presented a realm of faith in which we could control and administrate everything *about* God and do so freely without *God Himself* inconveniently getting in our way.

Of course, those teachers would never have put it in such terms, but at the end of the day, that's exactly what they

presented to those of us sitting in their classes.

It was fun to watch how their theological position required fancy verbal footwork as they danced around a plethora of Bible verses that contradicted their dogma.

Even though I was a kid new to the Bible, I could already see how they were in blatant denial of what the Bible actually said. The God encounters I had through my youth urged me to conclude their rationalizing was absolutely wrong. Respectable men seemed to redefine God according to their own lackluster experiences and unbelief.

Where's the Power?

Therefore, when I became a believer in Jesus and read about the awesome power of God acted out in the Bible, I wanted to experience it firsthand. I had already suffered from “the dark side of the Force,” so to speak, when I fell into Eastern mysticism. I was no longer playing games with God, and I certainly had no interest in playing church. Where is the Biblical God of True Power?

During the third month of my faith journey, a youth group I joined embarked on a brief mission trip. We were going to share our faith at the University of California in Berkeley, right on the steps of Sproul Hall, and also at San Quentin Prison where riots were breaking out because of explosive, nationally watched protests centered around those known as “The Soledad Brothers.”

The idea of sharing our faith in the midst of such a violent crowd motivated us to pray for God’s protection and guidance for the days ahead. As we did, I noticed my friends were gently praying in another language. Their speech was so elegant that it sounded like symphonic music, the way you’d imagine angels would sound.

I looked up and interrupted them, “Hey! What are you guys doing?” As they started to answer from the second chapter of Acts, I impatiently interrupted again, “Listen, I want this! How do I get this?”

They chuckled and said they would all pray for me that night at Polly’s apartment (one of my new friends), and I was thrilled!

Beyond Special Effects

That night, we all sat in a circle on the floor in Polly’s den. My four friends were smiling with anticipation, and so was I. The God who had shaken the Earth while visiting me in my backyard when I was seven years-old was about to visit me again!

We all closed our eyes as my friends placed their hands on me and prayed that I’d be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 3:16; Eph. 5:18; Acts 19:1-7)

The first thing that stunned me was that I could still see my friends...*after closing my eyes*. I thought to myself, “Hmm. This...is interesting.”

I then “looked” — with my eyes still shut — at my friend Gwennie. (She had grown up in a black Pentecostal church.) I could see a pinpoint of light in her left shoulder, and my attention was riveted. I had never experienced anything like this before.

Things got even more intense. The pinpoint of light was gathering volume and force. It began traveling down Gwennie’s arm and quickly took on the characteristics of both light and water: shining, shimmering, and splashing.

Before long, the Light-Water was swirling around us like a tornado. I was absolutely overwhelmed with the sweetness and force of God's love, soon realizing the *what* I was watching (the Light-Water) was actually a *Who . . .* the Person of the Holy Spirit.

And then, as if all of this weren't enough, the Light-Water seemed to pause and look at me intently. He then zoomed (for lack of a better verb) into my chest.

I Was Toast

At this point, there are no words to convey the experience. My best description is that it was "one million volts of perfect love." This was *not* a religious experience, nor was it merely a pleasant mood that settled over me by way of hypnotic suggestion or self-fulfilled yearnings. In fact, it wasn't just a feeling, though I certainly felt it! This was an experience that went far beyond my intellect or emotions; it was a timeless state of being.

More than anything, it was extreme romance. There was a stunning intimacy between me and the One I had never really known, and yet He felt to me like the most passionate and intimate friend I had always known. As His love kept rushing through every cell of my being, it was extremely familiar, yet absolutely new. Gender was irrelevant; this relationship far exceeded any human limitations or definition.

I kept thinking, "*This* is what *every* human craves! Oh my gosh! Everyone wants this! *This* is Who we all crave, we were made for this — the whole world!"

I was smashed by love — undone, as if the most intense lovesick crush was fulfilled by the greatest intimacy possible. I was overwhelmed and helpless, captured by the passion of my Creator. The awesome fact is God wants to marry us!

“As the bridegroom finds joy in his union with his bride, so will your God take joy in his union with you!”
(Isa 62:5b, Rev 19:7, Song 1:2 & 5:1, Zeph 3:17)

There is no love a person could desire that *wasn't* contained in the immersion of the Holy Spirit as I experienced Him. The human brain can't even process such a concept. And what I've tried to describe in the above paragraphs falls way short.

Following this extraordinary experience, I remained “drunk in the Spirit” for 3 days (intoxication as seen in Acts 2). In fact, I could hardly speak during that time. Instead of English, the only thing I was good for was what seemed to be an angelic language not of this Earth. Even when trying to ask my friends at dinner something mundane like “Would you pass the salt?” there was an outpouring of Heaven-speak. We were in a constant state of hilarity; “fun” is too small a word for it.

There's a biblical phrase that describes God as “the Desire of All Nations” (Haggai 2:7, NKJV). This means God is the ultimate fulfillment of human desire — not specifically for the religious of heart — but rather for every person on Earth, whether it's a teenager on drugs, a Wall Street hedge fund manager, or a Middle Eastern terrorist . . . if you're human, *this* is the love and the Person you were originally made for.

Ironically, those who love being religious for the pious pride of it often seem to fall into a weird category of people who consistently resist personal relationship with Jesus and His manifest power. This theatrical irony is best illustrated by the religious Pharisees of Jesus' time. The ones most “zealous for God” hated Him the most. That's because the realm of religion became their realm of control. And God is not controllable.

Lunch Is Ready

Another spectacular manifestation of God's power happened when my friend Sandi and I visited an orphanage in Mexico about a half hour outside of Tijuana. It was a small place with about thirty kids. We dug ditches to help install some new pipes in the ground.

Soon, word came to us that the orphanage had run out of food. Sandi and I counted up the change we had in our pockets, and it wasn't much.

But we took what we had, went to the store, and at least we were able to buy two bags of groceries. I put the two bags of groceries in the trunk of my '69 Pontiac LeMans, slammed the trunk shut, and drove off.

When we arrived at the orphanage, I opened up the trunk, and what Sandi and I saw made us both scream with near hysteria: there were FIVE bags of groceries, not just the TWO that we put in there!

God had multiplied the groceries for the orphans right there in the trunk of my car!

It took hours for us to calm down after that amazing miracle. Then again, why were we so surprised? Jesus had *already* shown us in the Gospels His ability to multiply food for more than 10,000 people (including women and children).

Conclusion

Why share testimonies of God's miracles and urge people to pursue the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? America desperately needs revival, not so it will become more religious, but for the Kingdom of Heaven to increase on the Earth as Jesus taught us to pray. When God's people seek His face, as outlined in 2 Chr. 7:14, that's the beginning of a nation getting healed.

Being Baptized in the Holy Spirit is not some sort of “club” for the elite. It simply enables us to pray beyond our limited human capacity and be more receptive to God “wearing us like clothing” as He did with Gideon:

“Then the Spirit of YAHWEH clothed himself in Gideon and enveloped him! Gideon sounded a blast of the shofar to call the men of the clan of Abiezer to follow him.” — Judges 6:34 (TPT).

I constantly need to remind myself of how HUGE God really is. I believe our little minds tend to shrink Him by default as time passes because, as I mentioned, our brains of clay weigh just 3 lbs.

One example of a “God-is-huge” brain exercise is to ponder this: science has continually sought to comprehend the size of the Universe. Early estimates put the number of galaxies at 200 billion, but newer estimates range upwards of two trillion. However, David Kornreich, assistant professor at Ithaca College in New York, says even that number is a gross underestimation — we should place the number at 10 trillion galaxies or higher and the number of stars at 1 septillion (one followed by 24 zeroes). That doesn’t even number the planets! Whatever the number, the Scripture says it’s all God’s “finger work.” He didn’t even put His arms or shoulders into the job (Psalm 8:3).

This is the Omnipotent One to whom we pray!
This is the One who wants to wear us like His gloves!
This is the One who wants to marry us!

Final Thought

I’ll close my lengthy article with this confession: I have never considered myself to be “religious.” Attending church for its own sake has never appealed to me, but I thrive on relationships. What ultimately won me over is the fact that God desires a personal relationship with us.

However, the most crucial issue we all face is that no one in the human race is “righteous” before God by their own merit, as stated in Romans 3:10. To paraphrase Bob Dylan, we are all born into this world stone-cold dead the moment we step out of the womb. Therefore, no one can stand before God at the Judgment in their own righteousness and enter Heaven.

This is precisely why Christ died for the sins of every person. It’s a free gift — but to possess it, we must accept it by faith before we die. For example, if someone offers us a Christmas gift and we refuse to accept it, we simply won’t have it.

I often say that the life and work of Jesus Christ is not a religious issue; it’s an accounting issue. When we stand before God after death, we will desperately need Jesus’ righteousness credited to our account.

Simply put: imagine God’s accounting ledger for each person’s life. There’s a column for every individual, with their name at the top. Under each name is a record of every action, thought, and spoken word. That’s a disaster for all of us because we’re all born in need of forgiveness.

However, that account can be edited. We all use Copy/Paste on our computers. When we receive Jesus as our Savior, His perfect righteousness is “pasted” into our accounting column under our name. THAT is our passport into Heaven.

As stated in John 3:36: “The one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but the one who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”

God doesn’t hate us — He loves us passionately! But He can’t force His forgiveness on us. So, how will we escape judgment if we reject so great a salvation — the only salvation God has provided? (cf. Hebrews 2:3)

Thanks for reading such a long article!

—Bob

Excerpts are from "The Book of Outrageous Prayers" by Bob W. Anderson

