

Cornfusion

Throughout this website I have showcased the works of others -usually long deceased -simply because they are the most skilled advocates of Holiness at hand. But when it comes to co-ordinating that topic within the broader reach charismatic and Pentecostal ideas, simply because there are so many self-styled regional groups.

My Personal Perspective

My main testimonial is very abbreviated since I lived a lot of life before I came to the place of Christian crisis that brought me to a growing concern with the quality of my Christianity. And since the testimony is not about myself, but how I finally entered His Rest, my early history is omitted.

I was the eldest of three children of an Anglican father and United Church mother (she was following her Congregationalist parents -indeed as my father was following his Anglican parents.) As was the custom in those days, the family followed the father's religion. So starting 1950 or before I remember spending time squirming on the mercilessly hard oak pews of the city's historic Anglican Cathedral under the stern eyes of my father. Children were "to be seen and not heard" was the maxim of the day. Any minor infraction was duly remembered and punished at home. Church itself was meaningless, and personal survival in this dangerous environment was of a much more immediate concern. The family went to church three times a year.

Later, the family moved to a smaller community and its smaller local Anglican Church. My mother became involved in the ladies groups. And I was duly enrolled in the choir.... Spirituality? Religion? *I was not aware of any.* In my personal life I had been aware for some years, but it had nothing to do with church? What was church for? As far as I could tell adults were a separate species that did weird things like go to church.

As I teen I left home and had more freedom in that time when girls were not yet a dominant interest -my education still had that place.

So one day I was walking by the local large Anglican Church building, and the question struck me: All these people go to church here. There must be *some* reason, but what? So I enrolled in "Confirmation classes". And dutifully learned all the required course material so that I could pass their test.

Some parts were curious though. They talked about sin as if I should know what they were talking about. I was not that kind of young man. I did not do any of the "sins" that they mentioned, so I had nothing to "repent" of or be "saved" from. I was OK.

As part of the graduation from the class, the Bishop visited and "laid hands" on all the newly confirmed- including myself. When he laid hands on my head I felt something warm penetrate about an inch into my head. I had no idea what it was.

Not so long afterwards, I attended Sunday worship there, and noticed that hardly any men were there. The few attenders were crowded into the back pews, and were almost all old women! So I thought to myself, I guess I was right after all. A big building like this can be supported for no good reason! I left that church after that service, and have never returned. A couple of years later, they closed up that huge building, and went to share facilities with the equally cavernous Presbyterian Church.

That was how I once came close to being an unsaved member of the once-revered Anglican Church of Canada.

I have learned a great deal since those adolescent days, but the years have confirmed that the large

churches are more artifacts of the past than manifestations of present-day need.

My Salvation

I was gloriously saved in rural New Zealand in 1971-2 when 27 years old. I was saved though the audible voice of the Lord rather than through any church. It was such a voice that I was so undone that I could not speak for three weeks after hearing it. It has been hallmark of my personal faith since to become more like those things I heard His voice freighted with, even though He only said: "MY NAME IS JESUS."

In those few moments I was made aware of:

1. His profound identity with all that He stood for
2. His profoundly radiant dignity and majesty
3. He had all power and authority in heaven and on earth.

With those three Words, my only response could be, "Well! If you are Jesus, welcome!!! With that response I was immediately filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit. Over time it has been made abundantly clear that my highest calling is to embody what I heard in His voice on that day.

But first I had to adjust to my new Life in Him. For two years I continued in my quiet rural New Zealand environment, working and studying my new Bible. In came the gospel, and out went my former Eastern Religions. Gradually, I became better known, and was invited to small churches to give my profound darkness to profound light testimonial. Some were saved after hearing it because it was so impressive. They sought me out and a small home meeting was started which was remarkable for its high anointing, spiritual fellowship and weekly accounts of signs and wonders following.

What Happened? We shared out of what we found in the Scripture and daily events.

When I returned to Canada, I looked for a church that also carried an active anointing and spiritually zealous members to fellowship with. I had no idea what awaited me in the church world. None. I was a lamb being loosed among wolves...

Eventually, I joined this active old independent Pentecostal "Latter Rain" church in London, Ontario, that was praying for revival after languishing for many years since the great "Healing Revivals" of the fifties. These older middle aged people were the eldership of the church, but had formerly been zealous Spirit-filled young people in the Latter Rain revivals. They were praying for the Lord to bring some young people to rekindle the Fire that they once knew. They had been diligently praying with tears before the Lord sent myself and a few others into their midst.

They needed our liveliness, and we needed their grounding in the Word and spiritual maturity. These two rather unlikely groups worked together, and the little church soon exploded spiritually to become a big church in a big new building with many young people. Miracles were daily. The anointing on Sunday morning was so palpable you could cut it with a knife. We just felt that anything was possible, and so it was. Souls were routinely healed without intervention right where they stood in that fabulous anointing. When a service was starting we would look at each other, so as to say, "O here we go again!!!!" because we could just feel the palpable cloud of anointing approaching. What a ride!!! Our core zealots went to a restaurant afterward to recover and recap the meeting.

During this time there was active fellowship and excellent graduated Bible teaching classes that actually got into some depth, and so I grew like a weed. Whenever the church doors opened I was there. When the church doors were not open I was there renovating the building, for I was a bond-slave poured out unto Him.

Prophecy Without Wisdom

Prophecy had been spontaneously happening in the church; even though all anybody knew about it was that the scripture encouraged us to do it. That was it. (This was the mid-seventies, far before today's wave of the prophetic) There were no books or anything to guide us.

Many of us prophesied with excellent anointing and any revelation we had.

There was also a very insecure older lady, with a perennially unsaved husband. She needed a weekly private counseling session with the pastor to keep her head above water. In time, I suppose she learned that if she prophesied people would consider her spiritual and accept her as "hot for God" along with us zealous youngsters. It became her practice to come to every meeting and prophesy no matter what.

It is well understood now about prophesying out of the flesh. But back then, some theory was in the background, but leaders were completely unprepared to discern or manage utterances. It was just too far out for them. Pastors were trained to above all, not to offend paying members!! It is now well understood that soulish prophecy can quench the Spirit in a meeting quite effectively.

And so it became. Our meetings would start with the usual palpable awe of worship that would last for an hour or hour and a half solid.

Then the old lady would prophesy and the anointing would hit the floor. Wham!!! Success in raising it up again in that meeting was questionable. I had a private interview with the senior pastor regarding what was happening, but he couldn't see it.

So, this state of affairs continued until finally, one day the Spirit just didn't show up again. He was just gone! The bright young zealots soon left, including myself. A greatly reduced church carried on in the wilderness for many years, and even today nobody understands what happened. Ichabod. "His Glory is departed" became a true saying for that church. When I visited years later, I found the place dominated by empty pews, and a thin scattering of tired grey stalwarts.

What Happened? The pastor was a stern German man who thought in very concrete terms. He was hired by the original zealots later on. He quite often emphasized a religion of family values and learning from "trials" rather than direct reliance upon the Lord. He therefore had no conception of stewarding a spiritual awakening, nor did anyone else. They prayed for it to come, but when it came, nobody knew what to do with it -so it died of starvation. I was still just a new Christian at this point.

My Reaction?? Astonishment and dismay. "If nobody knows how to manage these gifts, what can a young man like me do?" I gave up seeking revelation, and instead gave myself to seek quality in faith. (the closest I came to understanding Holiness at that point.)

Lesson Learned: A persistent group willing to shed enough Godly tears before the Lord will be answered. But without proper stewardship such blessings can be lost again -and then what do you have but tears of sorrow and loss???

The years of dryness and futility return.

The Living Word

In 1978, as this unwound, I began visiting another group that seemed to have much more understanding of the gifts of the Spirit as well as a degree of anointing. They even had an "Apostle" with extensive insightful writings and tapes! (John Robert Stevens). Perhaps these people had more of a clue!??

The group was a small satellite home meeting that was an outreach of a full church from near Detroit, Michigan. It was part of a global network of churches called "Church of the Living Word". The regular visiting Pastor was Francis Frangipane, who has since become quite a popular author and conference

speaker. He is good now, and he was good then, in his role as a local pastor with that early worldwide network of apostolic churches.

I explained how the anointing was in my prior church to the Apostle-pastor of the Edmonton Church while he was visiting in London. He sort of minimized what I said. I don't think he really believed me, though he gave an impression of having a high revelation on everything by applying exotic terminology such as "principality" and "nephulim" liberally to local landmarks.

However, much strong deception soon came to claim this denomination also. The head apostles' new guidance went something like this. "As young people you have things in your life that you have given up for the Lord, but you are not really delivered from them. Wouldn't it be better to be honest, until you get delivered?" They became honest all right. Sin quickly filled the church -but the deliverances never came into evidence!!!

After -service gatherings in cocktail bars became common! Cigars. Cigarettes. Snuff. Fancy dresses. Affairs. Fast cars. Worldly language. I don't know what all. I did not keep track. It was all too weird for me, and I was no fun since I had nothing hidden to bring out -and my new wife and I were new to this Edmonton church. But this is how the circus began. It ended with the apostle divorcing his unadmiring old wife and marrying a keen young follower. We were supposed to pray for Him to never see death but to be first to be translated into the "parousia", since the Lord did not have time to raise up another people such as we. Hmmm. Well, he got translated alright. By a super-fast brain tumor. In a few days, he was gone, and his admiring new "wife" was a sudden widow.

Any remaining anointing in the meetings the next Sunday was just gone. Disillusionment, strife, and the bitterness of unforgiveness replaced it and ran in the streets of Edmonton like blood in 1983.

I got out fast and clean (as did Francis -even though he was a leader in the movement) since I was experienced enough to recognize the deadly signs. It was hard, and confusing but I soon forgave, and encouraged any wounded I could. Meanwhile most couples in the church divorced! My wife however was not able to forgive the church, and began to slide...

The apostolic pastor quietly moved his family back to the states.

What Happened? Among them position and prestige were everything -and these were determined by "How close" you were to the apostle in their interminable closed meetings. I observed this unspiritual focus so my wife and I agreed to sit on the back pew to stay in the background. As before, I did renovation work on the building, while enjoying edifying fellowship with fellow workers.

My Reaction? Redoubled astonishment and dismay. Even the best of them made shipwreck of their lives. They got fat. They divorced. They blew my mind. How could they? Others left the Lord entirely.

Lesson: Seek to be close to Lord, not mere men. Stay low, don't blow (boast). O how the mighty fall!! Don't spend time on trying divine end-time events. His reality is unguessable -and far more glorious than what may be imagined using scripture.

We looked around for another church but only found groups virtually devoid of anything worthwhile -even if they did wave their hands around a little bit. They had a little whiff of blessing here and there, and called themselves "filled". That was normal for them, I suppose. Didn't make sense to me. Still doesn't.

Could I have helped? Not really. That was the role of the pastor. No meddlers are needed. Only textbook answers are credible. No seeking the Lord is allowed. But I wasn't too surprised by then -it was normal for the Living Word people too.

It was during this three of four year time of churchlessness that I entered His Rest, but had no way to know what I had. Later, I heard some rumours about it on a tape, and suspected, but it was all so sketchy and uncertain that it did me no good.

The Prosperity Church Debacle.

But my wife was homeschooling our daughters, and made friends with some other ladies doing the same. These friends started attending a new church in town that had excited crowds meeting in a large old school building. The new preacher in town had not even finished going to Rhema, before he came to Edmonton, because he knew how under-churched the city was. And it really was!

Well, he was a young man with a gift of gab. A Canadian man with a Tulsa accent!! He would talk so fast in the pulpit that you could hardly follow him. And he would keep it up for over two hours -interspersed with earnest financial appeals for various church projects.

Giving to the church was the main message delivered with machine-gun speed. It was sort of like a super investment scheme. Give! Give! Give until it hurts! Give even your necessities and God will pour out a tenfold blessing upon your suffering finances!!! Such a deal!! Just have faith! Trust God for your blessing!!

But I did not get a good feeling about this church. It gave me an actual headache that would take me a couple of days to recover from. And this happened every time I would be wheedled into going. Over time I was enabled to figure out what was going on spiritually. There were two spirits at work there. God was working in the enthusiastic worship and trust. But the fruits of that earnest trust was being greedily devoured by the devourer who was filling the words of the preacher.

New members would come in and rejoice in the excitement. They would give as they were instructed. Sometimes a windfall would appear to save their bacon afterwards, but more often it would not.

But everybody, including my wife, thought there was nothing wrong with the church, and my “headaches” were just me having an attitude or something. Well, I learned how to defend myself spiritually while there, so that I could get through. One homeschool dad especially thought I needed to get with the program, so I started to point out the inconsistencies which I saw in the way the spirit moved. He agreed there was something there.

And then the “revolving door” hit. Young couples after giving their all, started burning out, and leaving the church while in poverty. And in so doing I heard that some were giving up on the Lord at the same time. It was all just a con job, as far as they were concerned.

So I started finding a way to meet with these disgruntled young couples, and explaining to them my distinct experience with the church. They understood, and went on their way sadder but wiser.

The old bait and switch trick.

Well, the latest project for a while had been “we are building a church, and we are building it debt free”. So outside of the city a large parcel of land was sprouting concrete block walls. These walls soon filled in to make this HUGE building. And fancy. Debt free!

And then one Sunday when the building was nearing completion, we were told that it would give the wrong impression to the community if the Pastor and his wife didn't live in the same style as the new church, so a small million dollar mortgage had been arranged by the grateful church board to take care of this oversight. A mansion was built with “his and hers” Mercedes cars in the driveway!!

This may have been a small obvious oversight to the board, but to the people on the ground who were suffering serious donor fatigue by now, this was the last straw.

(Donor fatigue? Sure!! After up to (4) four (really) impassioned pleas for funding together with separate plate-passing each -most Sundays, how can you avoid feeling hunted? And especially when the giving was public and competitive as it sometimes was!!)

So now the revolving door went into high gear. And the encouragement meetings became large and held often until the need for them was fulfilled.

By the time all this was done, the new building had no shortage of empty pews. I did not return. Our homeschooling friends moved away.

What Happened? The young pastor “had a dream” that was implanted at Rhema Bible College in Tulsa. Like a missile sent from afar, he performed as he was programmed to do and sent lots of money back to Rhema.

But what happened? A concept was sent and it was received. They give the people just enough religion for them to do what was asked of them, but no more. For anything more, they remain as children, pathetically dependent upon your services, ensuring a guaranteed paycheck for a whole staff!!!

My Reaction? Relief when my wife was through with them!!! It feels so good to stop hitting your head against the wall...

Lesson: The best giving is secret. Support your church, but let your charities go beyond it -and stay secret. Be led of the Lord, instead of being led by the nose.....

Preaching is designed to edify unto godliness. When preaching is used for church projects, it becomes, not preaching, but salesmanship. Salesmen speak in order to persuade and evoke desired actions. The message is one of SLAVERY. The means of this slavery, was IDOLATRY to the local minister who led them by high-speed words. He was paid handsomely for his efforts!!!

The Vineyard Splash

After a long season with only a couple of old friends sharing the latest gospel books we had read, I started buying some of the best books in bulk and distributing them locally, because none of the local bookstores cared to be in touch with what was happening. This initiative grew and prospered.

And the Vineyard Conference came to town, and stirred up big expectations. But what did they leave behind? Just silly season. They gathered spiritually starving people together from the denominational wilderness, but added nothing to them because they had nothing to add. Not that anybody noticed. Everybody was so busy enthusiastically laying or receiving empty hands on empty heads.....

What Happened? Well, with the paucity of alternatives, I went to their Conferences, sometimes attended the often-comical (not funny) church meetings they convened. When I moved back East, I did the same by driving to Toronto from time to time. I kept waiting in hope that it would turn out to be something.

As it turns out that hope was the main thing they had going for them. Until it soured into fanaticism. Yes, I saw Todd Bentley performing. Sad.

Lesson: people are surprisingly poorly informed. Few go out of their way to really help people grow. Most often they are gathered together to be taken advantage of, meanwhile they get older and more tired, and forget their former spiritual hunger. Whenever you find souls hungering -find a way to feed them!! For the smooth-talking predators are circling...

A Baptist Holiday

When we had pre-teen daughters, we needed to have a stable church for them to connect with. The best Pentecostal church was having trouble with immorality in the youth groups, so we opted to attend a large Baptist Church in London Ontario.

There were many excellent people there, and I became friendly with many. I also became friendly with all the staff, including the local Bible College head.

But I never heard a challenging sermon. Instead, every week we were soothed with beautiful music and singing.

But every once in a while, a nightmare would emerge from nowhere and flatten everybody.

For instance, based in the church was a marvelous singing group with a gifted tenor who just stole the

show. He had married the prize daughter of a prize church family. He ran into rough water in his employment situation. And he just could not keep her in the way she expected. So he took courageous action to rectify the situation. This turned his situation around -until he was arrested for several counts of bank robbery! O the shame!! Loud and universal were the proclamations that we are “sinners saved by grace” -with the bold emphasis upon the word SINNERS -as if they had never been saved, and were all just hanging over the smoking pit on a rotten stick. Strange. Very strange.

And as I got to know individual situations better, I met a young man whose heart was absolutely devastated, and nobody but myself was sympathetic. His wife had seen somebody else in the church, and fell for him. She divorced this young man, and married the other fellow -all in the same church with this young man watching his beloved cuddle with another while he sat alone and forlorn on their regular pew.

He was a broken man.

And the young people's groups made these wonderful public declarations that they would remain chaste until marriage. And before long many became backseat athletes just like their peers in the world.

This is why the old-fashioned Holiness preachers called Baptist doctrine “the sinning religion”. When sin came knocking, they were virtually powerless to do anything except drag themselves out of the mud, repent in sackcloth and ashes over and over and over again, while keeping your fingers crossed in hope that you could manage to be in good standing when your number was called....

Lesson: the “sinning religion” as conceived in the Reformation is still the basic religion of today. It's meeting places are features on every street. Pentecostals may consider themselves superior: we only wish that were true in actual fact. Few escape beyond this religion, unless into cultish bondage such as Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, or Catholicism. (Note: some Catholics can be exceptional believers despite their sometimes outlandish beliefs. So never pre-judge. You just never know!!!!)

The Lord of The Rings

What do all the above stories have in common? The shepherds are limited to the best that their fleshly minds can come up with -despite all the sincere faith and revelation that is claimed, where they actually live is far more earthly.

Few shepherds ever see an actual move of the Spirit -and those who do are not lowly enough to get out of the way and let Him do what is called for to keep it. A proper Shepherd walks lowly in His Rest. A proper Prophet or any other ministry requires the same basic qualification to successfully steward His Spirit.

Not every one that is purified becomes a great leader, but every leader that is great *in the eyes of God* has been made white. But seldom are we able to discern what a leader is made of. So hold your judgment -and see.

His Rest is the Master gift that is needed to keep all the other gifts and ministries in harmony. Without it, the self-styled great ones are endlessly puffed up, deceiving and being deceived. Such ones are common, locally as well as on TV. Stay away. The true faith is lowly -not necessarily shy -but lowly.

Faithless Shepherds

"Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."--Ezekiel 34:10.

This is a dreadful warning to ministers of the gospel who are not doing their spiritual duty to their congregations.

In the second sentence the fearful announcement is made, "I am against the shepherds." It would be better for a man to have everybody against him rather than God. May we be saved from such a calamity!

The third sentence declares there shall be a removal of such men from the ministry. Many have gone out already, and more will yet go. It is done in various ways; but it is done.

The fourth sentence declares that the flock itself will be removed from the faithless shepherd's influence. This also, is taking place in many quarters. The hungry sheep are seeking those who will feed, and not abuse them.

Cornfusion

I am no theologian, so I will not mince words.

Why the "cornfusion"? Because both parties (Holiness believers and others) are more concerned with loyalty to their group rather than the actual truth of the matter.

I can see the problem from both perspectives, because after being an "on fire" Pentecostal for 17 years, God met me and changed me into another man. I entered His Rest in 1988, and have since been learning about godliness from that new perspective. I have never had the luxury and certainty of being a denominational creature. Even before I was saved, I was an earnest seeker, looking diligently in all the wrong places, and getting involved in exotic religion in desperate hope of finding reality.

Pentecostals view the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" as their special gift to the church at large -defined as signs and wonders marked by the speaking in other tongues.

Holiness people are remarkably similar. They also view the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" as their special gift to the church at large -defined as God reaching down eradicate the "Old Man" so that Christ may rule without rival within a heart made pure.

They both claim that their trademark blessing originated amongst the 120 gathered in the Upper Room who were there waiting for His Spirit to be poured out. Now I was not there because I had not been born yet. And the same goes for everybody else that chooses to engage in this useless argument.

The only eyewitnesses were the 120 -and the Holy Spirit. So we will have to rely on the frustratingly laconic Scripture to know just what happened there. Period.

And this is what the Scripture says directly about it:

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:1-4

So it would be reasonable to assume that the Holy Fire was there to burn something out, while the Holy Spirit was there to add something that was missing.

Do we have any evidence to support this broad assumption? Of course.

All the 120 became transformed as the newly poured out Holy Spirit came to indwell them. Before, they knew Jesus as an astonishing person in their world, now they came to know Him within their own hearts.

And all the apostles had an additional transformation -from unstable men of flesh into stalwart men of steel that shrank back from no hardship: from a mixture of faith, presumption and doubt into flames of fire that covered the known world with the Word until finally their lives were violently taken from them. This is instantaneous character change -and not just any character -His character!! Did this happen to all of the 120 in the room? It doesn't say, so neither should we. We just don't know.

But all that heard Peter speak afterwards were filled with the Spirit also -as we are today. Some of the 120 had already been blessed by Jesus to seal their souls to Him ready for the Upper room -but that does not mean that the Holy Spirit was poured out before it was poured out.

So do these two groups act worthy of their magnificent boasts today?

Arbiters of Blessing and Cursing

How can they? At various points in church history, dogma has been laid down “from above”, defining God's reality. Believers are then to walk in it despite what they believe the Scripture says,

Pentecostals are told that before they have hands laid on them, they were not filled with the Spirit. In reality, if they did not have His Holy Spirit within, they were heathens, because part and parcel of being born again is receiving Him. So when hands are laid on, what happens?

The Holy Spirit within is stirred up into greater activity, and the soul is encouraged to pay attention to what the spirit is doing within. Beforehand, the stirrings of the Spirit may be so slight, and the attention of the souls may be so gross as to overlook what was already happening within.

There those who are appointed to make such masterpieces of circular logic such as “*I don't speak in tongues. My friends at church do not speak in tongues. The early church did speak in tongues: therefore “tongues are not for today” and so any who dare to speak in tongues today are demonically inspired. They cannot be true.*” The corollary to this logic is that, “we sit at the pinnacle of Godliness”, and all others cannot help but be inferior, but we will righteously reach out and bring them up to where we are.

Those who do not place their faith with such doubters of the Word may find that there is a fuller manifestation of the Holy Spirit available to them.

Some say that those who do not speak in tongues are not proper Christians. To these I say, have you ever spent any time outside of your little circle?

And to those Pentecostals who call themselves, “filled with Spirit”. How much time each week are you spending in this spiritual state??? Tell the truth now..... The majority of “Pentecostals” I have known spend the majority of their time in the “lowest common denominator” of carnality, and so when they do, they are too unskilled to do much good for themselves or others.

Holiness people. Most that I have heard about, believe in a better state of grace, but have not entered in... What good is that?

Pentecostal stars lose credibility for the gospel on a regular basis, because after healing the sick and raising the dead, they backslide into into terrible sins. Most do not have the staying power of being properly founded.

These days Holiness people do not even gain any credibility to lose in charismatic eyes because they do not even try to heal the sick or raise the dead. And any claim of superior Godliness is rarely founded in fact. They may believe differently, but they possess the same spiritual reality as any honest Baptist.

The Parable of Sower rings true.....

Your Earnest Seeker

[From the Enter His Rest website.](#)