The power of the Holy Spirit at work in my life

TERRY WATERS

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It is important to share that 'Charismatic Renewal' is a term to help us describe or explain what was, and is, a sovereign move of God, calling the church back to a fundamental biblical relationship with himself. It involves the importance of salvation by faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the need for repentance and the essential work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and individuals. As a result, the word of God, prayer and worship become central in our lives, and holiness and integrity become our focus as we seek a deeper walk with our Lord Jesus Christ.

I came to faith before the term 'charismatic' was ever mentioned. The challenge of a personal commitment to Jesus came uninvited and unexpected. I attended the Methodist Church in Grampound Road, Cornwall and believed in Jesus. At a mission service, we sang 'O Happy Day' (Methodist Hymn Book 744).

O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day:
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!

(3rd verse)
'Tis done, the great transaction's done!
I am the Lord's and He is mine;
He drew me and I followed on;
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

Philip Doddridge (1702-1751)

The third verse proclaims: 'Tis done, the great transaction's done! I am the Lord's and He is mine'. A voice within said, 'There had been no transaction'. I could not sing 'O Happy Day that fixed my choice', because I had never personally invited Jesus to become my Saviour. Rev. Sidney Taylor invited us to sing the third verse again. In 1953 we rarely sang anything twice! I cannot explain how, but I found myself weeping at the communion rail and I was born again; Jesus became real and he has been ever since.

Four churches, who had never previously worked together in Truro, facilitated the Billy Graham relays from the Glasgow Kelvin Hall crusade in 1955. In the St Mary's Methodist Church, Truro, about a thousand people came each evening to hear Billy Graham speak. Hundreds came to faith. Three years later, I was sent to Luton by my employer, where I attended Chapel Street Methodist Church, and saw the amazing growth in the congregation from 60 to several hundred. Chapel Street Methodist Church became the Luton Industrial Mission which trained many industrial (or workplace) chaplains to serve throughout the UK. Rev. Bill Gowland preached in the open air every Saturday at the Corn Exchange, reaching unchurched people and, during the Easter missions, hundreds were reached for Jesus. I was birthed in mission and continue to live out that vision to this day.

I became involved with the Billy Graham Earl's Court Crusade in 1966. Thousands attended every night for weeks. The final meeting of almost 100,000 people was held in the old Wembley Stadium. In 1966/7 my work took me back to Callington in Cornwall. In a circuit mission in the autumn of 1966, 200 had come to faith and a young people's coffee bar was opened, led by David Cole, a Cliff College evangelist. It provided a place for youngsters to come off the streets and many came to faith because of this outreach. An after-church rally commenced with speakers like Rev. Malcolm Widdecombe from Bristol, David Chaudhary, Trevor Dearing and Dr Cecil Stewart. In the very early days of the 1970s outpouring of the Holy Spirit, many came to faith in Jesus and amazing healings took place. I was somewhat sceptical and went to 'check it out', but the presence and power of God exceeded my evangelical faith, so I too became hungry for more of God.

I was a successful businessman, the Portreeve (local mayor) of the town council, chairman of the Caradon District Council Finance Committee, a Local Preacher and Sunday School leader. Unconsciously, I had become a 'God if you want it done, I will do it for you' person. In October 1977, at an all-night prayer meeting, God spoke

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to my heart: 'Terry, I want you, not what you do'. I asked for prayer, sharing what God had said. I re-dedicated my life to Christ, coming under a powerful experience of being washed in a shower. God was so personal; it was a life changing encounter with the Holy Spirit for an hour; most of those present were in tears, as the presence of God filled the room.

I resolved never to work for God ever again, BUT instead to let God work through me. Later, I felt that God was asking me to lay everything down, so in 1978, I stopped preaching, did not seek re-election as a councillor and resigned from most leadership roles, to seek God for the future.

In January 1979, for the benefit of our young daughters, we joined the Elim Church in Plymouth and I was invited to attend a meeting in January 1980 about the work of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGB). I left that meeting appointed as President to lead the new Plymouth Chapter, beginning an amazing adventure of a Holy Spirit journey. It was an incredible experience of hundreds attending, people being saved, healed, delivered and experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit.

I became involved nationally, and around 1986, the FGB Convention was held in Bournemouth. The London Gospel Community Choir was invited to sing in the schools during the week, and on the Friday there were 4,500 in attendance, including hundreds of young people, in the Bournemouth International Centre to hear the choir sing. Rev. Paul Jinadu gave a powerful testimony and over 250 young people responded to the call to follow Jesus and during this time, the choir sang for an hour.

As chairman, I was to close the evening in prayer. As I moved to do this, God spoke into my heart, 'make another appeal'. I argued with God: 'I can't do that, you don't make two appeals in one meeting!' He responded, 'Make an appeal'. I stood in the spotlight and God gave me these words: 'There are older people here who committed their lives to Jesus when they were teenagers who are now saying, 'I wish I had continued to follow Jesus'. Come now, rededicate your lives to him and be filled with the Holy Spirit'. Imagine the beating of my heart! Was I making a fool of myself? I spoke the words as instructed and out of the darkness over 120 people responded and were prayed for.

A few months later, I was on a business trip to Spain and invited to their FGB National Council annual meeting. At dinner that night a lady asked, 'Do you remember me?'. 'No', I said. She went on to say that she was in the group that I had prayed for at Bournemouth when she was baptised in the Holy Spirit. Her husband was the President of the Madrid Chapter, she said that she never really understood about the Holy Spirit but now she is able to fully support her husband in the work of FGB. It was a confirmation that obedience to the prompting of God makes a difference to other people.

The excitement, joy and thrill of following Jesus for 73 years is impossible to condense into a short article!

A FEW FURTHER REFLECTIONS:

During the mid 1990s, at Plymouth Methodist Central Hall, my wife Eileen and I were helping with the nurturing of young people who were keen to understand the Bible. Each week we had informal worship, prayer, Spirit-filled messages shared by the leadership and testimonies shared from the group. In two years, the group grew from 20 to 200.

News of the move of God among us led to invitations to lead missions weekends around the country. One of these was to be part of the prayer team at Easter People in Torquay. God moved powerfully, and hundreds were touched. We had to move to a larger space at the event to accommodate those who wanted to come.

My wife Eileen was promoted to glory on 23 April 2002. She was a wonderful disciple and prayer warrior for her Saviour. In June 2002, the FGB asked me to become the National Executive Officer and in the following seven years we saw God move in many ways, with hundreds who re-dedicated their lives to the Lord. I moved to Ireland after marrying Joyce, my second wife, and together we serve the Lord. I continue to preach the Gospel averaging 4-5 times a month and we host a fellowship hour on a Monday where the Holy Spirit leads the meetings, and lives are touched.

I am a member of Enniskillen FGB; I have been told by God that he wants more from me as an 88 year old youngster, and to expect more of him in the days to come! God uses ordinary people who are willing to be obedient. So, for all the lay people who are reading this - know that you are part of an essential group of people who can make a difference.

Terry Waters has been a Local Preacher for 64 years, served as National Director and Executive Officer of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship and his purpose is to love Jesus and be led by the Holy Spirit.





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