

# THE SUPERNATURAL CONFERENCE

EQUIPPING THE BODY OF CHRIST FOR SUPERNATURAL MINISTRY—BLAISE FORET

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## Session 1: An Introduction to the Supernatural Move of God in History

### I. WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM: THE SUPERNATURAL NATURE OF OUR FAITH

- A. God's overall plan has an end. We can understand His plan and purpose by looking at redemption and revival history with a devotional spirit/spirit of prayer.

*<sup>3</sup> what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. <sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done...<sup>6</sup> so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. <sup>7</sup> Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. <sup>8</sup> They would not be like their forefathers—a stubborn and rebellious generation... (Psalm 78)*

- B. If we do not know what He has done in the past then we won't approach His promises for the future with a spirit of faith; we will approach them lackadaisically with a dull spirit full of doubt.

### II. GOD'S PLAN TO BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST: REVIVAL AND AWAKENING

*<sup>11</sup>It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup>until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)*

- A. Every revival that hits the Body of Christ is not only for the sake of touching that particular generation but it is also for the purpose of establishing (or re-establishing) a **biblical truth** in the Body of Christ as a whole.
- B. When a revival “dies out” many people claim that the revival was not genuine or had no purpose. In reality it is quite opposite. We have to discern what truth God is speaking to the Body of Christ through the revival that came. Revivals come and go, but the truth's that are established remain.
- C. There will seem to be an **overemphasis** on a certain truth during each revival period until that truth has been put back in its proper place within the Body. This causes misunderstanding but we must discern what God is speaking during each revival period so that we will respond accordingly to past revivals or current/future awakenings. (For the purpose of this conference we will call an historical move of God an **outpouring**, a **revival** or an **awakening**).
- D. There have always been outpourings of the Holy Spirit since the days of the Apostles. For the purpose of this conference we will focus primarily on revival history from the 1500's and on. We will look at the **main character(s)**, their **“forerunner(s)”**, **the (re)established truth and the response of the Body of Christ**. Below we will give a brief breakdown of revival history for the purpose of laying a foundation from which we will build.

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## **III. AWAKENING #1: REFORMATION (1500'S)**

- A. **Main Character:** *Martin Luther*. The Reformation was a significant event in the history of the Church and the world at large. A large portion of biblical truth had been lost because the commoner could not own and read Scripture.
- B. **Forerunner(s):** Luther was influenced by *Peter Waldo* (1157) and his followers who searched the Scriptures for answers, fasted and prayed, as well as believed in Holy Spirit infilling. These men were highly persecuted by the established Church (also see **John Wycliffe** and **John Huss**).
- C. **Re-established Truth:** *Salvation by Faith/Priesthood of Believers*
- D. **Response from Established Church:** *High level of persecution.*

## **IV. AWAKENING #2: THE 1<sup>ST</sup> (1600'S -1700'S) AND 2<sup>ND</sup> (1700'S-1800'S) GREAT AWAKENING**

- A. **Main Character(s):** *Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Count Von Zinzendorf, James McGready, Barton Stone, etc*
- B. **Forerunner(s):** *Peter Waldo, George Fox (Quakers), etc.*
- C. **Re-established Truth(s):** *Missions and Revival of Holiness/Sanctification*
- D. **Response of Established Church:** *Jonathan Edwards was criticized as being a sensationalist due to the mysterious manifestations/reactions of those within his meetings. Later, John Wesley was greatly persecuted and not allowed to preach in the established church.*

## **V. AWAKENING #3: CHARISMATIC RENEWAL/HEALING MOVEMENT (1800'S-1900'S)**

- A. **Main Character(s):** *Charles Parham, William Seymore (Azusa St), John Dowie, John G. Lake, William Branham, A.A. Allen, Gordon and Freda Lindsay (CFNI) Oral Roberts (ORU), etc.*
- B. **Forerunner(s):** *Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody*
- C. **Re-established Truth(s):** *Infilling of the Holy Spirit and Power/Gifts of Spirit for Today*
- D. **Response of Established Church:** *Many criticized the movement at first due to extravagant manifestations/reactions, but many denominations were touched by the outpouring. Today we see over 500 million charismatic/Pentecostal Christians compared to approximately 1 million in 1900.*

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## **VI. WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US TODAY?**

- A. Every outpouring re-establishes a truth within the Body of Christ. Once the truth is established we don't "leave it and move on to the next", but instead that truth will remain and show its face in subsequent outpourings.
- B. We are at the precipice of a powerful move of God in our nation and in the Body of Christ Worldwide. We have seen powerful truths of Salvation (through the Son), Sanctification (by the Holy Spirit), and missions (by the power of the Spirit) re-established through these outpourings.
- C. There has been a powerful move of God taking place since the early 90's that has swept the world. 1994 marked the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Toronto at Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship with Pastor John and Carol Arnott.
- D. This outpouring was characterized by "holy laughter, falling, shaking, and divine healing." Many overwhelming emphasis within this revival was the message of the Father's love for His children.
- E. There is a staggering number of orphans within this generation (141 mil.) and there is a "fatherlessness" within the Body of Christ due to divorce and broken families.
- F. Not only are we disconnected from our Fathers, but many of us have been deeply wounded due to the sexualization of our culture (MTV Generation). Every second - 372 internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines. Every second - 28,258 internet users are viewing pornography.
- G. God is bringing the revelation of His heart that brings healing not only to the physical bodies of His people, but also to the hearts of His people. He is truly "restoring the soul" (Psalm 23) of a generation.
- H. **Main Characters:** *John and Carol Arnott, John Wimber*
- I. **Forerunner(s):** *Jack Winter, Floyd McClung*
- J. **Re-Established Truth:** *God is a loving Father. He is not the "mostly mad/mostly disappointed" Father who Jesus had to protect us from (John 17:23, 26).*
- K. **Response of the Church:** *Many visited TACF and were healed and then sent into their denominations carrying the same message and the outpouring wherever they ministered (i.e. Heidi and Roland Baker, Steve Hill and others)*

## **VII. SIGNS THAT HISTORICALLY SIGNIFY AN OUTPOURING**

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- A. From the days of the Apostles until today there have always been signals that help identify a move of God. When the work being done brings about these results we can almost be sure that the work is of God: *exaltation of Jesus in the community, causes men to honor the Word of God and spend more time with it, the work causes a greater resistance to the works of darkness (corporately and individually), a greater conviction of sin and the eternal judgment, the fruit of the Holy Spirit is being displayed more apparently in the lives of those involved.*
- B. We can be sure that with any of these results that the “move” is a result of the Holy Spirit.
- C. A few other results that are guaranteed to follow a move of God are as follows (not comprehensive): 1) resistance or opposition, almost always contagious, ugly and messy (Proverbs 14:4). ***John Wesley prayed, “Lord send us revival without its defects but if this is not possible, send revival, defects and all.”***
- D. Just because a person involved in the revival or someone who has been touched by it “falls away” does not indicate by any means that the work was not the Holy Spirit. Matters of doctrine will be in question at times, but this does not mean that it is not a move of God. ***Your doctrine isn’t perfect either—therefore you can’t be used of God. This is our “discerning logic”.***

## **VIII. CAUTIOUS, CAREFUL OR FEARFUL?**

- A. One area that has confounded and troubled many over the years is the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in those who are “touched” by the revivals.
- B. Manifestation is probably not the best way to describe this. The word “reaction” is probably a more accurate interpretation of what is happening when GOD touches man. Here are a few examples from history:
- C. Wesley’s journal from Jan. 1, 1739: “About sixty of our brethren until three in the morning, the power of God came mightily on us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground.”
- D. George Whitefield worked with Wesley in England. When people started to fall in Wesley’s meetings, Whitefield protested it in a letter to Wesley writing, “I cannot think it right in you to give so much encouragement to these convulsions which people have been thrown into in your ministry.” Ironically enough, when Whitefield came to confront Wesley in person he found himself reprimanded by reality, for when Whitefield preached the next day, “four persons sunk down close to him, almost in the same moment. One of them lay without sense or motion. A second trembled exceedingly. The third had strong convulsions all over his body, but made no noise, unless by groans. The fourth, equally convulsed, called upon God, with strong cries and tears. From this time,” Wesley writes, “I trust we shall all suffer God to carry on His own work in the way that pleases Him.” From that time, Whitefield’s preaching was commonly accompanied by people falling.

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- E. Jonathan Edwards wrote, “Many young people appeared to be overcome with the greatness of divine things and many others at the same time were overcome with distress about their sinful state so that the whole room was full of nothing but outcries, faintings and such like and many were overpowered and continued there for some hours. Some have been so overcome with a sense of the dying love of Christ as to weaken the body. It was a very frequent thing to see an house full of outcries, faintings, convulsions and such like, both with distress, and also with joy” (*The Great Awakening* p. 547).
- F. *Francis Asbury, appointed by Wesley in 1771 as a missionary to the colonies, was a disciplined man who insisted on meetings being conducted in a proper fashion, yet his meetings were characterized by shouting, falling, crying, and the “jerks.”*
- G. *Charles Finney* witnessed the same manifestations as we are witnessing today. He reported spasmodic laughter; it was impossible to keep people from laughing, phenomena of speechlessness for hours, fainting spells. Finney described people falling under the power of God’s presence in his meetings.
- H. *George Fox* (1624-1691) was founder of the Friends, commonly known as the Quakers. The Quakers got their nickname from many cases of people who physically quaked in their meets whenever the Holy Spirit moved with heightened spiritual activity.
- I. *Frank Bartleman* was a leader in the Azusa Street revival in 1906. The accounts of the Azusa Street revival describe many shaking, speechlessness, motionlessness, being enraptured, drunk in the Spirit, laughter, visions, tongues, prophecy, and the like.

## **IX. WHEN TO DISCERN AND WHEN TO JUMP IN!**

- A. *Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones* (1899– 1981) is considered by many to be one of the most influential voices in the Church in the Western world in the 20th century. Lloyd-Jones taught: “Why should the Devil suddenly start doing this kind of thing in a period of spiritual dryness? The very result of revival completely excludes the possibility of this being the action of the Devil. If this is the work of the Devil, well then the Devil is an unutterable fool. He is dividing his own kingdom; he is increasing the kingdom of God. There is nothing so ridiculous as this suggestion that this is the work of the Devil” (Lloyd-Jones 1987, pp141-2).
- B. Lloyd-Jones points out: “Always in a revival there is what some call *divine disorder*. Some are groaning and agonizing under conviction, others praising God for the great salvation. And all this leads to crowded and prolonged meetings. Time seems to be forgotten. A meeting may not end until daybreak the next morning with nobody aware of the passing of the hours.”

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- C. There are three things at work in the midst of revival: 1) **God's power**: miracles that bring people to salvation and healing (Mt. 10:8; Mk. 16:15). 2) **Demonic activity**: Satan came among them. Wherever we find God at work, the devil won't be far behind. In Acts 16:16-34 we see a girl with the spirit of divination. Paul rebuked the demons (Acts 16:18). 3) **Flesh exaggeration**: exhibits itself so as to be seen as special or spiritual.
- D. Test all things by the Word. If the evangelist tells us one thing, and the Bible tells us something else, the Bible is right! If the teaching is unbiblical then we must refuse it. **Test all things; hold fast what is good. (1 Thes. 5:21)**
- E. The primary principles are: is it biblical and does it edify the majority? In the early days, even a **little manifestation of the Spirit edifies the majority** because it signals a change of the season.
- 1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts.....12 Since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel...26 Let all things be done for edification. (1 Cor. 14:1, 12, 26)***
- F. We (as biblical Christians) do not care how extreme the manifestations are as long as they are not outside biblical parameters, and are not fake or exaggerated. Test all things by the Word. **21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. (1 Thes. 5:21)**
- G. What is the fruit of the teaching or the action? Does it bring glory to Jesus? Does it bring attention to self? Are people brought to Jesus and righteousness? John the Baptist, Elijah and Ezekiel did strange things. God uses the unusual. They all had really good fruit in their lives.

***Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (Mt. 7:20)***

## X. FINAL CHALLENGES

- A. **Challenge #1**: being zealous and discerning. We must be zealous for the Holy Spirit's activity (not just open to it) as we seek to excel in love and discern the things that are excellent.
- 12 Since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. (1 Cor. 14:12)***
- B. **Challenge #2**: defining the weightier and lesser issues. (doctrine, style, etc)
- 23 You pay tithes of mint and anise...and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy. 24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! (Mt. 23:23-24)***
- C. **Challenge #3**: being childlike in faith, not childish in discernment
- 3 Unless you...become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom (Mt. 18:3-4)***