

Driving the Deliverance Movement Forward: Pioneer Alex Pagani champions the future of today's deliverance movement

Pioneers are among the first to explore or settle a new country or area, develop or be the first to use or apply a new method, area of knowledge or activity. They forge the roadway that helps a generation reach its destination. Though they are usually unnoticed and rarely acknowledged, pioneers are always remembered when it's time to move forward. For the glory of God, I share the story of how God has raised me up as a pioneer in the new era of social deliverance, one of the first to use social media and technology to reach this generation with the gospel and set the captives free.

Throughout the Old Testament when God wanted to initiate something new, He would raise up a pioneer who had the personality, boldness and zeal to carry it out. From the conquests of Joshua to the liberation of the children of Israel from Egypt by Moses to Abram leaving his father's house to go to a land God would show him, the list continues, adding King David, Deborah, the prophet Samuel and others.

This blueprint of the pioneer became part of God's template of change. The pioneer forged a path so heaven could send the change (new era) the children of Israel needed. Could God in His sovereignty show up and bring the shift required? Of course. But even with the advent of His Son Jesus Christ, who would also usher in a new era, He chose first to send a forerunner—for one primary purpose: to prepare the way of the Lord.

“Listen! It’s the voice of someone shouting, ‘Clear the way through the wilderness for the Lord! Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God!’” (Isa. 40:3, NLT).

“‘But forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland” (Isa. 43:18-19).

Notice the connection in the preceding verse. God wants to do something new. He raises up a pioneer or trailblazer who has the courage to initiate that new era, often unnoticed and unthanked, though honored by heaven above all others: “I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist” (Matt. 11:11a). Pioneers, pathfinders and trailblazers are the brave individuals who carry the mindset of the final frontier, pushing to the limit of understanding or achievement in a particular area to thrust a generation forward into a new era.

All great revivals, reformations and eras throughout history were pioneered by one or more people who gave their lives to initiate it and paid a heavy price to carry it. History has shown us the wisdom of placing special honor on these individuals. Without them, the body of Christ would not have progressed along a particular path where the Lord wanted us to go.

A Global Movement

During the pandemic, when everyone was on forced lockdown in their homes, and the media was spewing out all the COVID fear, an increase of demonic activity hit both the world and individual homes. Demonic spirits of fear, anxiety, worry and phobia were released, but because God had led me to prepare the way, digital deliverance ministries arose to take social media by storm. Today, the ministry of deliverance on digital

platforms is a juggernaut that can't be stopped.

What started out as one man's quest to pioneer deliverance on all digital platforms has now become a global movement involving multitudes who are spearheading the era of digital deliverance with God's blessing. Online ministries such as those of Isaiah Saldivar, Vlad Savchuk, Mike Signorelli, Art Montgomery, Amazing Church Global, Jason and Sonia Welsh, Nigel Lewis, Daniel Adams, Jenny Weaver and more have willingly embraced the marks of carrying the cross of digital deliverance and taking this gospel of the kingdom to social media.

Not only have these ministries responded to the call to be part of this digital deliverance era, but others are also taking the marks of this anointed ministry.

"From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17, MEV). What are these marks that the apostle Paul mentions? For him, they were physical scars (lashes) that he received during many of his missionary journeys through Asia Minor. In the book of 2 Corinthians, we find him describing these scars in detail: "Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches," (2 Cor. 11:24-28, NLT).

We can see that Paul was justified in saying that he bore on his body the marks, indicators of the price he paid to carry the gospel to the Gentiles but especially to his fellow Jews. The ministry of deliverance is no different. The average American evangelical church rejects the idea of a Christian needing deliverance, vehemently opposing it from the pulpit and through social media pages.

The call to become a deliverance minister, both in person and online, is not a light one; to embrace this ministry, you must have heard from God. Let's take a look at the marks that come along with this unique calling.

The Mark of Theological Conflict

This conflict was the hardest for me to overcome, as it dealt with my theological worldviews, which were shaped by my ministerial upbringing in denominationalism and Bible school. The idea that a Christian might need deliverance from the demonic after being saved was far-fetched, and according to my Bible school training, the concept of a Christian having a demon was heresy. Due to the fear of doctrinal error or the potential risk of steering others into error, this inner conflict was the hardest to overcome.

I began my ministry with such opposition to deliverance that I spent the first part of my 19 years as a pastor preaching against the ministry of deliverance, calling all deliverance ministries "sensational" and "fanatical." Not until a surge of porn circulated among the male membership of my church, along with my own season of struggle to get free from porn, did I consider the possibility that this sexual perversion running rampant among us might have a demonic root. The men engaged in this battle loved Jesus and were obviously saved, but they struggled with porn in such a way that it seemed to go beyond the threshold of the flesh.

What was I to do? As any good pastor would in moments like

these, I encouraged my church to pray more and fast more. But ultimately, even those sacred rituals didn't work. In a moment of frustration, I cried out, "Lord, I'm doing everything right as a pastor. What am I doing wrong that so many people in our church still seem bound? I don't know what else to do or how to help them."

Just like that, a still, small voice said, "The ministry of deliverance."

That's when God worked a change in me. *What's the worst that can happen? If deliverance isn't from God, nothing will change*, I thought.

With this "What do we have to lose?" mindset, I decided to explore the ministry of deliverance, and to my surprise, demons began to manifest and come out of my church members. Without any formal training and operating on pure trust in the Holy Spirit, my theology shifted to embrace the ministry of deliverance.

Others who seek to embrace this ministry will find that the theological conflict is the first battle they face and the first mountain they must overcome. It is also the first way to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Him, denying your theological preferences and traditions.

The Mark of Church Conflict

The second conflict is the one that will hurt the most. Many of my ministerial colleagues whom I had known for years, as well as members of my church, whom I had helped receive Christ as Savior, verbalized their public disagreement with my new embrace of the ministry of deliverance. Various leaders and other members threatened me with resignation, and many left the church.

During this time, others not only left the church but also called their former pastor a heretic. A number of my

ministerial colleagues criticized me and disconnected from years of friendship.

God reminded me of the story of Jesus in Mark 3:20-22. When He entered a house to teach, His family stood outside trying to stop Him from teaching and saying, "He is beside Himself" (v. 21). The fear of public ridicule on their family dominated them; the Bible also says that Jesus' own brothers "did not believe in Him" (John 7:5). The Mark 3 passage adds that the scribes even accused Him of being demon-possessed: "and by the ruler of the demons He casts out demons" (v. 22).

If you intend to embrace the ministry of deliverance, you must realize that the church will not agree with you, and many who are zealous may even publicly resist you. This resistance will hurt. This same type of resistance also marked the ministry of Jesus, who was crucified by the Pharisees, the "church folks" of that era.

Through the years, many videos by well-meaning Christians who consider me a heretic for pioneering this digital deliverance era have appeared on social media. Although some people have still not seen or experienced the fruit of the deliverance ministry, the movement has become bigger than the religious restraints set up against it. Christians from all denominational backgrounds are seeking out deliverance ministers, and thousands are getting set free.

Religion in the church will never stop Jesus from setting the captives free. This is why, throughout the years, I've encouraged believers to search the Scriptures for themselves regarding this important topic. Countless numbers have been strengthened far beyond the persecution of their Christian brothers and sisters.

The Holy Spirit is highlighting the ministry of deliverance right now and is pushing back the religious Sanhedrin who want to control this move of God but can't stop it. The presence of

God is not limited to church tenets or denominational bylaws, although those things aren't bad in themselves. It is not being stopped by those who want to maintain the church status quo. There is a hunger for the power of the Holy Spirit, and that hunger is causing an outbreak of freedom from the religious restraints.

"But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brothers to the city officials, crying out, 'These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,' (Acts 17:6).

The Mark of Demonic Conflict

I taught the first Bible study on the topic of demons at my church on a Tuesday evening. That night, I went to bed, and around 3 or 4 a.m., I heard a noise in the living room. When I went to investigate, I saw no one, but a candle flew across the room.

Immediately, a voice cried out, "Don't open a can of worms you can't handle. Don't come into this realm of deliverance." It startled me, but also served as a notice that the kingdom of darkness had sent me a personal message.

Anyone venturing into the ministry of deliverance will be marked by the backlash of demonic resistance. There will be no way around it. I don't mean demons will physically attack you, but you will experience a heightened awareness of unusual circumstances that will have no natural explanation.

The kingdom of darkness will find a way to accuse, harass, torment or simply annoy you with circumstances beyond your control, both to discourage you from pursuing this sacred ministry and also to distract you from being effective. But we have been given a promise in Scripture that no weapon formed against us will prosper (see Isa. 54:17). Jesus also promised believers, "Look, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all power of the enemy. And nothing

shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

From the beginning, the demonic backlash came strong and still persists against my ministry, as well as many attacks against other online deliverance ministries that have just started. But as they stay committed to the Word of God, they all will persevere. As the Bible says: "And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock" (Matt. 7:25, NKJV).

A final word: "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil" (Eph. 6:10-11, NLT).

The era of digital deliverance began in 2012 and continues today. Along with others, I have opened the path and laid the groundwork for the highway upon which others now walk. From this point on, we will see the greatest revival the world has ever seen. And it all begins with deliverance, which will lead to reformation and end in revival. By the grace of God, the digital deliverance era is here to stay.

Alexander Pagani is the founder of *He Is Risen Tabernacle in the Bronx, New York City*. He is an apostolic Bible teacher with keen insight into the realm of the demonic, generational curses and deliverance. A sought-after conference speaker, he has been involved in over 400 deliverance sessions. He has appeared on various television networks, including TBN and The Word Network. He currently lives in New York City with his wife, Ibelize, and their sons, Apollos and Xavier.