

Why We Are Better Together on the Frontlines

“Women on the Frontlines” returned to the location where founders James and his late wife, Michal Ann Goll, began to do what few others were doing 25 years ago—encouraging women to rise up and step into their call from God to be influencers empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The weekend-long equipping conference and 25-year anniversary of WOFL exemplified the importance of cultivating legacy in preparation for a change of seasons in ministry and in life.

When Don Finto invited the Golls to bring their prophetic and intercessory gifts to Nashville, Tennessee, in 1997, he was the senior pastor of Belmont Church. He had held the line and kept the door open to revival in the early 70s. Now, 20 years later, he felt the call to open the door to the prophetic at a time when little was known about prophecy in most churches.

In an interview with Charisma magazine, Finto said that he approached the board of elders with his concern that, without prophets, the church and the city were incomplete. Prophets were an integral part of the pattern for church leadership “that was set by the Savior in the early church.” The Ephesians 4:11 pattern of leadership is apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—in that order. The prophets were needed!

The church leaders set out to find the missing link: someone who moved in the prophetic and could also lead others in their journey in understanding and moving in the many aspects of prophecy.

It did not take long for the leadership team to see that James Goll was God’s answer to their prayer and search. The Golls were already sensing it was time for them to be re-planted and

they soon received many confirmations from the Lord that they were to move to Nashville.

By faith, they left the security of a staff position under Mike Bickle in Kansas City and walked through the door that had been opened by a spiritual father on Music Row in Music/Worship City.

This invitation was cutting edge at the time and would still be considered by most to be a frontline/forerunner invite if it were given today. Leaders with a prophetic gift and call are still being pushed out to the fringes by many church leaders.

When the Golls accepted the invitation, Finto, who is now Pastor Emeritus of Belmont Church, was no stranger to closing one door to open another door well. In the 1970s, he was leading a then very small Belmont Church that was under the umbrella of a denomination that did not allow any instruments to be played in church services. A revival broke out that was sudden, unexpected and brought logistical challenges.

When spontaneous worship accompanied by guitar emerged during youth services, what was a pastor to do? Shut it down or stay in God's flow? Instead of shutting it down, he encouraged it and allowed the flame to be fanned by the then youngsters Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith. The meetings became so packed that young people began hoisting themselves up through the windows.

During a phone call to Chuck Smith, who was experiencing the Jesus movement on the West Coast, it became apparent that Belmont was a part of the spread of the Jesus movement. Emboldened, Finto took the backlash heat, held the revival door open. and eventually led Belmont Church out from under the financial and social safety of being under the denominational umbrella.

Then, 20 years later, when he was prompted by the Holy Spirit to open the door of the church and the city to the prophetic,

he again stepped into a frontline position and invited the Golls to Nashville.

During an interview with Charisma, Goll described being on the frontlines as pioneering, taking territory for Jesus, thrusting forth and uniting the generations—all in a culture of honor. Finto's invite and the Golls' bold "yes" were all of these.

"It was never about being independent," Goll said. "It was always about we are better together."

At the last session of the recent WOFL conference, Goll had two closed unmatched doors placed on the stage. He opened the first door, walked through it and closed it behind him. He then opened the second door and stepped through it.

After shouts of joy quieted down, he organically invited all the people at the conference to come up on the stage and do the same. Goll sat on the other side of the second door and greeted each person, one by one, with a long look and words that were filled with love and acceptance. Most people had never met him in-person before then.

During the closing session, Goll said that, corporately, we have already moved from expecting revival to being in revival.

Surely, the opening and closing of the doors has a different meaning for each person on a personal level. On a corporate level, however, the prophetic picture just may signify that when we close old doors and open new doors well, we will be greeted by a new and very necessary expression of God's love.

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