

Prophetic Dream: Death of the House of Prayer

I recently had a dream that really shines the light on the coming battle in the church. As I've said, the church is to be a House of Prayer. Any other dominant defining attributes than intercession dilute and compromise the church's mission.

The church isn't to be a house of teaching, a house of friendships or a house of evangelism. It's a House of Prayer, a place that facilitates a lifestyle of night and day intercession. We are all called to pray at that level, not just some mystical, elite group of prayer warriors. The coming church will be a church on fire. No longer will we gather around a fire to warm our flesh, but rather we'll lay across it as burning ones who allow the Consuming Fire to do just that—consume us.

As we pray and live on fire, much trouble will come. We will threaten those who don't choose to pray, those who don't see the need. There are already strategies and theologies that are opposing and assaulting the prayer movement, and my dream brings clarity to that reality.

"And He taught them, and said, 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it a "den of thieves."'" (Mark 11:17).

Assisted Suicide—The Dream

In the dream, I was walking up a dirt hill where my dad was. In the dream, my dad represented the prayer movement. In the Branson, Missouri area he gave leadership to a significant regional prayer effort called the Uninterrupted Prayer Team (the UP Team).

My dad was on the top of that dry, dirty hill for a very specific reason. He was going to be executed. It was a public execution. I was shocked at how passive my dad was. He was on a bed, like a hospital bed, and he was submitted to the demand that he die.

I sensed that the forces were too strong for me to fight against them. He was to be executed, and there seemed to be nothing I could do about it.

I asked my dad what in the world was going on. He was pleasant in his demeanor, and in fact, most of the people around him who were helping facilitate the public execution were casually going about their day, and they were good friends of my dad. They were "good Christians" who were focused on having a great day and did what they could to eradicate anything that would threaten that.

My dad said, "John, this is going to be an assisted suicide."

I couldn't believe it! The pressure of the church as it opposes the prayer movement will be so great, that many will be overwhelmed and will lose hope that their mandate to pray will have impact. The prayer movement is at risk of agreeing with its own death!

The church today is threatened by the prayer movement, and it will do much to embrace the spirit of the age and execute the spirit of intercession.

As the dream continued, I then left his side and walked down the dirt road in deep, troubling thought. I looked down and saw a lighter, that looked like it was broken. I picked it up and I understood that if I could only get it to light, the execution would be called off.

If we pray, the fire of God will burn, and the opposing spirits will lose their strength.

Believe me, this is a very real situation. Someone actually contacted me online recently and arrogantly told me that they and others in a local church were actually praying for a local house of prayer to close down—and it did close down.

It's absolutely stunning that supposed Christians can oppose prayer with such zeal that they actually pray against the prayer movement!

We can't even call people to prayer today due to the fear that they will leave our churches! My God! How can we presume revival is near?

I met with a House of Prayer network leader the other day who said that people leave churches when leaders shift time, energy and attention from them to God. I've watched that happen myself, and it rips me up!

The coming church will be marked by constant prayer, and there will be a divide along this line. If we don't pray, I do believe it's a serious issue with eternity hanging in the balance. If we truly know God, we will understand the desire and need to connect with Him in prayer.

A CHURCH ON FIRE

Where are the ones who aren't looking first for human friends, personal affirmation or a sense of belonging but who are seeking after every available minute to minister to God in prayer? The prayer rooms must be full—and the main prayer room in the American church is the Sunday morning sanctuary!

And don't you even think of using the excuse that you need to create a non-threatening environment for the new believer! Every person, young or old, immature or seasoned must be in the prayer room—and it must be their primary focus! What if the Upper Room were toned down in the hopes of drawing a bigger crowd and interested seekers?

We must absolutely refuse to tone down the activity of the Holy Spirit out of respect of those less hungry! God is a consuming fire, and He is about to consume what is unholy and compromised. Who are we to presume we know better how to facilitate a service? Is inviting the Holy Spirit to step aside as we give preference to human wisdom the way to go? I've heard it said that the main Sunday service should be a toned-down meeting so as not to freak out visitors and seekers. Apparently the meeting where the Holy Spirit has liberty to move in freedom should be reserved for a night when there's little risk of the unconverted showing up.

This is humanistic religion at its best! Did those in the Upper Room tone down the Holy Spirit so as not to confuse and trouble the seekers in the city? Absolutely not! In fact, the power was so extreme and so unusual that the people were provoked to wonder and proclaim, "they must be drunk!" What was happening was off of their grid.

When man moves, it's naturally familiar. When God moves, it's supernaturally shocking. Keep in mind, there's always a spirit giving leadership in a service—the spirit of man, a demonic spirit or the Holy Spirit.

I told God one day many years ago that if I responded to His extreme call to facilitate a white hot environment of prayer in our church I would lose my reputation. People would sever relationship with me and hurl accusations my way.

God said, "Good. My Son was of no reputation, why should you be?" I was rocked. It was that day, many years ago, that I stopped trying to look good and build a ministry and make people happy about running with me. Selfish ambition died that day. The moment we make decisions based mostly on attracting people, keeping people or raising money is the moment we have failed as leaders.

"But He emptied Himself, taking upon Himself the form of a

servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in the form of a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:7-8).

I'm not trying to build a ministry—I'm devoted to obeying God and delivering the messages He has given me. I know these messages will directly hit theologies and ideals that so many hold dear. That's the point. I crave people's freedom from those harmful ideals! I desire the truth of Jesus to invade everybody's life!

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34).

One reason I'm OK with this divisive strategy (that Jesus affirmed above) is that it clearly reveals who's for and who's opposed. I'd rather make the message clear and know who I'm running with than to tone it down and have those who are opposed to it in our camp. So, we love and serve everybody in the camp, but we can't get sidetracked from our mission for the sake of their comfort.

Trust me, the resulting remnant of burning ones will rejoice at such an atmosphere of clarity and fire! Those who are lukewarm today just may awaken and burn tomorrow—if we have the courage to preach the very difficult, costly truth and call every person to the fire of continual prayer!

I'm sure there are some who translate boldness and refusal to soft-step issues as arrogance—but I do not apologize. Yeah, I know that sounds arrogant! The reason I don't apologize is because I wrestle with the call to humility continually, and I check my heart nonstop. The possibility of pride and arrogance is there, without question, and I take that very seriously. I check my heart to ensure I'm humble and full of love. It's wisdom to receive insight from your critics, at least to a point!

People that are close to me do know my heart—and they know I'm broken before the Lord. My call is to aggressively sound alarms, gather people around the mission of revival and provoke people to pray night and day. It can't be a soft-spoken suggestion if we hope to awaken a great end-time army!

Several years ago in Colorado, the Lord directed me very urgently to learn how to walk in extreme humility and extreme boldness at the same time. It was a full year of intense prayer and discovery—a personal school of the Holy Spirit. In that school, I learned much, including this—I was not to attempt to appear humble, I was to be humble. Why was this important? Because the Elijah-level boldness that is required to impact a region would often look like anything but humility. It would appear as arrogance and selfish ambition.

We are not in a season where we need to gather around a table and water down the message in the hopes of finding common ground that results in handshakes and smiles. The message of the hour will overturn that table with violence.

I endeavor to love every person deeply, but I refuse to affirm systems, methodologies, theologies and lifestyles that are an offense to the Word of God. I will, in humility and boldness, be relentless in provoking the sleepers to awaken and those given to a lukewarm life to be shaken. Prophetic threats against human systems and unholy altars results in accusation, gossip and resistance.

“When the men of the city got up early in the morning, the altar of Baal was torn down, the Asherah pole beside it was cut down, and the second bull had been offered on the new altar that had been built. They said to each other, ‘Who has done this?’ When they had inquired and asked, they responded, ‘Gideon son of Joash has done this.’ Then the men of the city said to Joash, ‘Bring out your son so that he may die, for he tore down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.’ Joash then said to all who stood

against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Whoever fights for him will be killed by morning. If Baal is a god, let him fight for himself, for someone has torn down his altar" (Judg. 6:28-31).

I know the accusations will continue, but you need to know that, if you are bold, you will provoke. You must be OK with that! Love people deeply, hate the enemy powerfully and know there will be a crisis in the middle as God, people and demons step into the ring. Don't wrestle against flesh and blood! Be innocent! But don't presume a passive spirit is the same thing as a humble spirit.

The assault against the prayer movement is extreme and we must advance against the spirit of the age with fire in our veins and tears in our eyes.

John Burton has been developing and leading ministries for over 20 years and is a sought-after teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. He has authored nine books, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and is currently directing a prayer- and revival-focused ministry school in Detroit called theLab University. John also has a web- and graphic-design business and is continually developing new and exciting ventures. He and his beautiful wife, Amy, have five children and live in the Detroit area. He can be reached via his website at .