

Adventures in Prophetic Diversity

I would love for it to be said of me that I was “like Anna,” (Luke 2:36-38) someone who focused on nothing and nobody except Jesus. In every prophetic word, long ones or short ones; every vision; every dream; every inspired prayer, I want to be declaring the testimony of Jesus (see Rev. 19:10). I want to be like John the Beloved, leaning my head on His chest, and then telling others about Him.

Do you love Him? If you love Him, your heart will overflow with words about Him. In loving Him, none of us will be exactly like Anna, because the overflow will take different forms. The message of love will come in different wrappings and it will be presented in different styles. Marketplace manners are a little different from prophetic conferences. Culture differs from place to place.

But the simple truth is that all adventures in the prophetic realm must be rooted in the same soil—expressing the love of God.

How Much God Loves Somebody Else

The prophetic gift helps us understand how much God loves us personally. But as the gift operates upon, in and through you, it becomes a demonstration of how much God loves someone else.

When you stir up the gift and release it, you are doing what the apostle Paul taught: “Follow after love and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy” (1 Cor. 14:1). Prophecy in its purest form is supposed to be about loving people with Jesus’ love. God has put into you a tiny measure of His massive heart of love and His Spirit decides to open up a little spigot. Even a tiny measure of His love overwhelms us, whether it comes with signs and wonders or in

the midst of a quiet, calm, little conversation.

For each of us, the various expressions of the prophetic gift differ, depending upon our personalities and what God has called us to. Each of us is a unique creature. God never uses a cookie cutter. The varieties of giftings and ministries that we read about in the New Testament become further varied as they are expressed through such a wide variety of individuals. "There are various gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. There are various operations, but it is the same God who operates all of them in all people" (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

Relevant Shifts

Besides the differences in personalities and in applications of the prophetic gifts, I am continually noticing additional diversity in the prophetic realm. Within the body of Christ, we are finding a wider ethnic diversity than ever before, and we are also hearing fresh voices. More new people are just over the horizon.

We are hearing new prophetic sounds, in terms of up-to-the-minute media presentations. Continuous change seems to be the new norm. New ways of thinking require flexibility and adjustment. From prophetic evangelism at New Age fairs to solemn assemblies of hungry, passionate young people, the name of Jesus is being proclaimed as never before.

Year after year, new models of kingdom life are developing. They include everything from megachurches to small house churches, from crowded stadiums to widely dispersed webcasts. Some flourish in places that have become centers of spiritual life, while others remain hidden from the public eye. Such a wide variety of new possibilities abound in this shifting prophetic landscape that I have tried to capture them in a *memorable* way. Here are my "nine M's":

1. *Mighty* streams of prayer and praise, combined with the

prophetic, are encouraging the *manifest presence* of God. The worship movement is maturing and bringing us into higher realms of glory.

2. *Miracle manifestations* are proliferating, not only in Third World countries, but also in the West.
3. *Marketplace ministry*, never heard of until recently, is increasing. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Christians exercise their prophetic gifts in their places of secular employment, bringing much-needed wisdom and prophetic intercession into new situations.
4. The *matrix* of relationships. The gifts do not thrive in isolation; they require a healthy relational community of faith.
5. *Missions* outreach. In spite of world recession and the well-established indigenous church, both long-term and short-term missions continue to be launched, based in many countries, including new places.
6. *Middle East* emphasis: God is doing something in Israel and in the regions surrounding Israel as people bring the gospel of the kingdom to the Jew first and then to the Gentile (see Rom. 1:16).
7. *Ministry* training. With the proliferation of ministry training centers and the organic spreading of the mentoring movement, established prophets, pastors and teachers are able to give away what they have earned and learned. People are realizing that the little bit they have may be someone else's magnificent meal
8. *Mercy ministries*. My late wife, Michal Ann Goll, responded to a call for this one. She ministered in Mozambique, Thailand, Burma, among the First Nations and wherever else she was able to release the message that Compassion Acts.

9. *Media mania*—another way of saying that every new means of communication, public and private, is being used by people of the kingdom.

The Holy Spirit is helping the worldwide church to achieve a remarkable level of unity and energy in “doing the stuff.” Whether we face more storms or times of fulfillment, it is time to seize the moment, listening to the Spirit for direction. The body of Christ is accepting an incredible opportunity to shift and move into kingdom alignment.

Getting It Together

I wish personal character could have been an outright gift of the Spirit like the gift of prophecy or the word of wisdom. Our character flaws contribute more to our ministry failures than any other factor. And yet, bequeathing us such puny character represents a stroke of genius on the part of God, who wants us to rely on Him for everything.

Here He is, living inside each person who names Him as Lord, with a goal of transforming us into His image day by day. As we come into union with the Creator of the universe, who knows us better than we will ever know ourselves, we grow in our experience of new creation realities. Christ in us is the hope of glory (see Col. 1:27).

The Spirit who dwells inside us is also the spirit of prophecy, and as you will remember, the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (see Rev. 19:10). As the spirit of prophecy draws you continually to the Lord of love, you will know God better and better.

There is our cure for weak character—and our primary prophetic message. What an adventure this life with Him is turning out to be! Yes, there will be a generation that walks in the double: fullness of fruit (character) and fullness of power (gifts of the Holy Spirit). And when we add the Spirit of

Wisdom to that, oh, what an adventure that will truly be!

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