

Called to Conquer

Three months ago in Jacksonville, Florida, I led a team of 60 altar workers at a men's conference hosted by New Man magazine. We were prepared to pray for those who needed to surrender to Christ for the first time, or who wanted the infilling of the Holy Spirit, or who were seeking answers to family problems. But we were overwhelmed by the response on that first night when evangelist Ted DiBiase challenged the men to deal with habitual sins in their lives. Almost half of the audience jammed the stage area, so after we moved the crowd to another auditorium it took more than an hour for my team to pray for each person individually.

At least 90 percent of the 600 guys who came for prayer wanted to confess some sort of sexual sin. Most cases involved pornography. Some of the men were sobbing because they felt powerless to escape the lust that had captured their minds through X-rated magazines, videos and Web sites. Many of them later

testified that they felt some new degree of freedom after confessing their sins to a sympathetic brother.

I was thrilled to see these guys get free. But I was also disturbed because I knew that this scene in Jacksonville was an accurate snapshot of the state of American Christianity. We are under siege, and in many ways we are losing the battle.

The New Testament tells us that we are "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37). But that's not what I see when I look at the so-called Spirit-filled church. In the last year my office has

been flooded with reports of adultery, financial scandals and divorces involving high-profile church leaders. In my eight years at this magazine, the year 2000 was the worst in terms of moral failures in the ministry. (And believe me, we haven't printed a fraction of the reports.)

But I'm not discouraged, especially after working on this special "Holy Spirit Around the World" issue of Charisma. Despite the challenges we face in the United States, it's obvious that the Holy Spirit is working mightily in this hour all over the globe. Even though negative reports have been on the increase, the number of miraculous evangelistic breakthroughs coming from Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America are so numerous that we couldn't fit them all in.

My prayer is that the spiritual victories you'll read about in countries such as Indonesia, Mexico, Kenya and Ukraine will inspire you to seek God for similar revivals here in our country. Yes, we are threatened on every side by the evil forces that want to control our culture. But who says we have to sit on the sidelines and watch the devil win? I intend to fight.

I encourage you to let the Mighty One rise up within you. Don't focus on your own sins and weaknesses, or the sins of others. We must acknowledge that we are weak in ourselves, but after we do that we must believe that His strength is always displayed through frail human vessels.

As we enter this new millennium, will you move from a defensive position to an offensive one? Will you dare to ask God to transform you into a warrior? Don't wait to feel qualified for the battle. You will never feel adequate enough.

But when we take our stand on the front lines, the Conqueror who lives in us will put Satan under our feet. *