

Why Ministry Is So Messy

Want to be used by God in supernatural ways? Then be ready and willing to get your hands dirty.

In 1979, I lived in Weaverville, a mountain town of about 3,000 people in the Trinity Alps of Northern California. My wife, Kathy, and I had moved there and bought a Union 76 service station in town.

One winter day it was snowing like crazy, and our city was about 3 feet deep in snow. The wind was howling, and the snow was falling horizontally. It was so cold that I had closed the bay doors and was running the heater full blast. My crew was working on cars, and I was in the office doing the books.

Sitting at my desk, I looked out to the far pump island and saw a cow on the driveway. The animal had a rope around its neck with a bell hanging from it. I called out to Dan, our pump-island attendant, and advised him to take care of the situation. He went out for a closer look and then came running into the station yelling, "That is no cow—that's a bull!"

"Dan, go grab that rope and lead that animal off the pump island!" I demanded in the most authoritative tone I could muster.

"No!" he shouted back, "You don't pay me enough to wrestle bulls!"

"Look," I reasoned, "That bull is someone's pet. It's got a leash and a bell around its neck. What's the big deal?" I turned to the crew: "All right, men, who is going to lead that bull off of our pump island?"

"Not me!" they said one by one.

"Fine. I'll do it myself!" I moved slowly toward the bull,

making sure of my exit if I needed one. As I got closer the animal looked docile, almost friendly. I took the rope and gave it a little tug. The bull grunted, so I jerked the rope harder. But that stubborn sucker wouldn't move.

I wrapped the rope several times around my hand to get a good grip and leaned into him. Just as I began to tug, he took off.

The stupid thing ran down the highway, against traffic. I couldn't let go of the rope because it had tightened around my hand. I had my snow boots on and I was being pulled through the snow like a water skier behind a jet boat. Traffic stopped, and people yelled and clapped as we passed by.

I started to run with the bull to try to take the strain off the rope. Finally I managed to get free. I took off running back up the hill to the service station, and the bull came after me. When I got to the station I jumped on a wall. The bull made one last attempt to gore me but missed. Finally, he lost interest and wandered away.

This story reminds me so much of the kingdom of God. When we first come into the kingdom it looks friendly, almost docile. Much like a cow, it seems like we can control and guide the kingdom to meet our demands and fulfill our every want. Then we tie our hands of service to the Lord, and the bull takes off running. Instead of taking it for a walk, it is dragging us through life.

To make matters worse, all the people we know and who used to respect us, are watching us go down the highway in the wrong direction. To complicate the situation, this bull is invisible to most folks, so we look ridiculous!

My point in telling this story is really simple: Life in the kingdom is unpredictable, risky and messy. If you want to have a nice, neat, organized life, you'll need to eliminate most of the works of God from your life. Little takes place in the

spiritual realm without taking a risk.

I tell people that in order to grow in the ministry of the Spirit you must develop a pooper-scooper ministry along with it. Proverbs puts it like this, "Where no oxen are, the manger is clean, but much revenue comes by the strength of the ox" (Prov. 14:4, NASB). Everyone knows what's in the manger when the oxen are there. Anytime we have real Holy Spirit ministry there will be a mess that needs to be cleaned up!

The church must allow God to position us for confrontations with the kingdom of darkness. The world is waiting to see true spiritual power, and until the church rises up to demonstrate it, the world will be held under the power of darkness.

This was made crystal clear to me once when I was invited by a local pastor to speak to his class at a state university on the subject of "Christianity and the Supernatural." He taught the course as a way to expose students to the power of God.

On the way to campus, the pastor described the class to me: "There will be 21 students. Ten of them are Christians. Three are into witchcraft, and the rest of them belong to religions that you probably could not pronounce."

It was a good thing I hadn't known what I was getting myself into until that moment. If I had, I might not have gone. Fear began to fill my heart. Just as we passed through the classroom door, the Lord said to me, "I am going to show off today!"

Show off? I thought. *Is that in the Bible? Lord, is that You?* Before I could receive an answer I was being introduced to the class.

I began to tell the students about my life and how the Lord delivered me from a 3 1/2-year nervous breakdown. Although I was a Christian then, demons visited me during the last year of my breakdown and tormented me until I became demonized. The

Lord finally delivered me.

As I told my story, the students hung on to every word. Finally, the pastor signaled for me to wrap up. As I made my way out of the classroom, a young woman pushed her way to the front, saying she had to talk to me.

I said to her: "You think that you are a psychic, but you have been called to be a prophetess. There has been an evil spirit assigned to kill you since you were born, and you almost died at birth."

She looked shocked.

"Yes!" she yelled out. "I did nearly die at birth, and there has been a demon trying to kill me ever since I was born. It came into my room the other night and tried to run over me." (I can't imagine what *that* must have looked like.)

"Would you like to be free from that evil spirit?" I asked. "Yes," she replied.

Intending to pray for her, I got as far as, "In the name of—" when she fell to the floor right in front of the doorway with a full-blown demonic manifestation that looked like a grand mal seizure. I was stunned. Students stood speechless.

Suddenly I heard the Lord say again, "I am going to show off today!" The pastor looked at me as if to say, "*Do something!*"

I leaned over and said to the spirit, "Leave this woman now in Jesus' name!" Instantly she was delivered—but then began rolling on the floor in a trancelike state, laughing hysterically. It was the kind of laughter that made *you* laugh.

Students for the next class were arriving, so we carried her into the hallway, but her laughing was so loud we had to carry her out of the building. She continued laughing uncontrollably while she rolled on the ground outside.

More students began to gather. I still wasn't sure what to do, but I noticed that many people, in what was mostly an unsaved crowd, were having manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The next thing I knew, I was pointing to a young man in the crowd and saying, "Do you want some of this?"

"Yes—*no!* I don't know!" he waffled.

"Take it!" I ordered.

All at once he fell to the ground, rolling around laughing. I began to point to others and say the same thing. Within a few moments several people were on the ground laughing hysterically while others looked on in amazement. God definitely showed off that day, as He had promised!

I have had experiences like the one at that college all over the U.S. I don't understand people who think Americans aren't hungry for God. Everywhere I go I see folks who are famished and longing for a spiritual awakening, and we have the ability to demonstrate a gospel of power.

It's time for us as the body of Christ to rise up and receive our inheritance! We can't be satisfied with illustrated sermons, great music or friendly services. We have been called to see the powers of darkness destroyed and our ruined cities restored.

Wickedness continues to grow all around us, taking root in the lives of those we love and eroding the foundation of our country. Yet the words of our Lord Jesus still echo through the halls of history: "These signs will follow those who believe," and "Greater works ... he will do because I go to My Father" (Mark 16:17-18, NKJV; John 14:12).

Satan is being forced to let go of his demonic stronghold on our cities as God demonstrates His raw power through His church. We are in the midst of the greatest revival in human history. Yet there remains a distance between what *should* be

and what *will* be. That distance is us!

What will we be? We are the bridge between history and *His* story. The sick, demonized, poor, blind, lame and lost all are waiting to see what we have learned. We can't afford to disappoint them.

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