

Charismatic and Pentecostal Spirituality

25th November 2007

1. Simon Barrington-Ward: I should say that the Holy Spirit was in the business of opening me up to new things, and then went on to speak of the way in which he uses the Jesus prayer.
2. The personal illustration: For me the presenting issue was 'speaking in tongues' but from that exploration came a radically new way of relating to God: power beyond, power in, power out.
3. Power beyond: the Power of God transcendent
 - a) "In our book, *Power Evangelism*, John Wimber and I describe power encounters as the clashing of the kingdom of God with the kingdom of Satan. 'Any system or force that must be overcome for the gospel to be believed,' we write, 'is cause for a power encounter.' Any system or force that must be overcome in Western culture usually involves a worldview that denies the supernatural. To understand how forces in our culture work against belief in the supernatural, we must take a closer look at the influence of Enlightenment thinking. [Kevin Springer, *Riding the Third Wave*, p. 13]
 - b) "Because the doctrine and attitude of the German Christians is nothing but a particularly vigorous result of the entire neo-protestant development since 1700, our protest is directed against a spreading and existent corruption of the whole evangelical Church. Our protest... must be directed fundamentally against the fact... that, beside the Holy Scriptures as the unique source of revelation, the German-Christians affirm the German nationhood, its history and its contemporary political situation as a second source of revelation, and thereby betray themselves to be believers in 'another God.'" [Karl Barth, writing in *Lutherfeier* 1933]
 - c) For me
 - i. The sovereign freedom of God – uncaged, untamed, uncontrollable – God in all God's rawness.
 - ii. Immanence: A God who intervenes all the time – the ordinary seen in a new light.
 - iii. A God not circumscribed by any rules of engagement e.g. the genetics of a Virgin birth.
 - d) The 'power beyond' is first of all a 'power apart', demanding holy fear, worship, obedience, service and lifelong discipleship. ⁷ *"Suppose one of you has a servant ploughing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? ⁸ Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? ⁹ Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"*

4. Power in

1) Power in: a God who overwhelms

While he was lying before the Lord in his illuminated mind and spirit, it happened that... there came to him the power of an almighty, divine, heavenly being, just like a heavy spiritual burden. It entered the top of his head in a perception of or sensitivity to the resurrection. It pressed inward through his head and all his members, moving down into his legs so that he had to sit down and could no longer remain on his knees because of the weight of the heavy burden. And behold, he felt the power touching him forcefully before it fell upon his head. While it moved about or circulated, he perceived in this same power five new senses from God.¹

¹ The Anonymous Biography of Joris, in Joris, David, tr. & ed. Waite, Gary K, *The Anabaptist Writings of David Joris 1535-1543*, Herald Press, Scottsdale Pa, page 84

He began to speak in new tongues, to comprehend the words in their divine, eternal, spiritual sense, and to examine their true origins. However, no one can taste or perceive any of this without the same Spirit... He was enveloped with such living, heavenly senses and thought, that he had to pray that God might allow him a little rest. Otherwise his body would perish, not being able to bear it unchanged in such an immediate nature.²

2) Power in: a God who comes in

a) Bonaventure [1221-1274], *The Five Feasts of the Child Jesus* – the believer as Mary

- i. Cómo Jesucristo, el Hijo de Dios, sea concebido espiritualmente por el alma devota
- ii. Cómo el Hijo de Dios nace espiritualmente en el alma devota
- iii. Cómo el niño Jesús ha de ser nombrado espiritualmente del alma devota
- iv. Cómo el Hijo de Dios ha de ser buscado y adorado espiritualmente por el alma devota con los Magos
- v. Cómo el Hijo de Dios es presentado espiritualmente por el alma en el Templo

b) John of the Cross [1542-1591], *Songs of the Soul* – the believer as lover

c) Gerhard Teerstegen [1697-1769], *Spiritual Flower Garden* – the believer as lost in Christ [131]

3) Power in: the Power of Gifting

a) The gift of tongues – Strachan: 66 – why tongues? Tongues necessary? Beyond ourselves. The God who takes us beyond ourselves.

b) The gift of guidance: God still speaks

In the beginning of the year 1655, I was at the plough in the east parts of Yorkshire in Old England, near the place where my outward being was; and, as I walked after the plough, I was filled with the love and presence of the living God, which did ravish my heart when I felt it, for it did increase and abound in me like a living stream, so did the life and love of God run through me like precious ointment giving a pleasant smell, which mad me to stand still. And, as I stood a little still, with my heart and mind stayed upon the Lord, the word of the Lord came to me in a still, small voice, which I did hear perfectly, saying to me in the secret of my heart and conscience, "I have ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," and, at the hearing of the word of the Lord, I was put to a stand, seeing that I was but a child for such a weighty matter. So, at the time appointed, Barbados was set before me, unto which I was required of the Lord to go and leave my dear and loving wife and tender children; for the Lord said unto me, immediately by His Spirit, that He would be as an husband to my wife and as a father to my children, and they should not want in my absence, for He would provide for them when I was gone. And I believed the Lord would perform what He had spoken, because I was made willing to give up myself to His work and service, to leave all and follow Him, whose presence and life is with me, where I rest in peace and quietness of spirit, with my dear brother [William Robinson] under the shadow of His wings, who hath made us willing to lay down our lives for His name's sake, if unmerciful men be suffered to take them from us. And, if they do, we know we shall have rest and peace with the Lord for ever in His holy habitation, when they shall have torment night and day.³

² ibid., page 85

³ The Testimony of Marmaduke Stephenson, one of the Boston Martyrs 1659, hanged for being a Quaker, in www.qh-press.org/quakerpages/qwhp/marmduke.htm, accessed 12th November 2007

- c) Gifting for ministry: Mr and Mrs Hollings – all are gifted [including children] – hunger for giftings – don't distinguish between those giftings that come through hard graft and those that come extraordinarily from outside, often when we aren't looking.

5. Power out

- 1) Power out: the power to go in Pentecostal mission - A Spirit who drives us out: Acts 2 Jerusalem – Acts 8.15-16 Samaria – Acts 10.44-46 Gentiles – Acts 19.6 Followers of John

When you are filled with the Spirit you will know the voice of God. I want to give you one illustration of this. When I was going out to Australia recently, our boat stopped at Aden and at Bombay. In the first place the people came round the ship selling their wares, beautiful carpets and all sorts of oriental things. There was one man selling some ostrich feathers. As I was looking over the side of the ship watching the trading, a gentleman said to me, "Would you go shares with me in buying that bunch of feathers?" What did I want with feathers? I had no use for such things and no room for them either. But the gentleman put the question to me again, "Will you go shares with me in buying that bunch?" The Spirit of God said to me, "Do it."

The feathers were sold to us for three pounds, and the gentleman said, "I have no money on me, but if you will pay the man for them, I will send the cash down to you by the purser." I paid for the feathers and gave the gentleman his share. He was travelling first, and I was travelling second class. I said to him, "No, please don't give that money to the purser, I want you to bring it to me personally to my cabin." I said to the Lord, "What about these feathers?" He showed me that He had a purpose in my purchasing them.

At about 10 o'clock the gentleman came to my cabin and said, "I've brought the money." I said to him, "It is not your money that I want, it is your soul that I am seeking for God." Right there he opened up the whole plan of his life and began to seek God; and that morning he wept his way through to God's salvation.

You have no conception what God can do through you when you are filled with His Spirit. Every day and every hour you can have the divine leading of God. To be filled with the Holy Ghost means much in every way. I have seen some who have been suffering for years, and when they have been filled with the Holy Ghost everything of their sickness has passed away. The Spirit of God has made real to them the life of Jesus and they have been completely liberated of every sickness and infirmity. [Smith Wigglesworth]

- 2) Power out – the power of God in guidance, which needs to be understood in the light of God's mission – sometimes in danger now of becoming a principle of self-fulfilment, when it is 'God steering me in the direction of purposeful life in the Kingdom.'
- 3) Power out – the power of God in spiritual warfare – one of the great Pentecostal truths is that the consequences of sin stretch far beyond the individual guilt and pain caused by what we do, and leave a spiritual stain on places, communities and histories.
- 4) Conversely, power out – the power to see the world through God's eyes – yesterday: Christ the King: hope and expectation. Also, [a] a breaking into this world of what will be – a real lived out eschatology: the future now, but also [b] maybe a glimpse of how God really sees: beauty now where the world cannot see anything but ugliness. This is a really important and perhaps much neglected aspect of the spirituality of public ministry.
- 5) Power out – the transformed community = the church – it's easy to become jaundiced, and Acts 2 is, no doubt, idealised. Yet we all have experience of church which is the world as we long to know it – kingdom on earth as in heaven...

Preparation for Revival

In 1860 Andrew Murray accepted a call to pastor the church at Worcester. His induction to the church coincided with a revival and missions conference made up of 374 South African ministers. The conference was planned for the specific purpose of encouraging spiritual revival and recruiting new workers and missionaries for the Dutch Reformed churches of South Africa. At the beginning of the conference a paper was handed out which traced the news of the recent revival in America and Britain. The attending ministers were strongly encouraged to expect and pray for a similar move of God in South Africa. A Dr. Robertson spoke on their great need for revival, followed by a Dr. Adamson who then gave a detailed report on the recent awakening in America. Andrew Murray, Sr. attempted to address the gathering, but was unable, being overcome with brokenness and tears. Overall, the conference was a great success, encouraging fresh hope and prayer among the attending ministers.

Shortly after the conference, a meeting of young people was held at the church on a Sunday evening. It was at this meeting that the Spirit of revival unexpectedly broke out. The meeting moved along as expected, until an unassuming 15-year-old black girl stood up to pray. Mr. Murray's associate, J. C. de Vries, was overseeing the prayer meeting and gives us an eyewitness account of these extraordinary events. "On a certain Sunday evening there were gathered in a little hall some sixty young people. I was the leader of the meeting, which began with a hymn and a lesson from God's Word, after which I prayed. Three or four others gave out a verse of a hymn and prayed, as was the custom. Then a coloured girl of about fifteen years of age, in service with a nearby farmer, rose at the back of the hall and asked if she too might propose a hymn. At first I hesitated, not knowing what the meeting would think, but better thoughts prevailed, and I replied, 'Yes.' She gave out her hymn-verse and prayed in moving tones. While she was praying, we heard, as it were, a sound in the distance, which came nearer and nearer, until the hall seemed to be shaken; with one or two exceptions, the whole meeting began to pray, the majority in audible voice, but some in whispers. Nevertheless, the noise made by the concourse was deafening. A feeling, which I cannot describe, took possession of me..."

Offended by Revival

While this meeting was going on, Andrew Murray was preaching in another section of the church. He was not present during the beginning of these events. When his own service was over, an elder passed the door of the prayer meeting, heard the noise, peeked in, and then ran back to get Mr. Murray. J. C. de Vries vividly recalls Murray's surprising reaction to the young people's meeting, "Mr. Murray came forward to the table where I knelt praying, touched me, and made me understand that he wanted me to rise. He then asked me what had happened. I related everything to him. Then he walked down the room for some distance and called out as loudly as he could, 'People, silence!' But the praying continued. In the meantime, I knelt down again. It seemed to me that if the Lord was coming to bless us, I should not be upon my feet but on my knees. Mr. Murray then called loudly again, 'People, I am your minister, sent from God! Silence!' But there was no stopping the noise. No one heard him, but all continued praying and calling on God for mercy and pardon. Mr. Murray then returned to me and told me to start the hymn-verse commencing 'Aid the soul that helpless cries'. I did so. But the emotions were not quieted and the meeting went right on praying. Mr. Murray then prepared to depart, saying, 'God is a God of order, and here everything is confusion!' With that he left the hall."