

Ten-Year Anniversary of Flowing in the River, *by Rex Burgher*

Let The River Flow Conference, May of 1995, Kelowna, BC

Lois and I and our girls along with two other couples from Riverside Alliance Church decided to go to Kelowna, British Columbia to the 'Let The River Flow' conference being held in May of 1995. The drive from Kalispell, Montana was a ten-hour drive over the mountains to Spokane and then north crossing the Canadian border and up to Kelowna. The day was beautiful and the drive especially after you crossed the border was breathtaking. The Okanogan River stretched almost the entire distance from the U.S. border to Kelowna. We crossed the floating bridge and into the city itself and were excited about the conference that was to start that evening.

We knew very little neither about pastor Wesley Campbell nor of the church but we did know that with worship leaders like Brian Doerkson and David Ruis you couldn't go wrong. Our main focus was on John Wimber who was the lead pastor of the Vineyard movement of churches. He had impacted our lives so much since we had become Christians not only through his teaching but also on his influence in the area of worship. To say that his influence changed the direction of worship in the church dramatically would be an understatement. The sad part of our trip was the realization that this probably would be one of John's last conferences as he was diagnosed with cancer and though they felt he would overcome it the treatments had left him very weak.

The church in itself was very interesting; it formerly had been an indoor produce warehouse with revival meetings held on the ground before the warehouse had come into existence. It held around a thousand people with a 10-foot balcony that encircled the top. Unusual but it felt good to all of us and we were ready for the night's service with John Wimber speaking.

The hour of worship was amazing, the place was packed and all of us were caught up in an incredible experience of worship with over a thousand people who had come to worship the King of Kings.

John came forth to speak and settled on the stool they had brought out for him to rest on. The cancer had left him very weak and he produced a bottle of 'pig spit' he called it which was artificial saliva that he sprayed into his mouth every now and then as the cancer had taken away his ability to produce his own saliva.

John was like he always was to us, Papa John and his style was as laid back as his Hawaiian shirt and khakis and that ready smile of knowing some secret that he was so excited to share with everyone, in due time of course. For over three hours John shared story after story holding all of us on the edge of our seats. As he came to a close he asked those who were 'dry and thirsty for more of God' if they would like to come forward and without delay we all headed for the front.

We didn't make it far as Wesley came forward and asked us if we would help stack the chairs and help moved then off to the side. For the next 15 minutes we stacked and carried or slid large stacks of chairs of to the sides and along the wall at the back of the room. By the end of the conference we were getting familiar with a routine that would follow every meeting, getting the chairs out of the way for ministry.

We stood there assuming the position, quieting our hearts extending our hands out in front of us and waiting on God. My right hand began to quiver and shake mildly as the power of God began to come upon me and soon two men I had never seen before or since came up and began to pray for me.

I don't know why I did what happened next, often now I tell people that the reason people fall is because they cannot stand and that is what happened to me, I fell. I didn't know why I fell and as the person behind me carefully lowered me to the floor I found myself lying there with more questions than answers. I remember thinking to myself these thoughts. "I wonder how long your suppose to lay here?" "I hope nobody kicks me in the head! Because if someone kicks me in the head I'm getting up." "My

hand is shaking, at least I got the hand shaky thing happening." "I wonder if I should get up?"

All these questions went through my mind, no bells were heard nor any angelic visitations or tremendous revelations happened. I didn't really feel nor have any great inkling that something was about to happen or was happening to me. But that was about to change and that change would affect not only me but also our families lives forever.

As I began to get to my feet a sudden transformation took place. I felt something happening inside and around me as I pushed my self up and stood to my feet. In the few seconds it took for me to get up off the floor I felt like I had entered into a different realm of reality. Almost like jumping into a pool of water going from one realm into another it was that dramatic. As shocking as opening your eyes under water and moving in that slow motion awareness of the difference in your surroundings was what I was feeling. I was heady with the glory of God resting on me but when I tried to speak from out of the depths of my belly would be a rushing, gurgling brook of power that would bubble out through my lips. No words would come forth just a bubbling; gurgling brook of power would come through my mouth. When I said anything to anyone they would go down in the spirit. I tried to get people's attention but as soon as I touched them down they would go down. Whether looking at me or with their backs turned as I tried to get people's attention the power of God would lay everyone out onto the floor. Within a few minutes the place was literally full of people laid out under the power of God.

The two men who had prayed for me came back and told me, "We don't know what has happened to you but something significant has definitely taken place, we release you to go and pray for others."

Lois on the other side of me was also going through a transformation. Her experience though different than mine was influenced by her past view of how God moves and touches people. Mine was easier, I had no background to work through, I knew it was God strange though it was and went for it. Lois on the other hand had to work through the whole issue of falling, tongues, etc. Fortunately the Lord sent a woman who came and sat beside Lois and ministered to her for over an hour. She was definitely sent from God to minister to Lois and help her through the transitional experience she was going through.

Krista at fifteen years old was going through her own experience as well. Coming off the floor she would either be seen doing the jerks, I.e. bending over in-half and coming back up then doing it again and again or speaking in a Chinese type of language. It was either one or the other, speak in tongues to stop the jerks or jerk and not speak in tongues. To say it was a little out of our realm of experience is to say the least. For over a week after our return to Montana she would go through this strange behavior. She even became tired of it I think. It did create quite a stir in the Baptist Christian School she attended but that is another story all together.

Right when we were wondering about it all, an Asian woman came running up to us and asked us in broken English. "Could your daughter pray for my daughter over there?" Pointing to a girl lying on the floor about 20 feet away. "My daughter not speak English but your daughter speak our language so well!" So we nodded in agreement though our brains were doing a 360 degree turn and watched as Krista went over and for over a half an hour had a discussion with the girl laying on the floor in her own language. A language Krista never learned nor heard before but was given by the Holy Spirit.

Tonya was touched deeper than almost all of us. At 12 years of age she was moved like a deep current under the sea. For months afterwards she would be found weeping in her room. When I would go in and ask her what was wrong she would look into my eyes and say, "Who is going to save them Dad, who is going to tell them." Still to this day I can see the current within her of God's immeasurable love for lost humanity.

For the next three days we all were lost in God's presence. Under the influence was a way of life for us as we took in the goodness of God and the bewilderment of all that was happening around us. We never had seen anything like what was taking place in that meeting. Often the sound of the people would be deafening and would drown out the speakers.

We saw manifestations of the power of God like we never imagined we would ever see or believed possible. One man sitting in a chair was rocking back and forth so violently that his forehead would almost touch the floor in front and his hair almost touch the floor in back as he was rocked back and forth. Never once did he ever lose his balance nor did it appear as if anything was out of control or for that matter that it was impossible for that to happen in the natural.

Lois and I would walk around the sanctuary from time to time and just watch what God was doing. During one of the meetings as we were all standing at the end of worship just soaking in the glory of the Lord in silence after having worshiped for over an hour a man began to demonically manifest. Suddenly he began to scream out in a snarled demonic voice that was not his, "I hate you, I hate you all!" His arms were raised above his head and bent and gnarled in a grotesque manner. He truly looked like a demoniac. Gary Best a vineyard pastor and speaker jumped off the platform and went through the crowd while others trained in this ministry came quickly to his aid. John Wimber however came to the microphone and smiling in his usual way just said "Isn't this great, this man is going to be set free." John always seem to know how to set people at ease in difficult situations. He was set free and was quite a different person during the rest of the conference.

The meetings ended on Saturday evening and we headed home on Sunday not knowing what was about to happen once we returned nor of the events that were about to take place that would catapult us all around the world.

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