

ACCELERATE AND BUILD!

PART 1

*“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundations of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”
Ephesians 2:20*

I hear the Spirit of God saying that we are entering into a time of **acceleration** on a global scale. I also hear Him speaking about a **building anointing** that is being released from heaven particularly upon apostles, apostolic leaders and prophets (although not limited to just this group of leaders). An apostolic leader is a person who has a distinct apostolic dimension operating in their ministry evidenced in apostolic functionality such as planting, pioneering, establishing, foundation-laying, building, nurturing and fathering/mothering. The apostolic dimension may also be revealed in the authority of signs, wonder and miracles in a person’s ministry (2 Corinthians 12:12). Furthermore, it may be shown in the fruit of the lives those who receive the minister as an apostolic leader. For instance, the believers in Corinth were regarded by Paul as a “seal” of his apostolic ministry to their hearts and in their lives. (1 Corinthians 9:2)

Apostolic building must be carried out by revelation given in wisdom and in heavenly “blue prints.” Nehemiah was a type of apostolic pioneer builder, who was commissioned by God to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. After prayer, fasting and consultation with the king, Nehemiah made a reconnaissance trip to Jerusalem and understood through physical sight and by spiritual revelation how to execute the building work. In being thus appointed, Nehemiah was equipped to raise a team of partners who worked along side him to realise the vision. Apostolic builders have grace to gather others around heavenly vision and empower ministry partners.

Nehemiah led to completion despite much enemy harassment and interference. He was able to do this because He had been authorised, anointed and empowered by God for the task. He was equipped to overcome any and all obstacles along the way and was able to develop successful strategy to the enemy’s tactics at pivotal points in the building work. The building anointing is a labouring anointing that is relentless in pursuit of achieving the God-given aims and objectives.

Apostle Paul taught the church in Philippi that they were to live “according to the pattern” they had seen modelled in himself and his team (Philippians 3:17). Pattern makers are visionary leaders who model and exemplify a lifestyle of holiness with Christ, so that others are enabled and equipped to follow suit. Pattern makers are mentors and spiritual mothers and fathers to others. They are often pioneers who are breaking into new territory and doing things that might not have been done before. If we are to be kingdom builders we must embrace the simple truth that holy and righteous lifestyles are an essential aspect of being a fruitful builder in God’s

house. Godly character will sustain us in times of challenge and surrender to His will births ongoing Godly transformation in us to the glory of His name.

Acceleration can only happen under the divine impetus of the Holy Spirit. When He mobilises us to a God-given task/assignment He releases the necessary grace, authority, power and wisdom to us to consolidate and implement vision and follow through to completion. Holy Spirit not only in-dwells us but rests and remains upon us to become a mighty catalyst to build according to God's will. Mobilisation causes acceleration and acceleration creates increased momentum to carry vision/building work forward.

This global outpouring of grace is given to engage the worldwide church in Kingdom endeavours to establish, to advance and to multiply God's kingdom on the earth. This level of outpouring will be contested by Satan and it is important that the church prepares for the coming spiritual warfare that will accompany this mighty breakthrough.

Spiritual Warfare

Perhaps we might describe this spiritual warfare on three levels:

1. Ground
2. Occult
3. Strategic

Christ's Love

Before looking at a Biblical example of all three levels of spiritual warfare operating in a city, let's first acknowledge that God's love is one of the greatest weapons of our warfare, alongside that of the blood of Jesus and the victory of the finished work of the power of the Cross. When believers operate in love and unity and exercise faith and hope in Christ's finished intercession there is enormous potential for personal and community transformation. We are built up by His love, to enable others to grow in faith and in maturity, to be prepared for works of service and to attain to the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11, 12)

Strategic Breakthrough Prayer

It is by prevailing prayer that spiritual warfare is fought and won and prayer and faith must operate hand-in-hand. Strategic breakthrough prayer is an absolutely essential part of the deliverance of individuals, communities and nations. Strategic prayer is tactical, planned and deliberate resulting in blessing and breakthrough i.e. sudden advancement and forward momentum. It is by prayer that souls are saved, that the demonised are set free and the sick are healed; it is by prayer that principalities are displaced and dethroned and Christ rightfully enthroned as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Church, we must learn to bend our knees and posture our hearts with fervent prevailing prayer and fasting before Almighty God if we are to walk in the level of glory anointing God desires for us!

THE EXAMPLE OF ACTS 19

Paul arrived in Ephesus to discover a group of disciples who had only received *“John’s baptism.”* Paul explained that this was a baptism of repentance and that John pointed to Jesus. *“On hearing this they were baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus.” Acts 19:5*

Baptism

Paul placed his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. The bible records about twelve men in all received this baptism. Perhaps we could say these men received a type of *“spiritual upgrade”!* Apostolic ministry always causes increase. Spiritual warfare cannot be entered into without the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit was graciously poured out on this occasion prior to the spiritual battles that would ensue.

Apostolic Preaching

Paul preached the word of God in the synagogue for three months, bringing the message of the Kingdom of God to the people there. He encountered opposition but preached boldly nonetheless. Apostolic preaching challenges, shifts and transforms the spiritual atmosphere into which it is delivered by the Holy Spirit’s anointing upon a surrendered servant of God. Preaching the kingdom message is an essential part of spiritual warfare on all three levels and is itself, a part of the apostolic mandate given to the whole church.

Apostolic preaching alters the spiritual atmosphere so that unbelievers are able to *“hear”* the Gospel and respond. There is no higher warfare than to win souls and disciple them for Christ’s glory and every single salvation is an ultimate trophy of grace in the realm of spiritual warfare. We must never underestimate the power of the fire of God in anointed preaching! It literally burns up the spiritual darkness around it, penetrating hearts and minds to bring people to a place of revelatory understanding and acceptance of the mystery and beauty of the Gospel message.

I had the privilege of preaching to a group of women in a prison in California last summer and as the word of God went forth the change in the atmosphere was tangible. I made an appeal in 90-degree heat and asked the women if they would like to receive the Lord, they ran forward and were swept off their feet by the Holy Spirit and many were instantly baptised and spoke in tongues. It was a most beautiful and blessed moment in the little prison courtyard as the bemused guards looked on and angels celebrated.

Teaching the Word of God/Discipleship Teams

By apostolic teaching the Kingdom of God is not only established in grace but also advances in the power of the Holy Spirit’s revelation, wisdom and truth. Paul taught the twelve new disciples for two years in the lecture hall of Tyrannus and we are told that both the Jews and the Greeks throughout the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord (v10). For twenty four long months the apostle laboured tirelessly to bring the word of the Lord both to his apostolic team in preparation to minister and impact the surrounding community. He trained the young disciples by the word of God and laid a strong foundation upon which the glory could manifest in signs,

wonders and miracles. During this 24-month period of equipping Paul prepared a team that could co-labour with him in the season of in-gathering for the harvest that was just around the corner. Anointed and inspired teaching of the word of God will bring about a Godly transformation in individuals allowing them to mature as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A few years ago I was privileged to lead a core group of 18-25 year olds in preparation for a prayer and repentance tour of Scotland. For a year we met every week to pray and worship together. As well as building vision with my leaders I also invested much time in teaching them some of the values I held. I saw the leadership potential in each of them and sought to not only train them for task but also to develop them as leaders. After a year they were sent out as team leaders all across Scotland on their ministry assignments and the Lord graciously moved in power everywhere they went. Preparing your team is an important part of affecting the destiny of your city or community.

Part two of this teaching will look at the various levels of spiritual warfare we have highlighted in this article.

May God bless you and pour out upon you a kingdom building anointing!

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ACCELERATE AND BUILD

PART 2

GROUND LEVEL SPIRITUAL WARFARE

**The level of warfare that deals with casting out demons/healing the sick
Extraordinary Miracles/Deliverance**

“God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.” Acts 19:11-12

Deliverance ministry is an integral part of apostolic ministry. Healings, signs, wonders and salvations are part of ground level warfare too. I love the deliverance ministry! I think we need to be as excited about someone being set free from a demon as we are about a sick person being healed. I recall when I was ministering in a Teen Challenge meeting and the fire of God fell so powerfully that before I could even lay hands on some of the recovering drug addicts and alcoholics, the Holy Spirit had caused them to fall to the ground and He was driving the demons out by his grace! It was a powerful and liberating time for all these precious ones.

The healing ministry also gives us every reason to worship God for His goodness to us in Christ. I have found that in meetings where the power of the Lord is present to heal the sick, often when one person is sovereignly touched by God and shares testimony of their healing, suddenly many more healings and miracles will begin to happen because faith has been built up in others through the release of the word of faith. In Oklahoma city I remember one sweet old lady who got healed in her chair and was able to walk without her cane. Her praise testimony was so exuberant and joyful that healings began to pop all over the room as people engaged heart by heart with the Lord. The pastor's wife's knees were healed right where she sat - truly God meets us where we are!

In Luke 10 we read how Jesus sent out seventy two disciples and they returned to him reporting, *“Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” Luke 10:17* Jesus responded, *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that our names are written in heaven.” Verses 18-20*

The disciples had been ministering deliverance in the towns and villages and many people were set free and on their return the Lord spoke to the disciples of seeing Satan fall. Whilst Jesus was in the first instance referring to the fall of Lucifer from heaven, it is noteworthy to ponder a further possible emphasis the Lord was making – casting out of demons affects principalities in the heavens!

Jesus further emphasised to His disciples the importance of rejoicing in relationship with God. A lifestyle of intimacy with Jesus is essential if we are to be involved in

spiritual warfare even at the most basic level. We read further in Acts 19 of some Jews who went around trying to drive out evil spirits in like manner to Paul and his team. However one day the evil spirit answered them and said, *“Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you? Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.”* Verse 15, 16

Whilst these unfortunate fellows received a terrible beating, for those who are in covenant relationship with God, it is important to understand that the spiritual realm recognises the authority of Jesus Christ and His anointed servants and submits to Christ's authority. Every knee must bow at His name. Hallelujah!

OCCULT LEVEL SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The level of warfare that deals with the occult, sorcery, witchcraft, and divination.

Agents of Satan are dealt with in this realm, especially witches, warlocks, sorcerers and Satanists. Examples include Acts 8, 13, 16 and 19.

When the story of Jesus' authority became known to the Jews and Greeks in Ephesus, the fear of the Lord fell on the people and *“the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour.”* The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. As a result of two years of preaching, preparation of an apostolic team, and the demonstration of God's love and power through deliverance/healing there was a mighty shift in the spiritual stratosphere. Occult practitioners were now being shaken from their old lifestyle and beginning to come forward to receive Christ as Saviour and Lord.

“Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practised sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” Acts 19:18-20

I remember ministering to a man who was involved in voodoo and witchcraft. When I met him he was dying of cancer and was about as far from being a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and one might be. With a friend, we shared the Gospel with him and the glory of God filled the little Hospice room and our new-found friend opened his heart to Christ, repented of his sins and received the Lord as Saviour. This dear man asked us to remove certain witchcraft apparel from his home and destroy it for him (he was too ill and frail to do it himself). We happily complied with his wishes and disposed of the artefacts in a deep sea harbour. Although the man was not healed of his cancer he spent the rest of his life telling everyone about his new First Love Jesus. He led his daughter to Christ and witnessed to nurses, doctors, consultants and patients before God called him home to glory. He did more with his life in those few short weeks that many believers do with a whole lifetime. To me he is an unsung hero of the faith. The spiritual atmosphere shifted through this occult practitioner coming to Christ and as a result salvations followed for others. Hallelujah!

We see in Ephesus how Satan's agents (the sorcerers) were displaced from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God. Through their open confession and repentance from the occult there was a radical increase in the number of people who (a) responded to the salvation message and (b) manifestation of God's power. The ground level warfare of preaching, teaching, deliverance and healing had laid the foundation for the next stage of breakthrough. Hallelujah! Occult practitioners no doubt held many in the grip of fear and superstition. When they became believers the devil's hold was loosened on all the lives over whom they had influence and God's grace was manifest in community salvation and transformation thus the kingdom was established and advanced. Church, we need to love and exercise Christ's authority for those who are trapped in witchcraft, Satanism and all manner of darkness because Jesus died to set them free just as He died for our freedom too.

STRATEGIC HIGH LEVEL WARFARE – RIOT OR REVIVAL!?

The level of warfare that deals with high ranking territorial spirits. . An example being found in Acts 19, where Paul's ministry affected the worship of the goddess Diana in Ephesus.

When a society is held captive by a demonic principality, every aspect of that society is infiltrated by the spiritual tentacles of the evil entity including the city's economics. The Ephesians' community was no exception. Prior to Paul's 'apostolic assault' on the city, the economy had been controlled and influenced in many areas by the occult. The occult practitioners who had not converted to Christianity were now suffering great financial losses and about this time a great disturbance arose.

"A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades and said, "Men you know we receive a good income from this business. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshipped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty." Acts 19:24-27

A riot quickly ensued and the people were furious and began shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" and soon the whole city was in total uproar. Paul's travelling companions (Gaius and Aristarchus) were seized by the people and rushed into the theatre. Paul wanted to appear before the people but the disciples wouldn't let him. The assembled mob was in total confusion, with people shouting in contention over one another and with most folks not even understanding why they were there. One of the Jews Alexander tried to speak to the crowd but when they understood he was a Jew they chanted for two hours, "*Great is Artemis of the Ephesians.*" Verse 34

Occultism births rebellion, confusion and uproar in the places where demonic thrones operate to bring despair and destruction upon a people or a region. It is time for the church of Jesus Christ to rise up in grace, to praise His glorious name and to pray with humility and fervency for the rule and reign of Christ to be established throughout the nations. His kingdom rule releases righteousness, peace, joy and Godly order in our lives and communities, yet we understand from the example of Ephesus that breaking through into hostile enemy territory may in part, involve a riotous enemy response prior to the establishment of righteousness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Apostolic authority and wisdom penetrates hostile territory with the glorious Gospel of our Saviour!

The city clerk stood up and quieted the crowd and said, *“Men of Ephesus, doesn’t all the world know the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image which fell from heaven?”* In broad daylight and in the midst of the community the government official was stating that this city was guardian to what we may equate to be the queen of heaven. The officials’ words confirm that the city had been in bondage to demonic rulers. However, the ensuing riot that accompanied the third stage of Spirit-led warfare by Paul and his team is evidence of a wicked ruler that was beginning to topple and needing to find a way to stop the holiness invasion that was uprooting all of its power bases in the city it had once ruled. Eventually the city clerk calmed the crowd and told them they were in danger of being charged with rioting because of their behaviour and he then dismissed the assembly.

We live in days of increasing spiritual warfare and we must learn to ascend into the reality of being hidden in Christ. When the Lord has taken me into spiritual warfare encounters with wicked evil rules, powers and principalities I can honestly say I did not ask to be taken there. Each encounter with an evil principality or ruler has been for a specific kingdom purpose. I have always been given an authoritative decree to proclaim, I am usually accompanied by a troop of angels and because the Lord sovereignly initiated the encounter I have been divinely protected and enabled to remain within the remit of my God-given sphere of authority. Warfare on this level should not be entered into without the specific direction, instruction and inspiration of the Lord. It is far too dangerous to engage with high ranking evil powers if the Lord has not appointed, authorised and anointed one to do so.

THE GODDESS FALLS!

It is believed that Apostle John later went to the city of Ephesus and entered the temple of Diana. He prayed and the goddess split in two; the final blow had been cast against the evil principality and its grip on the city of Ephesus.

Hallelujah our God reigns!

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