

Choose wilderness or the church

In 1998 my wife and I returned from living in Israel for 6 months at the Mount Zion Fellowship which was founded by Sister Ruth Heflin and Irene Bredlow and some other sisters. We were there from June to December participating in the daily prayer meetings and serving in whatever way they wanted.

On our return we were wondering in the Lord which church we would fellowship in in the city of Perth, Western Australia. It was a Saturday night exactly 17 years ago on the 3rd January 1998. We decided to go to the local church where we had friends and the same preacher who did our wedding ceremony a few years before.

That night the Lord gave me a dream which I will never forget.

It began with me walking along the edge of a very wide city street. The street was extremely wide and bitumised, with buildings on either side. In the street was a large crowd of men all walking shoulder to shoulder, not in rows, just massing together, all walking from right to left if you looked at the street from my vantage point.

They were all dressed in the same Chasidic orthodox Jewish clothing that the Ultra orthodox wear. Long black coats, black hats with the curl of hair on the sides of their heads. I was walking on the sidewalk, and I was dressed in the same outfit.

The crowd was being led by 2 men out in front. I recognised them as the Senior pastor and the associate pastor of the church we were going to attend the next day.

They were dressed in police uniforms.

As I said, I was dressed like the crowd, but I was not wanting

to mix in with them. Instead I walked along the sidewalk trying to look as if I was not a part of them.

Then a small group of women clothed in orange silky clothing like what Indian Hindu women wear came from the pavement and pushed their way into the crowd of men and were not seen, they were assimilated into the crowd as it moved forward.

The bitumen stopped and so did the buildings on either side. The road ended at a large natural earth amphitheatre. The men all began spilling into the natural bowl shaped place. There was a large wide stage at the front where the 2 pastors now were.

I was standing up the back on the left side.

The Pastor began preaching, as he preached he walked funny, like a peacock, the other man followed his every step behind him, like a minder, although he was learning all the moves to be like the pastor one day.

The Preacher yelled to the crowd that Jesus is the name above every other name! That what we have is the greatest! Greater than Hinduism! Greater than Buddhism! Greater than any religion, we have Jesus!! The crowd were yelling AMEN!! AMEN!!

The preacher continued on by shouting to the crowd, "Do you want what we have!?" And the crowd would yell back- "Yes!!" Again he would shout his challenge, "Do you want we have!?"...and as he yelled he threw a handful of colourfully wrapped candies out into the crowd. Wherever the candies fell the people would rush to grab one for themselves.

He continued this rant and lolly throwing, tossing some near where I was standing. A sweet landed in my open palm. Immediately a brother in front of me whirled around to see where the treat had landed, and seeing it in my outstretched hand he was confused. I did not want the sweet, I was offering it to him.

For a moment he was confused –I could tell he was wondering,

'WHY WOULD ANYONE NOT WANT WHAT THE PASTOR WAS THROWING OUT TO US??'

But then in all the excitement coming from the stage and the chance to get more sweets, he turned away from me with the candy I had given him.

Immediately I felt exposed by that exchange. I knew that everyone now knew that I did not want to be a part of this. I did not want what the pastor was serving up. Out of intimidation I moved my location around to the side of the seating area so that no one in the large congregation could see me. But the pastor could see me from the stage. He began preaching directly at me saying,

"If you are not for us you are against us", and then he said, "there are some among us who are not really for us, they will fall into a pit"

As he said this he deliberately stepped into a sinkhole in front of the stage and sunk down into the mud with his microphone held in the air for effect. The other brother with him, pulled him up in an instant and the pastor turned his attention away from me and never looked my way again. He kept preaching to the crowd in the same manner as before working the crowd for more loud "amens."

I stood alone out of view of the crowd. I looked to my left and as far as I could see were dunes covered with salt bush–wilderness...to my right was the curved earthen natural amphitheatre filled with people hanging on the pastors every word.

I knew in my dream I had to choose one direction or the other. I knew I had to choose the wilderness path...but I wondered if I would survive out there. Then I woke up.

We went to that church that morning. I shared the dream with the pastor on the Monday morning.

We stayed on for 6 years. In that time we learned to be "amen" people and always encourage the pastor in his message, because of that we were promoted and given opportunity to be "used" by God.

Eventually the church moved to a new building and in fitting the building out they built a curved seating arrangement like what I saw in my dream. One day a preacher was throwing colourfully wrapped sweets out into the crowd!

I went to a 5 day conference in New York, USA with the pastor in May 2002 with another prophetic brother, we were his intercessors. It was an Apostolic Prophetic conference.

After coming back he began preaching that the church must submit under him **the Apostle** in order to fulfil their calling. He twisted scripture many times saying how the church must be built upon the revelation given to the Apostles- Eph 2:20 Previously I did not notice, but I began to see something was not right. After seeking the Lord with fasting for 3 days I was horrified by what the Lord revealed to me. He showed me how I was just like the pastor, now Apostle...I was just as controlling and manipulative! I did not want to be under him anymore.

On the Thursday I phoned the pastor on his day of prayer and told him I did not agree with his direction and that we could not go where he was leading. So we left, just like that. No anger, no words.

I was told by others that the pastor preached against us the next weekend and said that "If you are not for us, you are against us", and then he said, "there are some among us who are not really for us, they will fall into a pit"

He said to “stay away from us for we will steal your faith”.

For the next 5 years we never heard from anyone there even though we lived in the same area for 3 of those 5 years. During those years I did fall into a pit and my flesh was a tool of Satan in many ways. Deep loneliness and despair haunted me. I sinned in ways that are unmentionable. I turned away from all things Charismatic and we finally joined a church that believed that the gifts had ceased.