



Teaching, Modeling, and Imparting Responsiveness to the Holy Spirit for Life and Ministry.

TEACHING: Practicing the Presence.

by Mike Flynn

I recently established a new website dedicated to practicing the presence of God. It's address is www.practicethepresence24.org. You might think in these days of extreme busyness, denominational upheaval, middle east conflicts and regular life difficulties that it's a bit extraneous to underline the practice of God's presence. But I think it is more crucial than ever.

What got me started practicing the Lord's presence some 28 years ago was a disagreement I had with the Lord over His statement in John 15:5, "without Me you can do nothing." I've told the whole story in *Holy Vulnerability*, so let me just remark here that losing that argument was life-changing for me. The Lord proved to my satisfaction that I could do nothing worthy on my own, so I began to realize that He'd have to be close at hand.

Suddenly I felt needy. Whenever I'm personally needy I always look for something to read—that's one way the Lord speaks to me. I found a little thing called *Open Windows, Swinging Doors* by Frank Laubach in which he testified that trying to practice the Lord's presence was difficult but that the attempt made every other task easy. To exchange many difficult things for one difficult thing looked like a good deal to me, so I began to experiment with the mental discipline of recollecting the Lord as frequently as possible.

I soon found out what a mental flake I was. I was lucky if I could remember to check in once an hour. And when I did manage to remember, I didn't get

much sense that it did any good: "Oh, hello, Lord. Uh... thank You for, uh, for your love for me." And then my mind would go back to the task at hand. But I determined to try practicing the presence for a good while before I evaluated it once and for all. It was a near thing. I almost gave up several times.

Finally I decided I needed help. So I bought a watch that had a countdown timer. You could set it for any length of time and it would count down, go beep-beep-beep, and start over again automatically. I tried various lengths of time before settling on 24 minutes. I made a game of trying to recollect the Lord before the timer went off and each time it went off too.

Next, I had to figure out a way to practice His presence that made sense to me. I realized that I'm a visual thinker. Others think conceptually or are more auditory or even emotional, but I think visually. And wanting Jesus to be King in my life, I began visually putting Him on a throne when I thought of Him or when my watch beeped. I'd just look at Him, there on His throne, and acknowledge His kingship.

Often when I checked in with Him, He'd just smile and we'd exchange affection. But a series of unexpected things happened which made me realize that He was waiting to give me input as soon as He had my attention. One day on an airplane I checked in and He immediately said, "Confess the sins of Bishop Spong." When I obeyed—which took a couple of minutes to agree with—my attitude towards the bishop was changed. The result is that I like me better being his intercessor rather than his enemy.

Another time I was taking my morning walk when I noticed a lot of trash on the walkway. As I checked in, the

Lord said, "Why don't you pick it up?" So I began a pattern of picking up trash, but I was rather judgmental towards those who had scattered it. Still, a couple of times a week, I picked it up. Then I began asking the Lord to forgive those who were polluting the environment with their trash. A couple of years later, as I was picking up trash one morning, I checked in and the Lord reminded me that He picked up my trash, my sins, on the cross. That made me *grateful* to pick up trash!

In meetings when I need answers, in ministry times when I need guidance, on prayer days when I need long-term guidance, in crises when I need solutions I've learned to position Jesus on His throne and trust that He has the situation/need/opportunity well in hand. He's just waiting for the opportunity to speak/act/guide/save. If you get my new book, look for my story in O'Hare airport where I was #26 on standby for a flight I had to make. WhattaGod!

After hundreds—rather thousands—of occasions of checking in with Him, I can now concur with Laubach that practicing His presence is indeed exchanging many difficult things for one difficult thing. It remains difficult, but there is so much benefit that I don't much notice the difficulty anymore.

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FreshWind Ministries

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FreshWind Scheduled Events

DATE	PLACE	EVENT	CONTACT
Jan 12-15 Office	Camp Allen, TX	The Next Step in Leadership	FreshWind 818-842-0113
Jan 23-25	Ch. Of Ascension Knoxville, TN	Thriving in a Conflicted Denomination	865-588-0589
Jan 30-Feb1	Mt. Olive Lutheran Lake Havasu, AZ	Order of St. Luke: Words & Works of Jesus.	928-855-2299
Feb 2-4	Diocese of San Joaquin	Clergy Retreat	559-244-4828
Feb 27-29	Denver, CO	Prison Chaplain's conf.	303-741-2006
Mar 4-7	St. Clement's El Paso, TX	Parish Life Conf.	915-533-4915

Sometimes the watch is "that blasted watch!" I have to confess that there are times when I don't want God's presence. One time years ago, when I was occasionally in the grip of pornography, I was just walking into a store to buy a men's magazine when my watch went off. Sometimes in long meetings it was irritating to others, so I'd turn it off. I mentioned this once in a teaching in a Hong Kong church. A man named Patrick went out, bought, and gave me a watch with a vibrator alarm so I could continue to practice the presence in meetings. I wear it every day. And it just went off as I typed the last sentence.

C. S. Lewis said, "God can't give us happiness and peace apart from Himself because there is no such thing." I can testify to much happiness and peace because of practicing His presence. He is, indeed, wonderful. He's always what I need. He's always Who I need to connect with. He's always eager to fellowship with me.

Now, about the website. I'm looking for material to put on it. I'm going to put something from my new book on it. But readers will need to know of others' experiences, testimonies, techniques, and trials in this business of being present to the King. How about you?

Can you write up something on this subject? If so, email it to me at Presence24@aol.com. Please sign it. I'll edit it and put it on the website.

By the way, I picked the number 24 because of the 24 elders mentioned 5 times in the Book of Revelation who are in His presence and praise Him for creation, redemption, and reign. If you're willing to experiment with practicing His presence, you might praise Him for those 3 things and see how it goes.

FreshWind Financial Summary.

As of mid-December, 2003, FreshWind's income totaled \$101,124: \$88,174 from donations and \$12,950 from travel reimbursements and honoraria. Our expenses: salaries (Mike and Administrator) \$61,620, travel 13,661, office 11,492, miscellaneous 11,395.

Mike's New Book.

Come March, look for *How To Be Good Without Really Trying*. Subtitle: *Letting Jesus Live His Life In You*. The publisher is Chosen Books (of Baker Book House).

Uganda Feedback

In October, Mike and Sue, with Edwina Thomas of SOMA USA, conducted a 2-week teaching mission in Uganda. The first week, 106 clergy and lay readers—pastors of congregations—attended. The next week there were 160.

Each teaching was followed by a led practicum. The Ugandans were wonderful: enthusiastic, teachable, faithful. And they did the real work which brought glory to Jesus: there were many physical healings, much emotional release, and many deliverances from demonic bondage. Here are two emailed reports. The first is from The Very Rev. Stephen Kaziimba, Provost (Dean) of the Cathedral in Mukono. It was addressed to Edwina. The second is from Onesimus Asiimwe who has been appointed minister of healing and deliverance for the entire province (29 dioceses) of Uganda's 8 million Anglicans. Please realize that English is not their primary language.

Dear Mama Edwina.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. I have taken long to respond because we have been experiencing the internet failure to connect. We are also busy preparing for the Bishop's visit in my parish to confirm 85 candidates on Nov 30. Also we shall host the Arch-bishop on Dec 7 for his

farewell service. We are busy preparing and we expect 1000 people to feed so pray for us.

I hope Captain Baraka (Brotherhood of St. Andrew) will be able to send you certain things as he saw the healing conference but I can share with you a few things from my point of view.

The conference was really a blessing to the whole Diocese. All along we have been longing for the healing and deliverance conference which has a balanced teaching thus scripture based. We are so grateful that SOMA blessed us with this conference. I would like to register our appreciation to Papa Mike and Mama Sue for their wonderful teaching that was accompanied with the practicals after the theories. This made an impact on all

the 106 participants who attended the first conference. These were PASTORS, Lay readers and lay people. They had to limit the number of participants because of the limited facilities. This conference made an impact to the ministers in that when they went back, they invited many other people to attend the second conference which started the

following week. This time we received 170 participants in comparison to the 80 or 90 we expected to come.

Why did all these people come? They heard what happened in the first conference. People were blessed by Fr. Mike's biblical teaching on healing and the practical part of it. Many people had never experience the presence of the holy Spirit in the lives like they did this time. Many people were set free from their diseases even to date they still testify how they were healed there and then. We had a number of people who were delivered from the evil spirits including one lady who had been married by the demon. Americans may not understand this but the evil Sprit can entangle a

lady and have sex with her without allowing her to have any husband.

In the same conference, there was a man after seeing all that happened went home and brought his son who was possessed by the evil Spirit. It took hours and hours to pray until this boy was set free. Again there was a lay reader who confessed that he was living a double life,

worshipping God and satan. In the process he was also set free after being tormented by the devil.

In fact the people ended these two conference enriched and also learnt to put their trust in God.

They learnt that God can use them for his glory without any discrimination. People have gained confidence in he Lord after seeing that God can use them even the lay people.

The Bishop of Mukono, Rt. Rev. Paul Luzinda Kizito was impressed and gave us his support.

He called Titus and I to discuss the way forward for this ministry. We agreed to make a team that will meet

other teams in the Archdeaconries. The Bishop met the senior staff and the Diocesan SYNOD and strongly challenged them to support this ministry all over the diocese. This will be mainly for follow up purposes. The emphasis was to train teams all the over the diocese.

What is exciting to hear. Those who were in the conference went back blessed and many are still carrying on what they learnt. The only challenge we have is to encourage them and also make more teams to support them at their localities. This is what the Bishop blessed and ready to give us his

support. We need your prayers that we will be able to get the money and the man power to do this. Titus suggested to the Bishop to employ a full time worker in the Diocesan office who will be in charge of healing and deliverance ministries. The Bishop accepted and requested us to pray for the funds that is needed to pay that worker.

All in all God has been so faithful to us and will continue to be. May the good Lord bless you all.

Yours,

The Very Rev. Stephen. Samuel Kaziimba.

From Onesimus Asiimwe:

The fire you ignited is still burning. Please be warned that you will be held responsible should the temperature be abnormally high!

Just before we left Mukono, a Reverend who had attended week one came back to report that things were already happening. Remember they left on a Friday. So that Sunday during a Baptism service, he feels prompted by the Holy Spirit to pray for the sick. So he says (out of the blue) "you stand up, we are going to ask the Holy Spirit to rest on us." So he calls down the Holy Spirit and after a minute or two asks those who were sick to hold up their hands.

He then as he had been exactly taught, asked people who were near the sick to place their hands on the shoulders of those who were sick, whether they were born again or not. There happened to be the Head of Laity in

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attendance. He fell in the category of those who were asked to pray for the sick although he had never received Jesus. Here the only criterion of choosing leaders is financial status. Guess what? His patient has a crippled hand. I understand she has had that condition for years!

To cut the long story short, the Rev says “repeat this prayer after me” and he prays for the sick. The Head of Laity testifies that as they prayed, the woman he was praying for felt some heat in her hand and then the whole arm, and then suddenly the crippled fingers started straightening up one by one till the entire hand was set free. Hallelujah! Here is the climax of the story. When the Head of Laity saw the miracle and realized that God could use him, he gave his life to Christ and the whole church went wild.

Another report: Recently, while on his confirmation tour, the Bishop asked all those who had attended the conference to come forward. Matter of fact they didn't know for what reason. So he then makes an announcement that whoever was sick should come forward for prayers.

Rev. Mike, there were miracles literally in every session and after every session. Remember the lady who was 6 months pregnant and suddenly the pregnancy vanished. This happened in 1990. Weeks before the conference, she felt and knew the pregnancy was back. As we prayed for her deliverance, there were very strong demonic manifestations and the spirits spoke in a masculine voice and claimed, “she is my wife.” This lady was set free.

The other miracle was the deliverance of Samson, whose Aunt in search of

wealth from a witch doctor in Congo-Zaire made a covenant to sacrifice 3 siblings. Samson had already lost a brother and he was to be next. These spirits would throw this young man in the air about 2 meters high and cause him to land on concrete floor head first. His deliverance took a battle of about 5 hours. (Ed note: on 3 occasions, they had to check for his pulse, for the spirit of death was manipulating him.)

One man I prayed for during the evening anointing session had his hearing restored.

One Lay Reader who burnt his shrine after you had taught on deliverance was hit seriously by the enemy, but the Lord set him free.

*God bless you,
Your brother Onesimus.*

Responses

FreshWind often donates its time and energy to foreign and domestic churches and organizations that cannot afford to pay normal honoraria and travel expenses. Many of these are missions-focused, as is FreshWind.

About 75% of FreshWind's budget comes from people like you who believe in and feel led to support what we're doing to extend the kingdom.

Here's the bottom line:

+ renewed, disciplined, and anointed people produce ministry and mission

+ FreshWind produces renewed, disciplined and anointed followers

We ask you to help us "produce" FreshWind.

We highly value all forms of aid: prayer, finances, and ministry team participation. Please look over this response form and see if the Lord would speak to you about your support of this ministry.

PRAYER:

_____ I/we would like to receive Mike's monthly intercessor's letter and pray regularly for your ministry. If we're on email, our email address is _____. Please copy and email this to Mike or mail by postal system.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

• I/we pledge: \$_____ per month for the support of FreshWind Ministries. I understand that FreshWind is a 501(c) (3) religious non-profit corporation and that I will receive regular IRS-approved statements for tax deduction purposes.

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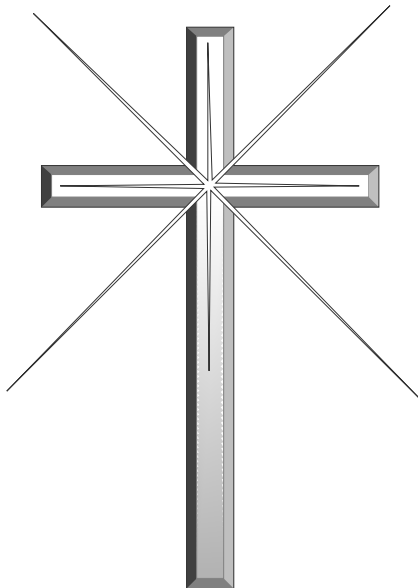
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