



Revival of Hunger for God's Word

By Dave Ellis

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Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. 2 And the king went up to the house of the Lord, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the Lord. 3 And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people joined in the covenant. 2 Kings 23:1-3

Training is a Latin America Caribbean (LAC) "COR3" mandate, along with church planting and missions mobilization. In an age when many would question our historical beliefs, our educators serve us all as protectors of healthy doctrine and practice. Latin America Caribbean educators seriously engage the times and culture to admonish and exhort to be true to God's Word. I am very thankful to our Spirit-filled educators for challenging us to grow in our hunger for God's Word, to obey Him and avoid the false teachings that have increasingly blown around during these last days!

Teachers of God's Word not only increase knowledge and understanding for disciples but also challenge students to be lifelong learners who are passionate about God's Word and His presence. This focus on training should lead to greater hunger for Him, both in terms of His Word and also of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Neglecting our responsibility to train others in the Word weakens us doctrinally, decreases our sensitivity to God, we become frail in our Pentecostal experience, and we are debilitated in our response to God's heart for the world. Our focus will be less on what He cares about most and more on what we care about most. This is the opposite of what the Bible says in John 3:30 that, "He must increase, but 'that we' must decrease."

If ever there was a time when our country, the church, and each of us should be repentant before our Holy God, it is today! It is disturbing to see the waning interest by some to train the next generation of Pentecostal evangelists, missionaries, pastors, and teachers. I wonder if we are at risk of losing our way and focus on who we have been and who we need to be? If so, how do we find our way back to doing and being all that God expects us to be and do?

When Carol and I started our first church in Argentina we faced many situations that we had never faced before. It was an amazing time when night after night God healed the sick and set the oppressed free. Unlike my experiences in the US, sometimes the services seemed chaotic with so much happening at once. I often wondered who was really in control of the service. As I reflect on those months of church planting, the one thing that stands out in my memory, is the times when it was as if heaven and hell stood still while God's Word was being taught. My explanation of the stillness was simply that as people listened to the Word, the fear of the Lord kept every enemy under control. If this is how the hosts of heaven and hell respond to His Word, should we not also live in constant, deep reverence for the Word of God? We need a revival of hunger and reverence for God's Word. It used to be called "the fear of the Lord." We need to pray that God will raise up an army of teachers, trainers, and leaders that teach with anointing the Word of God.

In 2 Kings 22-23 a young man named Josiah exemplifies the proper response to God's Word. This story shows what can happen when a nation follows Truth. The discovery of the Books of the Law led to a revival of God's Word and the favor of God on the Jewish nation. This is a message that the nations desperately need today. Any country not following God's Word will suffer until that nation reads His Word, repents, and turns to Him for forgiveness.

The truth is, every generation needs God's Word freshly planted in their hearts for guidance in life and ministry. We must refuse to allow schedules, people, or life's distractions to leave us unprotected and open to teachings and beliefs that are contrary to God's Word. We must be prepared to confront the spirit of the age and every scheme the enemy throws our way. Now more than ever before, Pentecostal teachers and educators in LAC need the protection and power of God's Word and the understanding that you serve as protectors of doctrine and truth.

1. **Protectors of Sound Doctrine** – When Josiah heard the words of the Book of the Law he communicated the message of the book to all the people and then responded to it by aggressively tearing down the pagan altars and all that was contrary to God law. He began his reign as king with a knowledge of God and desire to follow in the steps of David, his ancestor but after hearing God's Word, Josiah was concerned at how far even he had drifted from God's

commands. There had been a degree of commitment to God's ways, but now God's Word revealed how far His people had strayed. They responded with an understanding that God expects 100 percent commitment from us toward His Word. God directs us by His word to how we should live and like Josiah our educators are teaching us His ways and helping us see where we are in relation to where we need to be. The result is that we walk in God's light and enjoy His favor which not only blesses us but blesses others as our lives reflect Him.

2. **Protectors of Godly Conduct** – Learning from God's Word led to an adjustment not only the nations' beliefs but in their conduct. It was no longer acceptable possible to continue to do what grieved God. The response to what God says in His Law demanded change. It was necessary to confront all disobedience to God according to His Word and lead the the people to now follow His ways. There was not only a hearing of what God had to say but a response to it, a change in beliefs and an application of how those beliefs were put into practice in contrast to what was being done according to past beliefs. The hearing of God's word brought about a complete transformation in both individual and of corporate lives. Confronting disobedience is growing less popular by the day. Yet, Spirit-filled teachers confront with grace and in the of the Holy Spirit, confident that His word will transform our hearts and conduct. Pentecostal educators are protectors of Godly conduct that pleases and honors God.
3. **Protectors of the Next Generation** – The teaching of God's Word is important if we are to pass on His truth and His ways to the next generation. Some of the most sad verses in the Bible are found in the book of Judges where it says, *"The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel. Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten... After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what He had done for Israel.– Judges 2:7-8 & 10.* What a contrast with the story of Josiah. In the same way that the Book of the Law changed Josiah and the people of that day the same needs to happen today. The passing on of our faith must continue to be taught with each generation. Each generation must be taught who God is, and what His will is for us all according to God's Word! LAC teachers understand that it doesn't take long to forget the path of following God and His ways; many would say in just one generation. Teaching needs to be Bible based, anointed by the Holy Spirit and to the extent that is possible in relationship with those we are discipling.

My prayer for all of us is that there will be a revival of hunger for God's Word. Of all the manifestations that are spoken of in relation to revivals, one that interests me the most is a growing hunger for His Word and His Presence! Whether it is the example of Josiah in 2 Kings, of Nehemiah, or of revivals that we have read about and/or experienced people were hungry for God's Word and were moved to respond to what they heard it said and meant. The best proof of true revival is a deep desire for the Word of God and embracing what it says. I thank God for each of you that God has called and prepared to be educators. You have a strategic role to play in keeping us firmly grounded in God's Word and to encourage us to a personal revival in hunger for Him and His Word.