



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

TEACHING Why Can't People Just Believe the Bible?

by Mike Flynn

Back in my seminary days, three events occurred which ended up giving clarity to the rest of my ministry—and maybe yours. The first event was a solo thing during which I decided to finally understand whatever it was that Jesus was trying to say to Nicodemus in John 3. I lugged home from the library a 14 inch stack of commentaries, banked them around the edge of the kitchen table, and pondered that exchange for the next four hours, reading everything. I don't possess an exactly deficient intelligence, but I *could not* grasp what Jesus was saying to Nicodemus about being born again. And though I read and reread the commentaries assiduously, I could not understand what He was talking about. Finally I just gave it up as incomprehensible.

The second event happened at that same table. A classmate, Bill, had come over to study and we'd gotten into all manner of dialogue about what would make for a successful ministry. Finally, in summation of all our conversation, we made a solemn pact that we would be honest. Just that: honest. We thought that if we stuck to honesty, everything else would pan out.

Third, our history prof, Fitz Allison, staged a debate for one whole class

period. Half the class was declared to be Arians (a kind of heretic), the other half as orthodox. Each side appointed three spokesmen who debated about the Trinity, the rest of us scribbling advice to our spokespersons and handing notes forward to stimulate the debate. At the end of the hour, all agreed that the Arians had won hands down. In the ensuing discussion, it dawned on us that it would always be so: on purely rational grounds heresy will always appear more reasonable than orthodox. Maybe that's why Jesus' second strongest command in the gospels is "believe!"

Six years after graduating from seminary I was at the point of quitting the ministry. I was miserable and I was making my congregation miserable. I couldn't figure out what was wrong and I was finally too tired to pursue the answer any longer.

Just at the point of making the decision to fold my cards a parishioner brought me a book that contained a priest's testimony about getting filled with God's Spirit. I didn't want to read it, but agreed to in order to get rid of my parishioner. It's not important who wrote the book, and those who want to know the full story can find the answer in one of my books. My point is that as I read that book I *knew* that it was telling the truth. Don't ask me how I knew, for my mind was contentious

towards much the author was saying. But something in me knew—and hoped—that it was true, in spite of my intellectual disapproval. After several internally divisive hours of reading I decided to get honest—remembering my pact with Bill—and said to God, "O alright! if it takes giving up my intellect to get some peace, I give it up." Within the hour I had been filled with the Spirit, and I knew it.

Within a week I stumbled across John 3 and experienced an astounding revelation. Instantaneously I saw and understood what Jesus meant about being born again! I knew immediately that when God told Adam in Gen. 2 that he would die on the very day that he disobeyed God, that it was Adam's *spirit* that had died and that when the prophets predicted the coming alive again of the human spirit that Jesus' comments to Nick were the fulfillment of those predictions. I knew that *my* spirit had come alive and that it's aliveness was what enabled me to comprehend what I had formerly

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FreshWind Ministries

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FreshWind Scheduled Events

DATE	PLACE	EVENT	CONTACT
Apr 23-25	Park City UT	Vineyard Men's Retreat	435-649-8301
May 21-23	St. Paul's,	Modesto CA Men's Retreat	209-522-3267
May 15	Denver	Adv. Ministry Team Trng	BarbM12345@aol.com
Jul 30-Aug 1	Santa Barbara CA	Valley Vineyard Men's Retreat	818-776-9696
Aug 20-22	Order of St. Luke	St. Christopher, League City TX	281-333-2706
Aug 27-29	Dio. Of San Joaquin	Men's Conference	559-222-3721
Oct 7	Pasadena CA	Golf Tournament	805-487-9259
Oct 8-10	St. David, N. Hollywood	Catch the Wind conference	805-487-9259
Oct 15-17	St. Mark's Geneva IL	Order of St. Luke conf.	630-587-1477
Oct 29-31	Charleston SC	Catch the Wind conference	770-952-2670
Nov 12-14	San Antonio	Order of St. Luke conf	210-496-3655

Catch the Wind Conference

The "Catch the Wind" conferences we're planning are designed to make the Book of Acts normative in your churches. The Apostles ministered with incredible power in the early church.

- Their preaching brought conversion
- They healed the sick regularly
- The demonic was exposed and cast out

They impacted the culture radically.

- In Ephesus they caused a riot because so many rejected the cult of the goddess Diana
- In Philippi they incited an uproar
- They were accused of turning the world upside down.

Do you long for a return to that day? Do you want greater power in your ministry? Would you like to see more converted? healed?

The teaching and practicum sessions will include:

The Kingdom of God. Our basis for power, identity, and authority
Ministering with Greater Power and Authority. Focusing on how to get more people healed.

Cooperating with the Holy Spirit. Understanding and using words of knowledge.

When Healing Doesn't Seem to Happen. Looking at some common barriers and what to do about them.

Practicum and Healing Models That Work. Putting the ministry into action and getting the job done.

Mike Flynn and Allan Hansen of Acts 29 will jointly lead this conference.

Website

practicethepresence24.org

We finally found out how to make this website work. So there are a few teachings/testimonies now that can be explored. If you want to add a teaching or testimony about practicing the presence of God, please send it to Mike at Presence24@aol.com and he'll edit it for addition to the site.

Leader's Corner

One of the Lord's priorities for leaders is that they invest themselves in those they lead. In particular, it's important that leaders pick assistant leaders and put much energy into that relationship. In my little book, *Making Disciples*, I note that Jesus modeled for us how to do this in His relationships with the disciples. In short, He prayed for them, recruited them, hung out with them, taught them, apprenticed them, debriefed them, and anointed them.

I am quite aware that it is easier for a leader to do ministry him/herself rather than take the time and energy to enable their assistant to do it. But that's the Lord's commission to us. "Make disciples" means "invest in others," not "just do it yourself."

When I take books to conferences I lead, it's always interesting to me which ones sell out and which don't. Almost always, if I have any books left over, they are copies of *Making Disciples*. What this tells me is that the church at large has little concept of the thrust of the Great Commission. We all want to be invested in, not invest in others. But Jesus' orders to us are to invest in others. When you do, you learn one of His secrets: those who lose their lives find them. To invest in others is to

put them first, not you. The neat thing is that God honors that sacrifice by giving you blessings you could not have obtained if you'd put yourself first. Try it, Friend, you'll like it!

Golf Tournament for Angelenos!

ACTS 29—based in Atlanta—and FreshWind are teaming up to sponsor a golf tournament. We're looking for 72 golfers who will compete in a shotgun tournament at Brookside Golf Course near the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, CA, Thursday October 7 at 1:00pm. In addition we need sponsors who will "buy" a hole, which will have a sign naming them as sponsors of that green.

If you're interested in participating or sponsoring, please let us know at the FreshWind office. It looks to be great fun, and it will benefit the work the Lord is doing through these two ministries.

New Book.

Mike's book *How To Be Good Without Really Trying* (Chosen Books) is in the bookstores. John Sherrill, bestselling co-author of *The Hiding Place* and *The Cross and the Switchblade* says: "Even before I turned the last page of Mike Flynn's new book, my wife, Elizabeth, and I found ourselves using the practical, insightful teachings that sprinkle every chapter. ... Mike's book has already proven itself helpful in dealing with a family crisis. So... why not say so?" Chris Maxwell, who wrote a review for Christian Retailing, told me, "You did a great job. The book presents honest truth in practical, interesting and encouraging ways. I hope to help get the

word around about your words." The book, for \$13, can also be ordered directly from Mike, along with his other books, or found in Christian book stores.

Bit of Feedback

(Note: though we have many comments from various clients, we'll just insert one here)

"Dear Rev. Mike: "Thank you, thank you for being vulnerable and writing *Holy Vulnerability*. The book was wonderful, hard, gut wrenching, joyful, inspiring, thought provoking, challenging. Caused lots of carpet time. Lots of self awareness, yuk Etc, etc.

"You had suggested in one part to make a list. Top of the page is Who am I? So far I have 4 pages...each day I add to it. I never new those things about myself.

"On the warfare, I now take it a whole lot more seriously and never miss a day. Strange I have been sleeping so much better. God's not strange is He? The book will be on top of my desk to pick up often and reread, even in part.

"My inner healing counselor had me had me take a mini retreat and each morning read a chapter from your book and in the afternoon a chapter in Jim Hohngergers *Escape to God*. Meditating on each chapter as to how it applies to me. God met me where I was ... still am and will be. God is really setting me free.... Praise His Holy Name.

"Thanks again. I pray that God will continue to bless you and yours. Love in Christ Jesus. Janet"



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been unable to grasp.

Paul's statement to the Corinthians gives full expression to this dynamic: "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" I Cor. 2:14, NIV.

It wasn't an insincere or unfocused or incapable intellect which kept me from understanding John 3 in seminary; it was being a Spirit-less person who *could not* understand it. The presence or absence of the Spirit made all the difference.

I apologize for this long prologue which I now end in favor of talking about the church today. General Convention has cast us into chaos. O God O God O God O God! For any who have read this far, I suspect you're in one of two camps: those who comprehend what I've been saying and those who don't.

To those who don't know what I've been talking about, I have these recommendations. a) When you do begin to see some light and realize that you don't like it, have the honesty to go with the light anyway. My testimony is you'll be glad you did. b) When you encounter those who are opposed to your position because of what looks like fundamentalist, literalist biblical nonsense, pause long enough to grant that they may have the benefit of the Spirit when looking at scripture. c) Ask the Lord something like this: "Okay, if it takes your Spirit to

comprehend some of the realities the Bible talks about, and if I don't yet have that Spirit, would You please give the Spirit to me?"

To those who do know what I've been talking about: a) Remember that there was a time when *you* didn't have the Spirit. Please refrain from judging those who don't understand the scriptures as rebellious, heretical, or unbelieving, even if they are. b) If they "cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned," and if "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Spirit," then pray for them to be visited and invited by the Spirit to truly receive Him. "Cannot" means cannot, not will not. And who are we to judge even those who will not: leave them to God, Jesus said. c) Paul also says "love never fails." the word translated "never" is a quadruple negative (*oudepoete*) meaning "not never at no time no how". The promise of these scriptures you believe in states that if you love your opponents with the Lord's own *agape* love, that it will not fail to achieve it's purposes.

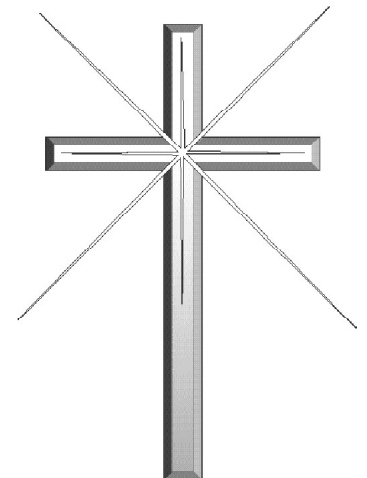
Maybe that's why Jesus' first strongest command in the gospels is "love!" And don't you think that God's love has the highest purposes for his church in mind?

Both sets of recommendations assume that there is a God and that He knows how to act on behalf of his people. And since I've noted Jesus' first and second strongest commands in the gospels, how about the third: "forgive!" If those on both sides of these issues will strive to forgive each other, we'll be a long

way down the road towards the unity which the Son claims is the sign of the Incarnation to the world (John 17:23).

Love, belief, forgiveness—these require what looks like weakness or vulnerability towards one's opponents. That's how it's always been with the Lord. Jesus' vulnerability towards the pharisees (and there are both liberal and conservative pharisees) extended to being available to their questions, staying in conversation with them, and finally submitting to their plans to do him in. He just didn't let them set the agenda for His life and ministry.

Finally, there is much mystery in this business of interpreting the Bible. Some things in it seem quite clear. Others evade our comprehension, even if we have the Spirit. To me it's clear that it took the Holy Spirit to *write* scripture and it takes the Holy Spirit to *read* scripture. But even then, no one person or group has a full grasp of everything in it. A little humility towards it would go a long ways towards the church's being set free by the truth.



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.

• I do not feel that the Lord is leading me to pledge regularly at this time, but I want to send a one-time gift of \$_____.

name _____

street _____

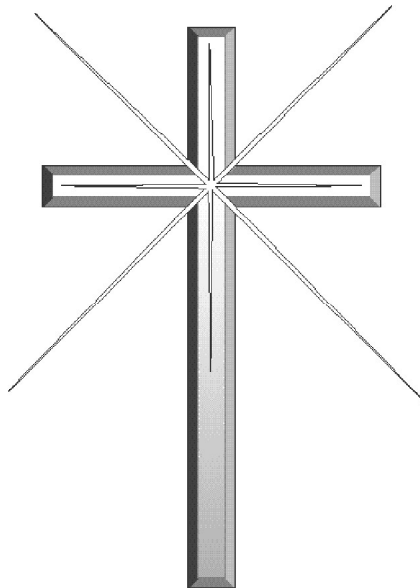
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state _____

zip _____

signature _____

Please make contribution checks to FreshWind Ministries. Thank you.





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**Mike's Books can be explored on www.freshwindministries.org,
purchased direct from Mike at the FreshWind Office or on amazon.com**

Holy Vulnerability, The risks and rewards of opening up to God. \$11
Inner Healing, A handbook for helping yourself and others. \$14
The Mustard Seed Book, Understanding and using effective faith. \$12
Making Disciples, Following Jesus' Model. \$5
*How To Be Good Without Really Trying, Letting Jesus Live
His Life In You. \$13*
plus \$1.50 shipping and handling for each book.

All 5 books, \$49 (a 12% discount)

Make checks out to Mike Flynn.

Contact Mike at mkfln@aol.com to order.