

Legacy Builds Identity

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What I want to share is along the lines of encouragement. Sometimes you can feel that you are out in the field working hard and perhaps you do not always see the fruit that you want to see or maybe you are too busy. There are many things that come along in life and ministry that can cause us to look inward from time to time. I was going over my notes last night, looking at reports, thinking of the U.S. field and all that God has done these 55 years, it is amazing.

I remember sitting around the board table in the office and thinking about the number of years we have walked; we have learned some things. I did not mean it in a haughty way. As we walk with Him, as we walk with one another, we have learned some things.

I think back to the precious, early days of Aglow – and I was not one of the original four – but I was in the early stages of the ministry, and someone mentioned last night that they were friends with Bernice Smith. I do not know how many of you remember Bernice, but she had the vision for starting Aglow International. Her husband was very involved in Full Gospel Businessmen. They were very active around the world and in Seattle particularly and she wanted something for women. So, she stepped out in faith.

I attended a meeting in her home where they were dreaming and floating ideas and for some reason, I am not sure why, I agreed to oversee a group in Edmonds, Washington. Edmonds is just north of Seattle on the waterfront of Puget Sound. It is a beautiful little community. We held our first meeting at the Edmonds Yacht Club. We did not know if we would have around 20, but we had around 350. From that point on things just began to happen.

I remember attending the first international conference. I am dating myself, but I am proud to do so. Those of us talking yesterday were saying, this ministry has been used to bring healing, deliverance, wholeness, and healed marriages. God has raised up an entity in the earth that He is using in this hour.

In particular as we think about the Third Day and moving into the Third Great Awakening, we have been told that Aglow will be used in that Third Day movement. So, when there are times when you think that you are tired or the enemy brings that thought of “Well, is God through with Aglow?” Well, take a look around the room and you have your answer. He is not through.

When I think about the things we know, I think about the word legacy. Legacy means something that has been passed on by a predecessor or an ancestor. It is something from the past that has been brought forward. The theme of this conference is ‘We Know’. We know because we have learned some things along the way.

Fifty-five years of ministry and 172 nations later. We started with four women – you know the story. Four women – Bernice was one of those women – they just kind of stumbled into this. Well, it would not be correct to say they stumbled into this because God was helping them stumble along. In that sense, they did just kind of stumble into this and the Holy Spirit quickened it with life and soon there were groups popping up in the Northwest portion of the United States and going across our nation and around the world.

Currently Aglow is in 172 nations and I want to assure you that we think of you often. We pray for you often. We mention you often. When reports come into the office, Joan Bennett, Director of the International field, shares with us with excitement. We have our staff meetings every Tuesday and I always ask for the news from the world. To tell you the truth, we still stand in awe at what God has done and is choosing to continue to do and has stated, “You will be used in this Third Great Awakening”. Stay on your toes. Stay on your spiritual toes. Be aware of what God is saying and what He is doing.

Personally, I do not think that it is something we can plan for. It is something that will unfold, and we will step into it. We will not be afraid because we have walked the way of the Spirit. We will easily step into the new thing that God is doing. I am excited about that.

We have had some changes along the way. That is life. We have seen changes in the world – culturally, economically, atmospherically. We experienced a pandemic that changed the world. It destroyed some businesses. It has hurt the supply chain.

There are other changes in the world as well – the rising tension in China and Russia. From Russia we are hearing nuclear threats. We are reading daunting headlines. If you listen to the news, you are aware of the situation in Ukraine and the suffering that they are experiencing. My heart breaks for the evil in the world that is put upon innocent people who then, suffer. The evil people seem to go free, yet we know that there will be a cost.

As I observe the world, I pray, don't you? I pray for the hearts and the lives that are being damaged or touched or broken. I pray for little children that do not have enough food and go to bed hungry. It is heart breaking to me.

Here in the United States, mid-term elections are upon us. There is a new Prime Minister in Great Britain, and we have a female Prime Minister in Italy. With the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, I felt a sorrow, a sadness. I, also, felt a shift. Certain tent pegs of security, things that have always been in place, they represented something to us and they are being shaken and moved. With King Charles III, he is unknown in many ways. There will always come the testing of a leader. When a new leader steps into place, there will be a testing of that leader. We need to be praying for King Charles III.

I think of our own border crisis here in the United States. I think of Iran and their saber rattling.

I think of what began with the four women and while it was to initially to start groups where women could fellowship together and have something akin to what the men were enjoying. Over the years

while Aglow is well known for evangelism, I would say that we are equally known as a prayer movement.

Perhaps initially our prayers were about me, myself, and I, my four and no more. Aglow has taught us the amazement of really praying with God for the nations and people of the world. Only Heaven will reveal the fruit of what this ministry has birthed, or helped supported, or encouraged along the way.

I was telling Tony that it is interesting when you think of the perfection of the Lord. He could have brought forth Aglow at any point in history, but He chose this time in history. With Russia doing its thing and China making its declarations – so much movement in the earth. And 55 years ago, He thought that was a good time. He planted Aglow. He let us go through finding our way and coming to this point in history where we send prayer teams into Washington, D.C. every month. EVERY MONTH! I think it has been for the last 12 years we have had a prayer team walking the streets of D.C.

There have been prayer journeys around the world. I was thinking of a trip that Elaine Keith and I took. We went to Beijing to meet with our people there and then we went into Mongolia. Neither of us had been to Mongolia before and it was a time when the hovering of the Holy Spirit was there. Aglow was brought forth at that time. I do not know how it is continuing today, but as Linda Jones said, once Aglow has been planted in a nation or a state, we believe that the Presence and movement of the Spirit that God intended for them will continue.

Aglow has been used as a catalyst for prayer around the world. We have seen renewal amongst women. Because women have gotten renewed and gotten their focus off themselves and onto the Lord and His business, it has made changes in homes. Women are not looking to husbands to give them life, we are looking to Jesus to give us life! Now we can live in right relationship with the men that we love.

We have had materials published, prayer helps, materials for evangelism. Janet Mangum is the Transformation Director and oversees evangelism. She just came home from the Philippines. Tess is our leader there and Aglow has thrived in that part of the world as it has in many Asian nations. Alice Tsoi, from Hong Kong and so many others I could name. I think of blocks of continents – Europe, Asia, North America, South America, Central America. There is Aglow in every part of the earth.

I think of a scripture that I shared with Tony last night.

Look among the nations and watch, you will be utterly astounded, for I will work a work in your days that you would not believe if I had told you. Habakkuk 1:5

That is us.

I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts. I will watch to see what He will say to me. Write the vision. Make it plain on tablets that he may run who reads it for the vision waits yet for an appointed time, but at the end, it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it because it will surely come, it will not tarry... For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Habakkuk 2:1-3; 14

I think of myself as a young girl. I was probably 8 years old, maybe 10. My father was a pastor in Akron, Ohio at that point. People have said to me, you are part of your father's legacy. We are all part of our Father's legacy. I really was a daddy's girl. I loved my mom. We were great friends. Girls have a special connection with their fathers.

My father was from Belfast, Ireland. He responded to the call of the Lord as an evangelist came through Belfast. My father had been in the Presbyterian church all his life, but he said, "I heard the Gospel for the first time." In this reserved Northern Ireland church, this evangelist did not let them quietly accept Jesus as their Savior, he said, "If you have heard a word today and you accept Jesus as your Savior, I want you to stand to your feet and shout it out one at a time." My father was one of those men.

I listened intently to him as he spoke each Sunday. He was a studier. He loved to read. He was a good friend of Dr. A. W. Tozer. If you know Dr. Tozer, you know the quality of his ministry. They were quite close friends and Dr Tozer's mother, and sisters were part of my dad's congregation.

I was captivated by the anointing. A young girl who stumbled imperfectly through life from Ohio to Los Angeles, to Berkley. I lived in Berkley for 25 years. My dad had a church there. Then I moved to Seattle.

In Seattle I ended up in a powerful move of God's Holy Spirit. I was hungry. Like Bob mentioned, you are hungry for something, and you are looking and seeking and trying. Someone mentioned Father Denise Bennett at St. Luke's in Ballard, WA. He had come from Los Angeles and a powerful move of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. I thought, well, that is really different, but I will give it a go.

Really, I wanted to hear. I wanted to sense with my spirit. Some friends travel to Ballard. It was not far, 30 minutes, to hear Father Denise Bennett to speak and to hear how his life had been transformed. I found out that he and Rita just lived down the block from me and we became friends. We often had meals together. It was an interesting period in my life. I felt like the Lord was spoon feeding me and feeding me to overflowing.

There was such a hunger in those days. It was the hunger that drove you. It was the hunger that made you vulnerable. You would say anything, ask anything because you were like a hungry child.

As I looked at notes last night, I thought that there is a lot of history here. You may be thinking, well, I want the Word of the Lord. As I kept looking at the notes, I thought, this history really is part of the journey that God has chosen to have us on as a ministry. He chose our timing. He chose our placement all over the world and He chose how this would be fleshed out.

Let me share a few facts with you.

In 1989 the Aglow conference East Germany and West Germany brought the flag in together, holding hands. The place went into an uproar. It was the unification of Germany. It was a time when the worldwide web was invented. It was the time of the fall of the Berlin wall. I stood at the Berlin wall months after. We had gone through Checkpoint Charlie earlier when you could not get through any place else. Then I had the privilege of being there when it was open. Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years of imprisonment in South Africa.

From 1991 to 1995 was the Persian Gulf War. It was in 1991 when Aglow received the thread word. Do you remember the thread word? God would put a thread in our hand that would begin to draw in and knit together people in the Islamic system. He would open doors for us and make it possible for us to reach into people caught in that system and that the system would be exposed and that they would come out of a false system to know the only true God. We have seen it happen.

Women's Aglow Fellowship became Aglow International in 1997. We took our first trip into Israel in 2000. It was in the late 90's that I felt the Lord say that I would be in and out of Israel in the next many years. I did not have a clue what that meant. I had been to Israel one time. I did not even get goose bumps while I was there, but He was to do a transforming work in my heart for Israel, the land, the people. It remains until this day.

We took a group, quite a large group, into Israel and we began walking the streets, praying. We were not obnoxious. We were careful. The streets were empty. It was during the Second Intifada. We had people ask, "What are you women doing here?" It was a time when God was planting something in our hearts that would go deep and remain deep for the land and for the people and for the purposes of God to totally be fulfilled. We have continued to go to Israel, I think just about every year. We will continue to go until the Lord says otherwise.

In 2003 we received a word from Barbara Yoder that Aglow is unplugged from the past and rewired for the future. In 2004, Dutch Sheets was one of our speakers and he spoke out of Isaiah 22:22 where it says, "I give you the key." Do you remember Dutch saying, "I give you the key! I give you the key! I GIVE YOU THE KEY that will open doors that no man can shut and will shut doors that no man can open." That is a word to walk in.

In 2010 Mike Bickel spoke to us. I remember him on the platform leaning over to me saying, "I do not know what I am doing here. I do not travel. I do not go speak other places, but when you invited me, I knew I was to come." Mike has a funny sense of humor. "I do not know what I am doing here." Well, I do. One of the things he said was, "Wherever Aglow is, the water level rises." Tuck that away in your heart. That is a now word. Wherever Aglow is – you can be in a big city, you can be in a city of a hundred people, the Word of the Lord is that WHEREVER AGLOW IS THE WATER LEVEL RISES! You are part of that.

In 2009 Asher Intrater, a friend from Israel, called Aglow to become a company of Mary's – do you remember this word – who partner with the armies of Heaven to usher in the return of Christ. That is a now word! These words are living still. We need to look for ways that He is unfolding them.

I mentioned the strategic prayer trips into D.C. every month. We are serious about prayer, and we realized that probably the primary call on Aglow is related to prayer. Yes, it is evangelism and prayer, but prayer takes a different kind of makeup. I feel that at this conference, He wants us to know that that is not a call that was for back then, He is ramping it up.

I have heard even at this conference that there are people who do conference calls. You do not have to have a prayer meeting at your house where you serve coffee and tea. Get on a Zoom call. Get praying because God has called us to it for such a time as this.

In the mid 2000's, I will say 2011 to 2014 – Identity is the Key to Transformation – which was new leadership development that was developed out of LifeChangers and GameChangers. We are grateful to Graham Cooke for really just releasing his material to us. I am still in touch with Graham. We are still friends.

In 2014, I had an interesting encounter – you will remember this story. This is kind of a review today. One was in Hong Kong and one in Jerusalem. In Jerusalem I was sitting in a coffee shop, and I was facing this direction and Tony was here, across from me. I saw a man a couple tables behind Tony who kept looking out towards us. After a little bit, he would look out again and I wondered what in the world was going on. What was he looking at? Long story short, soon he came up to the table and he said, “I do not know who you are. I have never seen you before, but the Lord told me to come and tell you that you are important in the Kingdom.” It was the sense that what He has called us to is of great importance to God. And God had some guy in Jerusalem come and tell me just so I would not forget, and he told me to go tell my people.

Then there was a man from Pakistan who was in Hong Kong who came up to me on the street while Tony was in a shop and in essence, he said the same thing. “I do not know who you are but.” He did not seem to be a Christian, but he wanted to relay the message that whatever I was doing was really important and to keep doing it and that time was short. God has funny ways of letting you know.

Think back to the last few years. Time marches on. Things are changing. Billy Graham died at age 99. That was a loss. Queen Elizabeth passed away. It was her 70th year as Queen. She is one of the longest reigning monarchs in British history and the second longest reigning monarch in world history. She died at age 96 in 2022. Do you watch when things like that happen? Something is shifting. Things that have been in place, it is changing. He wants us to keep a hearing ear and a seeing eye. He wants us, not in an anxious way, but like on tiptoe, speak Lord.

Interestingly, I have had this happen twice in the last month or two. I was awakened out of a sound sleep and the entire ceiling of the bedroom was filled with angels. I just laid there quietly watching. They were not talking. The room was filled. After a while, I must have fallen asleep, or they went to sleep.

Several nights later, I was awakened again and there were 3 angels. This time I said, after a long quiet pause, “Is there anything you want to say?” No answer. Just peaceful quietness. Something is happening and I do not mean in a demanding way, but in an expectant way, let us expect or look for things that would come to us that would be meaningful in our lives. I believe the Holy Spirit is stirred in a way that I sense a newness and excitement and expectancy. And I do not go to bed every night looking for angels. We focus on Jesus. But when they show up in your room, you at least need to say hello!

Things are happening.

We are heavenly beings. We are redeemed. We live on earth, but our home is in Heaven. So, it should not seem odd to us that Heaven would visit us from time to time.

I will close with this. It is like we have entered a Third Day season. Expect some things to be different. Good, but different. Never be afraid. Be expectant.

Dan Juster said, “We believe that Aglow has a wonderful and profound calling in the last days leading up to the return of the Lord.” Do you believe that? That means that you are a part of that. Expectant things to shift and change. I have seen things that I have long prayed for begin to shift and change. It is not because of greater effort on my part. Something has shifted in Heaven. Things are on the move.

I know with everything within me – and I am not bragging on Aglow, it is not my style, I do know that with everything that is within me, that He has called us for this time and there will be an upping of what comes, of your equipping, of His expectation, His everything. So do not be surprised, do not think you know, retirement sounds good – forget about it! Forget about it!

We are Kingdom people. We are in it to win it and we are in it to the end!

I am going to close with about 5 surely statements.

- » Surely, He is Faithful!
- » Surely, He always makes a way where there is no way!
- » Surely, He heals us of impossible situations! It is impossible for you to have an impossible situation.
- » Surely, He restores us in every situation. He is more than enough.
- » Surely, He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies!
- » Surely, He gives us beauty for ashes! He heals ALL our disease. He sets a path before us.
- » Surely, He is our breakthrough! He sustains me. His Truth, His Love, His Strength is new every morning. I needed that this morning.
- » Surely, He is a Peace Maker who brings calm into chaos!
- » Surely, the Lord will help me in every situation.

Lord, we thank You that surely Goodness and Mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives! You did not play a guessing game with us. You told us how it would be. That we can expect Your Goodness and Mercy to be there every single day of our lives!

He wants to honor Himself through you. Set aside the negative stuff and begin to say what Heaven says. The redeemed of the Lord say so! That is what we need to do because the more the heat comes, guess what, it can go the other way, too.

My Pastor is here, I hope this is not wrong to say. Let Hell feel Your heat, the heat of Heaven! Say it with your mouth. Sing it from your heart! Whistle it as you walk through the house. Make the pronouncement of the Lord every day. He is Good and surely, His Goodness and Mercy will follow me all the days of my life! Amen!