

## Chapter 2

### Anointing and Blessing

*It is like the precious oil upon the head*

When we lived in the sky in our council flat, I can still remember Mondays. This was washing day and the whole of the kitchen was converted into a laundry room. Piles of sheets and clothes divided into whites and colours so that the dyes would not run. Saucepans of water boiling on the stove and what seemed like fountains of bubbles running over from the sink as mother scrubbed our clothes on the glass scrubbing board. Sometimes we children would compete to be able to turn the handle of the mangle and squeeze the water, and sometimes our fingers, out of another thick sheet.

One Monday I came home from school and there was a strange sound coming from the kitchen. We did not have many electrical gadgets, but there in the middle of the room, pouring out soapy water into a bucket was a spin dryer. No more the labour of the mangle. My father had saved up and purchased this labour saving machine. No credit or bank loan, but a steady saving week by week. I do not know who was the proudest, my father or me as I boasted at school the next day about our new luxury!

How much better things are today – or are they?

We live in an age of instants. Everywhere we are surrounded by the words ‘instant’ and ‘now’. The advertising men, or as I prefer to call them the Prophets of Mammon, not only tell us that we cannot possibly live without this product or that latest invention, but they do all they can to convince us that we should have it now! It is the false base upon which modern economies are built. It is a never-ending cycle.

If nobody buys, then nobody sells. If nobody sells, then nobody produces. If nobody produces, then nobody earns. If nobody earns, then nobody buys. If nobody buys...! I know that economists would view it differently, but I see the economists as the Evangelists of Mammon. What is their solution? Let everybody borrow as much as they cannot afford so that they can buy what they do not need and keep the cycle going. And let them have it now!

Too simple? Maybe! But it has given us our world of the instant. We demand fast foods and ready-made meals. We must have every labour saving device that is available. We microwave our food while we make instant coffee. Why? So we can save time and make time to go to work to earn the money to buy the labour saving devices so that we have more time to go to work!

The cost cannot be counted. Yes, we have our pay slips and our bank statements; our budgets and our accountants. The true cost, however, has been our children and families and our society. We buy our children televisions and computers to amuse themselves; they learn how to kill and destroy from the demonic graphics of the latest computer games. Children’s cartoons are no longer ‘Snow White’ or ‘Tom and Jerry’ but witches, demons and ghosts. People cannot afford the time or the cost to marry

and when they do over 30% end up in divorce. We are raising a nation of children without the security of family life, confused about their identity and sexuality; lacking discipline and direction and the results are evident on our streets. Drug and alcohol addiction continues to increase as both adults and children look for an escape from the tiresome cycle of our so-called civilised living. Teenagers are taking over town centres during evenings and weekends.

What effect has this had on the church? I would answer with the word ‘devastating’.

We spend millions building our crystal cathedrals and multi-level, multi-purpose theatres we call sanctuaries, so that we can perform and make our television programmes so that we can make money to build our crystal cathedrals... Our churches, too, have become businesses. Our pastors have become chief executives and our elders and deacons the board of directors. The state of our financial situation has become more important than the state of lost souls. We compete with other churches as if they too were corporations. When asked how our church is doing we talk about our size and numbers and material things and seldom reply about our spiritual standing. I recently heard about a church not far from my home. The decision to remove the pulpit brought tears to the eyes of several church members – but where are the tears for the lost?

Is it any wonder that Jesus, when writing to the church of the last days, the church in Laodicea, says, *“Because you say ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor blind and naked – I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”* (Revelation 3:17-18).

When King David, still a shepherd boy, went out to face the giant Goliath we read that King Saul gave David his armour to protect him. King Saul had disobeyed God and lost his anointing. That is why he was happy to send a boy to do the work of a man! King Saul was head and shoulders taller than any other man in Israel and David just a boy not yet old enough to fight in the army of Israel. When David put on the armour it was so large and heavy that he was unable to even walk to face the giant. When he removed the armour and clothed himself in the righteousness and faith in God he was able to run to overthrow the godless giant.

When the church tries to protect itself with the things of the world it will become spiritually paralysed. It will lose its’ spiritual strength. The church has been listening to the Prophets of Mammon. It has taken for itself the values and methods of this world. You cannot build the kingdom of God with the values and materials of this world. We say we are rich and have become wealthy but we lack spiritual gold. We need His holiness, His righteousness, and His vision to build His kingdom.

The message of the so-called prosperity gospel has now reached all parts of the Third World. Millionaire evangelists come from the West and tell poor struggling rural pastors in the Third World that if they are not rich they are not living in the blessings of God - yet Jesus had nowhere to lay His head! I was in Kitale, Kenya when I heard an American pastor (he said he was a pastor!) tell these dear faithful pastors that if a

man comes to his church to preach who is not rich, he will not allow him in his pulpit. Why? Because he is not living in the blessings of God! Shame on him! By my understanding, even Jesus himself would have been prevented from speaking from this man's pulpit! Many of these so-called ministers receive the tithe from pastors in the developing world whose churches have no roof. They take the money from the poor Christians telling them that they have planted a seed in the kingdom of God, when all they are doing is planting in a bank account in America so that the evangelist can continue to fly first-class and stay in five-star hotels.

They are teaching wrong motives for giving. "If you give you will receive." The motive for giving becomes to receive. The bible says, "God loves a cheerful giver", one that gives for the joy of giving and not for the desire to receive alone. As I minister in many churches in Africa I find I am asked as much for material things as for spiritual. I am told that I cannot hold an open-air meeting in a small village without an amplifier and speakers, nor hold leader's seminars without feeding, accommodating and transporting people!

The church across the world has been tainted with Mammon. And just like the people of the world, the church has been taught that we can have all the promises and blessings of God instantly, on credit without paying the price of holiness and reverence, prayer and evangelism. We are falsely encouraged, "God will give it all for free – and give it all now!" As a consequence, we have revival meetings and no revival comes. We have spiritual warfare meetings and nothing changes in heavenly places or on earth.

As I arrived on the Akamba bus in Kitale town after the long dusty eight hour journey from Nairobi, there it was stretched out across the road; a banner proclaiming an all night service so that God could pour out His anointing. If only it were that simple. One night of praise and worship to enable God to pour out His anointing. Without doubt, God does want an anointed people; He does want to bless His church; He does want the church to move out in power.

There is another, better way. It is free, but it will cost us our devotion to Mammon.

When brothers dwell together in unity there is a true anointing. A spiritual anointing that comes from God. Listen to what He says about the anointing of true unity.

*It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments.*

Now that is anointing! Not a smidgeon of oil on the forehead that soon evaporates and is wiped away. When God anoints, He anoints! There is abundance; a generosity - an overflow. It covers the whole body. There is so much oil that it runs like a river from head to toe. The oil is not from a bottle off the shelf of the local shop. This is not an anointing given by man. This oil is special. It is holy. It is unique. It is the true anointing of God. When He gave instructions for the making of the oil when Moses built the tabernacle in the wilderness, He said, "*It shall not be put on any man's flesh; nor shall you make any other like it, according to its composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you.*" (Exodus 30:32)

This oil had a special composition, about 50 pounds of spices – myrrh, cinnamon, sweet cane and cassia mixed with olive oil. There was more than two gallons of the sweetest smelling substances that may ever have been on earth. It was not all used on Aaron, but enough to run down his beard, to soak into his garments and drip onto his sandals. When Aaron put on his priestly garments everyone knew he was coming. The beautiful fragrance went before him.

Apart from the olive oil itself, none of the fragrant spices that were added to the oil were native to Israel. They came from the surrounding nations! It was only when Israel was living at peace with her neighbours that the ingredients for the anointing oil were available. Even to make the oil it was necessary for unity to be among the nations!

Aaron did not have to tell people that he was anointed. He did not need special anointing meetings. He did not need to convince anyone that he had been anointed of the Lord. People were able to smell the anointing. The oil was poured out onto Aaron. It flowed like a stream down his face and down his robes even to the bottom of his garments. After being anointed he would have been standing in a pool of the sweet smelling oil. There was no doubting that he had been truly and fully anointed. Now, he did not need to announce to the people “I am anointed!” They would smell the anointing.

The same Lord says to us that if we learn to live in unity He will anoint us. We will not need special meetings, nor will we have to try to convince people that we are anointed. When the Lord anoints us the anointing will be obvious to everyone, just as it was with Aaron. In a sense, people will smell the anointing. We will not need to announce or pronounce it.

I met a man from Tanzania who punctuated almost every sentence he spoke with the words “I am a prophet!” I had no reason to doubt him until I heard about three months later that he was going round bringing ‘prophecies’ to people and charging for them. His sales line to convince people to part with his money was “I am a prophet!” Of course, he was not a prophet. At best he was a false prophet.

When God anoints, however, the anointing is overflowing and full. There is no need for us to convince either ourselves or others that we are anointed. We do not need to introduce ourselves by our ministry – “Hello, I am Stan. I am an evangelist!” If God anoints then people will see from our lives and ministries that we have his anointing. They will ‘smell’ it as surely as they smelled the anointing on Aaron. Oh that the church would have such an anointing today! It could have. When brothers dwell together in unity God will anoint our ministries and everyone around us will know it.