

*Swept
Away*
by His Presence

*Refreshing the Church
with the
Power of Prayer*

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with the
Power of Prayer*

Ron Auch



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*This book is dedicated to
the Church of Jesus Christ,
“THE” greatest tool
for completing His work.*

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Part
One

Chapter I

The Problem

As I sat in a crowded coffee shop across from my favorite college professor, I looked hopefully to him to clear some of the confusion that was fogging my mind. I had been an associate pastor for the past four years, but sensed God calling me to go to seminary to work on my master's degree. However, I wasn't sure where that would take me. After teaching several of the classes I had taken, Rev. Don Meyer earned my respect a dozen times over.

After Don patiently listened to my dilemma, he reached into his pocket and withdrew a pen. On an unused napkin, he drew three circles. In the first circle, he wrote an "A;" in the second, a "B;" and in the third, a "C." Looking up at me, he said, "From all that you've told me, I gather that God is indeed calling you away from your present situation. However, I can't say where God ultimately wants you."

Using his pen, he pointed down at the napkin to the circle marked "A." "Ron," he said, "This is where you are now." Moving his pen to the circle marked "B," he said, "This represents seminary." He tapped the last circle with his pen. "This represents

God's ultimate will for you." As he put his pen back in his pocket, he said something that seemed quite prophetic: "God wants us at point 'C,' but the only way to get there from point 'A' is by going through point 'B.'"

That was all I needed to hear. After praying more about it, my wife and I moved from Minnesota to southeastern Wisconsin so that I could attend seminary. It was the spring of 1980, which allowed my wife and I to work all summer to raise tuition money. By the end of the summer we had not only raised enough money, but had also become deeply involved in a church.

My first day of classes coincided with the first day of a prayer seminar being taught at our church by an evangelist named Dick Eastman, whose ministry dealt solely with prayer. For some reason, there was a great expectancy in my heart which sent me rushing home from school so as not to miss any of the seminar.

That prayer seminar was the beginning of an adventure with God. I found a new, deeper love for God than I had ever had before. My newly acquired love and desire for God that I received in prayer drew me to pray even more. I even got to the point where I was skipping class to go to the prayer room, where I spent hours on end. My relationship with the Lord grew deeper than I ever thought possible as I prayed, giving myself more and more to God.

The effect prayer had on my life and ministry was equal to the effect salvation had. For several years I had been searching for ways to be more effective for God. I had placed a great deal of hope in education, but my increased knowledge left me at the same distance from God with the same effectiveness I had before. Only when I began to pray and began to truly know God did I become more effective for God.

This doesn't mean that I'm opposed to higher education. I believe that an educated man who is sensitive to the Holy Spirit can be a most powerful force for God to use. The learned Saul of Tarsus was an excellent example of this. However, we mustn't

rely on higher education to do things it was never intended to do. God was calling me to a life and ministry of prayer, and all the education in the world could not develop it.

As I think back to that meeting with Don Meyer in that coffee shop across the street from the college, I realize that God was moving me, but not to seminary. Seminary was only point “B” on my ultimate journey to point “C,” a life of prayer.

The Problem

This book has been born out of a deep conviction I’ve held for a long time: Our pastors and churches must get back to prayer and the close relationship with God it produces or face spiritual stagnation as so many “radical” Christian movements before us have. Already we can see the first symptoms of the illness creeping through the body of the Pentecostal church: we still claim to believe in the supernatural manifestations of God’s power, but we rarely see it in our services anymore.

No Vision, No Church

“Without a vision, people perish.” Proverbs 29:18 teaches us that God sets each church on a path (vision). Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained. Once they lose sight of that path, they perish. They may not cease to be; they just no longer exist with God’s purposes in mind. There are many churches in every community that continue to exist in the sense that they pay their bills and have services each week, but the power has long since left.

It is with this thought that I write this book. Being an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God and having traveled this country from coast to coast teaching prayer seminars for several years, I can see that we are in dire need of prayer. If a person were to compare how often our ministers preached on the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in days gone by, to how often they preach about it today, it would not be difficult to see a trend. Some have said that within one decade there will no longer be any preaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit in our churches.

It is my prayer that we never lose sight of why God raised us up. If we lose our vision, we perish. Interestingly enough, one of the Hebrew meanings for the word “perish” is “go back.” Without a vision the people of God “go back” to what they used to be. Then God will raise up another people to take the Pentecostal message to the ends of the earth.

In this, the first part of the book, we will examine the problem, which as you will see we must diagnose as the prayerlessness of today’s church. We are in an age when we desperately need churches that know how to storm heaven, and pastors who know their God. We need prayer.