



Attack on spiritual workers

"Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there" (Rom.15:31)

The onslaught

You need merely scan through Christian magazines to realise the alarming number of spiritual workers who drop out. Various causes are listed: increasing immorality; more divorce, a high stress level; no job satisfaction etc. When you keep in mind that these men (and women) at some stage in their life testified that they received a clear calling from the Lord, these facts are alarming. I am convinced that the attacks on spiritual workers are fiercer today than in the past.

Attacks against spiritual workers mainly manifest as follows:

- Direct demonic attacks against spiritual leaders by e.g. satanists, spiritualists, witch doctors, etc
- An onslaught to love the world, as well as social pressure to compromise, to be popular and to think and do as the world does.
- Onslaughts from the old man, the flesh in conflict with the Spirit (e.g. Gal.5:13-18)
- There are direct temptations that the spiritual worker must resist.
- In general, spiritual workers are under a lot of stress. Research has shown that ministers and pastors have some of the highest stress levels in society. They are under heavy emotional and social pressure. The devil knows that and cashes in on it.
- Each spiritual worker has a specific personality and comes from a specific background. It is becoming more apparent that the spiritual workers also suffer emotional pain and hurt from the past. The devil concentrates on unresolved hurt in the spiritual worker's life.

These attacks on Christians - and therefore also on spiritual workers - can be summarised as follows:

- struggle against inner sin (personal sin)
- conflict at social level (sin from outside)
- conflict from above (direct demonic attack)

The truth concerning warfare against Christians is even more true regarding warfare against spiritual workers. However, the attack against spiritual workers is more severe. I do not want to elevate one battle-field above the other as if to say that there is one global reason to pray for spiritual workers. A total onslaught is launched against spiritual workers who are attacked from various directions. The purpose, however, is not to paint a discouraging picture. We must confront the problem and do something about it.

Reality of the battle

It is probably sufficient to say something about just one area, namely the direct demonic onslaught, to portray the reality of the struggle. At one stage I worked with someone snared by satanism for three years. During that time, I became acutely aware of the onslaught against spiritual workers. This person was one of a group of satanists who 'prayed' to Satan at night at the homes of spiritual workers. Their aim was to render the ministries of those spiritual workers ineffective and to also ruin their ministries and/or break up their marriages. Sadly, in some cases they succeeded. They even entered the homes of some spiritual workers by astral travel, attacked their children, initiated arguments and also obtained information which could be used against the occupants. Sometimes demons were sent to the homes or curses proclaimed over them.

Many people don't like to hear about these things. If these examples were isolated they could easily be rejected. However, on the contrary, reports of attacks on spiritual workers are received from all over the world.

On a flight from Johannesburg in South Africa to Windhoek in Namibia, a Christian lady sat next to a woman who seemed to be in prayer. When the other lady had finished praying, the Christian lady introduced herself as being a Christian as well. She had noticed that the lady was praying and asked if they could pray about the matter together. Instead, the other person laughed and said: 'I don't think you will want to pray with me. I am a satanist and we pray for the collapse of ministers' marriages at a certain time every day'.

Confirmation from elsewhere

C Peter Wagner tells about a similar incident that a professor, John Vaughan, experienced on a flight in the USA. Vaughan also noticed the man next to him was earnestly in prayer. On enquiry it became clear that the man was a satanist and he was commissioned to pray for the fall of Christian leaders (and for the collapse of their marriages) in New England. In the same book Peter Wagner writes about a minister in Ontario who spoke about the many satanist attacks on ministers while he was there.

One particular satanist cell was honoured because, during the previous year, they were instrumental in making five prominent spiritual leaders fall into immorality thus contributing to the break-up of their marriages.

Several ministers whom I know personally, who work with satanists from time to time, confirm that these attacks are a reality. Various publications over the years contain many examples of these typical onslaughts against spiritual leaders. These incidents all deal with onslaughts from satanists. However, the onslaughts that spiritual workers experience come from more sources than satanism. It is known that spiritualists basically do the same things as satanists. At the Lausanne II conference in 1989 various spiritual leaders from Latin America mentioned this fact. Apart from this, the devil is involved in a full-scale war against spiritual workers. If he can

neutralise them, tempt them to sin, make them spiritually lukewarm or cause them to work with a divided heart, he can do considerable harm to the Kingdom of God.

From the mission field

Many an incident tells about witch doctors who took direct action against missionaries. In such cases magic, black magic, voodoo and even direct physical attacks are used. The ruler of this world hates it when the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is carried out into the furthest dark corners of his world. The spiritual worker who brings the light of the Gospel will always be the target of such attacks. One of the leaders of WBT (Wycliffe Bible Translators) a few years ago said that they are realising more and more that the major struggle in Bible translation, especially in the final stages of the process, is an assault of the evil one. It has become very important for them to equip each translator to be able to resist the attacks from darkness. Satan does not want the Bible to be translated because it will enable people to hear the Truth. He wants to prevent this at all cost and therefore the spiritual worker, in this case the translator, will be attacked.

It is a known and disturbing fact that a large percentage of spiritual workers who go into the mission field do not complete their first year or return home after a year there. Statistics of missionaries to Taiwan for example, show that 50% of spiritual workers became ill within a year or became totally despondent and had to go home. I want to emphasise that this is but one aspect of the onslaught on the work and lives of spiritual workers and that I do not want to elevate this one area above the others. It nevertheless, gives us a good idea of the reality of the strain on ministers, pastors and missionaries.

The spiritual answer

The above does not state for one minute that Christians - spiritual workers for that matter - are mercilessly handed over to the assaults of the wiles of the devil. The fact remains though that there are onslaughts, conflicts and temptations and that many suffer spiritual injury in the process.

What is the spiritual worker's defence against these onslaughts? I can think of a great many things that provide assurance that they are not delivered into the hands of the devil, their old nature and the world.

More specifically, where does the Christian leader's safety reside?

- He was purchased by the blood of the Lamb
- He is shielded by God in Jesus Christ
- He has a position of authority in Christ over the forces of evil
- The Holy Spirit dwells in him
- He shares fellowship with other believers

These are only a few points one can mention. There is, however, another source of power and protection that I want to mention: the objective, intelligent and continuous prayers of

intercessors for the spiritual worker. Intercession for the spiritual worker is one of the least utilised sources of spiritual power. The power exists, it is available but is not utilised or released because it is not prayed for.

The lives and ministries of many spiritual workers will be drastically changed when more objective intercession is done for them. Where this has already been done the results are so positive that there can be no doubt about its effectiveness.

Examples of personal intercessors

Many examples are available of people who can testify to the impact of personal intercessors on their ministry.

The first case I want to mention is that of **Charles Finney**. Finney was used by God during the previous century to lead close on one million people to Christ in the USA. In his autobiography we often read about two persons who specifically prayed for him.

These individuals were called Nash and Clarey. Wherever Finney went in the USA they went, mostly without him knowing that they were present. When Finney preached they prayed. They were prayed that the Lord would protect and mightily use him. The fruit of his ministry can be directly linked to the intercession of these two men.

Another example is that of **William Carey**. He was a shoemaker without an education who went to India during the previous century to tell people about Christ. In his life-time Carey translated the New Testament into seven of India's languages. Together with a number of his fellow workers, he saw the Bible published in 25 of India's languages and 40 different translations of the New Testament. Carey ascribed this to the intercession of his invalid sister who remained in England. He wrote to her weekly, telling her his needs. She brought these needs before the Lord in her room. And God answered her.

The next example is also from the previous century. God called **J O Fraser** as a missionary in Lisuland (situated between Burma and China). After some time in the mission field he wrote to his mother in England making an agreement with her. He would send them information regularly and work in the mission field. At home she and her prayer group were to intercede weekly and daily whenever possible. This agreement remained for many years. Fraser was one of the most successful workers of China Inland Mission in that time. Why? I believe it was because he had personal intercessors who were committed to their prayer assignment – namely to pray for Fraser.

J Wilbur Chapman was one of the most successful evangelists of all time. During his induction sermon the elders of his parish were not at all impressed with his ability to preach. They asked him to arrive at church an hour early on the next Sunday so that they could pray with him. Chapman accepted the invitation. It became a standing appointment with eventually hundreds of members praying for him before every meeting. Therein lay his strength and it brought forth the final break-through.

A current example is that of **John Maxwell** in the USA. A group of 100 male intercessors pray for him daily. He maintains personal contact with this group and communicates personal prayer information to them regularly. He is convinced that he would not be able to continue his ministry without this group of intercessors.

Another example is that of **C Peter Wagner**. In his book *Prayer Shield* he goes into a detailed discussion on this subject and speaks of his own group of personal intercessors and the difference it makes to his life and ministry.

In my own ministry I can also see the difference. After the Lord had prompted me over many years to do so, I began to request a select group of intercessors to intercede for me in particular. They receive personal information about my work, my family etc. on a regular basis and they have to agree to pray for me daily or at least once or twice a week on a permanent basis. I include as my personal intercessors only those who distinctly prayed about it and sensed that the Lord wanted them to intercede for me, and conveyed it to me as such. Since that time a noticeable difference is visible in my ministry, personal and family life. I know that it works for me. I trust that I will never have to work without the prayers of personal intercessors in my life again.