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AWFUL START, HOLY END

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HaitiRevival

A Spiritual Transformation



He walked to my house to talk with me about his hunger for revival. He is Pastor Utile Sileus, and his congregation is Soldiers of Jesus Pentecostal Church. I'm happy to invest myself in a pastor and church seeking revival, so I committed to speak once a month to a group of 20 young ministry students he teaches, and also to preach in his church monthly.

Last Sunday I arrived to preach. The church was full, but right away I found myself getting disturbed. Down the two aisles and flanking the pulpit were young men and women standing at attention. Some were wearing uniforms like Boy Scouts, with neckerchiefs and gold braids connected to epaulets around their shoulders. But some of the young men were wearing camouflage jump suits, leather army boots and knee guards. One had a long-handled knife at his waist, and another was carrying handcuffs!

They did not smile. They did not sing or participate in worship. They were on "rotation," and when one would come to replace another, there were hand signals, a salute, and a formal high-step turnaround. At first I thought the young men were actual Haitian soldiers, but then I realized these were simply the church youth group, which in many Haitian churches is called the Brigade. They were there to "police" the worship service, to maintain discipline, to change people's seats for unknown reasons, and to generally put a frightening pall over the entire worship experience!

I've seen this in many Haitian churches, but this was extreme. I signalled Pastor Utile to me while the congregation was worshipping. I said to him, "You are desperate for revival. But this system of having 'police' with angry faces standing over the congregation can do nothing but drive the Spirit of God away! This should be a place of freedom, joy, and love, not to mention that none of those young people are worshipping, but rather playing a foolish army game. And what's with your worship team? They are sitting and telling jokes and laughing with one another even while playing their instruments!"

I could see his heart was broken, and before I preached he told the congregation that God had brought Pastor Jim and that everyone should listen carefully to what I had to say.

I put the message I prepared aside, and I walked up to one stone-faced young soldier standing near the pulpit. I put my arm around him and began to talk to the congregation about the meaning of worship, and how the whole system of what they were doing on Sunday morning was repelling the Lord instead of attracting his presence. I said to the young man, "I'm not angry at you. It's not your fault. You've been taught that this is what church is supposed to be. But it's just a game you've been taught to play. This uniform, the knife, the handcuffs, they have no place in worship. We're here to go to the Throne of God together and to be like children in our Father's presence." Tears started coming down his face, and all the soldiers left their posts and sat down while I continued to preach.

When I finished my message, drenched in sweat, I thought, "Oh Lord, did they see that I love them? Did you soften their hearts? Will they let me come back again? Did they see your broken heart and not my anger?"

A man came forward to lead the closing prayer, and a most amazing thing happened. He fell to his knees and began to weep and cry out repentance to the Lord, asking the Lord to forgive the church and lead them to His Kingdom. From the congregation came cries and groans and loud prayers. The young soldiers and the worship team were now on their faces before the Lord.

I began the service in complete discouragement, wondering why God had brought me to a place so lost and filled with a spirit of religion. I left the church in awe at the call of God and how perfectly he has chosen and prepared each

in awe at the plan of God and how perfectly He has chosen and prepared each person, each pastor, each congregation to receive what he's burned so deeply into me.

In every connection God is giving us to draw pastors and churches into a revival-producing Kingdom life, please pray that we will see His Church arise afresh out of a history of false gospels, pursuit of the world, jealousy, disunity, legalism, performance worship, and powerless prayers. Pray that our call and anointing will go forward as we willingly abandon anything or anyone standing in the way of our pursuit of Him.

Blessings to all,
Jim and Margie Glynn



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