

**SACLA II – Pretoria – 7 to 11 July, 2003**  
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## **EARLY CHURCH PRIORITIES**

**(Fellowship, Evangelism and Mission as Vehicles of Hope)**

**By Dr BRUCE WILKINSON**

Jesus Christ is here today, isn't he? I never expected to be here today. I expected to be living in warm Southern California. But as we were singing I was thanking the Lord that he changed my mind and heart and asked our family to move to this great continent. I'll never forget the day we moved here. We were sitting in the airport just waiting when there was a family next to us, and we began to talk and I asked: "Are you flying out?" and they said: "Yes, we're leaving." I said: "You're leaving South Africa?" "Yes, we've had it." "Where are you leaving to?" "We're going to New Zealand. We're not going to live here another day. And why are you here?" It was at that moment I said to the Lord: "Are you sure you know what you're doing?"

I'm humbled to be able to talk to you this morning. It humbles me to be here. It was such a rich experience to hear you speak these past few days; I couldn't be any more full of hope. I couldn't be any more impressed with the Cardinal's (Cardinal Wilfrid Napier) speech on abortion this morning. I've heard 101 sermons on the topic and this was the best one - it was the most biblical on the subject.

And for the First Lady (Mrs Janet Museveni of Uganda) and for the rest of the leaders who have spoken, everywhere I went in the United States and told them I was moving to Africa, people kept on saying: "You must meet this Michael Cassidy, he is world - renowned," and I just want to join you in thanking him for everything he did for this conference.

I've been given a topic this morning and it's called "The Early Church Priorities". When you try to answer the question: "What are they?" you go to the book of Acts and I want you to turn in your Bible to the book of Acts and I want to look at them with you. Whenever some of us or all of us or the Church departs from what the Bible teaches, in which it models it in time, we become powerless. If we continue to stray from what it teaches, we become fruitless. And if we continue to stray from what it teaches, we become absolutely worthless. I was meeting a president in one of your countries here in Africa and we were at the coast in his home and he said to me how he loves to fish off the ocean. And I said to him: "Sir, tell me what the Church is doing for your country." He said: "Absolutely nothing. They're not helping with Aids, they're not helping with the orphans, they're not helping with poverty, and they're not helping with the morality of our country." I said: "Sir, is that really true?" He said: "Just ask any of the members of parliament in this country. This is true."

What happened to that country's Church? It strayed from God's big idea of what churches are supposed to be about! I remember years ago coming to a church I was to speak at. It was an hour or so before I was to speak, and I began to walk around in the community around the church. I knocked on doors and said: "Can you tell me anything about this church up the street?" The first person: "Yeah, they're always arguing in that church. There's been splits over the years - unbelievable!" And the next house: "Do you know anything about that church?" "Yeah, they park all over my lawn!" "Anything else?" "No, I hate that church!" Okay, went to the next house: "Do you know anything about that church?" "They're against everything." "They're against everything?" "They're against everything that's fun." "Thank you."

I didn't want to go to another house, but I did, and asked: "Do you know anything about that church?" and they said, "Yeah, the choir director ran off with the secretary!" I said: "Do you know anything else about that church?" "What do you mean?" "Was it any good?" "Good for what?" "Good for the community." "I don't know."

I think the President was talking about that church. What happened to that church? It strayed from what the Bible teaches. And I studied the book of Acts over and over and over again, thinking about what really were the early Church priorities and I scrapped my first sermon and I scrapped my second sermon, and I think I finally have the early church priorities and they're different from what I thought they were.

Will you take a look in your Bible to the book of Acts and put your finger there and go back to the book of Luke. As you know, Luke wrote both of those books, and at the end of Jesus Christ's life, in chapter 24 verse number 46, Jesus begins to talk to them about the Scriptures, and he says: "It is written" and it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and you are witnesses of these things. Now here you are, one of Christ's disciples and you're hearing you're going to be witnesses to all of these things around the world. I don't know what you'd be thinking but at that moment I would be thinking: "I am ready. Let me at it! I've just been discipled by the discipler himself! For three solid years I've had the best teacher there is, teaching the only content there is, taking me out one on one, two on two, 70 to one. I've had discussions in little groups around the fire. We've had discussions up and down the roads. I've watched him preach, I've preached for him, he set me up. I am ready - let me at them!"

Then the next verse: "Behold I have sent you in the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are imbued with power from on high." Wait a minute, what do you mean power from on high? You're from on high and I have my seminary degree right here from the Jesus Christ Discipleship School. What else do I need?" "You can't do it." "What do you mean - You can't do it, Lord?" "You just can't. In fact, I don't want you to do anything except wait. Don't even start on the Great Commission until the power comes from on high."

Take a look now at Acts 1. You've got to get ready now to see the first big idea in chapter 1 in verse number 6. You know that Jesus Christ kept saying he was going to set up his kingdom, and then the kingdom was rejected. Then the disciples kept saying: "When are you going to set up your kingdom? Are you going to set it up now?" "No." Then he dies. No kingdom. The Jews are not ruling the world, Jesus Christ is not sitting on the throne of his father, David, the Gentiles are not bringing the wealth to Israel. None of the Old Testament prophecies have come true about the kingdom, and these Jewish men knew these prophecies because they argued all the way down from up north saying: "I'm going to sit on the right hand. You're going to sit on the left hand but I'm on the right hand. There's going to be a war. Jesus is going to rule, he's going to wipe out the Romans." They knew those Old Testament prophecies that have yet to come true. That's why in verse 6 they came together and said to him: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" What do they want? They want the kingdom right now. If I were them, I'd want the kingdom right now, too. But Jesus says: "No, it's none of your business when it's going to take place, but you shall receive power. When you're clothed with power and the Holy Spirit has come upon you, the Spirit goes to preach repentance and remission of sins to the rest of the world. When the Holy Spirit comes you shall be witnesses to me."

What do I need the power for? I need the power to fulfill the big idea of God and the big idea of God is out there, not inside here! "Lord why did you give the Holy Spirit?" "Well, in these passages I gave it for you to do ministry. I didn't give you the Spirit to feel good."

I studied every single verse in the book of Acts that has the Holy Spirit in preparation for this talk. Every single verse - "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you"; "They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance"; "Peter preached filled with the Holy Spirit." Listen to what the filling and the Spirit does in the whole book of Acts, because it's all the same and it's missing in Africa big time. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke with boldness. What does the filling of the Holy Spirit, not the baptism of the Spirit, but the filling in the book of Acts in the New Testament, what does it do to a person? It gives them boldness to minister outside of the church. Remember there's a church in the book of Acts. It took place in the synagogue and from house to house, but when you pay attention to what was taking place when the Spirit gave power to the people, it wasn't inside the home cells, it wasn't in the synagogue or the local church - it was out there in the marketplace.

But what happens when we stray from the big idea of the Bible and we miss whole idea that God gave me the Spirit, not just sealed me for the day of redemption, not just so the fruit of the Spirit of love, joy and peace could be there. Primarily he gave the Spirit according to Jesus so I could have power, but power to minister outside to the marketplace. When a church strays from the big idea of the Spirit, they turn inward and they want the feeling and the emotion that takes place, or supposedly takes place. And when the Holy Spirit is misused, when a church goes inward, the Spirit doesn't go outward.

Look at Acts 4, verse 29: "Now Lord look upon their heads and grant your servants with all boldness that they may speak your word." What are they trying to do? Preach Sunday morning? They're not trying to

preach Sunday morning, friends. Is it wrong to try to preach Sunday morning with the Spirit? Of course you're supposed to preach Sunday morning with the Spirit. But if you study the book of Acts, the Spirit was given time after time for people in the marketplace where the minister, the apostle, the deacon, the layman goes into the marketplace. He or she is afraid, feels inadequate, doesn't know what to say. "Who am I to say these things. I need power!" Jesus Christ said: "Stop - until you have it. But then when you go, take Him with you."

What happens when the Spirit then came? Verse 30: "With boldness you may speak your word, stretching out your hand to heal, signs, wonders," and so on. Verse 31: "And when they had prayed, the place where they had assembled together was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." And what happened immediately after they were filled? They spoke the word of God with boldness.

Point number 1: what is the early church priority? You partner with the Holy Spirit to do ministry outside the local church.

When I went to seminary, the Holy Spirit was a doctrine. Something I believed in, someone I believed in but didn't really know. Isn't it something that you can be a believer but not really know much about the Holy Spirit? I grew up understanding the Scriptures and this was honoured, and the Spirit not really honoured or discussed. It was Jesus Christ and the Scriptures, and not the Spirit. And you know what? I had no power. You can have the Holy Spirit in you and have no power if you do not know how to co-operate with the Holy Spirit. I've been around the world many different times ministering, I've seen the exact opposite problem - that the Holy Spirit has become the central theme. Jesus Christ almost comes below the Spirit and in the churches and the movements where the Spirit gives prominence, the Scriptures in most cases gets the least attention. But if you pay attention to how the Holy Spirit is addressed in churches, where he gets the prominence, it's almost always with what takes place inside the believer in emotions and feelings. And it's not what the Holy Spirit does with you out in the marketplace, witnessing evangelising, teaching, confronting or helping.

My friends, the Holy Spirit, not one time in the book of Acts, never gave any overwhelming feeling to anyone - except boldness!. Therefore, be very, very careful what you do with the Spirit of Almighty God and how you position Him in your church. I don't know how it is here - I'm learning - but in America there are so many problems in this area, where people believe that, when the Holy Spirit comes over them, the Spirit leads them to do unbelievably silly things. Barking! Now I am not attacking anyone except I am just sticking with the Scripture themselves. What does a man under the full and complete control of the Holy Spirit look like? He looks like Jesus Christ - he's full of the Spirit and he never barked and he never would bark! The Holy Spirit isn't given for you to act foolish! It is given for you and for me, in the boldness of the Spirit, to preach and teach the word and do exactly what happened in the book of Acts. You must be careful, just because you want the Holy Spirit's power in you. The power of the Spirit isn't what you feel it's what you do. Let me say it again: it's not what you feel but what you do.

Therefore, how do you know how Spirit-filled your church is? Answer: Stick with 10 of your people during the week and find out what they do in the marketplace and you'll know how Spirit-filled your church is. Now am I Pentecostal? You really don't know. Do I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit? That's what I'm preaching about. I was talking to a man who just finished doing some unbelievable things in a service I attended. I said: "Why did you do that?" "The Holy Spirit led me to do it." "He did? Why?" "What do you mean?" "Why did He do that?" "Because He wanted me to." "He did? What happened to you?" "I lost control." "You mean the Spirit came over and got control of you, right?" "Right." "You know, I believe you're a sincere man." He said: "I am." "I know. There's no criticism from me to you in this, but I want to ask you a question." To some of the most properly motivated, sincere people, if you don't stick with the text, you can define things in a way that make sense to you but it's not the Bible's way. And I said to him: "In other words being completely baptised with the Spirit means the Spirit gets control of you and you don't, therefore, control yourself right?" "Right." I said: "That's why you did what you did?" "Yes." I said: "Okay, then, let me just read one verse to you: - the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and self-control."

What does it look like when you are filled with the Spirit? You have 100% self-control. That's what it looks like. If you give up control you are not filled with the Spirit, you are empty of him. Never give up self-control, and if somebody in your service is acting as if they have lost self-control, you have a problem on your hands. If Peter wouldn't do what you're doing, stop it. If Paul wouldn't do what you're doing, stop it. If Jesus wouldn't do what you're doing, don't you dare say that's the Spirit. What does it look like when you're filled with the Spirit? Answer: you go into the marketplace with the word of God, preach repentance

and remission of sins, and thousands of people come to know Christ. That's what it looks like.

Point number 2: I'm preaching. I wasn't planning on preaching like that. Now if you leave here and tell somebody else Bruce Wilkinson is anti-charismatic, you're going to get leprosy on your lips. Get real! Of course I'm charismatic and you better be, too, because being charismatic means you're of the Spirit. And if I'm not of the Spirit, get me off this place.

Point number 2. I don't know if I should preach point 2. Let's just take a break for a minute. I need a break. I don't know if you need a break but I do. I need to get back under self-control.

As I went through the Scriptures more and more in the book of Acts, I said: "Lord, it's right in front of me, you know. Right here." "What hands? I don't see any hands." "Lord, it's right here. I've been reading Acts for how many years?" "What is the way you do it?" That's the first thing I found. The second thing I found is way back at the beginning of Acts. The Holy Spirit came. What's the next thing that happens when the Holy Spirit came? Chapter 2 verse 14: "But Peter, standing up for the 11, raised his voice and he preached this sermon." He preached. Lord, what is the early Church method? Answer: you have a partnership with the power of the Spirit. Number 2 priority of the Church? You can hardly turn a page where it's not happening - you preach the word for life change, not for understanding. You preach the word for life changing. Take a look at verse 36 of chapter 2: "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know surely that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified." You should be more tactful, Peter! Don't be so direct! Don't be like Jesus! Woe to you scribes! Woe to you Pharisees! Unless your righteousness exceeds theirs you're going to hell. Use more tact.

The tact in this country is pathetic. You beat around the bush until you can't find the message. John, what do you want us to do? Don't steal the money. Be content with your wages. If you have two coats, give one of them away. And some of us came out of this apartheid in which we really messed up. But how many years ago was that? And how long are you going to have a muzzle on your mouth about what the Bible teaches? Haven't you repented of this? Yes. Is there still restoration going on? Yes. For the rest of your life. What's new? But you must understand that for some of you, because you remember what you came out of, haven't been able to forgive yourself and to realize that Paul murdered people - and yet look what he turned around to do. I was so impressed with your President yesterday that I wanted to give a standing ovation. But I was an American and felt like I shouldn't in the middle of his speech, but that's what I wanted to do. He was talking about the Church being a spokesperson. And he was saying, in a sense between the lines "How come you aren't?" And a lot of it is because of the past mess - up, if I can say it that colloquially, in which you feel muzzled, and I don't have the right to speak that way anymore because of what I did back there. Let it go. Let it go. Stop letting Satan, the accuser, come after you for a sin that's under the blood of Christ, been confessed, set aside. It's time to move on, it's time to move on.

I can see it at times that you know you should be saying more than you're saying but you feel guilty because you're going to be judged because you're saying something so direct. If you're not direct, you're not of the Spirit. Jesus Christ was so direct it just catches my breath when I listen to him preach. With some of these passages, I shake my head and say: "Lord, are you sure you were under the Spirit when you said this?" Sometimes we think being under the Spirit means being weak and passive and supine. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you shut up the kingdom of heaven. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites, you steal the widow's money. Woes to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites, you go overseas and do wonderful things and nothing happens here. Woe to you, blind guides, woe to you, you give a little bit of money here and then you rob your parents of what they need from you. Woe to you, you are a dish on the outside, you are so pretty but on the inside you are rotten to the core. Whoa! He said this publicly! Therefore, you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of your fathers' guilt, serpents, brood of vipers, how can you escape the condemnation of hell? You can't.

What am I trying to say here? I'm trying to say that when you read the sermons of the New Testament, people's hearts were cut to the core, because the Spirit of God was released! You know how the Spirit of God is released? When you speak the truth of God's word openly and straightforwardly. That's when the Spirit of God gets in the hearts of the people.

The primary way you and I are transformed is by the transformation that the Bible reveals to us. Listen to me carefully: be ye transformed by the worship of the Lord; be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. My friends, I want to say it to you loud and clear, the Bible says it in many places. The way a person

is transformed is by changing how they think. If you change how you think, you will change how you behave. You can worship the Lord and not change your mind for years and your behavior will not change. Change takes place through preaching the word, and only the word, and preaching it in such a way that it comes to a place where the person needs to be changed. That's why everywhere Jesus went he led worship meetings. Now don't misunderstand. Sometimes to get a point you have to push a little too hard. I pushed it too hard on purpose. If you'd watched me while we were worshiping, I was worshiping as intensely as I knew how. My hands were up, sometimes when nobody else's hands were up. Why? Worship. You bet. But worship doesn't change. At least I don't have a verse that says that. If you do, come and tell me at break. But you don't. Transformation comes from people changing their minds.

Now I want to say it real clearly: when I read Peter's messages, when I read the New Testament sermons in print, called epistles, they are direct, they are straight - forward, and, my friends, I want to make it so clear to you - they go right for the big problem of the audience they're speaking to. I was talking to a pastor. He said: "My church isn't growing, can you help me?" I said: "Yes." He said: "I'll buy you a cup of coffee and a piece of pie." This was a big pastor's conference; about this many people. We went at it. I said: "Tell me about your church." He said: "It's got 150 people in it." I said: "Good, and how long has it been 150?" "Years." "Years? Whose fault is it that it's 150?" "What?" "Well, you have a problem and I want to ask you if it's God's fault its not growing?" "Well, no." "Is it the people's fault? Do they basically say: - I don't want this church to grow?" "Well, no." "Then whose fault is it?" "Are you saying it's my fault?" I said to him: "What are you preaching on?" He said: "I'm preaching on Galatians." I said: "That's terrific. How long have you been preaching on Galatians?" "Three years." I said: "You've been preaching on Galatians for three years? What chapter are you on?" "I just began chapter 2. I'm going in - depth." I said: "Sir, you're going in - depth beyond God. What's the big idea of Galatians." He said: "What do you mean? Don't you know?" I said: "I think I do, but I think you know better than I do at this point. What is the big idea? That you're not saved by works and you're not sanctified by works?" He said: "Yes, sir, you're right." I said: "What percentage of your church believes they're saved or sanctified by works?" "Well, none of them." "Well, sir, why on earth are you telling them that for the last three years? If nobody believes the heresy, what do you keep telling them the truth for?" "Well, I'm preaching verse by verse." I said: "Where does the Bible tell you to do that?" "What do you mean?" "Well, where does it tell you to preach verse by verse?" "Well, that's the best way." "If it's the best way it probably tells you that in the New Testament. Does it tell you that in the New Testament?" "Well, that's what they taught me at seminary." "Where'd they get that? I want to ask you another question, sir. When the apostles quoted the Scriptures, did they go verse for verse or did they take a verse from here, a verse from there and a verse from there to prove a point?" He said: "Well, they did that but I'm not gonna do that because it's not the right thing to do." I said: "Sir, exegesis isn't better done verse by verse by verse, or a verse from this book and a verse from this book and a verse from this book. You're supposed to exegete them correctly no matter where you take them from. But verse by verse through the whole book in Galatians is no better than taking a verse from this passage and a verse from this passage on the same theme. (That's what I'm doing this morning, aren't I?) So why are you preaching Galatians anyway?" "I'm preaching through the New Testament, in order." I said: "Why are you doing that?" "Well that's what you're supposed to do." I said: "Sir, the books in the New Testament are out of order in which they were written, do you know that?"

We are so far from the Biblical model. Question: When Jesus Christ came up to a person, He said: "Let me teach you a section from the Old Testament." What did He do? Almost always He started with the need of the person he met, and then He brought the Scripture and the new truth that He revealed to them, to the situation that was there. Every once in a while He met people who didn't bring up a need, and so He created a problem that they then asked about so He could answer it. And when you follow the apostle Paul and Peter, John and James and Jude and how they wrote, they took this particular church, who had a problem and they wrote the answers to that church. AAnd now I've heard about this problem here at your church. Here's the answer. Now concerning this, here is the answer." Why didn't he send that letter to that church? Because that church didn't need that letter. Then why are you preaching what you're preaching? The Bible doesn't have a need to be preached! You don't know what to think about that, do you? It doesn't. The people have the need. And this is the answer. You take the person's need and His answer and you're the living link between them. You take His answer to the needs of the people and, when you're done, their needs better be met from God's word. And what I find in churches all over the place is you're preaching the word but not to the need. And people comment: anything else today? You know what makes the Church grow when you preach the word of God to the needs of the people? They're going to run inside! Why? They got real needs and they want an answer. You take every single great man or woman of God throughout time. You know what they started with? They started with the need of the person first, therefore, what should you do?

What did I tell this pastor to do? I said to him: ADo you really want to find out what you should do?" He said: AYes!" I said: AWell, then, on Sunday morning preach a short sermon, give out some blank peaces of paper and say >Please don't put your names on this, I want to prepare a sermon.'Ask questions like: >When I get angry it's usually because.....' >When I get disappointed it's over this.....' >If I could change one thing in my life it would be.....' >In our family when we have conflict it's usually over this .....?"And I gave about 15 of those. They're just questions you can come up with. I said: AJust give them out, bring them back, go to your own house, divide them all up and after you have studied them all call me on the phone. Here's my home number."

He called me on the phone. Totally different tone of voice. ASo, tell me, what did you find out?" I asked. AI had no idea the majority of the marriages in my church are on the rocks, and the sins they are struggling with is this and the despair is this." I said: ASir, how many of those have you been meeting through Galatians?" He said: ANot one!" I said: ASir, you're the reason the church is dying - you're killing it. You're meeting your own needs to preach the Bible! You better get out of selfishness, stop meeting your interests, your need. It's their need, and this is the answer and they better know the answer when they leave, and they better have some life change as a result of it!"

So, here's what I find all over. We preach our own thoughts. We slip into this without knowing it. When I was a young man I was preaching my best sermon. It was a church of about 2 000 people. I was preaching my heart out. I shouldn't have been in that big a church. I was too young. And when it was over, there were all kinds of people giving wonderful affirmation and I was politely saying thank you and was so glad it was okay. There was an older lady standing quietly against a wall. The meeting was over and she walked over and she said: AThat was a very interesting sermon you gave." AThank you." AYou had some great ideas." AThank you." AI didn't come to hear your ideas. I came to hear the word of God and you never preached it!" And she smiled and walked away. What a rebuke! The years went by and I kept wondering why I keep struggling with that problem. Until I found the answer in Scripture and I want to read it to you.

AHe," said Jesus, Awho speaks from himself, seeks his own glory. But he who seeks the glory of the one who sent me is true and righteous." And I learnt over the years that if the Spirit of God has used you to preach the Word for lasting life change, the best way to know that is that when the meeting is over everybody's forgotten you and nobody has said thanks - because they are so much in connection with the Spirit, thinking about what they should do, that they've forgotten about you. I thought the best way to know if the sermon was effective was how many people said nice things about me, and in the end I said this was irrelevant, the issue is that they shouldn't be thinking about me - they should be thinking about Him.

So, my friends, are you preaching the word of God to the big needs of the people? I want to say you're not! Sexual immorality is rampant in the Church and, statistically, there are more people with Aids in the Church than out of the Church. W hat's the biggest need? Well, you can't miss this one, it's killing Africa. It's called sexual immorality in most cases! So when is the last time you dealt with this issue in such a way that the men stop having prostitutes on the side, in which fathers who run around began to stay at home, in which it became a terribly big sin to commit sexual immorality because, biblically speaking, it is a terribly big sin because God says: AI will judge everyone with fornication and adultery. I will judge." There's no fear of God with the immorality and immorality runs wild, and the issue is: the preachers are not dealing with the issue. Why not? Because they are afraid of it! Stop being afraid of the people. Be afraid of Him. He is the one who has given you over the church. You are under the Shepherd; you are the one who has His answers for their need. You think they are happier when they're immoral?

In closing, I want to say this: There has never been a greater opportunity for men and women of God to rise up than today. There's never been more of the Holy Spirit given to man and women since Jesus Christ came. He gave them all of it, all of Him, to you! All of Him to you! And he will give you every courage, he will lead you, he will convict the people when you preach the Word, he will lead you through the passages, he will lead you to be like Jesus Christ, He will convict you of personal sin. Just partner with him on a regular basis. When is the last time your church got together to pray for more of the Spirit, not for the emotions in the service or what to place after the service? Can you remember the last time that happened? Because in the New Testament that's what they did. They got together, they knew the Spirit was the answer, not to the Church inside but to the Church outside. And when you preach, are the people changing? And do they come in there arguing for a seat because there's never enough room in church? Why not? Because you deal with their lives every day. People are dying for an answer. They want the answer. They are hoping you will give them the answer.

I believe this country is at a crisis point. Every single thing that is on that sheet that was given out yesterday (reflects that), and my impression of your President was so strong when he didn't avoid that sheet and he made comment on it. Because it was filled with bad news. But, you know, as I read through that list, Jesus doesn't blame any government for that. He blames the Church for that. And, my friends, it's not a new organisation, it's not another NGO. If God wanted NGO's everywhere, he would have said: "I will plant my NGO's. He didn't. He said: "I'll plant my local churches."

Some other year, some other time, I'll preach point three because it's the most important of the three. But the first two are the basis of the third. Therefore, will you, as individuals who have not been perhaps partnering with the Holy Spirit in a way that is New Testament biblical, and if you don't see the power of your church outside of your church, it shows that the Spirit is quenched, the Spirit is grieved, and your people don't know what to do with the Spirit. The Spirit is power to fulfil the Great Commission outside of the church and in the marketplace. And if that has not taken place you have quenched the Spirit in your church, big time! And if you're not preaching the right passages to the needs of the people, not taking what the Scripture brings out of it and showing this is what it says, not this is what I think, then you, my friends, are the key to the turn - around of South Africa.

Forget apartheid. Forget blaming anything else. Forget all that stuff. Not once in the New Testament does somebody say let's wait for the government to fix the problem. They had God, they don't need the government.

It's time for repentance. Repentance means I realise I have been wrong in what I have been doing, and these have serious consequences. I hereby repent of that and I change my mind and my behaviour and I will do exactly what the Bible teaches. And if you have trouble with what I said, go back to the book of Acts. If you find I've made a mistake then do what you believe it says. If you, therefore, need to repent on the misuse of the Spirit, or the under - use of the Spirit, there are whole denominations in South Africa that haven't discovered the Spirit yet. Just sit in their service. Just imagine if they found Him.

If you need to repent of the Spirit in a moment, I am going to ask you to rise up in repentance, publicly, and come forward over here and I am going to lead you in a prayer of repentance. If, on the other hand, you need to repent because you have been preaching your ideas eloquently, or you have not been preaching what the Spirit's been convicting you of, that you haven't been meeting their needs; that you need to go back and preach the way Jesus Christ preached, I want you to stand over here for repentance. So if you need repentance with the Spirit, come over to this side on my right; if you need repentance for the preaching off to my left. Would you please come now.