

## **“The Holy Spirit and the Antioch Church”**

*“The Holy Spirit” Series ~ Part 8*

I was watching a Fox News Special about the condition of the Church in England Europe and how that Christianity is losing its influence. In many cases the churches only had two people attending services, yet the religion of Islam is exploding. As a matter of fact, in England a mosque is growing so fast that they are building a facility to hold approximately 40,000 people, making it one of the largest mosques in Europe. The Church buildings are being sold off at bargain prices and converted into pubs and business.

The report went on to say where Christianity once enjoyed being the religion boasting of participation levels that exceeded 95% in England these numbers are dropping dramatically. The results are just as alarming, if not more so, throughout Europe. The report says that In many cases Christians, are persecuted, their rights abused and often the preaching of Christian standards results in scorn, ridicule and in some cases imprisonment. What happened to the influence and respect the Church once knew? Why have so many people left the Church and gone to false religions to satisfy their spiritual hunger?

I Peter 3: 3-4 says:

*“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”*

II Timothy 3:1-5 says:

*“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous (betrayal of trust), rash (hasty decisions), conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.”*

There is no doubt Satan and his minions are working overtime on the hearts and minds of those who will listen. Additionally, many Church leaders; especially the traditional ones, have silenced the presence of the Holy Spirit in their services and in their individual lives. Some leaders of the Church have become so humanistic minded (a way of life that is centered on human interest) that any spiritual boundaries or allowing the Holy Spirit control of their church services is just not feasible.

The truth is people thrive when there are boundaries in place (site the playground scenario). That may be why so many people are flooding into structured false religions; perhaps they're looking for boundaries. People desire to be spiritual and they want to feel close to God. The Church has a major door of opportunity before it by breaking out of the religious system and being led of the Holy Spirit.

People are tired of going to Church to hear the same religious jargon spoken day in and day out. They want the refreshing of the Holy Spirit's presence and they want the Lord to guide their lives. Even though we may dislike change that doesn't mean we don't need it. People need direction and assistance so they can make proper transitions. Furthermore, they need leadership guiding and loving them into the higher realms of God's Kingdom.

Many have abandoned instructing people how to be led of the Holy Spirit and have also forsaken the teaching of the attributes of a loving Father. The reason leaders have discontinued these truths is because they more than likely have lost their first love and as a result have become blind guides. Furthermore, many Church leaders have stopped assisting their sheep in their quest for an intimate relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. How can a teacher instruct someone something unless they experience it themselves!

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is here to guide us into deeper truths and greater understanding of the ways of God. We must repent for our religious activities and ask the Lord to heal the breaches that we have created. The answer to the problems in the religious Church is the simple act of obedience and the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is a fact, that Churches under the guidance of Spirit-led leaders, who allow the Holy Spirit, access into the Church and who emphasis allowing the Holy Spirit to lead their lives and services, are growing at an unprecedented rate.

I have ministered numerous times in the past about the Antioch Church (Read Acts 11:19-29 and Acts 13:1-3). This early Church placed at its center the Holy Spirit. Everything it accomplished was done through the guidance of the Divine Spirit and they gave Him praise for all of their successes.

- It was interesting that the disciples were first called Christians (Christ-folk – It was a contemptuous nickname; but the Christians took it and made it known to the entire world. By their lives they made it a name not of contempt but of respect and admiration and even wonder) in Antioch (Acts 11:26b).
- That they were not afraid to share the good news of the Gospel (Acts 11:20b).
- There were manifestations of the goodness of God in their midst (Acts 11:23).
- There was a powerful infrastructure and leadership team (Acts 11:25-26).

- There were Prophets, Teachers, Apostles, Evangelist and Pastors in Antioch (Acts 11:22).
- The Christians in Antioch were also a giving people (Acts 11:29) and they were a worshipping, praying and fasting group of people as well (Acts 13:2).
- They sent Apostles and Prophets out to the Body of Christ (Acts 13:2-3).
- News of the Spiritual activity of Antioch spread like wildfire (Acts 11:22).
- More importantly they allowed the Holy Spirit to be in the center of everything they did (Acts 13:2-3).

I believe with all of my heart that the Antioch model that the Lord has given us will help reform the worldwide Church. This reformation will not occur through the works of man but through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we place the Holy Spirit at the center of everything we do, we will experience a move of the Holy Spirit that will dwarf the Antioch Church.

We must never allow religiosity to infiltrate our services or lives. We must keep ourselves clean and useable before the Lord. Each of us must take responsibility to permit the Holy Spirit to have complete access to our lives and services, lest we fall prey to the condition of the traditional Church. We must, individually, allow the Holy Spirit to set us ablaze with the Glory of His might not allowing any form of fear or restriction to affect us.

The Lord gave Apostle Debbie and I the name Arise for this Church. I believe this is a title not only for our local Church but for the worldwide Church as well. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to increase our vision to encompass the Church worldwide. That you and I, just like the Antioch Church, can change our local, national and international realm if we will only believe.

---

**Permissions:** You are permitted to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do NOT alter the wording in any way, you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, and you do not make more than 100 physical copies. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be explicitly approved by Arise Christian Fellowship.

**Please include the following statement on any distributed copy:** By Vance Russell, Arise Christian Fellowship 2005. Website: [www.ariseministries.com](http://www.ariseministries.com). Email: [ministries@ariseministries.com](mailto:ministries@ariseministries.com). Telephone: 512.451.8260.

---