

July 14, 2014

I stared into the flames of a fire I had lit to clear up a pile of small branches of three fir trees that my grandson had pruned last year. Cottage country permits open fires two hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset.

I was transfixed by the capacity of the flames to consume both the dry and wet wood that I had thrown into its hungry mouth. Even though we used an old truck wheel rim to keep the fire from spreading, some of the twigs from the branches fell outside of it. Steam rose from the limbs of the wet branches that at first seemed to resist the power of the flames but they too soon joined their brothers in the dance of fire. What was once a living thing was soon to become nothing but ash.

The falling ash started to cover branches that were not totally consumed and consequently prevented the lifeblood of oxygen from reaching all its members. So in order to allow air into the centre of the fire I used a larger branch to lift the remaining limbs. Immediately flames burst out of the middle of the dry cedar branch, but when I withdrew it from the fire it soon lost its ability to burn; all that remained was a blackened stub. For the fire to continue its chain reaction it needed to be fed a new combustible material and a continuous supply of oxygen. *Branches removed quickly ceased to burn; fire is a corporate experience.*

Moses had a similar experience in the desert, as he watched in amazement the bush that was burning but not being consumed to ash. Out of this fire came the voice of God's angel calling him to be the messenger of deliverance to the children of Israel from 400 years of Egyptian slavery.

The 120 followers of Jesus were obedient to His last instruction before His Ascension and waited in prayer ten days for the promise of the Holy Spirit. They had no previous experience to guide their expectations nor did they have any knowledge of what or how this promise was to be fulfilled.

Luke explains; "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and filled all the home where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of the and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

As I sat in a recent prayer meeting I saw a vision of flames rising into the night sky. I couldn't see the source of the fire but the dancing flames sent glowing ashes into the heavenly realm. I was aware that the flames from our prayer group illuminated the night sky and were a sign of our worship rising to God. My understanding was that our worship was penetrating "the heavenlies" way beyond our small group.

As I continued to meditate on the vision, out of this fire came the word; "tonight I am starting a fire that cannot be put out. It will become a wild fire that has no limits." We were in the "one accord and one place" of God's purposes. We were to be the bush that Moses experienced. We were to be the bush fed by the oxygen of the Holy Spirit, burning but not being consumed.

In the cottage fire experience I saw that it is not a one person event. In order to enable a chain reaction of God's power and purpose, it is necessary for the fire to be a collective, corporate encounter. *Branches taken out of the fire soon die.*

Fire needs an "ignition point," someone or something to start the process. In the context of the destruction of all that is unholy, the writer to the Hebrews states; "God is a consuming fire" but that same fire also brings light to a world under the darkness of the night sky.

The word came to me; “will you throw your branch onto God’s fire so that it spreads to all around you”? This fire cannot be controlled by man and has no limits. It will be a wild fire and the wind of the Spirit will allow it to leap across the nations.”

“And all the world will see that I the Lord have set the fire. It shall not be put out.” Ezekiel 20:48 (LB)

Shalom.

*Ron Harris*

