We Have Only Begun to Fight

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The year was 1967. It was a year when it seemed like everything that could be shaken was being shaken. In June, Israel launched a preemptive strike against Egyptian forces that were massed along the border and in just six days, Israel captured territory that would nearly double the size of the nation. And for the first time in 2000 years, Jerusalem was once again in the hands and the Capital under Jewish control.

At the same time, something very different was happening in America. The cover of the July 7th Time magazine featured the rise of a new countercultural youth movement. It was the summer of love, when as many as 100,000, mostly young people, flooded into San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury to experience a countercultural community with no rules, no limits, and no commitments, and it would grow to a movement of over 300,000.

Also, in 1967, it was the year of deadly race riots in cities such as Detroit and Newark. It became known as the Long Hot Summer. 1967 was indeed a year of upheaval. Long held beliefs were being questioned. Institutions were being challenged. People were searching for something new. In many ways, you know, it does not sound all that much different from the days in which we are living right now. And it was right in the middle of that turbulent year that Aglow was born.

Prepared by God for the Times

This morning, I want to take a few moments to look back at our roots and to celebrate from where we have come, but also, to recognize how God has prepared us for the hour in which we are living now, especially in the midst of growing anti-Semitism and the increasing of the delegitimization of the nation and the State of Israel.

Next year, 2027 will mark Aglow's 60th anniversary, and we will celebrate how this ministry began, with just four women in Seattle who were hungry for more of God. Over cups of coffee, they decided to invite their friends who were searching for more of God, and they came to hear a speaker named Rita Bennett. She and her husband, Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett, both had had a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit, and it had radically changed their lives. The first meeting was actually held in the Meany Hotel in Seattle.

Remember, this was 1967. In many American churches, women were still largely restricted to practical ministries like fundraising, children's education, choirs and charity work while formal leadership, ordained ministry and denominational authority were generally closed to women. This was 1967. This

would become the year widely recognized for the birth of the Charismatic Renewal movement in America, and it would have a dramatic impact on traditional churches across America.

125 women came to that first meeting at the Meany Hotel, and Women's Aglow Fellowship was born. By the next year, it moved on to the global stage as fellowships began in Canada, followed by Netherlands, New Zealand and Australia. In six short years, Aglow had become an international network of women ministering to one another - women being born again and filled with the power of the Holy Ghost and experiencing great, wonderful inner healing.

The first Aglow magazine was published, telling the stories of what God was doing in the lives of women. By the end of the 1970s, Aglow had groups in all 50 states and ten nations. But God was about to enlarge the purpose of our calling.

Aglow's Calling Enlarged

In 1981, God spoke to our international president, Jane Hansen, at that time not Jane Hansen Hoyt, but Jane Hansen. God began to speak to her about gender reconciliation. Women were being healed. We were being restored. We were being empowered and God was stirring a word in Jane about God's original design for the relationship between women and men, as He had intended. It was time for them to learn to walk together side by side in the Kingdom, each honoring the unique gifting in one another.

Aglow's First Mandate – Male/Female Reconciliation

Together, it was His plan that they would represent the image of God and take back what had been stolen in the garden. Aglow was to become a living prototype of what that would look like. And I am telling you right here, our International President, Nancy McDaniel, and her husband Dave, who leads Men of Issachar - don't they model that beautifully? For years we spoke this message across nations. We wrote books and articles. We taught people how to walk in their gifts, and their calling while continuing to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ and into the fullness of the Holy Spirit. This became our first Kingdom mandate: male and female reconciliation and restoration as God had intended from the very beginning. That message remains just as relevant today as it was then.

Second Mandate – Call to Islam

Ten years later, 1991, God brought our second mandate into focus. Notice I did not say God's second idea. He did not say, "Here is another suggestion." He did not say, "You know, women can multitask." You know, we can multitask. I mean, look, the phone rings, the kids are starting to fight, you have something on the stove, and you answer, "Hi. Yes." You know, even if you have to kick the oven door closed.

But God brought our second mandate command into focus in a way that would leave absolutely no doubt about the calling that He was now putting on Aglow. Tomorrow afternoon, Diane FinK is going to share the remarkable story of how God spoke to Aglow about our call concerning Islam, and confirmed it again and again through credible voices in the body of Christ. We were not echoing each other. God gave the word, but then He sent those who would come and confirm it again and again. We came to understand Islam as a significant expression of the anti-Christ spirit operating in our world

today. God taught us something very important. **We were to pray with the right spirit. Our hearts had to come from a place of compassion and a love for a people who were deceived and lost.**

E.J., I appreciated that at the end of your message, when you were speaking about your heart for the children, and a heart for those young men, they were deceived. They were brought up coming right out of their mother's womb it was spoken over them. They knew nothing else. So, God was saying, if you are going to pray for them, you cannot pray because you hate them - Go get them, God. Wipe them all out, Lord. But He had to break our heart for them. We had to remember that we were not warring against flesh and blood, but we were warring against spiritual forces. And the wonderful thing is, God was helping us to get to that right place in our heart.

Through seminars and manuals, Islam: Unveiling the system, Loving the People, through prayer walks, around neighborhoods, in mosques, through small prayer groups, throughout the Aglow family, we learned how to pray and reach Muslims. I dare say there are people right in here that, like me, in my group from New England, you have gone into those mosques. You know, they had no idea that we were just speaking blessing, that we were just calling them into the full knowledge and to come out from under deception as we were walking around praying in our prayer language, the perfect prayer of God interceding. Once again, we said yes to what God was asking of us and we never forgot the two legs upon which Aglow stands and continues to stand - prayer and evangelism.

Third Mandate - Call to Israel

Then came Israel. In 1999, our International President, Jane, asked those of us as leaders in the U.S. whether we would be interested in organizing a corporate trip to Israel. Wow! To Israel! It was part of a millennial celebration. That is a mouthful. Millennial celebration. The plan was for a different ministry to host a trip and choose a month that year, 2000, so that every month there would be a group of evangelical Christians coming in and praying and celebrating.

Well, Aglow was invited to participate. So, she took a vote and of course, we all said yes. So, in the hot summer month - how blessed we were to have the month of July. We had no idea. We would do it again and again and again in July if we had to. So, in the hot summer month of July 2000, there were 450 Aglow women. Now, there were only a few men at that time because it was primarily a women's ministry.

We braved that July heat and we traveled throughout Israel, visiting the ancient sites of both the old and the New Testament. And I do want to tell you, I have to be honest, we bought everything in sight. Some of us had to purchase a suitcase before we could come home. You know, you have to fit those huge shofars in there. And then you have the olive wood, the Last Supper in olive wood.

Aglow to Confront Haman Spirit

But something more was happening to us on that trip, our hearts were being captured. God began to apprehend us for the land and for the people. God also had another plan in mind when He sent us to Israel that July because before we left, God gave Aglow leadership a prophetic word that while there we would be confronting a Haman spirit. That is the spirit that is intent on the destruction of the Jewish

people. Now, this was significant because during that same decade, we had already received prophetic words from very credible voices telling us that **Aglow was a company of Esther's.**

Now you remember Esther. She was the ordinary, young, Jewish woman whom God raised for such a time as this, to stand against Haman's plan to annihilate the Jewish people. And now God was reminding us of our calling. We were a company of Esther's, and we were being sent to stand against a spirit that had once again come against the Jewish people, just as it had under Hitler and the Nazis.

So, while we were in Jerusalem, Jane gathered the US and the international leaders to come into her suite. When everyone else went out that day, we stayed because we needed to pray. "God, what are You saying in all this?" We sought the Lord, and we asked Him to show us why we were there at that moment in time.

We learned that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak had left and come to the United States to meet with President Bill Clinton at Camp David. The purpose was peace negotiations with the ultimate goal making a Palestinian state.

We were told by the Israeli head of the tour company, that Israelis were tired of war. The mothers and the fathers and the grandmothers and the grandfathers were tired of sending their children to war. So, they were grasping at peace, and they were about to accept an unprecedented offer that was being made to the Palestinians. It included, 96% of the West Bank. Now West Bank, let's use the biblical Judea and Samaria to the Palestinians, all of Gaza building a corridor connecting Gaza with the West Bank, significant international financial support for Palestinian refugees, and division of Jerusalem in which the Arab section would become the new Palestinian state capital. And in many ways, this would have left Israel vulnerable.

So, 450 women gathered on the Temple Mount steps in Jerusalem to worship. We had a strategy. We did not want to scare our people. This is our first trip. God began to show us how we were going to pray and so that all 450 women could enter in and engage. Jane led us in prayer. We prayed for courage and strength for the people of Israel. We prayed for God's intervention in the Camp David talks and that nothing would be agreed upon that was contrary to God's purposes and timing. We believed that we were obedient to the call that God gave us.

I remember the next morning stepping out of the hotel in Jerusalem, and they always would leave the Jerusalem Post. I picked up the paper and on the front page, it showed a picture. It had shown Arafat and Ehud Barak together, but this time the headlines said that the talks broke down. Arafat rejected the offer and three months later, the Second Intifada began.

The intifada is an undeclared war of violence. In the months and the years that followed, Palestinian leaders acknowledged that a historic opportunity for statehood had been lost. Had they accepted it, the Palestinians today would be celebrating 25 years of statehood. Looking back, we realized that God was depositing something in us during that trip.

In the following year, 2001, it would it would take form and shape.

There was a gathering in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, that had been organized by prophetic leaders like Don Finto and James Goll, who carried a deep heart for Israel and the Jewish people, and they were

coming together. They felt that the church needed to repent for a long and painful history of the treatment of the Jewish people.

Jane went there. She was not on the platform. She was part of those that attended and during that meeting she was called out of the audience. The leaders gathered around her, praying and prophesying over her and Aglow. It was a public setting apart. It was a public anointing and declarations were being made that Queen Esther's court was being raised up and coming to a new apostolic anointing. It confirmed the Esther word that we had been carrying and hearing about, and it affirmed what had happened in Israel the year before. So now we understood that God had given us a third mandate to stand with and to pray for Israel and the Jewish people.

The Mandates: The Three Battlegrounds of the Ages

This became the third of what we realized were the three battlegrounds of the ages and God had given us a call to war on each one of those fronts. Male-female, Islam, and now Israel and the Jewish people. And again and again during some of Israel's darkest moments we returned.

During the Second Intifada - and I know that there are people here that were on that trip, we were on this trip, many of us. We walked and we prayed through the streets of Israel, through all the towns where streets were almost empty of tourists because of the great fear of the horrible things were happening, the bus bombings and the killings - just awful during that time. So much bloodshed.

Israeli soldiers, you will remember, they would call out and say, “Who are you?” And we would answer back, “We are Christians! we love Israel, and we have come to stand with you and to pray for you.” I will tell you, it does not get much better than that. I will tell you if you like to get right into the battle, you know that stirs up that warrior in you. I know there is a room full of you.

Things Aglow Has Done in Israel Through the Years

Here are some of the things we have done through the years.

- We have left suitcases of clothing for people in need.
- We painted apartments for Holocaust survivors.
- We have walked the streets and prayed.
- We planted trees.
- Everywhere we have gone, we have spoken words of encouragement and told the people we stand with you.

For more than 25 years, there has been sustained prayer throughout the Aglow family for Israel.

Watchman on the Wall Seminar

In 2005, we released the Watchman on the Wall seminar. It is a two-day seminar with teachings like the Errors of Replacement Theology, Identifying and Exposing Media Lies, and making sure that we all understand God's Everlasting Covenant with Israel. The materials have been translated. All of the materials, all the teaching notes, all the PowerPoint slides have been translated into five languages. Men and women that complete the course are commissioned in Jerusalem on Mount Scopus and they

make a commitment to stand with and to pray for Israel for the rest of their lives. How many of you have been commissioned? Oh, glory to God! Oh my God!

I have had the honor of serving on the National Council of AIPAC, the largest pro-Israel lobby that advocates for the U.S. Israel relationship. In that capacity, I have had the privilege of moderating panels at their policy conference in Washington, DC. I also had the honor of moderating a panel at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention conference. I say that because **Aglow has a significant voice,** as we have gained a greater understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that the Messianic believers face, and proclaiming the Good News of Yeshua in the land. We continue to pray for them. They are the tender shoot of Messiah in the land.

Monday Night Prayer Call

Prayer has been our powerful weapon for the last 18 years. Intercessors across the United States, and some from Canada and Japan, have participated every Monday night in an Islam/Israel prayer call. Diane Fink and Scarlet Stone and I host the call. This actually began when Diane Moder and I started that call. When she went to be with the Lord, God began to multiply it and now not two of us, but three of us lead that call.

We begin every call with giving background information on each prayer point that we have prayed about and decided, so that we can pray strategically with understanding. We are not going to do buckshot prayers. We are going for the targets every time. Many take those designated prayer points and they bring them back to their churches and their prayer groups. My own Monday morning New England prayer group has been praying together for 28 years for Israel and Islam. But I tell you, Carolyn Suty, you were the one who showed me what you were doing out there on the West Coast, in California and in Hawaii. You showed me how to do it. I brought it back to New England, and for 28 years we have been praying and we now pray every Monday morning by Zoom.

Watchman on the Wall seminars, prayer calls, teaching letters, fireside chats, conference speakers all are the ways that Aglow continues to educate and activate on behalf of Israel. When we said yes to the Lord concerning that third mandate, we meant it and we are not finished.

This morning we celebrate where we have walked and we should. It is important to remember what God has done, but we are not camping out there. There are new challenges, and they demand new strategies. We are already at work in ways to deliver our message more powerfully and efficiently, to reach a new generation. In a world of growing anti-Semitism and delegitimization of Israel as a nation.

Israel Unveiled Podcast

This past year, we pioneered Israel Unveiled podcast, bringing concise teaching about Israel, the Jewish people, and the church, and I encourage you to view it. Tomorrow on your seat will be a little postcard. You can simple go on YouTube and then you can subscribe. I tell you, we cover just a whole, wide swath of interests. I encourage you. It includes discussion questions. It is an outline, all the scriptural references, so that you can take them to your groups and everything is right there for you.

We need to put our feet on the ground. Once again in Israel. The assignment is not completed. God has prepared us for this hour. We are primed, we are positioned and we are ready. We want you to know that we link arms with you, Susan. We link arms with you, E.J. We are in this together.

Aglow, Has Only Begun to Fight

I want to close with the words of a Revolutionary War hero, John Paul Jones. He was a naval commander who became known as the father of the United States Navy. During the Revolutionary War, Jones commanded a ship in a battle against a much larger British frigate. The Americans were outnumbered and outgunned. Their ship was taking on water. The situation looked absolutely hopeless. The British commander called out and asked if Jones was ready to surrender. John Paul Jones was said to have answered, “I have not yet begun to fight.” That battle continued for hours. Eventually the British surrendered and their ship sank. Those words have become legendary, and I believe that they speak to us today, right now, right here. **To every force that would oppose God's purposes for Israel and the Jewish people, Aglow says, “We have only begun to fight!”**