

A shocking truth uncovered. Hidden from local churches up and down the North Coast. A senior Anglican minister exposed. Despite his good reputation, public standing, acknowledged gifts, the truth is out. In nearly 40 years of ordained ministry this man is not responsible for anyone becoming a Christian. The minister refuses to resign. Claiming he cannot be responsible for the conversion of others. Claiming he lacks the power and ability to change hearts and soften stubborn wills. His claim: this the mission of the Holy Spirit. Based on six principles revealed in the Bible. Brothers and sisters, as we examine the six principles be the judge. Does the senior minister rightly understand the Bible?

First, the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus testimony in **John 16:8**, *When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:* Jesus' point. The Holy Spirit brings people to personal recognition of their rebellion against God. Convicting them their so-called righteous lives are self-righteous lives. Outside the righteousness God gives. Convicting people their rejection of Jesus is a false judgement. A false assessment of the person and work of Jesus. Without the Spirit's convicting work, it is impossible for anyone to be born again into the Kingdom of God. **Second**, the Holy Spirit launches his mission on the Day of Pentecost. As promised by Jesus, *'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'* **Acts 1:8**. Not a new mission. Biblical revelation shows God a missionary God from the beginning. God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit active in that mission. The Father sends the Son into the world. Jesus proclaims the Kingdom, calls people to repent, rescues people through his death. The Holy Spirit convicts. The launch ushers in a new dimension to God's mission. Acknowledgement of the Lordship of Jesus. Paul teaches in **1 Corinthians 12** no one declares the Lordship of Jesus apart from the work of the Spirit. **Third**, the Holy Spirit continues the mission in fulfilment of Jesus' promise. By **Acts 10**, Spirit inspired proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus creates new disciples. In Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and beyond. As signified in the conversion of the Gentile, Cornelius. Proclamation to the ends of the earth ongoing to this day. **Fourth**, the Spirit's mission is word based. The fundamental tool of the Spirit: the word of God. Spoken through God's servants. On the day of Pentecost, Jews from every nation gathered in Jerusalem. Captured by what they heard. Not what they saw. *When they heard this sound, a crowd came together*

in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken... we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Acts 2:6,11 Spirit filled disciples speaking the good news of the gospel about Jesus. In the foreign languages of the gathered Jews. The miracle of Pentecost. **Fifth**, the mission of the Holy Spirit is Jesus focussed. God the Father and God the Son both draw attention to themselves. God, the Holy Spirit never draws attention to himself. Instead putting the spotlight on Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Spirit filled servants of God throughout Acts urge people to turn to the one who forgives; who gives eternal life in his Kingdom. Jesus the Lord. They rarely speak about the Holy Spirit. Jesus speaks of this focus of the Spirit. *'When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.'* *'He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.'* **John 15:26 16:14**

Sixth, disciples of Christ are junior partners in the mission of the Spirit. In **John 15:27** Jesus says, *'And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.'* Speaking to the first disciples. Applicable to us also. Jesus teaches: the Holy Spirit, prime witness. Disciples, junior partners. Equipped by the empowering presence of the Spirit. A role to play in the growth of God's kingdom. Sisters and brothers, the Bible backs up the senior minister. Only the Holy Spirit convicts people of the need for Christ; does the work necessary for people to come to Christ. But that senior minister has a role. As you do. Our Bible readings clarify that role. Providing encouragement, challenge, warning, the model. Another senior minister draws the obvious conclusion. He wrote, *'I would quit all forms of Christian ministry immediately if I were not convinced that the Lord Jesus is building his church; that the Father has given over a people to his Son; and that the blessed Holy Spirit is working in the world to convict it of its sin, its righteousness, its judgement.'* Brothers and sisters, because of the mission of the Spirit we can take heart. Though we struggle with fears about witnessing to Jesus. Nursing wounds from rejection and abuse for daring to follow Christ. Living with hostility toward Christianity. We can rejoice for it is God who brings people to himself. Look around at the evidence. These biblical assurances from Scripture lead to five characteristics I believe flow from what we learn from the Bible today. Foundations for confident partnership with the triune God. Let us grow and display them in our Christian walk. One, prayerfulness. Call on God by his Spirit to convict those to whom we witness. Asking for courage to persevere in our witness. Two, realism. That the presence of the Holy Spirit not

a recipe for comfort and a life of ease. The gift of the Holy Spirit thrust Jesus' followers into a rollercoaster adventure. The Holy Spirit less about a life of comfort. More about sending out those in whom he dwells as witnesses into a challenging, dangerous, unpredictable harvest field. Partnership with the Spirit costs. We witness in a world that hates Christians. Especially when we speak of the Lordship of Jesus. Three, discernment. Authentic Holy Spirit mission will always be Jesus centred. Beware of spiritual charlatans focussing on the Spirit. Promising experiences of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit never talks about himself. Only about Jesus. The experience of the Spirit that matters for eternity: new birth in Christ, forgiveness of sin. The greatest gift of God, not grace gifts but the gift of God himself. His indwelling presence in us now. In eternity, face to face adoration of the one seated on his throne. Four, singlemindedness. trust in the power of God's word to change lives. Keep telling people about Jesus unafraid that it seems a weak message. Received as folly by those perishing. The gospel is the power of salvation for those who are believing. Not signs and wonders. God's ways higher than ours. He acts always in accordance with his character. The tools he chooses his to choose. However, the weapon he gives us, the sword of the Spirit. His powerful, incisive, lifegiving word. Let us singlemindedly speak it. Five, rejoicing. like the angels in heaven at the saving of one lost sheep. Rejoice whenever a prodigal child returns to the heavenly Father. Rejoice the mission of the Spirit invests our labours with eternal significance. Taking away fear of failure. That senior Anglican minister, stands before you this morning. More and more convinced he not responsible for people's conversion. More and more convicted he responsible for godly partnership in the mission of the Spirit. Humbled God uses him and frees him from anxiety about results. Thankful the everlasting arms of God tend his wounds in the spiritual battles. Inspired by the mighty work of the God who speaks of his wonders in the heart language of people in every nation. The mission of the Spirit. My mission. Your mission. Until Jesus returns.