

Introduction to Observations

In 1987, I wrote and produced a magazine called *Spiritwind*. The magazine made its debut at the first All-Ontario Holy Spirit Conference that same year. Even though the magazine was discontinued after three issues, the Holy Spirit Conferences, which my wife Alice and I had begun to organize and host, continued and became a Charismatic awakening of the Spirit that lasted for six years with regional conferences throughout the southern parts of the province and yearly All-Ontario conferences in the greater Toronto area. Attendance rose to the thousands. Many were baptised in the Holy Spirit and experienced manifestations known as “*Gifts of the Spirit*.”

I remember those exciting years as the time of a *Spiritwind* that blew primarily among traditionally established denominations, but especially among those of Reformed persuasion. It’s been 33 years since that inspired time and our experience continues. However, word *Spiritwind* (not the experience) lay dormant for those years. I had given the name no further thought, until November 10, 2019, when it resurfaced as a suggested title for the outcome of my series of observations that began in April 2019.

“*Spiritwind: It’s blowing strong; Listen for it!*”

I was a prophetic word to sustain my observations.

Initially, three words emerged as a pattern for explaining *Spiritwind*, or “Wind of the Spirit.” Observation, Demonstration, and Correction, which together formed a basis for my renewed understanding of discipleship.

Discipleship is an *experiential* phenomenon with a solid grounding in Apostolic Traditions (or Foundations, and not to be confused with Apostolic Succession or apostolic traditions of church order). Discipleship is not a methodological approach to the journey of faith sustained only by man-made doctrines and dogma, or philosophies and ideologies. To summarize.

This is what *Spiritwind* is saying:

OBSERVATION is from life observed, past and present; past from the observations of Scripture through those who “lived-it” and present from those who continue to “live-it.” Observation should lead to a careful examination of what we see with emphasis on essentials, that is, apostolic traditions. Over 2000 years we have accumulated too many non-essentials and we have become champions of non-essential doctrinal, and dogmatic causes that have divided the Church.

Essentials have become boring, time-worn, old-school, “lacking buzz.”

The appeal of non-essentials such as mannerisms of convenience and accommodation, loose liturgies, how-to and self-help seminars, style distinctions, entertainment and marketing advantages, products for healing and prosperity, *always learning and never having the power to truly live by faith experientially*, these and others have put essentials such as clarity of “yes-and-no” when led by the Spirit, committed discipleship, faithfulness to apostolic tradition, hunger and thirst for Scripture, obedience to governance of the Kingdom of God (now), and hearing the voice of God, on the shelf.

DEMONSTRATION is from structured learning by those who “live-it” in real time among real people and whom God has anointed to teach, as well as those who freely (and accurately) testify of the “live-it” life. This is where I live: as an artist I draw with a naturalist impulse reflected in the waters of spiritual inspiration to hear the *Spiritwind* say “this is the way: spirit, soul, and body.” It is a qualitative experiential

phenomenon of awe, wonder, and delight that knows no bounds and fills the life I have chosen with freedom in God's love and grace.

CORRECTION is alignment and adjustment from lived-experience. However, we may agree with Observation and Demonstration, but the word Correction has gotten a bad reputation over the centuries. It's been misinterpreted as punishment. Correction is *not* punitive as some religious denominations have and continue to proclaim when they point their condemning fingers at fearful people. It's a fear of Divine judgment among those who believe that freedom is a work of faith substantiated by achievement and success towards salvation, wrapped in a mistaken theology of "already but not yet." The outcome had been confusion, uncertainty, and doubt about the finished work of Christ that opened the door to unrestricted citizenship in the Kingdom of God. It remains a stumbling block to how we reconcile a God of love with punishment.

Correction, however, is affirmative as seen through a *theology of kindness that posits all who are led by the Spirit of God are indeed the children of God* (not maybe, or not yet). Correction is alignment and adjustment of our lived-experience by and through the Spirit of God to discern what is essential and what is not, with total submission to Christ's governance.

Therefore, my observations continue to illuminate *Spiritwind* as a loving wind that blows peace, hope, and assurance of faith into the chaos of spiritual practices and confused voices of modern *isms*.

My observations were first written down as raw data beginning in April 2019. No attempt was made to write my observations in an orderly fashion with any kind of methodology in mind. *It's from the heart*. The observations are my response to being led inspirationally by the Spirit of God in a private conversation.

Warning: Observations are not for the faint of heart nor are they polished diatribes to ease the conscience. Observations are not an alternative doctrine nor are they a rant against the one church, the body of Christ. They are not "tough-love nor are they persistent propaganda. But they are the *Spiritwind* who calls for critical thought in this age of chaos.