HOSTING THE PRESENCE

Unveiling Heaven's Agenda

Bill Johnson

Foreword by Heidi Baker
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I dedicate Hosting the Presence to Dr. Heidi Baker of Iris Ministries International.

I realize it’s not very common to have a book dedicated to the same person who wrote the forward, but I must do so in this case. Heidi Baker is one of the most remarkable individuals I’ve ever met. Her ability to give herself to the poorest of the poor and the most-broken of the broken makes her stand out in a world of ministries that clamor for success by appealing to the successful. Thankfully, there is a growing number of individuals who serve in the fashion that Heidi has modeled all around the world. They deserve our love and support. But Heidi’s uniqueness comes from her ability to also serve the richest of the rich, without the hidden agenda of wanting what they have for her ministry. And this
she does with one more extremely rare quality: she doesn’t shame them for their success. Instead, she celebrates it.

Before meeting Heidi, I would have said something like this: In a perfect world, there would be one person who embodied the lives of both Mother Theresa and Kathryn Kuhlman. Through the years, I have noticed that Heidi has the same fruit of both of these giants from church history. She lives with equal measures of compassion and power. Apparently, this has become a more perfect world than I had originally thought possible.

I have had the incredible privilege of serving alongside Rolland and Heidi Baker all over the world, including their home base in Mozambique. They continually amaze me. One of the things I’ve witnessed day after day, year after year, is that they are the same in private as they are in public—humble, passionate, and honoring. Heidi’s passion for the Presence of God upon her life is the fuel for everything else she is known for. For this reason, I dedicate this book to her. She models the heart of this book so profoundly.

Iris Ministries now has ministry bases around the world. Rolland and Heidi live in Pemba, Mozambique.

(Of course, she wrote the foreword not knowing what I would do with the dedication.)
I want to thank Mary Berck and Michael Van Tinteren for doing some of the research needed for this book. It was priceless help to me. Kristin Smeltzer and Shara Pradhan, your selfless work in putting together my transcripts was an invaluable help. Judy Franklin, Pam Spinosi, and Dann Farrelly—each of you played a unique role in helping me review and edit this project. Thanks to all.
In *Hosting the Presence*, Bill Johnson stirs your heart to go deeper in Him, challenges your mind to embrace the Holy Spirit with a new understanding, and ignites your spirit with a fervent passion to seek and maintain His sweet presence. The testimonies and truth, in these pages of inspiration, will open the eyes of your understanding in a whole new dimension in surrendering to the Holy Spirit. *Hosting the Presence* is a must read for every believer who wants to love and honor Jesus as we were created to.

Dr. Ché Ahn  
Senior Pastor, HROCK Church, Pasadena, CA  
President, Harvest International Ministry  
International Chancellor, Wagner Leadership Institute
One of our highest callings is to host the Presence of the Dove of God. That is my greatest joy and pleasure in this life is to be a perch where this dove can come and have a place of belonging. Over the years I have had the honor of observing the hovering of the Holy Spirit over different churches, gatherings, cities, and nations. But rarely have I seen a person, place, or ministry become a dwelling place where the God of Now builds a nest and not only hovers but lands. This book is filled with lessons and present day history of a tender man of God named Bill Johnson and a risky people called Bethel Church. It is an honor to commend to you the lessons learned by this team of seekers. Join them in being a people who host the Presence of the Heavenly Dove.

James W. Goll
Encounters Network, Prayer Storm, Compassion Acts
Author of The Seer, A Radical Faith, The Lost Art of Intercession, and many more

Bill Johnson’s new book, Hosting the Presence, is a very important book on the most important of topics—experiencing Him. I read the book in one morning and loved it. Thrilled by Bill’s personal insights, captured by his insightful one-liners, and challenged as I once again read about other great people of God, and their experiences of Him. This is a book meant for recalibration, calling us back to our first love and warning us not to allow the lesser things rob us of the most important, our relationship with Him. I believe it will become a classic devotional book for our day much as Andrew Murray’s writings were for a bygone generation. You won’t want to miss this read, buy it and experience Him as you put into practice the wisdom from a modern day general in the faith. I believe if books were allowed to be read in Heaven that this one would
be on the best seller list, the mystics from other generations have given it five stars. It would even be reviewed in the New Jerusalem Times.

Randy Clark
Author of There Is More
Co-author with Bill Johnson of The Essential Guide to Healing and Healing Unplugged
Founder of Global Awakening and the Apostolic Network of Global Awakening.

Only a handful of men carry the special anointing that Bill Johnson carries to usher in the presence. I have witnessed on many occasions the awesome miracles that result from this grace. So I was totally engrossed and blessed by every page of his new book, Hosting the Presence. It ministered to me like no other book I have encountered on the presence of God. The waves of God’s glory overwhelmed me as I got captivated by fresh revelations on every page. I never saw Moses or Gideon or David in this manner before. And these revelations kept coming. This will be my manual for the year. I can only say thank you, Bill, and bravo for these revealed treasures. For all believers hungry for more of God’s anointing and how to steward it, this is what you’ve been waiting for. Amazing, awesome, life transforming!

Mahesh Chavda
Sr. Pastor, All Nations Church
Bill Johnson’s book, *Hosting the Presence*, is one of the most powerful books that I have ever read. I was undone by Chapter 1 and found myself weeping and crying out for more of the manifest presence of God to rest on my life. I was wrecked with a greater hunger to be fully possessed by the Glory of God and filled with fresh longing for my life to be distinguished by His Presence.

Bill’s testimonies of encounters with God reminded me of my own life-changing visitations. I remember one particularly powerful time during a meeting in Toronto, Canada, when I was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. My friend Randy Clark was preaching, and during his message I felt so desperate for what he was talking about that even without an altar call I ran down to the front and lifted my arms to Jesus. I remember Randy saying...
that God wanted to know if I wanted the nation of Mozambique. When I screamed back a resounding “Yes!” the Holy Spirit completely undid me and I felt liquid love pulsating through me like electric shocks. It was so powerful that I thought I might die. I couldn’t move, walk, or talk for seven days and seven nights. I had to rely on the Body of Christ to help me with everything! During that time I learned about my total dependence not only on Christ, but also on His Body. I felt a heavy, anointed hand rest on my chest above my heart and a river of love repeatedly rolling over me. I had never felt love as powerful as this up to that point in my life.

I later learned from my husband that no one had laid hands on me during this time. It was God Himself putting His burning heart of passionate love within me. This encounter changed my life forever, and I was ruined for anything other than carrying the very heart and presence of Jesus into the darkness of this world. Since that day I have always looked for open doors to release Him. Through Bill’s book, the Lord calls us to a place of intimate partnership where we carry His glory daily. I believe that as you read this book God will take you in to a deeper place of yielded affection and openness to the Holy Spirit, and draw you into your own greater supernatural encounters with God. It will teach you to recognize the open doors He has for you, and to release His power and presence through your life.

We have been called to such intimate communion with Him that all things are possible for us who believe, and who have been created to be like Him. As we realize that all the miracles Jesus did on the earth were done as a Man dependent on His heavenly Father, we are invited to believe that our little lives can be used in the same way to carry the awesome glory of God. The death of Jesus on the cross made it possible for humanity to come into a place that had previously been hidden, where humankind could carry the very Presence of God and do all that He did. As I read
this book I felt compelled to keep pressing in all the more, until the same things that Jesus did happen in my own life.

As I have listened to Bill’s teachings over the years, I have been drawn to press in for new realms of possibility, and to believe that we can see things we never thought we could see through the power of the Holy Spirit. Since meeting Bill in 1997 I have watched the life and power of God flow through him in powerful ways. When I have been at meetings where he has spoken, I have always experienced the manifest presence of God and been drawn into deeper places of abandonment. Watching Bill’s personal life of intimacy and abandonment to God has been a great inspiration to me. He is one of the most generous people that Rolland and I have ever met, and he always seeks to empower others to soar in realms of the Holy Spirit. He practices a lifestyle of hunger, intimacy, and constant awareness of God’s Presence.

I highly recommend that every believer who longs for possession by Holy Spirit read this book and learn to live a Presence-centered life. Jesus longs to rest upon not just the few, but a whole generation of unstoppable, fearless servant lovers. Those who are willing to wholly yield to His immeasurable, ceaseless love. I believe that as you read this book, Jesus will enlarge your capacity to carry His Presence, ignite your heart with passion, and transition you into new realms of Heaven. You will find yourself in a greater place of yieldedness as you believe that you too can be filled up to all the fullness of God.

May you become the eternal dwelling place of God and soar in your ultimate assignment to be one who hosts the Presence of the King of Glory.

I am undone!

Heidi Baker, PhD
Founding Director, Iris Globe
I’ve never been one to give long introductions to my books—partly because a great number of people don’t read introductions. Another reason is that most of what I want to say I’d rather put in the book. But if there’s one thing I’d like to draw your attention to in presenting this book to you, it would be Psalm 27:4:

One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple.

It’s important that we all find the “one thing” that can become the reference point for the rest of the issues of life. And that one thing is the Presence of the Almighty God, resting upon us.
The Ultimate Assignment

There was something different about the atmosphere that surrounded the apostle Peter. He once stood in fear in front of a servant girl, denying that he ever knew Jesus (see Matt. 26:69-70). His lifestyle changed quite dramatically after he was baptized in the Holy Spirit. People not only were healed when he prayed for them, they just seemed to get well when they were near him. The stories of these miracles spread until finally someone noticed his daily routine—he walked to the temple to pray. So they brought the lame and diseased and lined them up along the side of the street so that as he walked by they could be healed by his shadow (see Acts 5:15). It was actually the Presence of God upon him, for the anointing is a person. The hope was that his shadow might
fall upon them and they would be healed. Shadows have no substance. The shadow was merely the point of contact for their faith. Yet miracles happened with some measure of consistency for the people to develop this pattern.¹

Jesus was known for healing people with and without prayer. In fact, there were times when it looked as though He was not involved at all in the miracle that happened through Him. From the Gospel records, it seemed to have started when one very sick woman saw the potential of a moment and thought if she could just touch His garment, she would be well. She sensed something was available through a touch that was completely unseen. It had not been done before. Neither was there a record of this process ever being included in Jesus’ instructions for “how to get your miracle.” He never even implied it was possible. She watched Him work and came to the conclusion that He carried something on His person that could be accessed through touch.

There’s no question that faith was at work in her heart. But rarely, if ever, does a person in her condition become aware of their faith. The focus was not on herself. It was on Him. As a result, faith was her normal expression. After touching Him, she found out that her perception was true, and she was healed (see Luke 8:43-48).

The story of that one miracle spread until people everywhere realized that this was a legitimate way of being healed—just touch any part of His clothing. It eventually became the goal of the gathering as the people were “imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured” (Mark 6:56). Imagine crowds of people, sometimes numbering into the thousands, trying to touch this one man’s clothing. The Scriptures testify that everyone who touched His clothing with that in mind experienced a miracle.
There was a time in the apostle Paul’s ministry when he graduated from miracles to extraordinary miracles. It’s amazing that the miracle realm can become so normal that Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had to create a separate category to describe the new miracles. They operate at a higher level of mystery, anointing, and authority. This moment came about in Ephesus. The Scriptures record it this way: “God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul” (Acts 19:11). It was during this time that the miracles realm exceeded what happened with Jesus where people simply touched His clothing. Now things had developed to such a place that they could take pieces of Paul’s clothing to the sick and lame and they would be healed of disease and/or delivered of demons. A unique aspect of the biblical description is that these miracles that happened a great distance from Paul were attributed to being “by the hands of Paul.”

These stories are extraordinary. They are glimpses into the ways of the Holy Spirit. We have yet to live in what has already been revealed. I believe it also implies there are ways of the Holy Spirit that are yet to be discovered. These unusual methods reveal how He moves. None of them happened because the people were instructed to behave in such a way, nor was there any suggestion made to hint of the possibility of His presence and power being accessed through these unusual methods. People observed something unseen and responded with faith. Faith sees and responds to unseen realities. Each of the individuals involved in receiving a miracle did so by responding to what they perceived that rested upon these three—Peter, Jesus, and Paul.

This also shows us how the unseen realities of the Kingdom can be accessed through simple faith and obedience. Faith doesn’t come from the mind; it comes from the heart. Yet a renewed mind enhances our faith through an understanding of the unseen. It finds its fuel in knowing ways of the Holy Spirit—how He moves. Their unique perspectives on reality, from which they drew their
HOSTING the PRESENCE

miracle, were not the results of years of study and prayer (which obviously have great value in our lives, but serve another purpose). They were responses to the grace made available in the manifested Presence of God through the Holy Spirit that rested upon people.

It’s time for these exceptional stories to no longer be the exception. It’s time for them to become the rule—the new norm. And that is the cry of my heart. The apostles learned from Jesus’ example that the greatest treasure was the Presence of the Holy Spirit resting upon Him. Learning to host the Presence of God is the biggest challenge of the Christian life.

The Perfect Guest

Consider what Mary and Joseph felt when they heard that Mary would be giving birth to God’s Son, Jesus the Christ. He would grow up in their home, be nurtured as their own, and raised for a purpose beyond their comprehension or control. This Jesus was totally God, yet totally man.

If the assignment of raising the Perfect One weren’t frightening enough, what would it have felt like to lose Him? It actually happened.

Joseph and Mary had a custom of going to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover every year. After the festivities were concluded, they made their way back to Nazareth. After traveling a full day they realized that Jesus, who was only 12 years old at the time, wasn’t with them. Joseph and Mary had not even completed their job of raising Him when Jesus went missing. He had decided to stay behind in Jerusalem and ask the religious leaders some questions. This He did without asking permission. When they compared records they realized that neither of them had seen Jesus all day. They assumed he was with other relatives or traveling...
companions in the caravan. This was a moment of great concern. They lost God.

Three days went by before they found Him. I can’t imagine that they were really that different from the rest of us. I would first be mad at myself for not being more responsible. Upon finding Him, I would feel relief, but also have somewhere else to place the blame—Jesus Himself. It appears that this is exactly what Joseph and Mary did. Mary asked Jesus, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously” (Luke 2:48 NKJV). Jesus caused their anxiety. And they put the blame squarely on His shoulders. Now that they were relieved in finding the Son of God, they were also a bit taken back by His lack of concern for their grief. “Why have you done this to us?” Strangely, in the midst of the miracles and extraordinary lifestyle that He exhibited in His adulthood, Jesus would continue causing anxiety.

His response didn’t help. In fact, His answer made no sense whatsoever from our perspective. Jesus responded, “Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49 NKJV). Isn’t it the parents’ responsibility to look for their missing child? How were they to have known where He’d be? By implication they were to have known that His ultimate priority in life was doing the Father’s business. Jesus was saying that they didn’t need to seek Him. He is never missing when He is doing His Father’s business. As great an answer as it was, neither Joseph nor Mary understood it.

It is the parents’ job to teach their children. To this day the primary responsibility of teaching children does not fall on the shoulders of church or government. It is the God-given assignment to parents. All the other institutions assist. But at this unusual situation, it was the parents’ turn to learn. Jesus just revealed earth’s priorities from the Father’s perspective. This will had something to do with the interaction of two worlds—Heaven and earth.
Awakening to Purpose

There is no greater privilege than being a host to God Himself. Neither is there a greater responsibility. Everything about Him is extreme. He is overwhelmingly good, awe-inspiring to the max, and frighteningly wonderful in every possible way. He is powerful yet gentle, both aggressive and subtle, and perfect while embracing us in the midst of our imperfections. Yet few are aware of the assignment to host Him. Fewer yet have said yes.

The idea of hosting God may sound strange. He owns everything, including our own bodies. And He certainly doesn’t need our permission to go somewhere or do anything. He is God. But He made the earth for humanity and put it under our charge.

If you were renting a home from me, I wouldn’t walk into your home without an invitation, or at least without your permission. You would never see me in your kitchen, taking food from your refrigerator and cooking a meal for myself. Why? Even though it is my house, it is under your charge or stewardship. While there may be landlords who would violate such protocol, God is not one of them. He planted us here with a purpose. Yet it’s a purpose we can’t accomplish without Him. Our true nature and personality will never come to fullness apart from His manifest Presence. Learning to host Him is at the center of our assignment, and it must become our focus so that we can have the success He desires before Jesus returns.

In one moment we find ourselves rejoicing in the dance, arms raised with heads lifted high. In the next we are bowed low, not because someone suggested it would be an appropriate response, but because the fear of God has filled the room. In one moment our mouths are filled with laughter—we have truly discovered “in [His] presence is fullness of joy” (Ps. 16:11 NKJV). In the next we find ourselves weeping for no apparent reason. Such is the walk with God. Such is the life of the one who has given himself to host this One.
His longing for partnership is at the core of this issue. It is His heart. He’s a Person, not a machine. He longs for fellowship. He loves to love.

My interest in the ever-increasing story of a people suited to carry His presence is in these areas:

- What happens to the person when God rests upon them?
- What is their responsibility in protecting that Presence?
- What is the impact on the world around them?
- How are the ways and nature of God revealed in their encounter?
- What is possible for us through their example?

**The Greatest Honor**

Hosting God is filled with honor and pleasure, cost and mystery. He is subtle, and even sometimes silent. He can also be extremely obvious, aggressive, and overtly purposeful. He is a guest with an agenda—Father to Son. Heaven to earth. It is still His world—His purposes will be accomplished. This leaves us with a question that has yet to be answered: What generation will host Him until the kingdom of this world becomes the Kingdom of our Lord and Christ? (See Revelation 11:15.)

**ENDNOTE**

1. The process of how the story of Peter’s healing shadow anointing spread is conjecture. The outcome is not, and is ultimately the focus.
Bill Johnson is a fifth-generation pastor with a rich heritage in the Holy Spirit. Together Bill and his wife serve a growing number of churches that have partnered for revival. This leadership network has crossed denominational lines, building relationships that enable church leaders to walk successfully in both purity and power.

Bill and Brenda (Beni) Johnson are the senior pastors of Bethel Church in Redding, California. All three of their children and spouses are involved in full-time ministry. They also have nine wonderful grandchildren.
IN THE RIGHT HANDS, THIS BOOK WILL CHANGE LIVES!

Most of the people who need this message will not be looking for this book. To change their lives, you need to put a copy of this book in their hands.

But others (seeds) fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold (Matthew 13:8).

Our ministry is constantly seeking methods to find the good ground, the people who need this anointed message to change their lives. Will you help us reach these people?

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop (2 Corinthians 9:6).

EXTEND THIS MINISTRY BY SOWING
3 BOOKS, 5 BOOKS, 10 BOOKS, OR MORE TODAY,
AND BECOME A LIFE CHANGER!

Thank you,

Don Nori Sr., Founder
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