

WHITE WING

100 YEARS

MAY 2023

MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

Reconciling the world
to Christ

Through
the power
of the
Holy Spirit

MISSION STATEMENT



The Church of God of Prophecy is a Christ-exalting, holiness, Spirit-filled, all-nations, disciple-making, church-planting Movement with a passion for Christian union.

Christ-Exalting

In all we do, may the name of Jesus Christ be made glorious! Our goal is that Christ is seen through this body of believers.

Holiness

The call to holiness is deep in our roots and remains a component of our destiny. We renew our surrender to God's grace and the cleansing of his blood, so that we may be like him.

Spirit-Filled

We declare our entire dependence on the Holy Spirit, who has been given to lead and empower the Church of Jesus Christ.

Disciple-Making

Through more than a century of ministry, this body has been committed to the biblical call to make disciples in obedience to the Great Commission of Christ.

Church Planting Movement

We will multiply our efforts to invest in planting churches in every place we find opportunity.

An All Nations Church

We celebrate and intentionally cultivate multicultural diversity in every level of leadership in this international body.

A Passion for Christian Union

Today we intend to joyously cooperate with all that exalt the name of Christ and His great gospel.

WHITE WING MESSENGER

WE BELIEVE in the Holy Trinity—one God, eternally existing in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe in one God, the Father, creator of heaven and earth, of all things seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. All things were made through Him and for Him. He is true God and true man. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin, Mary. He suffered, died, was buried, and on the third day He rose from the dead. He ascended to the right hand of the Father, and He will return to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who eternally proceeds from the Father. He is Teacher, Comforter, Helper, and Giver of spiritual gifts. Through Him the saving and sanctifying works of Jesus Christ are applied to the life of believers. He is the empowering presence of God in the life of the Christian and the church. The Father has sent His Son to baptize with the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues and bearing the fruit of the Spirit are New Testament signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross and that He died in our place. The believer's sins are forgiven by the shedding of His blood. We believe that healing of mind, body, soul, and spirit is available to the believer through the blood of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe in one baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the grace of God brings forgiveness and reconciliation to those who repent, as well as transformation in holiness, enabling them to live a Christ-like life. Sanctification is both a definite work of grace and a lifelong process of change in the believer brought by the blood of Jesus, the Word of God, and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe in one holy, universal church, composed of all true believers in Jesus Christ, offering fellowship and calling for service to men and women of all races, nations, cultures, and languages. We believe in the spiritual and ultimate visible unity of the church.

We believe that the Bible—both Old and New Testaments—is the inspired Word of God. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself and His will to humankind, sufficient for instruction in salvation and daily Christian living. The Bible is the Christian's rule of faith and practice.

We believe that God will ultimately reconcile all things in heaven and earth in Christ. Therefore, we look forward to new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

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About the Church of God of Prophecy

The Church of God of Prophecy is a vibrant, worldwide body of believers, united in worship, working hand-in-hand to share God's love and a message of hope to the brokenhearted. The organization has more than a million members and more than 10,000 ministers, worshipping in more than 10,000 churches or missions in 135 nations of the world.

Church of God of Prophecy Core Values

- Prayer
- The Harvest
- Leadership Development
- Biblical Stewardship
- Service

Vision Statement

Reconciling the world to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit

Mission Statement

The Church of God of Prophecy is a Christ-exalting, holiness, Spirit-filled, all-nations, disciple-making, church-planting movement with passion for Christian union.

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FACING FORWARD

Through the Power of the Holy Spirit

"I can do it by myself!" My wife and I were in a pastor's home many years ago when we heard their two-year-old daughter declare this to her mother who was attempting to pour orange juice into her glass. The little girl grabbed the carton and pulled it from her mother's hands, saying emphatically, "I can do it by myself!" Underestimating the enormity of the task for her small hands, she inadvertently slung the juice all over the kitchen. What a mess!

When it comes to reconciling the world to Christ, we, too, will make a mess of things if we underestimate the enormity of the task and take matters into our own hands. We have been well-advised by the writer of Proverbs not to lean on our own understanding (3:5, 6).

Jesus left no room for misunderstanding when he said, "For without Me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

All around the world, the church is sharpening its focus on the ministry of reconciliation. I see it in our writings, hear it in conversations, and note that it is being lifted up as the theme of conferences and conventions. "Reconciling the World to Christ" is the church's priority, our chief concern, our "One Thing." We must never assume that we can accomplish this enormous task through our own pursuits of higher education, strategic planning, or human effort. Our only hope for reconciling the world to Christ is **THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**.

As a prelude to His earthly ministry, Luke's gospel records that the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Jesus when he was baptized by John. Then being filled with the Holy Spirit, He returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness where he was tempted for forty days by the devil. Afterward, Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. Soon afterward, He went to Nazareth, entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah and found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because He has anointed me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."
(Luke 4:18-19)

Then Jesus closed the book and said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The early church believers could do no less. As a prelude to their engagement in the ministry of reconciliation, they were commanded to remain in Jerusalem to await the baptism of the Holy Spirit which would empower them to be witnesses of Jesus to the end of the earth. One-hundred twenty were gathered in an upper room when there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind that filled the whole house. Cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Today there are more than 644,000,000 Pentecostals/Charismatics who have experienced this same outpouring. We have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to give witness to Christ so that the world might be reconciled.

Not only does the Holy Spirit empower our witness, his role in the salvation of a soul is paramount. Without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the sinner would never know the gift of eternal life. Conviction, godly sorrow, repentance, regeneration, and newness of life come only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The good news is that the Holy Spirit is at work in the world today. A fresh wind is blowing across many college campuses. A fresh fire is igniting. A fresh outpouring is happening as new wine is being poured into new wineskins.

"Not by might nor by power,
but by My Spirit, says the lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). We have been given no other means to reconcile the world to Christ, only **THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**.



Tim Coalter
Presiding Bishop

CONNECTIONS

REV. CATHY PAYNE, DMin | GLOBAL MISSIONS MINISTRIES COORDINATOR



The nations of Malawi and Mozambique in South-Eastern Africa suffered five weeks of the severe impact of Cyclone Freddy. Lasting five weeks with two or more harsh episodes in the months of February and March 2023, meteorological authorities have described Cyclone Freddy as the longest-lasting tropical cyclone recorded worldwide. The death toll of Malawi and Mozambique victims has risen to 500. Of these, more than 300 are in the nation of Malawi with the center of the destruction being Blantyre, where the COGOP Headquarters is located, and the Southern Region of Malawi, where we have the most local churches. While the death toll is rising in Malawi, and whereas our members have lost relatives and friends, we have not had reports of fatalities who are members of our church. The number of displaced people has increased to 508,244. The greatest onslaught has been the damage of the properties of our brethren and those of our local church structures in both countries.

In Malawi, at least 38 brethren's homes have been affected at varying degrees, from total collapse to the blowing away of rooftops or wall collapse. Field Secretary Nelio Makwiza and the former wife of the previous overseer (Grace Mokhuna) have had significant damage to their properties. Altogether 11 local churches have lost their roofs or had their walls falling. In some cases, there were no metal roofs (corrugated and galvanized iron sheets) but thatched roofs that blew away and exposed the walls that need to be reconstructed. The situation in Malawi is compounded by the fact that Cyclone Freddy has also affected crop production, with most maize farms of the brethren destroyed by floods, extreme winds, rains, and mudslides. The same damage has affected electricity, infrastructure, and communication. It is an overwhelming process that will take years to restore, especially for individuals and churches. Malawi's rural economy, where our members are mostly based, is agricultural, and we have established that as many as 60 brethren have lost their farms/crops as farm produce (mostly maize) was blown away by the wind, water, and mudslides.

Similarly, in Mozambique, Field Secretary Albino Quembo reports that virtually all the districts have been affected; here altogether six local churches have been broken down and the corrugated iron sheets blew away. It took a bit of time to compile data, but now we have established that at least 45 brethren across the country have

had varying degrees of damage to their homes, mostly fallen walls and blown-away rooftops.

The Malawi Church of God of Prophecy operates in 70 local churches with a recorded number of 11,000 members while Mozambique has 44 local churches with an updated membership of 3,140.

1. An assessment of the situation shows that most of the homes and churches destroyed were structurally compromised and could not withstand the sustained torrential downpour and strong winds offered by Cyclone Freddy over the five-week period.
2. The brethren will need various interventions, both spiritual and, where possible some help towards restoration of their local churches and restoration of their homes. The challenge is that there will be great need for food in the coming months as the months of April to June were supposed to be harvest period on the farms destroyed by the effects of Cyclone Freddy. It is as overwhelming when reported as it will be in attempting to intervene.
3. We have concluded that, monetary-wise at least, each destroyed local church will need to purchase corrugated iron sheets and install a fairly robust welded super structure shelter roofing that can withstand a similar cyclone. Additionally, each congregation will need to raise funds to do walls and floors while they have a shelter over their heads. With 17 churches affected, a priority will need to be made as some churches will need to explore options such as temporary tents, home meetings, and rentals, where feasible and affordable to the local church, before they can reconvene as before.
4. These nations will have needs in the form of food, finances, and restorations. But we also need prayers that Jehovah may provide resources, vision, and comfort to the brethren. We especially pray for the governments of the two nations to mobilize the necessary resources and to effectively facilitate interventions both now and in the coming months.

Thank you for your prayers of support as we begin to rebuild.

—Phillip Segadika

Administrative Assistant for Malawi, Mozambique,
and Zimbabwe

Have You Received the Holy Spirit?



After Paul met Jesus on his way to Damascus, Jesus instructed him to “get up and enter the city,” and he was going to be told what to do (Acts 9:6). In the meantime, Jesus appeared in a vision to Ananias and commissioned him to go visit Saul of Tarsus, who was praying, and had “seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight” (vv. 11, 12). When Ananias entered the house where Paul was, he laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit” (v. 17). Suddenly, the scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Paul got up and was baptized. Using Pentecostal language, we would say that he was saved, sanctified, and baptized in the Holy Spirit. It seems for Paul this became the natural path for every person coming to know Jesus: each person would receive the blessings made available to them by Jesus’ atoning work at Calvary.

Paul’s first question to a group of disciples in Ephesus was, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” This question shows us how important it was to Paul that Christians receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They replied that they had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit. They had been baptized into John’s baptism of repentance, but it is striking they had not heard there was a Holy Spirit. Somehow, somewhere, the teaching about the baptism with the Holy Spirit got lost. When we read John the Baptist’s introduction of Jesus in all four Gospels, he is very clear that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:1; Mark 1:7, 8; Luke 3:16; John 1:32, 33).

John the Baptist reported that the one who sent him to baptize with water said to him, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (John 1:33). John wants us to know that the whole Trinity is involved in this event. He wants to make clear that it was God who told him that Jesus, on whom the Spirit descended and remained, was the one who baptizes



received the baptism of the Spirit through the laying on of Ananias' hands, and now Paul was laying his hands on these disciples so that they could receive the baptism in the Spirit. Paul was intentional and proactive, letting them know about the blessing of the baptism in the Holy Spirit already available for them. This was accomplished because someone who had already received the baptism in the Holy Spirit was willing to let others know about this great blessing available to them by the grace of God.

What should our attitude be toward a new generation of believers?

Baptism with the Holy Spirit is one of our Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices in the Church of God of Prophecy. We have inherited this teaching from our forefathers.

A.J. Tomlinson became a fervent seeker of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as soon as he heard about this blessing. During the second Assembly, held January 9–13, 1907, Tomlinson preached a sermon titled “The Baptism with the Holy Ghost and Fire.” The minutes state that “The speaker dwelt on the subject very extensively and in power. At the close of his discourse, he made an alter [sic] call and the alter [sic] was quickly filled with earnest seekers for this Baptism. Some tarried until late.”

What is remarkable about this report is that A.J. Tomlinson had not yet been baptized with the Holy Spirit. In his book *The Last Great Conflict*, he said:

In January 1907, I became more fully awakened on the subject of receiving the Holy Ghost as He was poured out on the day of Pentecost. That whole year I ceased not to preach that it was our privilege to receive the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues as they did on the day of Pentecost. I did not have the experience, so I was almost always among the seekers at the altar. The Lord gave great revivals, and souls were converted and sanctified, and some really went through and were baptized with the Holy Ghost evidenced by the speaking in tongues.

A.J. Tomlinson then proceeded to describe his baptism in the Holy Spirit which occurred one year later January 12, 1908, during the third Assembly under the ministry of Gaston B. Cashwell. This experience only increased his zeal for the Holy Spirit, and, like Paul, he became a fervent promoter of the baptism with the Holy Spirit wherever he went. When we read his diaries, his sermons, and writings, we find that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was a priority for him.

Since baptism with the Holy Spirit is one of our Biblical Principles, Beliefs, and Practices, I think that we must teach it to the new generations of our Church. This teaching is also

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with the Holy Spirit. I think that even for John the Baptist the baptism of the Holy Spirit coming after the baptism in water for repentance was a normal sequence for the believers in Jesus since God told him that Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. But somehow, these disciples who had been baptized into John's baptism of repentance had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit.

In what way did Paul respond to John's disciples?

Paul proceeded to tell them the difference between John's baptism and Jesus' baptism: “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus”. On (Acts 19:4) hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And after their baptism in the name of Jesus, Paul “laid his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied” (19:5, 6). Paul was doing with them the same thing that Ananias did to him. Paul

CAMP

Dates

State/Region	Age Groups	Camp Location	More Information
Alabama	Collegiate Camp (15-19) June 4-10 \$225 Senior Camp (12-14) June 11-17 \$225 Discovery Camp (9-11) June 18-24 \$225 Pee Wee Camp (6-8) May 31- Jun 3 \$135	Camp Boothe, Greenpond, AL	alcogop.org
Alaska/ Washington	Teen Camp (13-19) July 16-21 Pee Wee Camp (5-7) July 7-9 Junior Camp (8-12) July 9-14 Young Adult Camp (18-30) July 14-16	Camp Roganunda, Naches, WA	wacogop.org
California	Teen Camp (12-17) July 1-4 pre-register \$225 onsite \$250 Kid's Camp (5-12) July 1-4 pre-register \$225 onsite \$250	Camp Cedar Crest, Running Springs, CA	cacogop.org
Canada East	Big Shot Camp (6-9) Aug 11-13 \$250 Tweens/Teens (10-17) July 24-29 \$460	Upper Canada Camp, Palgrave, ON	cogop.ca
Florida	Hot Shot Camp (4-7) June 9-11 \$55 Senior Camp (14-17) June 12-17 \$135 Intermediate Camp (11-13) June 19-24 \$135 Junior Camp (8-10) June 19-24 \$135 SC+ Camp (18+) June 12-17 \$135	Camp Sonshine, Brooksville, FL	flcogop.org
Georgia	Senior (15-19) June 4-10 \$175 Junior (12-14) June 11-17 \$175 Freshman (9-11) June 18-24 \$175 Explorers (6-8) June 25-28 \$125 YAC (18 HS Grads -30) June 28-July 1 \$100	Camp Echeconnee, Lizella, GA	gacogop.org
Great Lakes Region (IL, IN, MI, WI)	GL Camp (7-12) June 25-29 GL Camp (12-18) June 25-29 GL Camp (18-23) June 25-29 GL Camp (24 and up) June 25-29	Lake James Campground, Angola, IN	greatlakesregioncogop.org
Heartland America (AR, KS, MO, OK)	OK Senior (13-18) June 5-10 \$165 before Apr 15 OK Intermediate (10-12) June 12-17 \$165 before Apr 15 OK Junior (7-9) June 19-24 \$165 before Apr 15 AR Kids Camp (7-12) June 8-12 \$135 by May 1 AR Senior Camp (13-College) June 13-17 \$135 by May 1	Camp Big Cedars, Wanette, OK Camp Kahoka, AR	hacogop.org
IOU Region (ID, OR, UT)	ID/UT Youth Camp June 12-15	Cathedral of the Pines	cogop-iou.org
Kentucky	Hot Shots (7-9) June 17-19 Junior Camp (10-12) June 19-23 Teen Camp (13-18) June 12-17	Camp Nikao, Elizabethtown, KY	kycogop.org
Magnolia Region (LA, MS)	MS Pee Wee Camp (6-9) May 29-June 1 MS Senior Camp (14-18) June 1-6 MS Junior Camp (10-13) June 7-12 Regional College & Career (18 and up) May 26-28 LA Pee Wee Camp (6-8) June 4-7 LA Junior Camp (9-12) June 4-7 LA Senior Camp (13-18) June 8-11	Kamp Kumbaya, Eupora, MS Camp Pollock, Pollock, LA	magnoliacogop.com

State/Region	Age Groups	Camp Location	More Information
Mid-Atlantic Region (DE, DC, NJ, NY, RI, VT)	Pee Wee Camp (5-8) June 27-29 Junior Camp (9-12) June 27-29 Youth (13-17) June 23-25 Young Adult (18-25) June 23-25	Summit Lake Camp, Emmitsburg, MD	macogop.org
Midwest Rocky Mtn Region (CO, IA, MN, NE)	IA Junior Camp (8-12) June 27-July 1 \$175.00 NE Higher Vision Camp (13-18) June 20-24 \$275	The Crossing Retreat Center, Lexington, NE	midrockycogop.org
North Carolina	Pee Wee Camp (Kindergarten-2nd grade) June 14-17 \$95 Hot Shot Camp (3rd-5th grade) June 20-24 \$160 Middle School Camp (6th-8th grade) June 26-Jul 1 \$175 High School Camp (9th-12th grade) July 10-15 \$175	Camp Maranatha, High Point, NC	nccogop.org
Northeast Region (CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT, Bermuda)	Youth Camps August 20-25 \$350 before July 22, \$375 after	Streamside Camp & Conference, Stroudsburg, PA	cogopner.org
Ohio/West Virginia	All Camps June 5-10	New River Ranch Campground, Fayetteville, WV	ohwvcogop.org
Pennsylvania	Elementary Camp (6-10) Youth Camp (11-23) All camps: August 6-10 Cost: Early bird (by July 16): \$185.00; Regular: \$200.00	Camp Allegheny, Stoystown, PA	pacogop.com
South Carolina	Big Stuff (Preschool/Family Camp) May 27 Parent/Camper \$25, Family \$50 Short Stuff (K5-2nd grade) June 4-7 \$125 Freshman Camp (3rd-5th) June 7-10 \$125 Junior Camp (6th-8th) June 18-22 \$125 Senior Camp (9th-12th) June 11-16 \$125	State Campground Batesburg-Leesville, SC	campagapesc.org
Tennessee	Senior Camp (15-18) June 3-8 Teen Camp (12-14) June 10-15 Preteen Camp (10-12) June 17-22 Junior Camp (8-10) June 24-29 Big Shot Camp (6-8) July 1-5	Camp Hickory Hills Convention & Retreat Center, Dickson, TN	tnkogop.com
Texas	Big Shot Camp (6-9) June 14-17 early bird \$110 4:12 Kids (10-12) June 21-24 early bird \$110 Youth Camp (13-17) June 7-10 early bird \$110 College & Career (18-30) June 29-July 2 early bird \$110	Camp Lost Pines Campground & Retreat Center, Warda, TX	txcogop.com
Virginia	Children and Youth Camps July 24-27	Eagle Eyrie Conference Center	vacogop.org

All camp information is subject to change. Some camp information had not been finalized at the time this issue was published. Please contact your state/regional office for more information.

2023 Regional and State

State/Region	SRB	Dates	Location
Alabama	Richard Ramsey	7/13 - 7/15	Metropolitan Church of God 2800 Metropolitan Way Birmingham, AL 35243
Alaska	Franklin Smith	8/4 - 8/6	Anchorage, AK
Washington	Franklin Smith	8/17 - 8/19	Kennewick-Three Rivers Convention Center
Arizona	Jose Rivera	5/19 - 5/20	Revolution Ministries 911 N 91st Ave Tolleson, AZ 85353
Nevada	Jose Rivera	6/16 - 6/17	Centro Cristiano El Shaddai, 2075 N. Lamb Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89115
New Mexico	Jose Rivera	7/21 - 7/22	Albuquerque Church, 300 56th Street NW, Albuquerque, NM 87105
California	Philip Pruitt	7/21 - 7/23	Visalia Convention Center, 303 E Acequia Ave, Visalia, CA 9329
Canada East	Shelton Beneby	8/4 - 8/6	4289 Rue Majeau Montreal-Nord Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Canada West	David Brown	7/20 - 7/23	Riviera Plaza and Conference Centre 3515 26 St NE Calgary, AB T1Y 7E3 Canada
Florida	Scott Gillum	7/27 - 7/30	Doubletree Universal Orlando, FL
Georgia	Billy Adams	7/20 - 7/22	
Great Lakes	Tim Harper	7/21 - 7/23	Shipshewana Convention Center Shipshewana, IN
Heartland America	Gary Smith	8/3 - 8/5	Oasis Hotel in MO
Oregon	Wallace Pratt	5/18 - 5/20	
Utah	Wallace Pratt	6/8 - 6/10	
Idaho	Wallace Pratt	7/13 - 7/15	
Kentucky	Jeffrey White	7/28 - 7/29	Stitton Baptist Church 95 Park Ave Radcliff, KY 40160
Magnolia	Duke Stone	7/13 - 7/15	Crossway Church of God, Flowood, MS
Mid-Atlantic	Woodroe Thompson	7/21 - 7/23	Doubletree by Hilton - Downtown Wilmington, DE

Convention Schedule

State/Region	SRB	Dates	Location
Mid-West/Rocky MTN	Jesse Yanez	8/18 - 8/20	Merrymen Performing Arts Theater Kearney NE
North Carolina	George McLaughlin	7/27 - 7/29	
Northeast EN	Leroy Greenaway	7/14 - 7/16	Marriot Albany 189 Wolf Road Albany, NY 12205
Northeast SP	Rahadames Matos	7/14 - 7/16	Hilton Parsippamy 1 Hilton Court Parsippamy, NJ 07054
Northwest Territory	Scott Lee	6/15 - 6/17	Bethesda Worship Center, Sheridan, WY
OH, WV	Clint Knowles	7/6 - 7/8	Victory Temple Church 2443 Valle Greene Dr Fairborn, OH 45324
Pennsylvania	Mark Menke	7/21 - 7/23	Red Lion Hotel Harrisburg Hershey, 4751 Lindle Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17111
South Carolina	Richard Martin	7/20 - 7/22	Woodruff Church of God, 6385 Hwy 101 Woodruff, SC 29388
Southeast SP	Ebli De La Rosa	7/6 - 7/8	Peerless Rd Church Cleveland, TN
Tennessee	E.C. McKinley	7/20-7/22	North Cleveland Church of God Cleveland, TN
Texas	Daniel Felipe	7/27 - 7/30	Southwestern Assemblies of God University 1200 Sycamore St Waxahachie, TX 75165
Virginia	Joshua Lynn	7/13 - 7/15	Tree of Life 2812 Greenview Dr Lynchburg, VA 24502



HOLY SPIRIT POWER HAS COME!

Power has come! Holy Spirit now indwells humanity as we surrender to Christ. Holy Spirit works in and through us by his power. As we explore a few truths of Holy Spirit, my desire is that your knowledge of these truths will help you to understand the creative power of Holy Spirit so that you can fulfill the calling God has placed upon you.

Jesus said, "I go away to Him who sent Me . . . I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you (John 16:5-7 NKJV).

You may have noticed I refer to that Helper Jesus talked about as "Holy Spirit" instead of the possibly more common use, "the Holy Spirit." It is my preference to call him Holy Spirit; after all, Holy Spirit is a person, and it is not a common practice to add "the" in front of a person's name. For example, most people would not say, "The Todd Bagley wrote this article," but simply, "Todd Bagley wrote this article." I say Holy Spirit to indicate he is a person, specifically the third person of the Trinity.

And Holy Spirit acts within the Godhead in specific ways. Let me share with you three biblical elements that show Holy Spirit is the agent of creativity and creation.



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HOLY SPIRIT—AGENT OF CREATION

Let us start at the beginning. We are told that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:1, 2 NKJV).

The Hebrew word translated as “Spirit” here is *ruach*, which also can mean “breath.” The *ruach Elohim*, “the Breath of Almighty God,” is the agent in creation. It is not the immaterial aspects of the Spirit that are the perspective here, but instead his power and energy. The image we see is of God’s energy breathing out creation, speaking the worlds into existence, putting the stars into space.

When we read Isaiah 40:26 (NKJV), “Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing.” The “who” referred to here is found in Genesis 1:2; the Spirit is the unrestrained power by which God accomplishes his purpose—HIS BREATH! When we read Genesis 1, it is not difficult to see that we have in the second verse a clear and distinct reference to the third person of the Trinity—Holy Spirit.

HOLY SPIRIT—AGENT OF NEW CREATION IN CHRIST

The Holy Spirit is the agent not only of creation, but also of God’s new creation in Christ. He is the initiator of the creation of new birth. He is the one that convicts of sin. He is the one that draws to salvation. He is the agent of this new life.

In Jesus’ classic encounter with Nicodemus, Jesus said, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5 NKJV). This truth of being born of the Spirit is worked out in the rest of Scriptures as we see Holy Spirit’s work in the life of the early church and beyond.

HOLY SPIRIT—AUTHOR OF SCRIPTURES

Finally, Holy Spirit is the author of the Scriptures. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Inspiration is another breath word; to inspire literally means “to breathe into.” Another translation says, “All Scripture

is BREATHED OUT by God.” The Greek word behind this phrase is *theopneustos*, which literally means “God-breathed.” At creation, we have Holy Spirit breathing his energy, releasing the power of God in the act of creation. We have the same thing in the act of redemption, and we see it again in the divine act of giving to us the Scriptures themselves. Inspiration is entirely related to the work of Holy Spirit.

Peter affirms this understanding when he writes, “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21 NKJV). The writers of the books of the Bible were not inventing things on their own. Neither were they machines generating a result. They were real people in real historical times with real DNA writing according to their historical settings and their personalities.

But the authorship of Scripture was not theirs alone. It was dual. For instance, it was both Jeremiah and God because Jeremiah was picked up and carried along. Indeed, in Jeremiah’s case, God said, “I have put My words in your mouth” (Jeremiah 1:9 NKJV). God did so without violating Jeremiah’s distinct personality, and Jeremiah then wrote the very Word of God. We study the Bible because it exists as a result of the out-breathing of Holy Spirit, a person distinct and inseparable as part of the perichoresis, the Trinity.

Holy Spirit’s identity is as “another Helper.” Jesus promised a Helper of the same kind rather than of a different kind. Holy Spirit is the *parakletos*, the one who comes alongside. Jesus said that Spirit would “abide with you forever . . . He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16, 17 NKJV). His ministry is both permanent and personal. The Holy Spirit came, not just in power, though there was great power at work, but he came in person.

He came not to overpower us, but to empower us.
He came not to capture us, but to free us.
He came not to restrict us, but to lead us into all truth.
He came not to dictate us, but to transform us.

Allow Holy Spirit to breathe in you and through you.

reaffirmed in our Statement of Faith. We must remember that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is “the promise of the Father” for the believer. This carries a great weight since it is God’s Word that is committed here. When we teach and promote the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we are validating Jesus’ teachings to his disciples in his farewell discourse, when he made the promise to send the Comforter who was going to be with us forever; who was going to teach us all things; who was going to remind us of Jesus’ teachings, and to testify about him (John 14:16, 26; 15:26); who was also going to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; and who was going to guide us into all truth and to glorify Jesus (John 16:8–14 NKJV).

How are we to teach about the Holy Spirit to a new generation?

Since our people need to hear about the baptism with or in the Holy Spirit, how are we going to teach them about it?

Simon Chan has written the following:

The Pentecostal reality has not been communicated in all its fullness to a subsequent generation. When it was explained, it came through as rather impoverished theological constructs. To cite a case in point, the central doctrine called “baptism in the Spirit” is far richer in Pentecostal experience than in Pentecostal explanation. As experience, it is nothing less than the “revelation” of the triune God, a “theophany” of the God of history and the eschaton; yet when it was explained, it was narrowly defined as “the enduement of power for life and service.” This disparity between experience and explanation has serious consequences for the Pentecostal tradition. When Pentecostals explain glossolalia as the initial physical evidence of Spirit-baptism, within the Pentecostal community, this makes pretty good sense. But it makes good sense only as long as the majority of the people in the community continue to have a healthy experience of the Pentecostal reality—which was not a problem in the early days when most Pentecostals experienced Spirit-baptism and glossolalia firsthand. But when the experience is inadequately conceptualized, what is communicated to the next generation is a constricted concept of the experience, and this concept will in turn evoke an equally narrow experience. This, I believe, is what is happening to Pentecostal believers in our churches today. Among second-generation Pentecostals, Spirit-baptism is received first as a doctrine before it is actualized in personal experience (contrary to what happened to first-generation Pentecostals, who first experienced the baptism in the Spirit, and later developed the doctrine of the baptism [ER]). But when the doctrine is poorly explained, the intended experience does not necessarily follow.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit, as we have known it, “is power for witness and service,” but we must not overlook the relational aspect of Spirit baptism. Frank Macchia brings both aspects of Spirit baptism stating that Luke’s Spirit baptism doctrine is “charismatic, having to do with the divine empowerment of the church as a living witness, while Paul’s is primarily soteriological, having fundamentally to do with being in Christ.” Chan highlights this relational aspect of Spirit baptism stating, “Spirit baptism is better understood primarily in terms of revelation and personal intimacy and only derivatively, as empowerment for service.” Wolfgang Vondey says that “the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism is first and foremost an encounter with Jesus Christ,” while John A. Sims states that Spirit baptism is “a direct contact with the presence and power of God.”

This emphasis on the personal relationship with Jesus Christ provided by the Holy Spirit cannot be ignored. In other words, we must find the proper balance between the two aspects of Spirit baptism which are being in Christ and empowerment for service. I think that the aspect of being in Christ and personal intimacy with the Holy Spirit needs to be elevated. Maybe we have preferred power and signs over intimacy with Jesus. Paul said, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

How can we encourage believers into receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Our apathy will cause a new generation of believers to say they have not even heard there is a Holy Spirit. We must talk, teach, preach, and give enough freedom to the operation of the gifts of the Spirit in our services and activities. And many times, when we do talk about the Holy Spirit, we do it in derogatory ways, highlighting the negative things of our unruly behavior instead of emphasizing the benefits and blessings of his presence. Our fear of extremes has become a hindrance to the seeking of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The present and upcoming generations must know the reality of the Holy Spirit, his baptism and giftings, and they must also be taught discernment, which is given by the Spirit, to reject perversions and counterfeits of the manifestations of the Spirit.

Affirmation—The Presence and Manifestations of the Holy Spirit

During the last three decades, the Holy Spirit has been poured out to such an extent that many believe we are continuing to live in the time of the fulfillment of Acts 2:15–18, when God said, “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.” Spirit-filled believers make up the largest and fastest-growing segment of Christianity in the world. The academic world is interested; governments are interested; books are being written; and studies are being done about this worldwide movement.

At the same time, Christianity in the Western world seems to be slowing or drifting from Spirit-filled influence. During the last decade, there has been external influence by misconceptions portrayed in the media as well as internal influence from Christian leaders to distract, suppress, and, in some cases, outright oppose any visible ministry or manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Some have advocated that the spiritual gifts or corporate ministries of the Holy Spirit do not have a place in public worship today.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit, as we have known it, "is power for witness and service," but we must not overlook the relational aspect of Spirit baptism.

This persuasion has resulted in not only the rapid decline of spiritual manifestations in the church, but it has also subsequently discouraged believers from actively seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is this urgent matter that recently led the Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches of North America to entertain a discussion with the Pentecostal Society of Scholars as to how bishops and pastors can best respond to this imminent challenge. The conclusion among scholars and ecclesiastical leaders gathered in March 2009 was that Spirit-filled ministries must rise up with new inspiration to live and minister in the fullness of Pentecost, thereby demonstrating a more vibrant and effective approach to ministry than those who would water down the activity of the Spirit, seeking approval from seekers and more liberal elements in Christianity today. The Church of God of Prophecy wants to go on record as believing and practicing the presence and manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

While there has always been a need among our leadership and pastors to maintain biblical order and decent behavior in the house of the Lord, such zeal for structure and fear of false manifestations of the Holy Spirit should never be practiced in a manner to "quench the Spirit" or "despise prophecies" (1 Thessalonians 5:19, 20). Subsequently, this should encourage us to embrace spiritual discernment that enables church leaders to both enhance and encourage the genuine moving of the Holy Spirit that edifies and comforts believers. Scriptures are abundant throughout the New Testament in that such ministries are a fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send to us "another comforter" (John 14:16, 17). Furthermore, the Bible undeniably declares, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). A careful examination of the Greek verb

translated "be filled" shows that it is a present tense, revealing that this blessing is one that we can experience now. The fact that the verb is used in the imperative mood does not leave the obedient disciple an option. Since the verb is also in the passive voice, it is not something we gain by human effort or achievement but is done for him or her as they submit to God (Acts 2:38, 39).

What happens when Holy Spirit-filled believers go to church? Paul clearly answers this question when he writes to the Corinthian church. He expressly details the various gifts of the Holy Spirit that are given "for the profit of all," namely the word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gift of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). These phenomena need not only occur in the congregation but should go beyond. As Paul unfolds the blessing of these manifestations, he also gives anointed instructions about abuses and how to handle such anomalies (14:6-33). But nowhere in the text does the apostle command or insinuate that these manifestations of the Holy Spirit should ever be rooted out from the experience of corporate worship by the believers. Instead, the apostle, when speaking even to a church rife with abuses, still encourages and gives imperative commands that these ministries are essential to edifying and empowering the church (1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:1-5, 39).

Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, speaking in tongues in the public arena was not seen as a detractor, but as a source of interest to unbelievers and as an enjoyment, even ministry, to believers. We see in multiple references both the attraction that speaking in tongues offered to those in the community and the encouragement for a bolder witness that it gave to the disciples (Acts 2:1-8; 4:31-33; 10:44-48; 19:1-6). In a world that has become increasingly attracted to cults, the media, and technological gadgets, the Holy Spirit's presence is one key ingredient in our churches that can attract and fill the needs of people hungry for something beyond their daily life of drudgery. In fact, this actuates the blessing and need of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) to strengthen the believer in their normal life experience.

In this age, there is a spiritual thirst among people to experience God, and the Church of God of Prophecy must be prepared to offer them the Spirit that can quench this desire. Let the Church be Spirit-filled and ready to offer deliverance, inspired truth, and real-life victory. We are truly thankful that there are areas in the world where the flames of the Spirit are burning brightly, and we commend such fervency with an admonition to continue to allow the Holy Spirit to spread. Indeed, we must now commit ourselves once again to be churches filled with spiritual outpourings that can refresh and change people's lives (AC BDP Report, 96th Assembly, 2010). Come, Holy Spirit, be our guide!



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Extraordinary Power Ordinary Means

My mind has been reeling since the International Assembly last summer. I felt personally motivated and challenged by the messages and themes conveyed by many of the dynamic speakers. Their words still echo in my thoughts and resonate through the Scriptures. Throughout the course of this year, since the Assembly, I have been carefully considering the meaning of "reconciling the world to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit." I have been blessed by reading through the Bible with this framework in mind.

One thing that truly strikes me as I examine the Scriptures is that the Spirit has worked almost invariably through human beings. Perhaps on the surface, this does not sound like some grand revelation. Indeed, it probably is not, for God works through the ordinary. Many messages have been penned about our gracious God working through broken and unqualified human beings. However, the focus is not on the quality of those with whom the Spirit works, but on the incredible irony that the Holy Spirit performs the amazing work of reconciliation through these "earthen vessels." God could choose to bypass the human element altogether and allow his Spirit to minister to the world, and surely some could testify that was their experience. However, our Father loves us such that he desires for us to be included in his rescue plan.

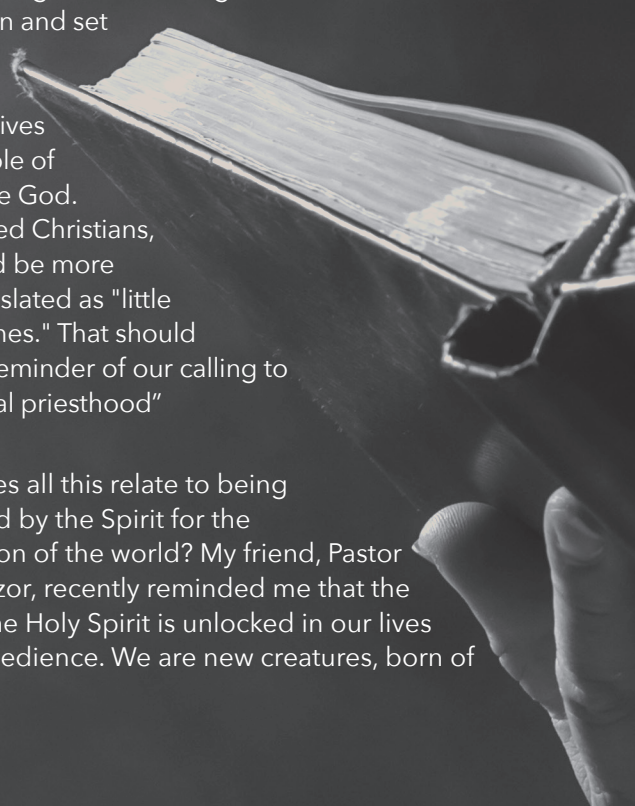
In parallel to this divine-human collaborative effort, we should also note that this role is not a novelty of the New Covenant. The Spirit worked through ordinary human beings in the past, individuals such as Bezalel (Exodus 31:1-4; 35:30-33) and Gideon (Judges 6), but this happened to people quite sporadically. The day of Pentecost ushered in an entirely new metric. Simon Peter famously declared, "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams'" (Acts 2:16, 7 NKJV).

In the millennia since that day, the Holy Spirit truly has been poured out on all flesh. All believers are now born of and anointed by the Spirit. Because of this, we are called to serve as kings and priests. All who belong to Christ are meant to be the royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6), the intermediaries seeking the reconciliation of the world to our beloved Savior.

The role of kings and priests is absolutely vital to this conversation. In the Old Testament, we saw something special take place to announce that someone has been set apart for either of these roles. That something was "anointing." These individuals were chosen and set apart to function as representatives of the people of Israel before God. We are called Christians, which could be more literally translated as "little anointed ones." That should serve as a reminder of our calling to be the "royal priesthood" of God.

How does all this relate to being empowered by the Spirit for the reconciliation of the world? My friend, Pastor Raul Umanzor, recently reminded me that the power of the Holy Spirit is unlocked in our lives through obedience. We are new creatures, born of



and anointed by the Spirit, but the true power of that anointing is hampered when we are double minded. The human condition is such that obedience is never completely easy. No one is above temptation so long as we wear this mortal flesh.

Thankfully, obedience is made possible by the Spirit who dwells in us. The Spirit is aptly called our Helper, and love is his mechanism. The discourse of Paul in 1 Corinthians illustrates this powerfully. Chapters 12 and 14 are packed full of instructions and information concerning the gifts of the Spirit.

However, that beautiful thirteenth chapter is sandwiched between them for the express purpose of showing how love must be the hallmark of our lives. It is through the simple obedience of ordinary people that the majority of kingdom work is accomplished: acts of charity, preaching the gospel, ministering to the outcasts, and such deeds. Reconciling the world to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit looks like this: ordinary human beings, changed and empowered by the Spirit, engaging their communities and cultures with effervescent, unwavering acts of love for Jesus the Messiah.

A MATTER OF COURAGE

—A SPIRIT MATTERS LESSON

Introductory Matters

When studying the stories of Martha and Mary against the backdrop of the Gospels as a whole, we can see that serving is a prominent sign of the kingdom of God. Here are two sisters, each serving the Lord, each being attentive to him. But while Martha becomes distracted by too many things, Mary focuses on one. It was a matter of courage.

[Begin with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth as you study God's Word (John 16:13).]

[Discussion Questions]

- In what ways might it be necessary for a Christian to be courageous in the United States? What about other parts of the world?
- What is it that you would do for Christ if fear, anxiety, and worry did not exist?
- Will you be receptive to the Holy Spirit as he shows you in what ways you can be a more courageous disciple?

[Read Luke 10:38–42 (NIV): “As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’ ‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’] ”

This is the same Mary who John says took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair (John 12:1–8). Such a display of love, reverence, gratitude, and humility would make it hard to believe that Mary would have shirked her responsibility to help Martha provide

the necessities for their guests. She may even have encouraged Martha to leave all the extra things undone so they could join the disciples and Jesus. After all, it was common for disciples to sit and listen to a religious teacher. But in Judaism, long before the first century, this practice was reserved for men. Mary's choice took courage.

Principal Matters

When Martha complained to Jesus, she was not merely asking for help. It was really an expectation that Mary needed to be helping her. The Greek translation implies she fully expected Jesus to agree with her. She knew that Jesus was aware of the roles prescribed for men and women.

[Further study: Often, Jesus refused to side with the one who asks that things be decided in a particular way; see Luke 12:13–15 and John 8:4–7. In kind, see Matthew chapter 15 where Jesus encountered controversy with leaders over interpreting the spirit of the law—not the letter of the law.]

For Mary to sit with the disciples and absorb Jesus' teaching instead of performing the more traditional female role would have shocked most Jewish men. In John 4, Jesus' disciples were amazed to see him conversing with a woman (especially a Samaritan woman).

Rabbi Eliezer¹, from around the time of Jesus, is famous for saying:

- “Instructing a woman in the Law is like teaching her blasphemy.”
- “Let the Law be burned rather than entrusted to a woman.”
- “A woman's wisdom is limited to the handling of the distaff.” (the instrument used for twisting threads)

For males, however, the educational process was prescribed by the Mishnah.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

“The Mishnah is the oldest authoritative postbiblical collection of Jewish oral laws. Its various interpretations were compiled by numerous scholars over a period of about two centuries—since the time of Ezra, c. 450 BC. It supplements the written, or scriptural, laws found in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament). For a Jewish male in the time of Jesus:

- At five, one is fit for the Scripture
- At ten, the Mishnah (oral Torah, interpretations)
- At thirteen, for the fulfilling of the commandments

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- At fifteen, the Talmud (making Rabbinic interpretations)
- At thirty, for authority (able to teach others—usually describing exceptional students)

Those who left home to travel and study with a famous rabbi were called talmidim in Hebrew, which is translated as disciple. As the rabbi lived and taught his understanding of the Scripture, his students listened and watched and imitated—so as to become like him. Eventually, a few would become teachers passing on a lifestyle to their disciples.” —<https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/rabbi-and-talmidim>

Many scholars believe that girls around the age of five also attended class in the synagogue. Education focused primarily on reading and writing Scripture (the Torah). By the age of 13, girls would have remained at home. Further studies to become a teacher was a role not permitted to women. There is one known exception in the second century, but most rabbis rejected her opinions. It was not forbidden for a woman to be instructed in the Torah, but few rabbis would expose themselves as contradicting the customs dictated by rabbinic Judaism.

This made Jesus’ response to Martha even more unexpected. Not only did Jesus refuse to take Martha’s side, but he also added that Mary’s decision to spend this time with him was the better one.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

“Jesus took the time to evangelize and teach women (John 4, John 8, Luke 7, Luke 8, Luke 23). He was willing for these women to learn about spiritual matters. His approach to women was revolutionary during that era. For Jesus, women have a value equal to that of men (Matthew 19:4, Genesis 1:27). Jesus came to earth not primarily as a male but as a person. He treated women not primarily as females but as human beings. Jesus recognized women as fellow human beings. Females are seen by Jesus as genuine persons, not simply as the objects of male desire. The foundation-stone of Jesus’s attitude toward women was His vision of them as persons to whom and for whom He had come. He did not

perceive them primarily in terms of their sex, age, or marital status; He seems to have considered them in terms of their relation (or lack of one) to God.” <https://www.crossway.org/articles/how-jesus-viewed-and-valued-women/>

Mary’s decision to sit at the feet of Jesus with the disciples and absorb Jesus’ teaching—at the expense of the more traditional womanly role—would have taken courage. And Mary was not the only woman making courageous choices. In Luke, chapter 8, we read women were among the disciples who followed Jesus’ ministry on earth. Women, along with the beloved John, were the last disciples at the cross. Women were the first at the empty tomb and the first appointed to proclaim Jesus’ resurrection (Matthew 28:7). After the resurrection, Acts 9:36 says, “In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha.”

Several women disciples served as leaders or co-leaders of the house churches that sprang up throughout the Roman Empire:

- Acts 16:15: “When she (Lydia) and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home.”
- Romans 16:1: “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae.”
- Romans 16:3: “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus.”
- Romans 16:12: “Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.”
- Philemon 1:2: “Also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home.”
- Colossians 4:15: “Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.”
- Philippians 4:2, 3: “I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel.”

With the increase of women historians contributing to this field of study, we have learned more about women in

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The Power of Living Hope



Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest YOUR HOPE fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3, 13 NKJV).

In these verses, the apostle Peter is speaking to Christians like himself who were suffering persecution in Asia Minor. His words were meant to encourage them and us that their future was secure in trouble because of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Their hope was in his victory over death, hell, and the grave. Whatever believers then and now would suffer would not compare to the blessings of the future resurrection and the life to come in eternity. Even so, come Lord Jesus!



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The apostle Peter opens his letter with words of praise to God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, reminding readers that salvation is a gift of God's mercy and grace. Then Peter states that believers are given a **LIVING HOPE** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What exactly does Peter mean when he speaks of a living hope? Peter states that it is the new birth that provides our living hope, affirming that salvation is a gift from God. We are born of God (John 1:13) through Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Salvation changes who we are (2 Corinthians 5:17), making us dead to sin and alive to righteousness in Jesus (Ephesians 2:5). This new birth serves as our reason for hope—the assurance of salvation.

Bible commentators often call the apostle Peter the apostle of **HOPE**. The living hope Peter speaks of is not the wishful thinking usually associated with the word hope today.

The Greek term for hope means "an eager, confident expectation." This hope is not only living but lively. Unlike the empty, dead hope of this world, this living hope is energizing, alive, and active in the soul of the believer. Webster's Dictionary defines hope this way: "To expect and desire—to wish for something with expectation in confidence." The biblical meaning of hope in both the Old and New Testaments is a confident expectation and assurance based upon a sure foundation of actions: "If God said it, I believe it and it is so!"

So many of the Psalms focus on being hopeful:

- Put your hope in God (Psalm 42:5)
- My hope comes from him (Psalm 62:5)
- For I have put my hope in your Word (Psalm 119:74)
- O Israel, put your hope in the Lord (Psalm 130:7)
- Who put their hope in his unfailing love (Psalm 147:11)

According to Baker's Dictionary of Theology, "Hope: Elpis (Hebrew *batah*)" had in Greek and Roman times a neutral meaning as expectation of good or evil. God is the hope of Israel (Jeremiah 14:8).

They trust in him (17:7), wait passively upon him (Psalm 42:5), or actively anticipate his blessing (62:5).

Christ himself is described as the Christian hope (1 Timothy 1:1); and by his resurrection, the specific Christian virtue of hope is bestowed on the regenerated—who abound in hope through the Spirit (Romans 15:13). Living hope is anchored in the past and confirms for the future and continues in the present. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). Praise the Lord!

The following is a fact. Because of the Person and work of Jesus Christ, Christians of all ages now have an inheritance in heaven that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading—ready to be revealed in the last days (1 Peter 1:4). We have an inheritance that will never be touched by death, stained by evil, or faded with time. This inheritance is also failure-proof because God guards and preserves it in heaven for us. Our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable external way of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen but on what is unseen, which is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16–18).

Face to face with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we shall experience the fullness of God's grace now, in these troubled times, and then in glory. Life with Christ is an endless **HOPE**. Without him, our Lord of hope is a hopeless end. We have an inheritance that will never be touched by death, stained by evil, or faded with time. Our hope is sin-proof, death-proof, and fail-proof. Our living hope originates from a living, resurrected Savior!

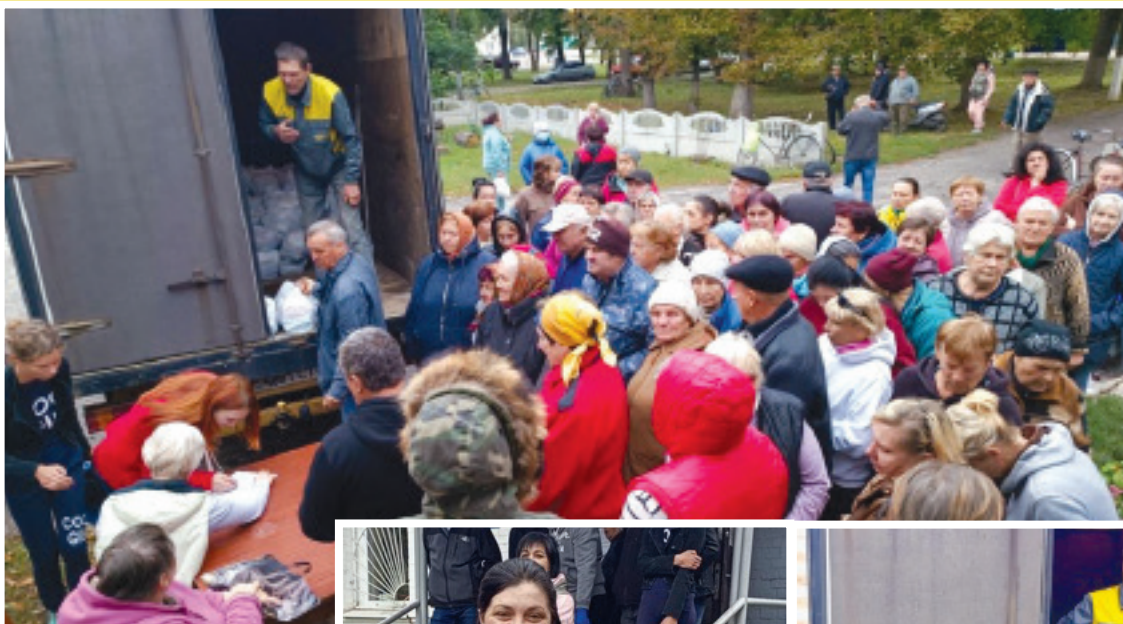
People cannot survive long without hope. Hope keeps us going through painful experiences and fear of what the future may hold. In a fallen world where people face poverty, disease, hunger, injustice, disaster, war, and terrorism, we need a living hope. The Bible tells us in Ephesians 2:12 that those who don't have Jesus Christ do not have hope. Believers are blessed with real and substantial hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. By the power of God's Word and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, this living hope quickens our minds and souls (Hebrews 4:12).



Dr. Cathy Payne coordinates Global Missions Ministries for the Church of God of Prophecy internationally and has ministered in more than 100 nations. Cathy obtained a Master of Divinity from Pentecostal Theological Seminary and earned a Doctor of Ministry from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Cathy and John have one son and five grandchildren.

REV. CATHY PAYNE, DMin | GLOBAL MISSIONS MINISTRIES COORDINATOR

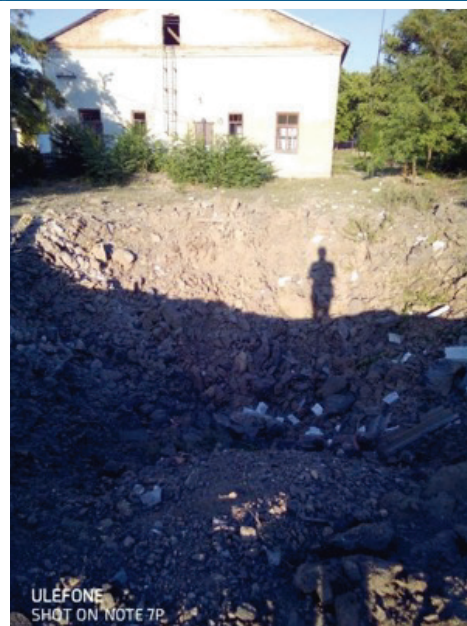
Update from Ukraine



Some Ukrainian territories are enjoying freedom now. Brothers from Kamenskoe are going to those villages and helping the people there. They are in need of the most simple things—things such as bread and water.



Our pastor in the village of Novovorontsovka says they are no longer being bombed, and they still cannot get used to the quietness around them. However, a lot of buildings are destroyed there. There was also an explosion right next to the church building, but miraculously the building was not destroyed; only the roof and windows were damaged.



From our pastors: No words can express how thankful we are to the Lord for you and our union—for all of your prayers and real help. We received blankets and power banks for leaders. It is so, so needed. Thank you for your sacrificial heart. May God bless you and reward you, and proclaim his miracle for your family in this difficult season.

Nikopol is still being bombed. One small girl, who had been coming to our church with her brothers and sisters, was sleeping in her grandmother's house in one room with her mom when a rocket hit the house. The rest of the family was okay because they were sleeping in a different room, but the girl and her mom were severely injured. Unfortunately, this young girl lost her legs. Please pray for her recovery.

While many cities are being freed, others are being bombed. People hear the explosions in the mornings, during the day, and in the evenings. Please pray for God's protection and for this evil to be stopped.



Thank you to all who are continuing to pray and help. In this way, you are serving Christ and his body.

A person in a red and black jacket stands on a rocky cliff, looking out over a vast canyon at sunset. The sky is filled with warm, golden light and soft clouds. The canyon below is deep and rugged, with layered rock formations.

The Spirit Breathes Life into Dry Bones

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'" So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army (Ezekiel 37:1–10 NIV).

I fondly remember the time I visited the Grand Canyon in Arizona. I recall looking into the canyon's vastness, its array of colors, and the beautiful design of crevices and curves. I was truly captivated by its immense size. When I think of the biblical account of Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, I recall the grandest valley that I have ever looked upon. I remember that this Grand Canyon was carved into the middle of a desert. Amid a dry and sparsely populated area, God chose to create a beautiful display

of his glory, his masterpiece, his creative hands at work. I then realize that so many times I have faced situations that seemed as big as that canyon, and yet time and again God has revealed himself to be bigger than any canyon-sized problem. In Ezekiel 37, God demonstrates what he is capable of when all that human eyes can see is a desolate valley.

Ezekiel was a priest who was among those who had just been taken from their Israelite homeland and had been forcefully relocated to the land of the Babylonians. The



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BISHOP MICHAEL A. HERNANDEZ, DMIN | AMD DIRECTOR AND SPIRIT AND LIFE SEMINARY PRESIDENT

Israelites had been punished by God due to their disobedience after multiple warnings to turn back from their wicked ways. Their capital and military were finally destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC. Now, as the Israelites were being forced to make a living in a foreign land, they were devastated by what had happened and had lost hope that they could move beyond what seemed like a complete destruction of all they knew and all they were. A removal from their way of life in their homeland was like stripping away their very Israelite identity. God sent Ezekiel to prophesy to those living in exile to bring them hope in the midst of their ruin and misery. Ezekiel himself had reason to lose hope. After all, what was he to do as a priest now that the temple was destroyed, and his very livelihood stripped from him?

The Valley of Dry Bones

God brought Ezekiel to a valley of dry bones and asked him to imagine life being brought forth from those dry bones; in other words, bringing life to that which was not only dead, but beyond any hint of life whatsoever. Have you ever felt stuck in a valley of death? Imagine yourself at the top of a mountain, looking down at tons of broken, dry bones in a valley. What would be going through your mind if God asked you to imagine those bones being brought back to life?

When I think of the account of dry bones, I recall Genesis 18:1–14—the story of Abraham and Sarah waiting to have their promised child. Sarah’s womb was like the valley Ezekiel stood in front of. Sarah could not believe that God could bring life out of what she believed was already dead. Sarah even laughed when God told her she would have a son in her old age, but God proved faithful and stayed true to his word. Abraham and Sarah were not the only ones to face a valley of death. Think about when Moses led the Israelites through a desert, when David faced Goliath, when Daniel was in the lion’s den, or when Christ suffered on the cross for our sins. All these stories bring to mind images that God has given us to see opportunities for life to be exchanged for death. Do you feel like Ezekiel, Sarah, Moses, David, or Daniel? Are you staring at an impossible situation? Do you believe God has asked you to imagine something that seems to be unattainable?

The Dry Bones Come to Life

Now let’s look at Ezekiel again in the passage above. Scripture says that God commanded him to prophesy. God

had commissioned Ezekiel to speak words on his behalf. Take note that in this section of the passage God does not speak to the dry bones himself, but commands Ezekiel to do so. At times, God wants us to act on things that seem to be impossible. Daniel had to enter the lions’ den, Moses had to lead people through a desert, David had to pick up small stones and face Goliath, and Christ had to carry the cross. These were moments in which these individuals came face to face with the impossible, yet they obeyed. Ezekiel did not question God about the valley of dry bones. Ezekiel did not doubt God when he was told to speak. He spoke; and when he spoke to those dry bones, he spoke with the authority of God.

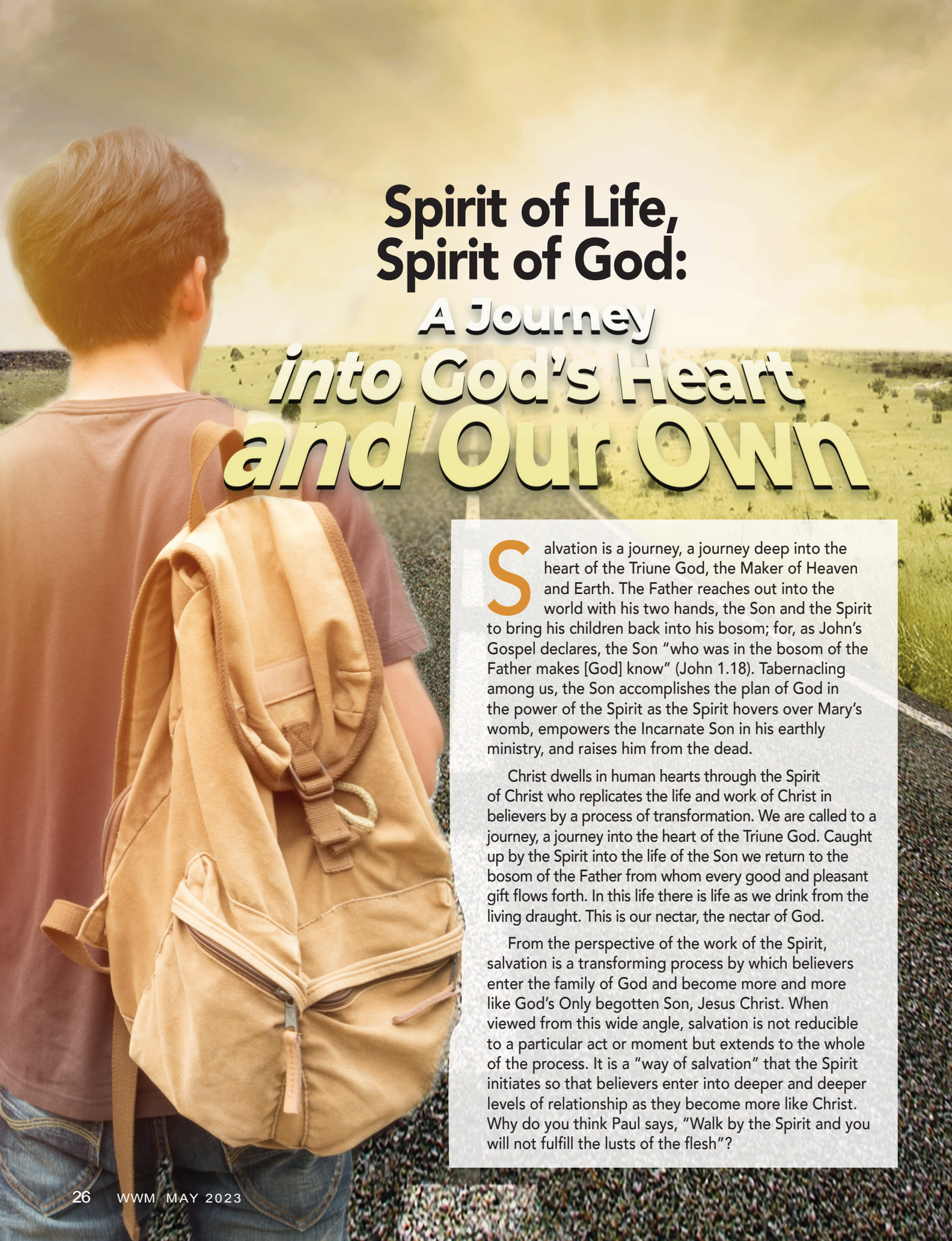
The same God that Ezekiel served is the same God that we serve. If God has led you to a valley in your life, then you can guarantee that he will commission you with the same authority that he gave to Ezekiel. What lifeless situation are you facing now? You may be facing a valley in your finances, you may be struggling in your marriage, you may have an unsaved loved one that you have been praying for. You may be waiting on a promise from God. But if the Lord has led you to those dry bones, then he is going to lead you to a time and place in which those bones will receive life!

The Explanation of the Vision

According to verse 11 which follows, the Israelites in exile believed their bones were dried up and their hope was gone—that they were cut off from the rest of the nation. Do you feel as though your hope is gone? Do you feel cut off? Look at what God declares in verses 12–14:

“Therefore prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live. . . . Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it,’ declares the Lord.”

This is not just a promise given to an Old Testament prophet. This is the word of the Lord that has been spoken over all of us. Look at your valley, your lifeless situation, whatever it might be, and believe in the life that God will bring to it by the power of the Holy Spirit. And he will not only bring life into that situation, he promises to put his Spirit in you, that you might live too!



Spirit of Life, Spirit of God: A Journey *into God's Heart and Our Own*

Salvation is a journey, a journey deep into the heart of the Triune God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. The Father reaches out into the world with his two hands, the Son and the Spirit to bring his children back into his bosom; for, as John's Gospel declares, the Son "who was in the bosom of the Father makes [God] know" (John 1.18). Tabernacling among us, the Son accomplishes the plan of God in the power of the Spirit as the Spirit hovers over Mary's womb, empowers the Incarnate Son in his earthly ministry, and raises him from the dead.

Christ dwells in human hearts through the Spirit of Christ who replicates the life and work of Christ in believers by a process of transformation. We are called to a journey, a journey into the heart of the Triune God. Caught up by the Spirit into the life of the Son we return to the bosom of the Father from whom every good and pleasant gift flows forth. In this life there is life as we drink from the living draught. This is our nectar, the nectar of God.

From the perspective of the work of the Spirit, salvation is a transforming process by which believers enter the family of God and become more and more like God's Only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. When viewed from this wide angle, salvation is not reducible to a particular act or moment but extends to the whole of the process. It is a "way of salvation" that the Spirit initiates so that believers enter into deeper and deeper levels of relationship as they become more like Christ. Why do you think Paul says, "Walk by the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh"?



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Genesis 2.5-8 The Genesis text speaks of the intimate relation between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit. It is only after the breath of life blows into the shell of clay that the first human becomes a “living soul” (Gen. 2:7). In the Hebrew the picture is intimate and deeply personal. It is of God hovering over the lifeless clay and performing mouth to mouth. While humans reflect God in the way they were designed, the connection between God and humans centers upon the Spirit. The capacity for relationship with God stems from the reception of the breath of God right at the beginning of creation.

If the human spirit provides the point of contact between God and humanity, then human beings can only achieve their potential as their spirits cooperate with the Holy Spirit. At the beginning, God designed human beings for relationship. This much is clear from the fact that humans were created in God’s image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). God wanted humans to reflect him so that he could be in relationship with them. However, the way this relationship emerges and takes shape is through the Holy Spirit at work within the human spirit. God calls us all to be artists and our life is the canvass. What will you paint today? The Spirit is at work in the depths of the human being, the inner workings of the human spirit. Severance from the Spirit leads to death, but cooperating with the Spirit brings life and holiness.

Ezekiel 37.1-5 The prophet Ezekiel prophesied from Babylon during the exile. Sometime around 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched into Syria-Palestine and began his conquest of the region. After attacking the Philistine city of Ashkelon, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem and deported a number of prominent Jews, most likely including Daniel and his companions.

As strange as they seem at times, Ezekiel’s prophecies primarily concern the restoration of the nation. The theme of restoration is central to Ezekiel 37. The valley of dry bones form a powerful symbol of the lifeless nation of Israel that is stranded in exile, cut off from the land of promise and the blessing of God (Ezek. 37:11).

It seems that all hope is lost when God poses the question: “Can these dry bones live?” (Ezek. 37:3). The

question is an all-too-human-question, and yet we find God initiating it. What are we to make of this divine utterance? After all, God knows the answer to the question and yet he poses it to Ezekiel. God gives divine permission to ask those deep questions that stem from the deep tragedies of life. Is restoration even possible? Can I make it back from this death? Can I pick up the pieces of my life?

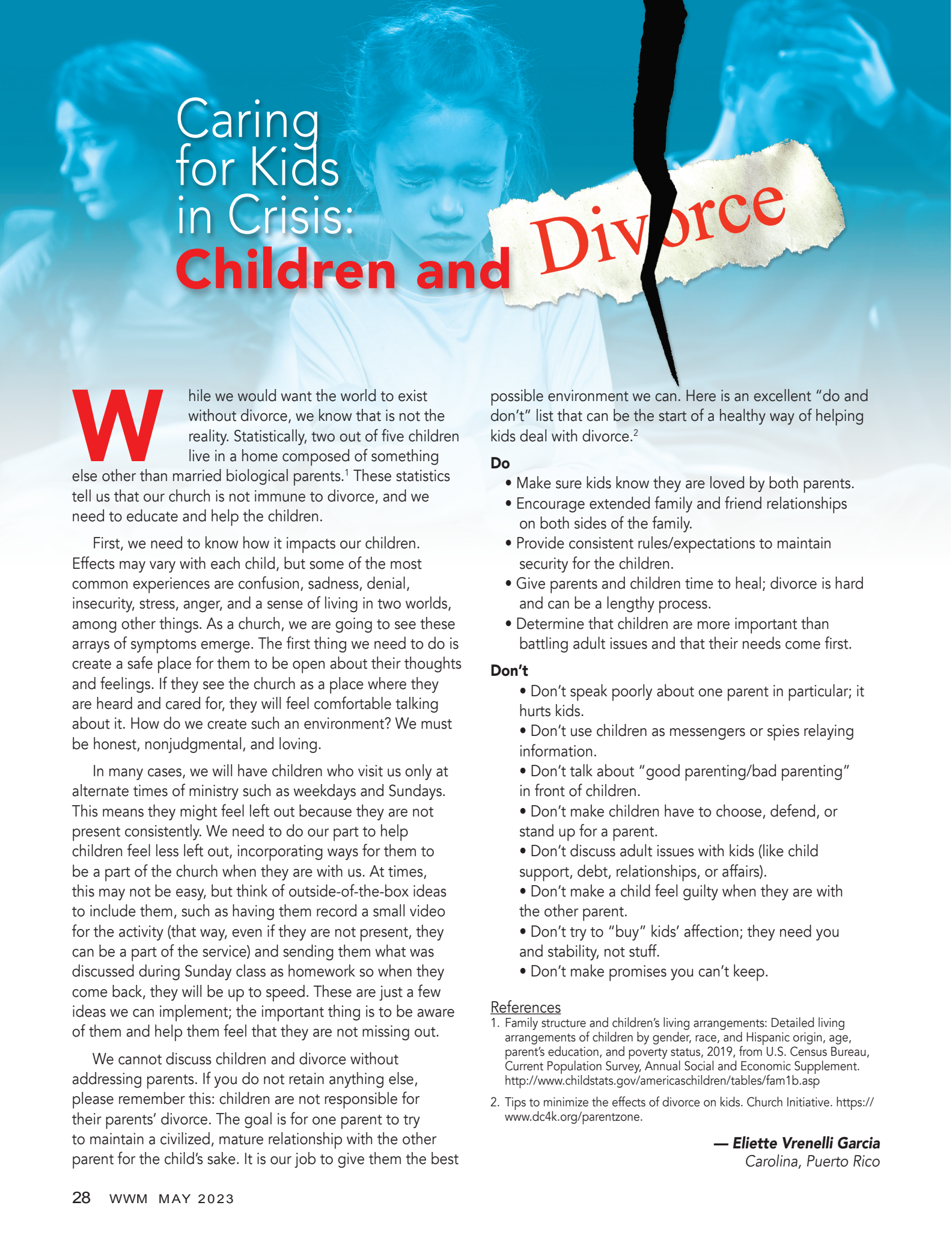
Notice that in Romans 8 Paul says two things: 1) We received the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead as sons and daughters (Rom 8:11); 2) This same Spirit helps us groan with sighs too deep for words (Rom 8:23). This is why Paul says in Romans that if the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead lives in you. It is because the Spirit of life generates life in us and brings us back from those places of exile and alienation, those dark nights of the soul.

In Ezekiel, the question contains the prophecy God instructs Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones. As Ezekiel declares the Word of the Lord, the divine Breath begins to blow over the bones and they come back to life (Ezek. 37:9-10, 12-13). In an important sense, the Spirit returns to the nation and renews life within her. As God puts his own Spirit within the Israelites, they begin to live again (Ezek. 37:14). The answer to exile is the return of the Spirit who can breathe life into death and restore the nation.

**“Not by might, nor
by power, but by
my Spirit, says the
Lord of hosts”
(Zechariah 4:6).**

Zechariah 4.6-10 The word of the Lord to Zerubbabel when he is trying to reconstruct the temple in Jerusalem is “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts” (Zec 4:6). The Lord tells Zerubbabel not to despise the day of small things. Every journey begins with a single step, a forward movement, a foundation laid. We should not despise this. God looks at the whole taken together, not the single moment here or there, but the

great expanse spread out through time. God says to you about your life, this journey that you’re on, “Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit.” We must try again; we must learn to start over if necessary. Together, let’s say, “Come Holy Spirit.” God has called you to be the artist of your life. But we cannot paint something beautiful apart from him.



Caring for Kids in Crisis: Children and Divorce

While we would want the world to exist without divorce, we know that is not the reality. Statistically, two out of five children live in a home composed of something else other than married biological parents.¹ These statistics tell us that our church is not immune to divorce, and we need to educate and help the children.

First, we need to know how it impacts our children. Effects may vary with each child, but some of the most common experiences are confusion, sadness, denial, insecurity, stress, anger, and a sense of living in two worlds, among other things. As a church, we are going to see these arrays of symptoms emerge. The first thing we need to do is create a safe place for them to be open about their thoughts and feelings. If they see the church as a place where they are heard and cared for, they will feel comfortable talking about it. How do we create such an environment? We must be honest, nonjudgmental, and loving.

In many cases, we will have children who visit us only at alternate times of ministry such as weekdays and Sundays. This means they might feel left out because they are not present consistently. We need to do our part to help children feel less left out, incorporating ways for them to be a part of the church when they are with us. At times, this may not be easy, but think of outside-of-the-box ideas to include them, such as having them record a small video for the activity (that way, even if they are not present, they can be a part of the service) and sending them what was discussed during Sunday class as homework so when they come back, they will be up to speed. These are just a few ideas we can implement; the important thing is to be aware of them and help them feel that they are not missing out.

We cannot discuss children and divorce without addressing parents. If you do not retain anything else, please remember this: children are not responsible for their parents' divorce. The goal is for one parent to try to maintain a civilized, mature relationship with the other parent for the child's sake. It is our job to give them the best

possible environment we can. Here is an excellent "do and don't" list that can be the start of a healthy way of helping kids deal with divorce.²

Do

- Make sure kids know they are loved by both parents.
- Encourage extended family and friend relationships on both sides of the family.
- Provide consistent rules/expectations to maintain security for the children.
- Give parents and children time to heal; divorce is hard and can be a lengthy process.
- Determine that children are more important than battling adult issues and that their needs come first.

Don't

- Don't speak poorly about one parent in particular; it hurts kids.
- Don't use children as messengers or spies relaying information.
- Don't talk about "good parenting/bad parenting" in front of children.
- Don't make children have to choose, defend, or stand up for a parent.
- Don't discuss adult issues with kids (like child support, debt, relationships, or affairs).
- Don't make a child feel guilty when they are with the other parent.
- Don't try to "buy" kids' affection; they need you and stability, not stuff.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.

References

1. Family structure and children's living arrangements: Detailed living arrangements of children by gender, race, and Hispanic origin, age, parent's education, and poverty status, 2019, from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement. <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables/fam1b.asp>
2. Tips to minimize the effects of divorce on kids. Church Initiative. <https://www.dc4k.org/parentzone>.

— **Eliette Vrenelli Garcia**
Carolina, Puerto Rico

A MATTER OF COURAGE

Continued from page 19

the early church (including their martyrdom). Through the years, many women have answered the call from Isaiah 6:8 (NIV), "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" Women became teachers and preachers—despite traditional barriers or limited expectations.

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

Sarah Crosby believed there was no other option but to follow the Lord's leading to preach. It was a great risk in 18th century England. She preached in chapels, houses, barns, and open fields. In a letter of encouragement to another female preacher, she said, "Speak and act, as the spirit gives liberty, and utterance; fear not the face of man." She eventually became one of Methodism's first licensed women preachers. —<https://18thcenturyculture.wordpress.com/primary-sources/the-armenian-magazine/an-account-of-sarah-crosby/>

Maria Taylor, along with her husband in 19th century China, cofounded the Inland China Missions. She said, "As to the harsh judging of the world, or the more painful misunderstandings of Christian brethren, I generally feel that the best plan is to go on with our work and leave God to vindicate our cause." —<https://omf.org/about-us/our-story>

In the 19th century, Catherine Booth accompanied her husband William to tent revival meetings around England. They founded the Salvation Army. She said, "I know not what He is about to do with me, but I have given myself entirely into His hands." —<https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/our-story/our-history/founders-william-and-catherine-booth/>

Today, female disciples are still making courageous choices. Listen to this example from Paul Chilcote of a 20th-century female preacher who encountered opposition in the vestibule on her way to the pulpit. After an exchange of words, she finally says, "Sir, I infer from your remarks that you are opposed to women preaching." "I most certainly am!" he replied with emphasis. "So is the devil!" she responded and moved on to the pulpit."¹

There has been a multiplicity of opinions on the passages from 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, where Paul writes to the leaders of the Greek churches prohibiting women from teaching or speaking in the church. Many argue that these passages are "conclusive and final in an absolute sense and in all times and in all cultures."² If that be the case, one would have

to deny God's extraordinary calling of women such as Miriam and Deborah, and those in the early church, and throughout history and in modern times.

[Further study: Do a deep dive into God's biblical structure of authority including the discernment of proper responses (e.g., to Christ, in the church, in society, etc.).]

We must be cautious, though, not to glory in the choice to be courageous. The ability to be courageous comes from God. "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid [fearful, cowardice] but gives us power, love, and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7).

ILLUSTRATING MATTERS

2 Timothy 1:7 Commentary

"The parts which we should naturally have expected Paul and Timothy to fill are reversed in this letter. Paul 'the aged,' a prisoner, and soon to be a martyr, might have been expected to receive encouragement and consolation. But Timothy seems to have been of a somewhat weak and timid nature, and this letter of the dying man is one long trumpet blast to stir his courage.

It is a grave reminder to Christians of every age and degree that all cowardice, all dread of danger, all shrinking from doing one's duty for fear of man's displeasure proceeds not from the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit does not work cowardice in man (us).

Mary was empowered to make a courageous decision. Love guided her action and with self-discipline she quietly displayed her nonconformance to the expectations of others. She was seeking only to serve Jesus and to be served by Him." Elliott's Commentaries for English Readers—https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_timothy/1-7.htm

The last thing Jesus said to Martha about Mary's choice in Luke 10:42 was "it will not be taken away from her." Jesus not only approved of Mary's decision to join the disciples, but he also guaranteed she would not be deprived of her choice, or of its eternal benefits.

¹ Jewish Encyclopedia, <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/5604-eliezer-liezer-ben-hyrcanus>.

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Hope: Through the Power of the Holy Spirit

In this issue, Bishop James Wallace shared a message on our theme, "Through the Power of the Holy Spirit." He focused on the Holy Spirit's power to reveal Jesus as our living hope. I had to shorten that article just a bit. But the words of the edited section and the Scriptures supporting them sunk deep into my heart. I couldn't leave them out. Thank you, Brother Wallace, for these anointed words:

Hope enabled Abraham to become the Father of the faithful (Romans 4:18). Hope has the power to save us (Romans 8:24). The Scriptures are our source of hope (Romans 15:4). Hope is as eternal as faith and love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Believers are called to proclaim hope (1 Peter 3:15). Hope inspires us to live holy (1 John 3:3). Hope cheers the saints in their dying hour (Proverbs 14:32). Hope assures us of immortality (Acts 24:15). Hope anticipates Christ's coming (Titus 2:13). Hope is the soul's sure anchor (Hebrews 6:18).

We can accomplish nothing of eternal import without the inward power of the Holy Spirit! He is the source of the living hope Brother Wallace wrote about.

Godly hope is a gift. It is perfect. It is not mixed with doubt. Statements like "I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow." Or "I hope God will heal me" are wishes. That's like opening a gift to find it broken. The hope the Holy Spirit gives infuses our hearts with power and ability.

King David wrote songs about that kind of hope. He had every reason to doubt. He was chosen by God but very flawed. He was greatly loved, but constantly assailed by enemies. He ruled a nation but failed at leading his own family. But through it all, he walked in hope. And God loved him for it.

In Psalm 62, David reminds himself that God is the source of hope. He used very specific words—not that hope

will come or might come or even that it had come in the past—he uses the tense of the word that means hope is pouring forth to him continually, a rushing river of hope. I guarantee you he didn't feel it; he was in the middle of a terrible, backstabbing, lying attack on his character. He had to emphatically tell himself he could wait on God in silence; that hope was flowing to him even if he didn't feel it.

I think sometimes we feel like failures if we have to square our shoulders and boldly proclaim the promises of God to ourselves—again. More than once. We want it to be "one and done;" one battle followed by a lifetime of victory. Well, guess what? Life has new troubles just about every day. God knows it and provides new mercy every day.

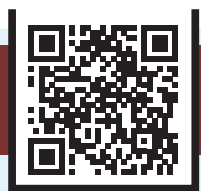
God's Word is true no matter what is going on around us or how we feel. When you get your mind, will, and emotions (soul) in line with God's Word, you will also find you have words that help other people. It is a natural progression.

See it there in Psalm 62? David starts a sermon in the middle of his praise. He goes from talking to himself to proclaiming to other people what he has commanded his own soul to believe: "Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah" We can reconcile the world to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. He gives us the hope, he gives us the ability, he gives us the plan. But we have to believe it.

Command your mind, will, and emotions to hope in God today. It is necessary work, hard work sometimes, but you will bless others and help them in their journey if you do it. Let's reconcile the world to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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