

WORLDWIDE PENTECOSTAL FELLOWSHIP

TOGETHER

CONNECTING THE APOSTOLIC WORLD



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FROM THE CHAIRMAN**Paying the Price
That Principle Demands**

Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard. Few stories burn brighter with the fire of unyielding principle.

"Sell your vineyard to me. It is next to my palace. Give it to me, Naboth, and I'll give you a better one." Ahab's offer still rings across the ages—seductively whispered today to every believer who dares to stand. The world dangles comfort, status, safety. Heaven demands everything.

Naboth stood on holy ground. His refusal echoed with the voice of Moses: *"So the inheritance of the children of Israel shall not transfer from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers"* (Num. 36:7). To Ahab, it was a footnote. To Naboth, it was a blood-bought legacy—the sacred trust of his fathers, the open door to God's covenant blessing.

There will always be a price offered. Satan never sleeps; he studies the heart, calculates the moment, and names the cost. Esau traded eternity for a bowl. Judas sold the Savior for silver. Balaam chased Balak's hire. But not Naboth. Not us.

The price of truth is not negotiable. It is not scaled by income or influence. It is gloriously, terrifyingly simple: *everything you have*. Your comfort. Your reputation. Your future. Your life. All of it—laid aflame on the altar of conviction.

Hear Esau's desperate rationalization: *"What good is a birthright if I die?"* The answer to scripture's infamous backslider shakes heaven itself! That birthright is Abraham's promise—a seed more numerous than stars, a nation, a redemption, a Savior! It is the covenant that saves to the uttermost. Esau flinched. We will not.

Naboth paid with his life. And in that defining moment, he joined the cloud of witnesses who refused to bow. Daniel in the lions' den. The three Hebrews in the furnace. David before Goliath. Every saint who ever bled for the faith cries out, "It is worth it!"

And above them all towers Calvary—where the Son of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and became obedient... unto death. This is our pattern. This is our power. This is our victory.

The Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship was forged in this fire. Our founders turned their backs on political thrones and easy alliances. They chose the narrow road, the long obedience, the costly stand. Society mocks, but history will roar approval. Wisdom is always justified by her children.

Your church is not for sale. Your conviction is not negotiable. The adversary may rage, but the gates of hell shall not prevail. The vineyard entrusted to you—watered by the tears and blood of the faithful—is holy ground.

This is no ordinary hour. This is a *kairos* moment—a divine intersection where heaven invades earth through hearts that will not bend. Pentecostal fire falls powerfully on altars upon which the ultimate sacrifice is offered.

It is a glorious day to be the Apostolic Church. We will give everything. For the vineyards handed to us are not mere fields—they are kingdom outposts, and their continued legacy is our sacred honor. God calls, Ahab rages and Naboth stands. Let us pay the price that principle demands. □


 Nathaniel Urshan
 Executive Chairman




Johnny King
Calgary, Canada

Historic SUMMIT

The 2025 annual Summit was a historic one for the Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship. Since the founding, the WPF has been led by Executive Chairmen who comprised the original Executive Council. These men were responsible for the founding and launching of the Fellowship and underwriting significant expenses. They were, in the order of their service as Executive Chairman, Johnny Godair, Crawford Coon, Floyd Odom, Nathaniel Wilson, Larry Booker, and Kenny Godair, who was also the first elected Executive Chairman and served an unprecedented total of seven years. Crawford Coon is deceased, but all the other founders remain as non-elected members of the Executive Council.

This year's Summit saw the election of the first Executive Chairman who was not one of the founding members. Nathaniel A. Urshan II, was elected as Executive Chairman on the nominating ballot. Brother Urshan is married to Jacqueline and they have two sons, Joseph (married to ShiAnn) and Benjamin (married to Megan), and three grandchildren. He pastors the church in Durham, North Carolina, that was founded and pastored by Brother Johnny Godair. He formerly started and pastored a church in Fort Myers, Florida. He and his family served as a missionaries in Roatan, Honduras, for a year followed by evangelizing and then pastoring in Southaven, Mississippi. Brother Urshan assumed the position of Executive Chairman in a moving transition service during the last evening of Summit 2025.

Joel Booker and Johnny King were re-elected to the Executive Council, and James Townley was elected to fill the position vacated by Brother Urshan when he became Executive Chairman. In addition to these men, other members of the Executive Council are Wade Bass, Stephen Buxton and Paul Deeds.

Other WPF Councils are:

Global Missions – Chair Jerry Rowley, C. Myles Young, and Kelly Nix

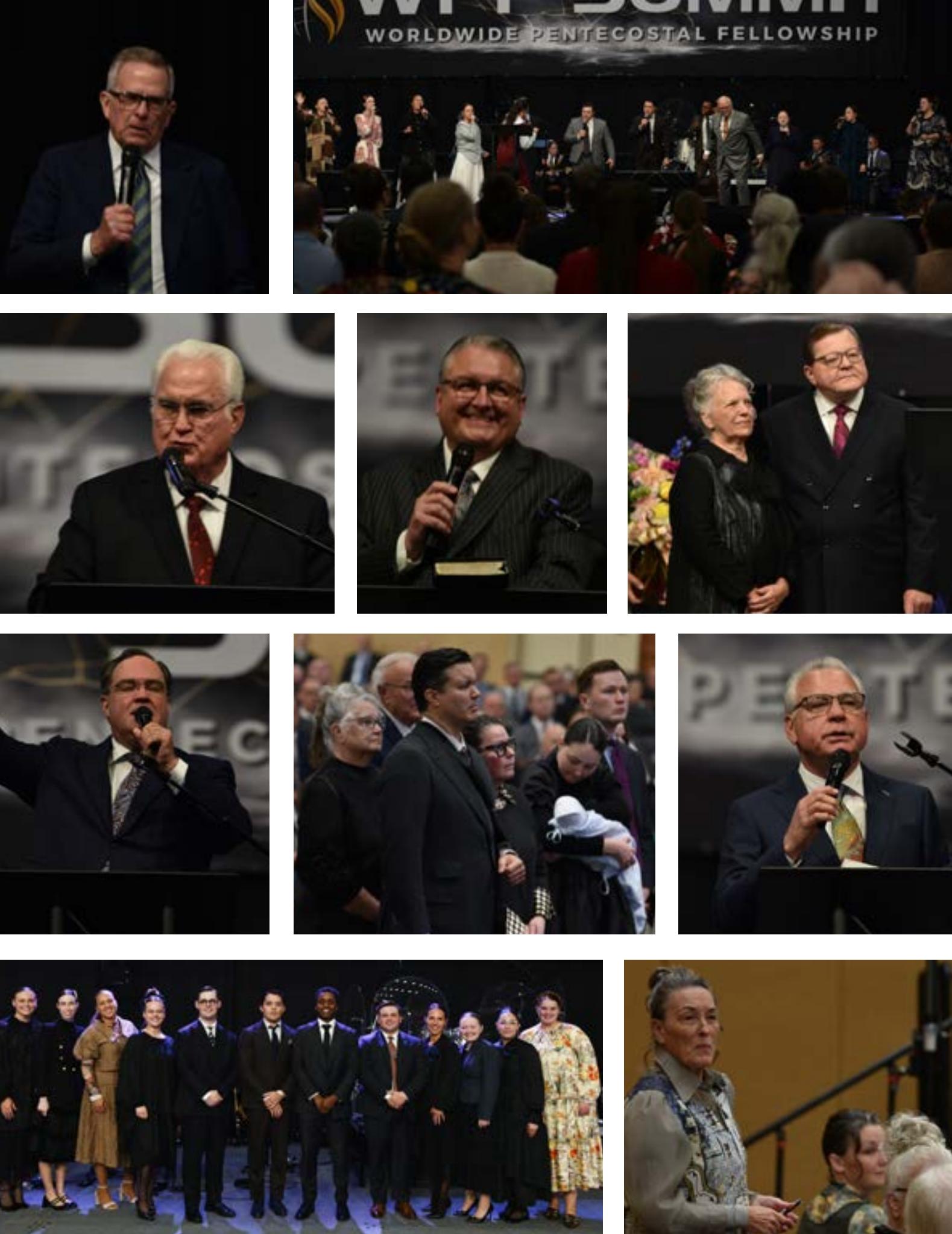
Church Development – Chair Billy Chapman Jr., Tim Adams, Benjamin Davis, Jesse Galindo, Shane Golden, and David Morrison.

Youth – Chair Zach Wells, Tim Adams, Angel Aureoles, Jordan Copeland, Devin Deeds, Steven Jones, and Julien Ryder.

Evangelist – Chair Nathaniel Harris, Dallas Bryant, Stanley Hopkins, Andrew Howard, Harlan Morgan, and Jacob Phillips.

Ladies – Chair Ellen Mayo, Erica Booker, Dina Calhoun, Serena Holland, Connie Tiller, and Maleah Walker.

General Council – Speaker Kevin Bradford and approximately fifty members work alongside the Executive Council developing policy for the Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship. □





Philip Booker
Rialto, CA

THE CURSE OF KNOWLEDGE

I read about a fascinating experiment recently. Scientists paired people into twos. One person would think of a song and, without saying a word, tap out the rhythm of that song on the table. The other person's job was to guess what song it was. Simple enough, right?

Before they started, the tappers were asked how likely they thought their partner would guess correctly, and here's where it gets interesting. The listeners guessed the right song only about 2% of the time but the tappers THOUGHT the listener would get it right *half* the time. They were off by 48%! Instead of being right one guess out of two, it was closer to one out of FIFTY!

Why such a big difference? Well, the scientists found that it was because the tapper already knows the song. They can hear it in their head as they tap. They're not just knocking on a table but are also hearing the melody, the lyrics, the beat but the poor listener? All they hear is random tapping.

That's what psychologists call *the curse of knowledge*. **Once you know something, it's nearly impossible to imagine what it's like not to know it** and that's exactly where so many of us, myself being one of the greatest offenders, trip up when we're teaching. We forget what it felt like to be the one trying to figure it out.

For those of us raised in church, in stable homes, surrounded by church from the beginning, it's even more pronounced. I'll be the first to admit that I have an enviable testimony. My parents have lived for God since before I was born, my brothers are in church, their families are in church, and not a single person in our immediate circle is outside the truth. That's an incredible blessing but it also means I have a blind spot.

I know the song. I know the melody. I know what it feels like to grow up in church but for some of the kids I teach especially those that may ride one of our buses... they don't. Some come from homes with almost no structure. Some, even at eight or nine years old, are the only person in their family who is even trying to live for God and I have no personal concept of what that feels like. And if I'm not careful, in class, I can end up tapping out rhythms they'll never recognize.

In a single one to two hour Sunday School class, we're reaching kids from both ends of the spectrum. The ones who can rattle off verses, raised in church, involved in bible quizzing, and then the ones who may not even own a Bible or may not have ever opened one.

So how do we overcome this "curse of knowledge"? Experts say there are really only



two ways.

1. Never learn anything yourself. (Not exactly an option.)
2. OR take your ideas and transform them. Communicate them in ways that cut through the gap.

While I usually hesitate to just repeat something straight from a book, a lot of what the authors shared in *Made to Stick* is incredibly relevant for Apostolics involved in children's ministry. They introduced the S.U.C.C.E.S. framework (yes, they intentionally left off the final "S" but we added it back ourselves!), and it's a great checklist to keep in mind every time you teach:

1. Simple
2. Unexpected
3. Concrete
4. Credible
5. Emotional
6. Stories
7. SPIRIT OF GOD (most important of all even the book doesn't have this last one listed)

S.U.C.C.E.S.S.! We don't have time to go through each of these in detail but we will hit each briefly. To make things stick and to bridge the curse of knowledge make everything:

Simple: Keep what you're teaching clear and easy to grasp. Don't overcomplicate things or try to sound smart. Use language that any child in your age group can easily understand.

Unexpected: People remember the unexpected! Change things up. Don't get stuck in the same routine each week and expect excitement or retention. Surprise the kids, grab their attention in new ways.

Concrete: Kids struggle with abstract ideas. Make what you teach something they can see, touch, or imagine. That's why object lessons are so powerful, they turn truths into something kids can wrap their heads around.

Credible: Kids need to believe what you're saying is true. If they don't understand why the Bible is reliable, it will be hard for them to trust it. Use examples from science, history,

and prophecy to show that God's Word can be trusted. Help them see that the Bible isn't just a storybook, it's the foundation of everything we know about God.

Emotional: Share personal stories. Be real and open with your class. When you're vulnerable, you create genuine connections. Those moments often lead to some of the most powerful and memorable times in your classrooms.

Stories: Bible stories, real-life stories, historical stories, use them all! Just make sure they're engaging and come alive for your kids.

Spirit: This last one isn't in the book, but it's absolutely vital. The Spirit of God is what truly makes our lessons come alive. Pray during the week, pray during class, and have altar calls every Sunday. Let God move, and you'll be amazed at what He does in your classroom.

Instead of unconsciously assuming they "know the song" we are hearing in our own heads, we must slow down, break it down, and put this truth within reach of kids who've never heard it before.

I don't have the perfect formula for reaching children I don't share common ground with, but I do know that the more conscious we are of the gap, the more intentional we can be in how we teach.

Every time I step into a classroom, I try to remind myself... don't assume, slow down, make it clear, use stories, images, and emotions and never forget that some kids are coming in blind while others are already singing along with the song I know.

Our job as teachers is to make sure every single one of them can hear the song. T

FOOTNOTE: Much of the information in this article comes from the book *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* by Chip Heath and Dan Heath (Random House, 2007). It's an excellent read for anyone seeking more information on this topic.

Don't assume
Slow down
Make it clear



What About the Fourth Commandment to Keep the Sabbath?

The Sabbath has maintained a key role in the Biblical ethos. Its inclusion in what is known today as “the ten commandments” gives it a key role in the panoply of controversial topics. Should a Christian keep the Sabbath, and is it part of the New Testament understanding of covenantal commitment? These questions were keenly pressed upon the minds of the first-century church, and the answers are relevant for the Pentecostal Church today. The Sabbath is a primary concept deeply ingrained in the Word of God from the very beginning of Genesis and is among the earliest things discussed as a sacred institution. As God ceased to create on the sixth day, He establishes the tradition of Sabbath in the Bibles second chapter (Genesis 2:3). Much later, the fourth commandment institutionalized this concept into the canon of Torah law when Moses wrote, “remember the Sabbath day to make it holy,” as a reminder that the very first seventh day was holy and consecrated for rest, when the Lord ceased from his creative work (Exodus 20:8-11). The original version of the commandment cited in Exodus noted its root concept in the imitation of God, who created the world in six days and then rested. However, as Moses moves from it being God’s last day in the week of creation to man’s first day, he emphasizes man’s rest and recollection of how God freed the Israelites from Egyptian slavery (Deut. 5:15). There is more, much more, to Sabbath, than just a day of rest, one must “make it holy” (Exodus 20:8). The Sabbath has been as deeply repudiated by great thinkers as Jews revere it.

1. Rabbi Saul Berman has explained, ‘there is more to Shabbat than not working just as there is more to peace than not fighting.’ The Sabbath is on the Bible’s list of revolutionary

innovations. *Leading Roman thinkers ridiculed the Sabbath, citing it as proof of Jewish laziness. Seneca, the first-century Roman stoic, wrote, ‘to spend every seventh day without doing anything means to lose a seventh part of life, besides suffering loss in pressing matters from such idleness.’ The less courteous, Plutarch regarded the Sabbath as one of the Jews’ ‘sordid habits,’ while the antisemitic Tacitus saw it as another of the Jews ‘sinister and shameful’ customs.*¹

The observance of the Sabbath has played an integral role in preserving the Jewish people to this day. The keeping of the Sabbath also plays a key role in the Judeo-Christian ethic as part of the “ten commandments.” One may inquire: if it holds a key role, why does the New Testament Christian not observe it? And one would be right to ask this question; the answer may shock some—we do observe it! The law of Moses links the Sabbath to the Passover (Deut. 5:12-15). The law of Moses also links the Sabbath after Passover to the feast of Pentecost, also called the Feast of Weeks or Feast of Firstfruits, which occurs fifty days after the Sabbath that follows Passover, linking it directly to Sabbath timing and themes (Lev. 23:15-16). The weeks counted to Pentecost begin “from the morrow after the Sabbath,” associating Pentecost with the Sabbath day. Pentecost, a yearly Sabbath, on which no work is done, emphasizes its connection as a sacred rest day in Israel’s calendar. It symbolized the firstfruits of the wheat harvest and pointed to God’s covenant blessings. In the book of Acts, Pentecost takes on even greater spiritual significance as the day the Holy Spirit was poured out, marking the birth of the Church

(Acts 2). The “firstfruits” of the church (3,000 that were born in the Spirit) matched the numeric value of the Sinai theophany (3,000 killed). The reader would be hard pressed to miss the correlations to Pentecost as the “firstfruits” and the emphasis that Paul and his churches placed on the “first” believers in certain regions (cf. Romans 16:15; 1 Cor. 16:15)... Paul also associates the outpouring of the Spirit with “firstfruits” (Rom 8:23), which characterized that festival.²

Pentecostals should not avoid using the term Sabbath; Jesus kept the Sabbath, and one of the great debates of his ministry was the proclamation that he was “the Lord of the Sabbath” (Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5). According to the Old Testament, the Sabbath or Holy Day of the Feast of Pentecost was a “Feast of Firstfruits” (Lev. 23), but in the New Testament, Jesus is the firstfruit of them that are resurrected (1 Cor. 15:20-23). Pentecostals are unique in that we alone, among all worshippers outside of Judaism, do indeed observe the Sabbath in the perfection of Jesus Christ by experiencing the full outpouring of the Holy Ghost as they did on the Day of Pentecost (Matt. 3:11; John 14:16-18; Acts 1:4-5,8; 2:1-4,38-39). Theologically, Pentecost represents the fulfillment and expansion of Sabbath themes through the outpouring of the Spirit, bringing believers into a new spiritual rest, empowerment, and renewal. While the Sabbath rest was physical in the Old Testament, Pentecost reveals a spiritual rest and empowerment realized in Christ and His Spirit. The counting of seven complete Sabbaths from Passover, culminating in Pentecost, underscores perfect completeness and thus is the culmination of all sabbatical observances and practices.

The Apostle Paul taught that Sabbath observance is not a binding command for Christians but a matter of personal conviction and liberty (Romans 14:5-6; Colossians 2:16-17). He encouraged believers to honor the

Lord in how they observe days, emphasizing freedom rather than legal obligation. The New Testament writers were adamantly convinced that Jesus is the full consummation of the Law, and in Christ we keep the Festivals of the Old Testament.

The focus shifted to Christ as the ultimate rest and fulfillment of the Sabbath, and to the rest achieved through experiencing the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. Pentecostals are therefore no longer under the Mosaic covenant but under the new covenant in Christ; the Sabbath as a covenant sign is no longer binding. The Sabbath was a “shadow”

or symbol pointing to Christ, as Old Testament sacrifices were shadows fulfilled in him (Hebrews 10:1). “A very strong case can be made that the primary focus of the Old Testament moves with unwavering intentionality to and through Christ directly to the charismatic outpouring of the spirit in Acts 2.”³ No greater form of realization of the Old Testament prophecies exist than the baptism of the Spirit of God. No “rest” laid out in the liturgy of Shabbat could ever compare to the rest offered by the infilling of the Holy Ghost. “So there remains a Sabbath rest for the

people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest” (Heb 4:9-11, NASB). It is to revere, honor, and obey the command to “remember the Sabbath day to make it holy,” that is the objective of this article. It is this author’s firm conviction that there is no greater way to “make it holy” than to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost as was poured out on the Day of Pentecost. □

ENDNOTES

1. Telushkin, Joseph, *Biblical Literacy: The Most Important People, Events, and Ideas of the Hebrew Bible*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, (1997), pp. 427,428.

2. Keener, Craig, S., *Acts, An Exegetical Commentary*, Vol 1 (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic, 2014) pp. 787-788.

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Douglas Walker
Calgary, Canada



The Power of an Idea



Kevin Bradford
Bakersfield, CA
Speaker of the
General Council

GENERAL COUNCIL

Over the last two and a half years, the General Council has endeavored to champion the notion of idea creation, process, and execution as its primary focus. Organizations, businesses, and entrepreneurs of all sorts start with the genesis of an idea and then progress to actualizing or putting "flesh" to the thought in order to meet a demand, better a system, and expand. That's not always an easy endeavor because human nature is much more attuned to the problems of people and present events rather than asking seminal questions like: Why? Why not? How? What can be better? When any group starts discussing ideas in this way, creativity flourishes.

Not that others haven't, but the General Council has purposely advocated a bidirectional flow of idea input from the grassroots up, and from the executive level down. This advocacy has come via creating an atmosphere of asking questions and seeking ideas, creating round table discussions with the youngest members of the WPF, and forming a Jr. Council so as to make sure we are not ignoring relevant technologies and methodologies.

Having an environment conducive to fielding ideas requires processes that will lead to productivity. The General Council creates a project board that moves each idea to eventual launch. The idea is fielded and assessed for viability, then a team is formed to build a prototype, beta tested, and then evaluated. This leads to a proposal to be presented and, depending on its acceptance, will be launched. This process has been metabolic and keeps the work the General Council is doing alive and creative. It is the hope that this process moves to an inculcated culture for the purpose of helping the WPF remain creative, vibrant, flexible, innovative, and enterprising.

The danger to avoid is organizational drift. When ideas stop flowing and curiosity stops being encouraged, energy flattens and we lose forward focus. What often follows is what we must guard against: fear of speaking up, comfort that becomes resistance to change, and systems that make it hard for new ideas to breathe. These negative elements stifle growth and keep any organization from moving toward its mission.

Hierarchical fear is where voices are not encouraged. Rather, they are silenced or one is penalized for speaking up. Resentment grows to the point where engagement wanes and toxicity stops advancement. The WPF must react strongly against this danger and encourage any and all of its members to "ideate" with strong arguments and

reasons for why they feel the idea is important.

Excessive consensus is dangerous because the successes of a certain time frame may need to be adjusted methodologically. What once was innovative hardens into comfort and becomes resistant to any change. This is not referring to doctrinal issues, but rather modus operandi. When organizations stop asking, "What can we do better? How can we improve? What needs to be adjusted?" they wander into weird territory where the focus stops looking outward and begins turning inward, spinning off into comparison, ego measuring, and pontification that produces little movement.

And if fear and comfort are problematic, bureaucracy can be as well. Bureaucracy tends to strangle innovation and any experiment that doesn't originate from the top. The General Council and Executive Council work together to present initiatives that will help the overall growth of the WPF both by their own ideas and from the ideas of others. Having an openness to listen to others creates a healthy framework and empowers every member of the WPF. Giving ownership to members closest to the problem has been very beneficial, and a few are listed below:

- Formation of a Speaker of the General Council
- Formation of the Project Board and Processes
- Formation of Children's Ministry Council
- Formation of Evangelist Council
- Launched SYNC to increase engagement among younger members
- New Summit voting system
- Formation of Communication Director role
- Formulation of the WPF mission statement "Advancing Hope to the Nations"
- Diversity Policy Statement of "All Nations"
- Formation of Jr. Council
- Formulation of recommended bylaws for regions
- Formation of the team for Summit locations
- Collaboration with the Education Council for membership leadership development

While the processes and framework are very important for productivity, the result must not just be a "doing" culture, but also a "being" culture. The Chairman of the Executive Council, the Speaker of the General Council, and all the members of the combined councils are on a purposeful path of avoiding drift, and we are grateful for the combined effort of its members in making this happen. □



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PARTNERS IN MINISTRY: STRENGTHENING THE PASTOR-EVANGELIST RELATIONSHIP



Harlan S. Morgan
Sulphur, LA

The ministry of the evangelist is an essential operation in fulfilling the purpose of God in today's church and world. Attempting to accomplish the work of the ministry, without this vital office being actively involved, would be like a pianist attempting to perform a recital using only four fingers on each hand. While it may be possible, it would seem incomplete.

No tradesman would attempt to run his company at eighty percent capacity. No mechanic would attempt to perform his daily tasks with twenty percent of the sockets missing from his toolbox. No attorney or physician would practice with the availability of only eighty percent of their legal or medical resources. No one would consider living in a home lacking twenty percent of the support structure.

Involved in the greatest possible work, the eternal destiny of the souls of men, we must always endeavor to operate with one hundred percent of the resources God has given to the church. "And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" (Ephesians 4:11-12). All offices of the five-fold ministry are essential.

The desire of the Evangelist Council is to promote the value of the evangelist and encourage enhanced relationships between pastors and evangelists in efforts to accomplish the will of God in a specific time and place. Careful consideration of three key areas will lead to successful, united efforts that strengthen the pastoral-evangelist relationship.

Communication. During our first tenure of evangelizing, I recall pulling out of the parking lot of a church where we were in revival and commenting to my wife, "If they did not want us here, why did they invite us to preach in the first place?" As the revival progressed, we discovered there was no dislike for us, the pastor was simply deficient in methods of communication.

When a revival begins, clear channels of communication should be established with the following questions answered. What is the goal and vision of the pastor for the revival? Does the evangelist have specific direction concerning the meeting? What will be the service schedule? What are the expectations during the day? Are there special prayer services or organized outreach efforts? What happens on off days? Where should the evangelist's wife and family sit during the services? Are there plans after church? How should honorarium be made payable? Are there specific standards of separation that need to be communicated? With the pastor being the host, it is always best for him to initiate this conversation. An evangelist should not be left attempting to guess the thoughts of the host pastor.

Additionally, the evangelist should be able to express the need for personal time with his family, his personal prayer and consecration times, and any desires he may have during the revival meeting.

Open communication between the pastor and evangelist enables the two to be yoked up together for God's purpose during their united efforts.

Mutual Respect. The notion that an evangelist holds a less significant office should never be entertained. While the pastor is the final authority as the overseer of a local church, the office of the evangelist is not beneath him. The evangelist should not be treated as a hireling or a common laborer. His ministry should be respected and valued as given by God. While the evangelist is onsite at the pastor's invitation, he is not working for the pastor; he is working with the pastor, and together they are co-laborers for God.

The evangelist must also honor the office of the pastor as the final authority in the church. If the pastor is not comfortable with certain actions or efforts, the evangelist should not violate the wishes of the pastor. Also, the evangelist and his wife must always respect the established

standard of the church where he is ministering.

Monetary Consideration. I have lived long enough to remember getting paid in a small brown paper bag with whatever came in the offering. Sometimes, it was enough to purchase five dollars of gas, two hamburgers, and the road out of town. Hopefully, those days and that method of remuneration for an evangelist are over.

When an evangelist receives a call to preach a revival, he has no idea what he is going to receive. He goes in faith that God will supply his needs, and in faith that the pastor will treat him fairly. An evangelist with a burden for the work of God does not go into a church with the purpose of receiving an offering, and a pastor with a burden for the work of God will not expect an evangelist to labor in his vineyard without sufficient compensation. A pastor should consider the cost of living, travel expenses, family size, ministerial experience, and other factors when determining financial remuneration.

The evangelist's desire should be to bless a church with his ministry; the pastor's desire should be to bless the evangelist - not only spiritually, but also financially - during his stay.

Having labored in two tenures of traveling the evangelist circuit, once with just my wife and myself, beginning in 1996, and again fourteen years later with our two children in tow, and having served in pastoral ministry for nearly twenty-five years, I could not imagine the operation of the church without the active role of the evangelist. It is my conviction these men and their families should be appreciated, respected, and utilized for the purposes given in Ephesians 4... "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ!"

Strengthening the partnership between pastors and evangelists will create an unbreakable, united force for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. 

SCAN TO GIVE

WPF Global Missions

FIND & FACILITATE

OFFERING DUE BY DECEMBER 15, 2025

PEAK

JULY 15-17

TULSA, OK



WHY CHURCH DEVELOPMENT?

Historically, we called our particular council the North American Home Missions Council. Why have we changed the name to North American Church Development?

The label "Church Development" was born out of a desire for a purer definition of what we were doing as a movement and as a reflection of our overall influence and direction. We felt the terms "home missions" and "home missionaries" had taken on a negative connotation over the years. Those labels were used not only to describe recently planted works, but also as a way to stigmatize chronic cases where growth and revival were not being attained. Even if systems and practices that once had great merit and success unintentionally perpetuated that depiction, due to changing battlefield conditions, a more strategic approach was needed. Moving forward, we wanted to launch a tactical focus on church growth and evangelism for churches of all sizes. Church development has a broader focus on the North American church as a whole. We are a mighty army coming in and conquering lands for the kingdom of God.

Our greatest asset is our membership. Our goal is to see local churches across North America increase their strength, vitality, and ability to ultimately produce preachers, ministries, and other church plants from their congregations. The health and success of new works is maximized by staying connected and accountable to a pastor and an established church. We want to be a resource for training, facilitating, promoting, and partnering where revival is taking place.

Church Development is for:

- **CHURCH PLANTS**

We partner with pastors of newly established works that have been

sent out from healthy churches. Our partnership facilitates revival by working alongside them in areas where they need support. We have helped churches purchase buildings; understand IRS compliance; and source chairs, audio/video equipment, vans, etc.

- **DAUGHTER WORKS**

We collaborate with larger churches that have a healthy, active daughter work community. We endeavor to facilitate and duplicate their successful model in other churches and cities. Here our efforts have been to support the daughter works through the mother church.

- **DEVELOPING CHURCHES**

We support churches that, due to a myriad of circumstances, have found themselves in a cycle of decline. We desire to see every Apostolic church in healthy growth and revival. Old works can be infused with new life without compromising the old message. We want to help diagnose the need and partner strategically.

As our Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship mission states, we are "Advancing Hope To The Nations". We believe the nations of the world have been brought to North America for us to convert and, in turn, impact the world. The New Testament church had an international congregation at its first service thereby becoming a worldwide movement.

Time is a commodity we can't afford to waste. We want to partner with you in REVIVAL today. As the elders have echoed before us, LET'S HAVE REVIVAL TILL JESUS COMES. ☮



Billy Chapman
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HAIR & COVERING IN 1 CORINTHIANS 11

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Gordon Fee states that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is a passage “full of notorious exegetical difficulties.”¹ Other commentators echo similar views regarding this passage. Yet, one wonders if the passage is actually so difficult to understand, or if modern readers, with twenty-first-century sensibilities, are simply reluctant to accept what Paul is teaching regarding hair and covering. One key to understanding what this passage teaches is understanding the Greek behind the English words for “covering” and “hair.” The following is a brief introduction to this Greek.

COVERING

One confusing feature of 11:2-16 for the English reader is that Paul uses three different Greek words for “covered” in the passage. In most cases, the word translated as “covered” or “uncovered” is the adjective *κατακαλύπτως* (*katakaluptos*), or the verbal form of the same word, *κατακαλύπτω* (*katakaluptō*). As Paul discusses the theology of covering in verses 5, 6, 7, and 13, he is using the Greek words *κατακαλύπτω* and *ἀκατακαλύπτως*. Through these verses, all instances of covering, except one, refer to women. In the case where a man is in focus, Paul uses the word in the negative sense, “a man indeed ought not to cover his head” (1 Cor 11:7). By employing these words, Paul makes it clear that a woman’s head must be covered while praying or prophesying, but a man’s head should remain uncovered.

These two Greek cognates indicate a general state of being covered or veiled, without specifying how an individual accomplishes that state. Looking to the Old Testament for examples, in Isaiah, the angels *κατακαλύπτω* their faces with their wings (Is 6:2 LXX). Alternatively, when Judah saw Tamar sitting veiled, he thought she was a harlot because she had *κατακαλύπτω* her face with a physical veil (*θέριστρον*) (Gen 38:15 LXX).² These are two instances of *κατακαλύπτω* with different methods of covering being used, neither of which is hair, indicating that *κατακαλύπτω* does not inherently designate hair as the means of covering. Nonetheless, Paul’s overall discussion is closely tied to the topic of hair. In 11:6, he refers to an uncovered woman being shorn or shaven, and in 11:13-15, an uncovered woman is considered uncomely due to the differing nature of men’s and women’s hair. While Paul discusses the necessity for women to be covered through this passage, he is inextricably linking his theology with the issue of hair.

Another Greek word translated as “covered” is actually not a word at all, but rather, the Greek phrase “*κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων*” (literally, “having down from the head”). Paul instructs the Corinthian Church in 11:4, indicating that men should have nothing hanging down from their heads, presumably including long hair. Teece believes that although this phrase does not specify what is “down from” the man’s head, since Paul’s topic is hair, hair should “fill the ellipsis”.³ However, one could argue that Paul intentionally leaves ‘hair’ out of this phrase because he is referring to not only hair, but rather, any kind of covering. At this point in the passage, the length of men’s hair is not crucial to Paul’s general argument on how the state of being covered or uncovered brings honor or shame to one’s spiritual head. Nonetheless, Paul does address men’s hair specifically later in the passage when he discusses the length of men’s and women’s hair based on nature (1 Cor. 11:14-15).

There is an example of Plutarch using this identical phrase in his essays titled *Moralia* (*Morals*). Plutarch was a Greek philosopher-historian who wrote during the late first and early second centuries AD; therefore, his usage of Greek is relevant to the New Testament. When Plutarch recounts the story of the Roman general Scipio arriving in Alexandria, he describes him as wearing a toga that covered his head (Plutarch, *Moralia, Sayings of Romans, Scipio the Younger*, 13 [Babbitt]). Although Plutarch’s use of *κεφαλῆς* (head) is articular, rather than anarthrous as it is in 11:4, the same phrase, “*κατὰ (τῆς) κεφαλῆς ἔχων*,” is used to describe Scipio as “covered.” The use of the definite article in Greek is complex, but suffice it to say, the definite article is optional in most cases. Plutarch goes on to speak about Scipio, saying, “When he uncovered his head, they clapped their hands with a loud acclamation.” The Greek narrative makes it clear that what is coming down from Scipio’s head was a Roman garment, a toga. He was able to easily uncover his head by removing the garment, allowing the surrounding people to see his face. This example confirms that “*κατὰ (τῆς) κεφαλῆς ἔχων*” is a general term for a person covering their head, and does not necessarily indicate that one’s hair is the material used for the covering.

The final word used by Paul for a covering is *περιβόλαιον* (*periboleiov*), a compound word literally meaning “to throw around.” Unlike the other two words for covering, this word refers to an actual garment. Other passages in the Bible and writings from the Second Temple Period confirm that this word denotes a garment that one would wear (Deut 22:12 LXX; Isa 50:3 LXX; Heb 1:12; En 14:20; Ep Arist 158). Significantly, Paul uses this word here in 11:15 of the passage, where Paul argues that a woman’s long hair is given to her “*ἀντὶ περιβόλαιού*” (instead of a garment). The word *ἀντὶ*, which is translated as “for” in the King James Bible, is a word that speaks of one thing replacing or being equivalent to another. It can also mean a process of intervention. Jesus gave his life as a “ransom *ἀντὶ* many” (Matt 20:28). Here, through the process of giving his life, Jesus provides a ransom on behalf of many people. This definition doesn’t fit the context of 11:15, yet, even so, it carries the idea of a replacement. Following his discussion on covering in a general sense, Paul is now addressing a physical vestment used as a covering. Paul clarifies that if a woman has long hair, there is no need for

a garment, as her long hair is intended for that purpose. If a woman has long hair, she does not need a second covering of cloth to cover their head.

HAIR

So, what does Paul mean when he speaks of “long hair”? There are three words in 11:2-16 associated with hair. The word for hair used in 11:15 is the noun *κόμη* (*komē*). A woman’s *κόμη* (long hair) is the covering that she has been given instead of a garment. In its most basic definition, this word appears to refer to a person’s hair without specifying length. Nonetheless, in the texts that do use this word to refer to women’s hair, the context suggests that the hair is long (BDAG). 11:15 is the only place this word appears in the New Testament. However, the verb *κομάω* (*komāō*) used twice in 11:14-15 is the cognate of *κόμη*, and it does denote a person who lets their hair grow long (BDAG). Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, uses this verb to describe the practice of those who take the Nazarite vow. The Nazarites would “suffer their hair to grow long, and use no wine, when they consecrate their hair” (Jos., Ant., 4, 72). Josephus appears to be using the word *κομάω* to describe someone who does not cut their hair, as that was the requirement for Nazarites (Num 6:5; Judg 13:5). As *κομάω* is closely related to its cognate noun, *κόμη*, in these two verses, Paul evidently believes uncut hair is a satisfactory covering for a woman, in place of a veil or garment.

The other words related to hair are *ξυράω* (*xsuraw*), to shave, and *κείρω* (*keirō*), to shear or cut one’s hair (1 Cor 11:5-6). Paul argues that if a woman is not covered, it is equivalent to her having her hair shaved (*ξυράω*). He continues by stating that both *ξυράω* and *κείρω* are actions that are shameful for a woman to do to her hair (1 Cor 11:6). However, since both of these hair conditions are shameful (shaved and cut), a woman should be covered. In contrast to 11:15, where long hair is associated with being covered, here in 11:5-6, cut hair is connected to being uncovered. This contrast is significant, and the reader of Paul should take note. The comparison between *ξυράω* and *κείρω* on one hand and *κόμη* on the other, indicates that *κόμη* is speaking of uncut hair. In Paul’s eyes, there are only two states for a woman’s hair. If her head is uncovered, her hair is cut. If she is covered, her hair is uncut. The issue for Paul is the state of a woman’s hair. There is no need



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to insert a veil or a cloth garment into these verses, since the topic is hair, and by extension, spiritual covering and headship.⁴

Taking these different Greek words into account, what can we conclude about this passage in 1 Corinthians 11 concerning hair and covering? The words for covering in most of the passage appear to be generic and do not indicate what the covering consists of. Nonetheless, hair is the topic of discussion. In concluding the passage, Paul states that the garment is not necessary if a woman has long hair. The long hair that Paul speaks of would appear to be uncut, as it is closely associated with the verbal form of the same word, whose basic definition means “to let one’s hair grow long.” Additionally, Josephus uses the word to speak of the Nazarites, individuals who allowed their hair to grow and refrained from cutting it. The long hair here must be uncut, as it contrasts with the other two hair states referenced in 11:5-6, which involve shaving and cutting one’s hair. Taking everything into account, a woman with uncut hair does not need a second covering of cloth when praying, prophesying, or attending church. T

Endnotes:

1. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 492.
2. Franco Montanari, in *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, ed. Madeleine Goh and Chad Schroeder (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), s.v. “Θέριστρον”.
3. M. D. Teece, *1 Corinthians*, The New Literal Word (Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, 1995), 247.
4. Teece, 249.



Divine Deliverance of Dreams

Every woman carries within her a God-given dream—a purpose that only divine deliverance can bring to life. Yet between pride, insecurity, and the pressures of modern life, many of us wrestle to keep our hearts aligned with His Spirit. God longs to bring our dreams to pass, but only when we surrender them fully to His will.

Recently, my husband preached a message titled “When Chains Become Leashes,” discussing how girls and women are often simultaneously chained to both pride and insecurity. Even little girls have a desire to be beautiful, to be noticed for their beauty and accomplishments, and to find their places in this world. It takes a real work of the Spirit to conquer the flesh and to keep pride and insecurity on a leash—so we, as women, control them rather than letting them control us.

The struggle between confidence and humility isn’t new; it’s part of every woman’s journey. When my husband and I were evangelizing many years ago, we were getting ready to leave for town when one of the pastor’s little girls came out after she had proudly dressed herself and fixed her own hair. She said confidently, “Mom, look how cute I am!”

I’ve thought about that many times, because no doubt, as that little girl grew older, she wrestled with moments of not feeling cute or worthy enough. “You are enough” is a popular phrase among girls and women today because the enemy constantly bombards us with feelings that we are somehow not enough and that our lives don’t measure up.

I want to offer hope to a struggling lady’s heart today! We all have a purpose beyond what we imagine, and God has set laws in motion that work with faith and action to fulfill our dreams and purposes. We must simply submit and move toward our aspirations. My husband said the other night while preaching, “God picks up where you can’t, not where you won’t!”

That truth of God’s divine order even connects to how He designed the natural world to function. The desire in women to do it all and be it all is

not from God. God orders our steps! We must understand that our direction and our steps are ordered by an authority much higher than we are, and we are to submit to that process. God is making and molding us into beautiful vessels. As godly ladies, we must model submission to the higher authorities in our lives—submitting to God, to our pastor, and to our husbands. There is much safety beneath the umbrella of protection that hinges upon submission. What dreams has He placed in your heart, even since you were a young girl?

While I was in school earning an additional certification to run the software I use in my holistic clinic, I listened to a lecture by Dr. Vaughn R. Cook as he spoke on a fascinating topic within quantum physics called the zero-point field.

Did you know that in the world of quantum physics, everything on earth has a frequency, a field, and a sphere of influence? You and I have a frequency, and so does everything else on earth. I have a sphere of influence; you have a sphere of influence. The First Lady of the United States has a larger sphere of influence than ours—at least in the earthly realm—and that goes with the territory. The U.S. has a sphere of influence, China has one, and even inorganic objects or concepts like mathematics have their own fields.

Think of the zero-point field as the unseen web that connects everything in creation—a reminder that God designed a universe where nothing exists in isolation.

There is a place called the zero-point field where everything in the universe crosses paths. This is a concept that can change our lives if we allow it. It’s a proven scientific fact that when we wholeheartedly set our intention on something and begin working toward it with unwavering tenacity, the universe begins to respond and work with us to accomplish that goal.

In the zero-point field, all things must work together to maintain a balanced sum of zero. Why is that important? Because our positions in the universe, even at a subtle level, are called



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our energetic postures, and they impact every other field around us. The universe shifts to accommodate, maintaining balance. A sum of zero must always be held in God's universe.

Have you ever heard of the power of focusing your intent? It's powerful because our intent directs our energy, and how we direct our energy affects our posture. If we maintain a particular posture long enough, it eventually produces a physical manifestation.

Examples include training to run a marathon or walking with grace and confidence through a room. Have you ever heard the saying, "Be careful what you wish for—you might get it"? When we focus our intent and hold it in faith, that focus often results in its deliverance to us. This sounds much like prayer and faith.

Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

Proverbs 14:1

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7).

This verse

reminds us that when we stay close to Jesus and let His Word shape our desires, our requests align with His perfect will. I'm not referring to some ungodly "name-it-and-claim-it" theology. I'm speaking of the divine laws God set in motion so that we, as Holy Ghost-filled women, can experience victory and truly see a divine deliverance of our godly dreams and visions—all for His glory!

But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). This reminds us that our faith not only pleases God but activates His promises in our lives.

Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18). When we lose sight of our God-given dreams, our spiritual momentum fades, but vision revives our purpose.

Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands (Proverbs 14:1). This verse reminds us that our daily actions and attitudes determine whether we're building or breaking what God entrusted to us. It takes a godly woman with self-control, focused intention, and a boatload of wisdom to work daily toward building a

legacy worthy of honor. Any woman can tear down her house in a matter of hours. I want to be a godly woman who leaves behind a legacy.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Faith gives form to our hopes—it's the bridge between what we believe and what we will one day behold.

When my family and I first arrived in Sebastopol in 1998, everything was small, but there were big dreams. Our church was built on a godly foundation that provided the undercurrent for what God would do. Some godly elders had been keeping the fire burning, and though there were only about thirty people to vote us in, God had great things on the horizon.

One of our elderly sisters—who has since gone on to her heavenly reward—once told me, "When we used to go pray for the sick, we prayed until they got up from their sickbed!" That was the kind of faith the elders had when we came to Pine Grove Church.

Stories were told of a deep ravine beside our facilities where, years ago, many members of the congregation would gather to pray before services. Neighbors said those prayers could be heard for a great distance as that hollow amplified their voices. The beautiful truth is that our current sanctuary sits directly above that very place of prayer. We had to haul in many loads of dirt to fill the ravine so we could build on solid ground, but you can truly say our church is both literally and figuratively built on prayer.

Ladies, dare to dream, and let's turn our godly intentions into tangible reality. God's laws are working with us, and it's never too late to become what we might have been. At the end of the day, when we've come to the end of our own strength, we must give it all to God and immerse ourselves in His presence. Then pride transforms into godly confidence, and our insecurities melt away in His peace as we witness the divine deliverance of our dreams.

True divine deliverance happens when our dreams align with His will, our faith partners with His power, and our posture remains surrendered to His Spirit.

Sister, lift your eyes and dream again. The same God who began a good work in you will finish it—beautifully, divinely, completely. □



RX: Bible Quizzing

I have often thought about how God can use any tool He desires to bring about growth. Many times, what appears to have one intended purpose may produce blessings we never could have anticipated. Bible Quizzing, for me, has been one of those things. It was, of course, created to help young people learn Scripture, but the results reach far beyond the verses memorized. Bible Quizzing has side effects.

Every prescription comes with a list of side effects, some expected, others surprising. However, at times a medicine is created to fix one problem and ends up helping in ways that may seem unrelated to its intended use. Take ACE inhibitors, for example. Developed to lower blood pressure, they were later discovered to help protect kidneys in people with diabetes and may even slow memory decline. Or consider minoxidil, another medication that was originally intended to treat hypertension. Initially an oral medication, it can now be found as a foam or spray and is well known for helping people grow hair. These outcomes are not failures of the treatment but are unexpected benefits.

In my life, Bible Quizzing has worked in much the same way. The side effects, the life skills and personal growth that emerged along the way, are undeniable. I saw this firsthand as a premedical student going through an organic chemistry course. I was sitting on the floor of the atrium with a deck of flashcards, muttering phrases to myself (probably while looking quite out of my mind) when it hit me. The memorization techniques I had learned as a quizzer, absorbing information, recalling it under pressure, became the same methods I used to memorize chemical reaction processes and complex compound names. I was then applying this information in exams, as I sat in a timed and pressurized environment, much like I had done on a quiz board from the time I was five years old. This was one of the first realizations I had about how Bible Quizzing had given me more than knowledge of Scripture. It had equipped me for life.

In my local church, young people who entered very shy and withdrawn found their "thing" through quizzing. They entered the program while struggling in school and had little confidence. Sitting at the quiz board, they discovered they

were good at something. Over time, they learned how to speak in front of people, how to connect with others, and how to carry themselves with poise. As they traveled and competed, these young people gained experience interacting with peers from other churches and backgrounds. Today, many of them are used by God to teach and minister to other young people. They often excel in public speaking and serve in greater ways than they could have imagined. One of the primary contributing factors to this development was quizzing.

It's true that Bible Quizzing ensures that young people deeply immerse themselves in Scripture. As they memorize verses, they are not just learning facts. They are hearing the heart of God, which shapes their actions and character. The steady exposure to God's Word builds a foundation for their walk with Him that goes beyond the quiz board.

Tournaments are not only competitive environments but are also spiritual experiences. Many young people have received the Holy Ghost during services and prayer meetings at these events. When committed young people gather in one place to study His Word, God takes notice.

But consider that fellowship and connection are other unexpected benefits. Quizzers meet peers from other churches across the region and the country. These interactions often lead to lifelong friendships and Godly relationships. I still have friends all across the country who are "quiz friends" in my mind, because it was quizzing that provided the environment for me to connect with them and form strong interpersonal relationships. I've witnessed young people whose families may not be heavily involved in church suddenly find a community. Those already in church strengthen their bonds. These relationships create accountability and a shared sense of purpose in serving God together.

Better study habits and time management skills are also side effects of quizzing. Many young people struggle not with how much they study but with how they study. Quizzing teaches more efficient and effective study methods that benefit school performance and other areas of learning. Managing all that successful quizzing entails will develop skills that lead to stability and productivity. Many quizzers excel academically, often ranking



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National Challenge Week is a collaborative developmental conference hosted by the WPF Youth Development Council, Hope Corps, and Wilson University. The Challenge is, *developing the next generation of Apostolic leaders*. That is our vision and mission. We are committed to the long-term viability of the Apostolic movement. Human potential exists on a broad spectrum. The possibilities for advancing the Kingdom of God are beyond imagination and start with dynamic, personal spiritual formation. How do we see correctly, the depth of possibility that lies just under the surface of each individual life? How might we develop the next generation if we could envision not just the problems, but the *possibilities*? What are we capable of *becoming*, and how does that becoming expand Apostolic effectiveness?

This year, there were five areas of focus: **Formal Ministry, Youth Development, Business as Mission, Church Administration**, and



among the top students in their classes. These practical skills stay with them for a lifetime.

Quizzing also teaches respect for authority, teamwork, perseverance, and a push to excel in other areas of life. When consistency and discipline in study habits become second nature, they can be applied generally in one's life. The competitive and spiritual environments of quizzing teach young people how to handle pressure and perform under challenging circumstances. These skills translate directly to school, work, ministry, and beyond. Through Bible Quizzing, we are equipping young people to be successful and productive members of God's kingdom. Quizzing is not meant to replace studying or other responsibilities. Instead, it complements these pursuits by teaching discipline, accountability, and focus. A successful Bible Quizzer becomes a better student, a better future employee, a better servant of God, and a better member of the body of Christ. This is because they have been trained in more than Scripture. They have been trained in life.

Again, the main benefit of Bible Quizzing is spiritual: learning God's Word and developing a personal relationship with Him. The Word of God is the medicine, but the growth in both character and personal development are the side effects that everyone should know about. ¶



Cookin' Up Something Good



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We all know that feeling of anticipation. Dinnertime is approaching and someone has been working in the kitchen. The aroma from various pots and pans fills the house. The prepared meal is served, and it's every bite is as good as you hoped! In fact, the satisfaction of a belly full of goodness sticking to the ribs overshadows even the expectation. This is what a job well done feels like.

It Starts With Vision

The first step of the project is to decide what you are going to do. My husband says that where *incisions cut into something, decisions necessarily cut away all options that don't lead to the goal*. This focuses our energies on the steps that will follow. In meal planning, this is selecting the main course and choosing complementary sides with their respective recipes.

In ministry, this stage will align with the Pastor's vision as God leads the church. It is staffing the work prayerfully with passionate and committed members.

It Requires Preparation

Planning done, it is time to assemble the ingredients and start preparing the meal. This step of the process may also include going to the store to purchase new items. Consult the recipe. By all means, buy quality ingredients!

In Deaf ministry, we prepare ourselves. We pray and fast. We stay submitted to the vision. We learn all we can to prepare for assignments.

Find an interpreter training program (ITP) that can help you take your sign vocabulary beyond the matching game of marrying one English word to a sign in American Sign Language (ASL). In an ITP you learn how to use the grammatical structure of ASL to make your message understood. Beyond that, find Deaf people to converse with. Spend time watching them use ASL and using what you have learned. Learn new signs and ways of communicating ideas.

It Involves Work

Everything is ready and has led to this moment. The stove is hot. The pans are filled. This is when the magic happens in the kitchen. Even while following the recipe, there will be last-minute adjustments. Ultimately, you will season the dish your way and will salt "to taste".

This is serving time. The lights are on and service is beginning. The first song starts. There is no more time for planning or preparing. Your knowledge will be tested. You will come from this assignment with some wins and an awareness of gaps in your learning. Along with your skills, you also bring yourself and your unique flavor into the mix.

It Is Rewarding

Best of all, the people of God will be fed! This is why we keep going through all the hard work, to nourish our families and guests. The strength they receive from this meal will propel the gospel forward until HIS kingdom comes. ¶

EDIFICANDO PUENTES: RECONOCIENDO Y ALCANZANDO DIFERENTES CULTURAS

En un mundo cada vez más interconectado, pero muchas veces dividido, la Iglesia se encuentra en una encrucijada crítica. Las naciones, los idiomas y las culturas están convergiendo de maneras nunca antes vistas. Migración, tecnología y comunicación global han creado comunidades en las que la diversidad no es la excepción, sino la norma. Para la Iglesia, esto presenta tanto un reto como una gran oportunidad. Si la Iglesia quiere cumplir con la Gran Comisión, no solo debe reconocer la existencia de diferentes culturas y sus normas, sino también edificar puentes de manera intencional para llegar a ellas con el poder transformador del Evangelio.

Desde Génesis hasta Apocalipsis, las Escrituras pintan una imagen consistente del corazón de Dios para todas las naciones y pueblos. Cuando Dios hizo su pacto con Abraham, declaró que *“en ti serán benditas todas las familias de la tierra”* (Génesis 12:3). Desde el principio, el plan redentor de Dios incluyó a todas las tribus, lenguas y naciones. Jesús lo reafirmó cuando comisionó a sus seguidores, diciendo: “Id, pues, y haced discípulos a todas las naciones...” (Mateo 28:19). La palabra “naciones” (en griego: *ethne*) no se refiere solo a las naciones políticas, sino también a grupos étnicos: culturas, grupos de personas y comunidades con idiomas, tradiciones y cosmovisiones distintas.

El día de Pentecostés ofrece una de las ilustraciones más vívidas de la visión inclusiva de Dios para su Iglesia. Cuando el Espíritu Santo descendió sobre los creyentes en Hechos 2, los que estaban allí reunidos oyeron el Evangelio “en su propia lengua.” Esto no fue accidental. Fue una declaración divina: el Evangelio no está limitado por barreras culturales. Habla todos los idiomas y pertenece a todos los pueblos. Más adelante, en Apocalipsis 7:9, Juan vio un vistazo del destino final de la Iglesia: una multitud que nadie podía contar, de “todas las naciones, tribus, pueblos y lenguas,” adorando ante el trono. La diversidad de la Iglesia no es una idea moderna, sino un diseño

divino.

Muchas iglesias desean ser “acogedoras,” pero reconocimiento va más allá de la hospitalidad. Reconocer las diferentes culturas significa comprender que las personas experimentan la fe, la comunidad y la comunicación a través de sus propios lentes culturales. La cultura moldea la forma en que las personas interpretan las Escrituras, cómo adoran y cómo entienden autoridad, relaciones e incluso tiempo. Cuando una iglesia ignora estas diferencias, corre el riesgo de aislar involuntariamente a aquellos a quienes están tratando de alcanzar. Por ejemplo, en algunas comunidades, la hospitalidad y compartir comidas entre ellos son expresiones vitales de la cultura. Esto es cierto en la comunidad hispanohablante. Reconocer las características y distinciones que existen dentro de una cultura permite a una iglesia ministrar de manera más eficaz, mostrando conciencia y amor en lugar de insistir en la uniformidad.

El apóstol Pablo modeló este enfoque al decir: “A todos me he hecho de todo, para que de todos modos salve a algunos” (1 Corintios 9:22). Pablo no cambió el Evangelio; adaptó sus métodos para encontrarse con personas donde ellos estaban. Era consciente de las diferencias culturales y comprendía que el mismo mensaje podía necesitar comunicarse de manera diferente según el público al que se dirigiera. Él edificó puentes.

El reconocer las culturas dentro de la iglesia significa reconocer que la imagen de Dios se refleja de diversas maneras. Cada cultura revela un aspecto diferente de Su creatividad y gloria. Cuando honramos estas diferencias, no solo fortalecemos el Cuerpo de Cristo, sino que también reflejamos la unidad en la diversidad que existe.

A pesar del llamado bíblico a la unidad, muchas iglesias luchan con la división cultural. A veces, la barrera es el miedo a lo desconocido o a perder el control. A veces es el orgullo, la creencia de que

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BUILDING BRIDGES: RECOGNIZING AND REACHING DIFFERENT CULTURES

In an increasingly interconnected yet often divided world, the Church stands at a critical intersection. Nations, languages, and cultures are converging in ways never seen before. Migration, technology, and global communication have created communities where diversity is not the exception but the norm. For the Church, this presents both a challenge and a profound opportunity. If the Church is to fulfill the Great Commission, it must not only recognize the existence of different cultures and their norms but also intentionally build bridges that reach them with the transforming power of the Gospel.

From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture paints a consistent picture of God's heart for all nations and peoples. When God made His covenant with Abraham, He declared that *“in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”* (Genesis 12:3). From the very beginning, God's redemptive plan included every tribe, tongue, and nation. Jesus reaffirmed this when He commissioned His followers, saying, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...”* (Matthew 28:19). The word “nations” (Greek: *ethne*) refers not just to political nations but to ethnic groups—cultures, people groups, and communities with distinct languages, traditions, and worldviews.

The Day of Pentecost offers one of the most vivid illustrations of God's inclusive vision for His Church. When the Holy Ghost fell upon the believers in Acts 2, those gathered heard the Gospel *“in his own language.”* This was not accidental. It was a divine statement: the Gospel is not bound by cultural barriers. It speaks every language and belongs to every people. Later, in Revelation 7:9, John saw a glimpse of the Church's ultimate destiny—a multitude no one could number, *“of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,”* worshiping before the throne. The

Church's diversity is not a modern idea; it is a divine design.

Many churches desire to be “welcoming,” but recognition goes deeper than hospitality. Recognizing different cultures means understanding that people experience faith, community, and communication through their unique cultural lenses. Culture shapes how people interpret Scripture, how they worship, and how they understand authority, relationships, and even time. When a church ignores these differences, it risks unintentionally alienating those it hopes to reach. For example, in some communities, hospitality and shared meals are vital expressions of the culture. This is true in the Spanish-speaking community. Recognizing characteristics and distinctions that exist within a culture allows a church to minister more effectively, showing awareness and love rather than insisting on uniformity.

The Apostle Paul modeled this approach by saying, *“I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some”* (1 Corinthians 9:22). Paul didn't change the Gospel; he adapted his methods to meet people where they were. He was culturally aware, understanding that the same message might need to be communicated differently to the targeted audience. He built bridges.

To recognize cultures within the church means acknowledging that God's image is reflected in diverse ways. Each culture reveals a different aspect of His creativity and glory. When we honor these differences, we not only strengthen the Body of Christ, but we also reflect the unity-in-diversity that exists.

Despite the biblical call to unity, many churches struggle with cultural division. Sometimes the barrier is fear of the unfamiliar or losing

Continued on page 31



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su forma de adorar u organizar la vida de la iglesia es “la forma correcta.” Y a veces es simplemente ignorancia, la falta de comprensión de las experiencias y luchas de los demás.

Las barreras lingüísticas, los métodos y las diferencias socioeconómicas pueden crear muros. El Evangelio siempre ha sido una fuerza reconciliadora. Como nos recuerda Efesios 2:14: “Porque él es nuestra paz, que de ambos pueblos hizo uno, derribando la pared intermedia de separación.” Entonces, ¿cómo podemos nosotros, como Iglesia, edificar estos puentes e incorporar la unidad por la que Cristo oró en Juan 17? He aquí varios pasos prácticos:

1. Cultivar Humildad

La humildad comienza con el reconocimiento de que no lo sabemos todo. Nos exige escuchar, oír genuinamente las historias, el dolor y las perspectivas de los demás sin juzgar. En lugar de acercarnos con una actitud de superioridad, debemos acercarnos como aprendices. Haga preguntas. Aprenda sobre la historia, las costumbres y los estilos de comunicación de las personas que lo rodean. La humildad abre la puerta a las relaciones. Cuando personas se sienten vistas y respetadas, están más abiertas a escuchar el mensaje de Cristo.

2. Relaciones, No Solo Programas

El ministerio multicultural no puede reducirse a servicios temáticos o comidas internacionales compartidas. Si bien esos pueden ser detalles agradables, la verdadera edificación de puentes se da a través de las relaciones. Invite a personas de diferentes orígenes a su casa. Compartan comidas. Sirvan juntos. Compartan sus historias. Las relaciones disuelven los estereotipos. Cuando amamos genuinamente más allá de las barreras culturales, le mostramos al mundo que el Evangelio es más poderoso que cualquier división social o étnica.

3. Empodere un Liderazgo de Diversidad

La diversidad en el liderazgo refleja diversidad en el Cuerpo. Sea intencional en el desarrollo de esos líderes. Cuando las personas ven líderes que se “parecen” a ellos y comparten sus experiencias, esto transmite valor y un sentido de pertenencia. Considera la posibilidad de crear espacios donde personas de diferentes culturas puedan dirigir la adoración, enseñar o servir de manera visible. La representación es importante. Ayuda a la

iglesia a crecer más allá de una mentalidad de “cultura anfitriona” y hacia una verdadera colaboración en el ministerio.

4. Contextualice el Evangelio Sin Comprometerlo

El mensaje de Jesús nunca cambia, pero la forma en que lo comunicamos puede y debe adaptarse. El sermón de Pablo en Atenas (Hechos 17) fue muy diferente de su mensaje en la sinagoga. En Atenas, citó a poetas griegos; en la sinagoga, citó las Escrituras hebreas. Era sensible a su audiencia. Del mismo modo, las iglesias deben aprender a comunicar el Evangelio de maneras culturalmente relevantes, a través de la música, la comida, el compañerismo, la narración de historias o el lenguaje que resuena en las personas a las que intentan llegar. La contextualización no es ceder, es compasión.

5. Celebre Unidad en la Diversidad

El objetivo del reconocimiento cultural no es asimilación, sino la armonía. La Iglesia no está llamada a borrar las diferencias, sino a celebrarlas bajo el señorío de Cristo. Cuando adoramos juntos a través de las diferentes culturas, le damos al mundo un vistazo anticipado del cielo. Celebre los diferentes idiomas en la adoración. Reconozca y anime los testimonios de santos de diversos orígenes. Cada historia enriquece la narrativa más amplia de la gracia de Dios.

El Evangelio como el puente definitivo

En esencia, el Evangelio es un puente. Crea una conexión entre Dios y la humanidad. Jesús cruzó la mayor división cultural imaginable cuando dejó la gloria del cielo para morar entre nosotros. Se hizo como nosotros para que pudiéramos ser como Él. Si Cristo se humilló a sí mismo para llegar a nosotros, ¿cuánto más debemos nosotros humillarnos para llegar a los demás? El Evangelio nos impulsa a salir de nuestra zona de comodidad, a derribar los muros del prejuicio y a encarnar el amor reconciliador de Dios.

A medida que la Iglesia aprende a honrar y acoger la diversidad cultural, se convierte en un testimonio vivo del poder de la Cruz. El mundo está hambriento de unidad auténtica, y solo el Espíritu de Dios puede producirlo. Al final, la misión de la Iglesia no es simplemente reunir a personas que se parecen, hablan y piensan igual, sino construir un puente y crear una comunidad donde el Cielo toque la Tierra. 

control. Sometimes it's pride—the belief that one's way of worshiping or organizing church life is “the right way.” And sometimes it's simple unawareness—a lack of understanding about the experiences and struggles of others.

Language barriers, methods, and socioeconomic differences can create walls. The Gospel has always been a reconciling force. As Ephesians 2:14 reminds us, *“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.”* So how do we, as the Church, build these bridges and embody the unity Christ prayed for in John 17? Here are several practical steps:

1. Cultivate Humility

Humility begins with the recognition that we don't know everything. It requires us to listen—to genuinely hear the stories, pain, and perspectives of others without judgment. Rather than approaching with an attitude of advantage, we come as learners. Ask questions. Learn about the history, customs, and communication styles of the people around you. Humility opens the door to relationships. When people feel seen and respected, they are more open to hearing the message of Christ.

2. Build Relationships, Not Just Programs

Multicultural ministry cannot be reduced to themed services or international potlucks. While those can be enjoyable expressions, true bridge-building happens through relationships. Invite people of different backgrounds into your home. Share meals. Serve together. Learn each other's stories. Relationships dissolve stereotypes. When we genuinely love across cultural lines, we show the world that the Gospel is more powerful than any social or ethnic divide.

3. Empower Diverse Leadership

Diversity in leadership reflects diversity in the Body. Be intentional in developing those leaders. When people see leaders who “look” like them and share their experiences, it communicates value and belonging. Consider creating spaces where people from different cultures can lead worship, teach, or serve in visible ways. Representation matters. It helps the church grow beyond a “host culture” mentality and toward true partnership in ministry.

4. Contextualize the Gospel Without Compromising It

The message of Jesus never changes, but the way we communicate it can and should adapt. Paul's sermon in Athens (Acts 17) looked very different from his message in the synagogue. In Athens, he quoted Greek poets; in the synagogue, he quoted the Hebrew Scriptures. He was sensitive to his audience. Similarly, churches must learn to communicate the Gospel in culturally relevant ways—through music, food, fellowship, storytelling, or language that resonates with the people they are trying to reach. Contextualization is not compromise; it is compassion.

5. Celebrate Unity in Diversity

The goal of cultural recognition is not assimilation but harmony. The Church is not called to erase differences but to celebrate them under the lordship of Christ. When we worship together across cultures, we give the world a preview of Heaven. Celebrate different languages in worship. Recognize and encourage testimonies from saints of various backgrounds. Every story enriches the larger narrative of God's grace.

The Gospel as the Ultimate Bridge

At its core, the Gospel is a bridge. It spans the gap between God and humanity. Jesus crossed the greatest cultural divide imaginable when He left Heaven's glory to dwell among us. He became like us so that we could become like Him. If Christ humbled Himself to reach us, how much more should we humble ourselves to reach others? The Gospel compels us to go beyond comfort zones, to dismantle walls of prejudice, and to embody the reconciling love of God.

As the Church learns to honor and embrace cultural diversity, it becomes a living testimony of the power of the Cross. The world is hungry for authentic unity, and only the Spirit of God can produce it. In the end, the mission of the Church is not simply to gather people who look, sound, and think alike, but to build a bridge and create a community where Heaven touches Earth. 

AN URGENT CALL TO GLOBAL ACTION

Pastors and Ministers of the World Pentecostal Fellowship, Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I write to you today with a heartfelt appeal on behalf of our resident missionaries, whose need for monthly support has never been greater. During the recent Global Missions Service at Summit, the Global Missions Council had the privilege of presenting the pressing need for consistent missionary support. The presence of the Lord was truly palpable, affirming the urgency of this call.

God is actively calling workers into the global harvest; however, these workers require our committed support to both go forth and remain steadfast in their respective fields of calling. **Monthly support for our missionaries' living expenses is essential**, as most resident missionaries are typically not permitted to seek employment outside their mission work in their fields of service. Our missionaries and their families depend on our support for all of their basic expenses, including housing, utilities, food, transportation, children's educational needs, and medical care. To put it plainly, if we do not partner with them in monthly personal support, they have nowhere else to turn, and eventually they will be unable to remain on the field.

The WPF stands at a critical juncture. We have the opportunity either to evolve into a fellowship that sends missionaries or to remain content assisting only where opportunities arise, through the Find and Facilitate offering. The Global Missions Council is made up of former missionaries and pastors who are deeply involved in sending missionaries and supporting the mission work around the world, and we firmly believe we can do both. The WPF can support a growing corps of missionaries and their families, but it will take every church and minister embracing and fully committing to the vision for the global harvest.

As outlined during the Global Missions Service, we **urgently** need:

- 50 Churches or individuals contributing \$1,000 per month = \$50,000
- 100 Churches or individuals contributing \$500 per month = \$50,000
- 118 Churches or individuals contributing \$100 per month = \$11,800

This equates to a total monthly commitment of \$111,800 or \$1,341,600 annually to support our resident missionaries.

To borrow a quote from Caleb, **we are well able**.

Please note these figures are for illustrative purposes, and I believe we can exceed these goals. Our missionaries depend on us—the sending church—to stand firmly with them as they carry out the missional mandate to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples of all nations.

On behalf of the Global Missions Council and the missionaries we serve, I plead with you to step up to the plate. We have a dying world to reach, but the only way we can fulfill the Great Commission is by standing shoulder-to-shoulder, joining our resources, and making reaching our world with the gospel our #1 priority.

We need you now more than ever before. Time is running out.

I humbly urge each of you to prayerfully consider how your church or ministry can participate in this vital effort. Together, we can empower our missionaries to continue the work God has called them to with confidence and the assurance that their families will be provided for.

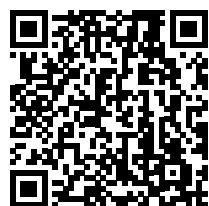
Please...**right now**...take your phone and scan the QR code below. It will take you to a page where you can make your monthly commitment to Activate, the Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship's monthly support program for missionaries. Our missionaries simply cannot afford to wait another day, as many of them are struggling to survive. Your church's monthly pledge of \$1,000 will be an enormous step toward meeting the needs of each of their families. Of course, if \$1,000 is beyond your congregation's reach at this time, a pledge of any amount will be a blessing. No amount is insignificant if it truly represents our best effort.

Our missionaries have literally laid everything down for the sake of the gospel. May the Lord bless you abundantly as you seek His will and become their faithful partner this vital kingdom endeavor.

In His Service,

Jerry Rowley, Chairman
Global Missions Council
Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship [\[T\]](#)

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Jerry Rowley
Laurel, MS



A Wife's Awakening



Beth Baus
Elk Grove, CA

I used to think it was my job to keep our family from falling apart. My husband was struggling with drugs and alcohol, and I believed that if I just loved him enough, prayed hard enough, and kept everything together on the outside, somehow everything would be okay. I thought my strength could hold back the storm.

So, I became an expert at pretending. I smiled through church services, made excuses for missed birthdays, and told the children, "Daddy's just tired." I was determined to protect them from the truth. But deep down, I was weary. My heart ached every time I saw the man I married slipping further away. I prayed constantly—pleading, bargaining, crying out in the dark hours of the night.

Each day felt like a battlefield between faith and fear. I quoted Scriptures like, *"With God all things are possible"* (Matthew 19:26), but inside I questioned if God even saw us. I was trying to play Savior, carrying a weight I was never meant to carry.

Then came the night everything changed. After another long evening of broken promises and angry words, I packed a few clothes, grabbed the kids, and drove until I found a small roadside motel. The silence when I turned off the car felt deafening. The kids fell asleep quickly, but I sat there in the dark, tears running down my face. For the first time, I admitted what I'd been afraid to say out loud: *"God, I can't do this anymore."*

That confession didn't mean I stopped believing—it meant I finally started trusting. True surrender isn't giving up; it's giving God control. I realized that my love couldn't heal my husband, but God's love could. My role wasn't to rescue him—it was to pray, set healthy boundaries, and let the Lord fight the battle for us.

It wasn't easy. There were relapses, setbacks, and nights when loneliness pressed in like a heavy fog. But slowly, change began to happen. God started restoring things I thought were beyond repair—my peace, my joy, and eventually, my husband's heart.

He started attending a Christian recovery program they had just started at the church and began seeking the Lord for himself. I watched the same man who once hid bottles under the sink now sit at our kitchen table with his Bible open, tears in his eyes, saying, "I want to be the husband and father God called me to be."

It didn't happen overnight, but little by little, our home was rebuilt on a new foundation—faith instead of fear, truth instead of secrecy, grace instead of guilt.

What God showed me was that letting go wasn't the end—it was the beginning. Because when I finally released control, I made room for God to redeem what I could never repair on my own.

Today, my husband has been sober for about six years. We serve together in our church's recovery ministry, helping other families find hope in the middle of their storms. Our children know what it means to pray for miracles—because they saw one unfold in our living room.

When people ask me how we survived, I tell them we didn't. *God did it.* He met us in the ashes and breathed life where addiction once stole it. He reminded me that the same God who calmed the sea can calm the storm inside our homes.

—Based on a True Story

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

—Psalm 34:18



**NATHAN COX / LARRY BOOKER / JONATHAN ALVEAR
NATHANIEL WILSON / DANIEL MCKILLOP**

APRIL 1 - APRIL 3, 2026



ARE MIRACLES FOR THE CHURCH TODAY?

There is much debate today about whether miracles, signs, and wonders should still be expected in the church. Some maintain that miracles belonged uniquely to Jesus' ministry and are not relevant to the church today. Others, such as Rudolf Bultmann, have argued that modern people cannot simply accept the New Testament's 'spirit and wonder world' in the same way the first Christians did. [i] This paper, however, along with the apostolic movement at large, maintains that Jesus' ministry was a ministry of miracles. Moreover, his ministry was continued and transmitted to the first-century church through the apostles, and that miracles belong to the broader Spirit-filled community today.

Jesus' Ministry Included Miracles

The Gospels, especially Mark, are filled with miracles. In fact, approximately one-third of Mark's Gospel contains miracles. Biblical scholars generally affirm that Jesus was a miracle worker. When discussing Jesus as a miracle worker, Craig Keener notes that "the evidence is stronger for this claim than for most of the other historical claims that we could make about Jesus or earliest Christianity." [ii] Miracles were as much a part of Jesus' ministry as His teaching. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the eyewitness evidence supporting these miracle reports.

Eyewitness Testimony in the Gospels and Acts

While some may be skeptical of the miracles, the New Testament writers present them as publicly witnessed events. Both the Gospels and the book

of Acts claim the existence of eyewitnesses to the miracles of Christ. Mark and Luke attest to the amazement of individuals when the paralytic was healed. [iii] While Jesus only allowed Peter, James, and John to be present for the actual act of Jairus' daughter being raised from the dead, those who had witnessed that the girl was dead and now alive "were astonished with a great astonishment." [iv] All four of the Gospels attest to Jesus feeding the five thousand. In the aftermath of the event, John concludes, "These men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." [v] These are just a few examples of the testimonies regarding the presence of eyewitnesses to Jesus' miracles, as recorded by the Gospel writers.

Even Luke's second letter to Theophilus records the veracity of Christ's miracles based on eyewitnesses. The first mention of eyewitnesses in Acts is found in the selection of one to replace Judas, indicating there were witnesses to Jesus' entire ministry beyond just the 12 apostles.

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. [vi]

On the day of Pentecost, the legitimacy of Peter's sermon rested upon the fact that his hearers were eyewitnesses to Jesus' miracles. "Ye men

of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you; as ye yourselves also know." [vii] It is evident through the Gospel accounts and the Acts of the Apostles that many attested to the fact that Jesus performed miracles. There were many eyewitnesses.

Jesus Confirmed His Identity Through Miracles

In Matthew 11:4-5, Jesus affirms the miracles he performs when questioned by the disciples of John the Baptist about his true identity. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." [viii]

Later, in Chapter 11, Jesus rebukes Chorazin and Bethsaida for their lack of faith amid the miracles they have seen. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." [ix] While the KJV states "mighty works," other English translations render this passage as "miracles." [x] The underlying Greek supports the notion that Jesus is referencing miracles, as the Greek word "dynamis" means "force; specifically, miraculous power." [xi]

The Apostles' Ministry Included Miracles

The Bible indicates that the apostles were an extension of Jesus' ministry, which included miracles. In Mark 9:28-29, we find a clear example of Jesus' expectation for the disciples' ministry to include miracles. "And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." [xii] Therefore, Jesus did not act as though miracles were something that would cease with him. He expected the disciples to walk and minister in the same power.

The book of Acts records how Jesus' expectation was met. In Acts 3, Peter and John found a lame man at the temple gate. Upon encountering the man, Peter commanded that the man "rise up and walk." Luke records that the man was healed and walked away leaping and praising God. Additionally, Acts 5:12 tells us, "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people..." Therefore, based on this statement, we can conclude that miracles

were a normal part of apostolic ministry in the Jerusalem church.

As the gospel spread, Philip went down to Samaria. "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." [xiii] An interesting thing to note here is that Philip was not a number among "the twelve" as Peter and John were. Philip was one of the seven men chosen to wait on tables in Acts 6.

Miracles Witnessed in Corinth and Galatia

The ministry of the Apostle Paul illustrates that miracles continued after Jesus' ascension. In addition to the miracles attributed to Paul by Luke in Acts, 2 Cor 12:12 indicates that there were eyewitnesses to the miracles associated with Paul's ministry. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." [xiv] Eyewitnesses to Paul's ministry are not only found in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth, but also in the letters to the churches at Galatia. [xv]

Luke's "We Statements" as Eyewitness Testimony

In addition to Paul's affirmation of witnesses, Luke's "we statements" in connection with the miracles associated with Paul's ministry provide another eyewitness. Luke's recording places him as an eyewitness, and his testimony does not contradict Paul's letter. In Acts 16:10-18, he is with the team in Philippi when the girl with the spirit of divination is confronted. He places himself there by stating, "We went to prayer." Later, in Acts 20:5-12, Luke is again present when Paul preaches at Troas, and the young man Eutychus is "taken up dead" and then brought back to life. Lastly, in Acts 27-28, Luke accompanies Paul during the shipwreck and is present in Malta. There, he records Paul surviving the viper bite and then healing Publius's father. After these events, many other sick people on the island are healed.

Miracles Are a Part of the Larger Spirit-Filled Community

1 Corinthians 12:9-10 shows that miracles were not restricted to Paul and the other apostles but were expected among the broader Christian community. "To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. [xvi] Paul's statement here aligns with Jesus' declaration in Mark 16:17-



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18, which states that signs and miracles will follow those who believe. Therefore, both Paul and Jesus expected that miracles would be an ongoing, ever-present part of the ministry of Spirit-filled believers.

In light of the New Testament pattern, the answer to the question is clear. Miracles marked Jesus' ministry. Miracles marked the apostles' ministry after His ascension. Paul and Jesus both taught that the working of miracles belongs to the wider body of Spirit-filled believers. There is no biblical indication that miracles were to cease in the first century. Therefore, miracles are for the church today. [\[1\]](#)

Endnotes

- [i] Bultmann, R. (1961). *New Testament and mythology and other basic writings* (S. M. Ogden, Ed. & Trans.), p. 4. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press.
- [ii] Keener, C. S. (2011). *Miracles: The credibility of the New Testament accounts* (Vol. 1, p. 22). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- [iii] Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26
- [iv] Mark 5:37; Mark 5:42
- [v] John 6:14
- [vi] Acts 1:21-22
- [vii] Acts 2:22
- [viii] Matthew 11:4-5
- [ix] Matthew 11:21
- [x] NASB, LSB, NET, NIV, CSB all translate "mighty works" as miracles.
- [xi] Strong, J. (1990). *The New Strong's exhaustive concordance of the Bible* (G1411, "dynamis"). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- [xii] Mark 9:28-29
- [xiii] Acts 8:6
- [xiv] 2 Corinthians 12:12
- [xv] See Galatians 3:5
- [xvi] 1 Corinthians 12:9-10



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God Met Me in My Holding Cell

I was born and raised in the Apostolic Church. I received the gift of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues during revival. A few days later, I was baptized in the precious name of Jesus for the remission of my sins. And in those following times, I was on fire for God. Nevertheless, I struggled with my flesh.

I was too spiritually young to know that spirits that were introduced into my life at a young age were in spiritual warfare with my flesh for my soul. It seemed like I would never receive full deliverance. And little did I know that the devil was working on a long-term goal to destroy me.

Years down the road, I backslid, forsaking the church. It led to my arrest in 2018, less than a year after I gave up the struggle. I reached rock bottom and then dug deeper. But God...

God met me in that holding cell before I was completely booked. He said, "Praise Me." In my anger, I scoffed at Him. "Praise You? You have the power to get me out, and You want me to praise You?" But He spoke it again. "Praise Me." And a song came to mind. Of all songs to sing, He gave me, "I feel the joy of the Lord falling fresh on me. I feel the joy of the Lord delivering me. I feel the joy of the Holy Ghost all over me."

No sooner than I had finished that last line did my heart break open in repentance and immediately my knees crumbled to the floor. The presence of God filled that cell, and I began to speak in tongues as I was refilled with the Holy Ghost. I dedicated myself to Him.

In the county jail, I began a 90-day fast in which I only ate half of my meals (which were already very small). I committed to pray upon waking, throughout the day, and every night (hours per day). I read the Bible through three to four times during that fast and kept myself as pure as I could, rebuking every vain imagination.

I had faith that God was going to get me out of jail. At that time, I was being charged with something that I didn't do, and I told God I would not plead guilty to a lie. I felt it would make me a liar. So I began to pray that God would help me win my case (which meant I was looking at 45 years to life).

During a particular prayer, I felt the Holy Ghost, and as I prayed, "Lord, help me win," I heard the voice of the Lord as clear as day. He told me, "I have not

been preparing you to win. I have been preparing you to lose." And I was crushed. But I adapted my prayers, no longer praying for victory in my case, but that I would receive the amount of time He wanted for me. No more. No less. They gave me 30 years, meaning I'd have to do seven and a half years to be eligible for parole. I took seven years as a sign.

Prison was worse than I had expected and yet not as bad in some ways. God has protected me and had His hand in several situations about which I could testify.

I never expected to find any other Apostolics. I thought I might have been the first Apostolic man to get arrested. I am glad I was wrong. I find much comfort in fellowship with my brothers in the new birth. However, there have been several years without them or any Apostolic materials.

I felt ashamed of our people for our near total abandonment of the men behind bars. I searched hard for Apostolic material and found none for a long time. My mind goes back to Matthew 25:36-41 where Jesus condemned those who did not visit those in prison.

Finally, I made it to Cummins, and I'm in the chapel when I learn of Nobody Like Jesus from some fellow Apostolics. I treasured the magazine and read it several times.

At that time, they were asking for testimonies and so I sent mine in. Since then, I have developed a relationship with the organization. Through NLJ, I have a walk with God I only dreamed of. I have a degree and I'm working on my master's. I found a family of believers who make me feel that I am not alone anymore.

The NLJ team visited me while I was in prison. And without support from those outside these walls that would not be possible. The NLJ team touches thousands of lives. We are making a real difference in people's lives — drawing men and women into truth, giving them hope. God has been so good to us.

You may not be able to walk into the prisons and visit us physically, but your support is how you send those who can. It's how you provide the truth of Acts 2:38 to men and women who are hungry and desperate for deliverance. At the very least, I ask that you pray for God to give you direction and mention us in your prayers. [\[2\]](#)

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SAN DIEGO

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God-Blindedness

John 12:20-21

And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

To see Jesus should be the desire of every one of us. It is the desire of God that we should seek His face. It is the will of God that His people should seek to see Him. God's response to King Solomon at the dedication of the temple shows His desire that His people should "humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways" (Second Chronicles 7:14). David, a man after God's own heart, offered "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek" (Psalm 27:8), and Jesus promised that "the pure in heart...shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

Mary of Bethany is an example of someone who really saw Jesus.

Luke 10:38-42

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

John 12:1-5

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

Thomas Kelly was a Quaker missionary born in 1893. He wrote on the subject of spiritual devotion.

Humility rests upon a holy blindedness, like the blindedness of him who looks steadily into the sun. For wherever he turns his eyes on earth, there he sees only the sun. The God-blinded soul sees naught of self, naught of personal degradation or of personal eminence, but only the Holy Will working impersonally through him, through others, as one objective Life and Power. But the humility of the God-blinded soul endures only so long as we look steadily at the Sun (Kelly: 35-36).

Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, must have been so blinded by Jesus that she did not see the value of the work being done by Martha as recorded in the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke. What Martha saw as important, Mary didn't see. As a result, what was a source of trouble and anxiety for Martha was absolutely nothing to Mary. Thus, being God-blinded removes all worry. God-blindedness also causes the things of this world to lose their value except as they can be used for Him. In John's Gospel, chapter twelve, Mary pours a treasure worth one year's wages on the feet of Jesus. She is so blinded by Him that she fails to see what the more intelligent Judas sees. Judas, who has not allowed himself to be blinded by the worth of Jesus, cannot see the value of the anointing. He only sees the value of the ointment, and gets upset that something so costly is 'wasted.' Judas, unblinded by God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ, only sees three-hundred pence in the beautiful and fragrant sacrificial offering, and only sees thirty pieces of silver in the Lamb of God.

Like Paul, in First Corinthians 2:2, I am determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ. Blinded by the Creator, with his image seared into my vision, I hope to see Him in the face of every person I meet. I hope to be so focused on Him that I can see Him in every trial and every difficulty. Can the God-blinded person

see the face of God superimposed over every continent and every country? Can you see Him high and lifted up over every city and village?

If we were to become God-blinded, gazing steadfastly into His face, we would become blind to the things in others that irritate us. If we would see Jesus, we would not be so quick to point out the flaws we see in others. If we would see Jesus, we would stop looking for fault in others. Perhaps this is what happens to the new convert who comes into the church through the new birth...he or she is totally captivated by the face of Jesus, His glory and His grace. They are on cloud nine. They think everyone is perfect. It actually comes as a shock to them when they discover that we all have feet of clay. As long as they keep their eyes on Jesus, everything is fine. Gradually, if the cares of life distract them, and their gaze wanders...then they begin to see the faults in others. Oh! Don't let it happen! Keep your eyes on him. Be blinded by his brightness and refuse to be realistic. When someone speaks evil of another brother or sister, just shake your head and say, "I can't see that."

When others are turned aside by problems and difficulties, the God-blinded soul sees only Jesus. Those who focus on their problems are missing the lesson. How much you feel the problem, and how much you will be affected by the problem will be determined by your focus. It is possible for the person who focuses on the problem to be consumed by the problem. But the person who focuses on God can be consumed by God. The God blinded person can be oblivious to problems that would destroy others. The God blinded soul can be oblivious to Satan's mightiest efforts. The God blinded person can be oblivious to the mockery and gossip of others. Oh, turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full into his wonderful face.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Looking unto Jesus. Keep your eyes on him. Become blinded to the shame. Become blinded to the pain. Become blinded to the cost. Become blinded to self. Become blinded to the world. Become blinded to all but Him. If you can become God blinded, you are well on your way to become totally consumed by Him.

Excerpted from
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