



Reconnect with Power

Rev. Otto Menko

“The power that was promised, for which the Disciples gathered and waited in earnest anticipation, burst forth on the Day of Pentecost. Peter and the other Disciples spoke with power and authority by the Holy Spirit. That same power is available to us as we reconnect with God and are re-ignited by the Spirit. There is wonder-working power in the blood of Jesus!” – (UCJCI Preaching Themes – Sunday, May 28, 2023)

Pentecost Sunday marks the end of the liturgical season of Easter and commemorates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples following the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. It is also viewed as the birth of the Church and the beginning of its mission to the world.

Please read Acts 2:1-21 (The story of Pentecost)

The above Scripture account describes the events that took place in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost as thousands of pilgrims gathered from all around the Roman Empire to celebrate the Jewish holiday known as Feast of Weeks, observed 50 days after Easter (Passover).

On that day, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples of Jesus, empowering and enabling them to speak in different languages. This miraculous manifestation of God’s Spirit attracted the attention of the crowd. Emboldened and empowered by the Holy Spirit, Peter addressed the crowd and explained the significance of what was happening, connecting it to the prophecies found in the Old Testament, and calling them to faith in Jesus, the promised Messiah (Christ). According to v.41 “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

This account is a powerful example of the Holy Spirit’s work in the lives of believers and, consequently, in the life and ministry of the Church, and it is not the only one! Several other similar outpourings of the Holy Spirit happened throughout the history of Christianity, such as the Great Awakenings in North America between the early 18th and the late 20th century or in modern times in Africa, Asia and Latin-America. God’s Spirit is still active and powerful. It moves where there is a deep yearning and hunger, where hearts and lives are opened and ready to be filled.

But are we ready for such an outpouring? As individuals and as a Church, do we really “hunger and thirst for righteousness”? Because if we do, we are promised to be filled (Matthew 5:6)! The fact that we seek to reconnect and be re-ignited means that we are not there yet, individually and collectively.

The 43rd Synodical theme of the UCJCI, “Rooted, Resilient: Re-ignited by the Spirit (Return, Reconnect, Realign, Re-ignite)” is a recognition of our need to ‘get to a place’ where the Holy Spirit can pour in and bring about our personal and collective spiritual revival.

But why are we ‘not there yet’? What is preventing us from a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Let us consider some of the reasons.

Spiritual complacency

Spiritual complacency manifests in diminishing passion and enthusiasm for our faith and our Church. We lose our previous spiritual hunger and desire for God and begin neglecting the spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship, studying the Bible, or engaging in ministry. Spiritual activities that once brought joy and fulfillment to us start to feel mundane or even obligatory. Without even noticing, instead of seeking fresh encounters with God in the present, we begin dwelling on past spiritual experiences or accomplishments, relying on them as a measure of our current spiritual state.

Worldly distractions

The busyness and distractions of daily life, such as work, entertainment, and material pursuits, are powerful forces that can divert our attention from God and our call to be witnesses of God’s love and grace. We shift our priorities and start focusing on our career, material possessions, personal ambitions, worldly success or pleasure, which inevitably crowd out our hunger and thirst for God and lead us to end up in a lukewarm or indifferent spiritual state.

Sin and unrepentant behavior

We can also lose our sensitivity to sin or areas in our life that require repentance and growth. We begin to ignore or rationalize our behavior or attitude even though we know that they are contrary to God’s will. Our confessions may become mere formalities without sincere remorse and repentance and the resolve to say ‘no’ to them. The more space we allow sin to settle in our life, the more we dull our spiritual sensitivity and end up hindering the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in our life and through us.

Disengagement from our church community

Disengagement does not necessarily mean cutting completely our ties with the church. Most often, it is manifested in a superficial engagement and participation. We are still present physically but are not actively involved anymore in the activities that are designed to sustain and strengthen fellowship, spiritual life and also to equip us for engagement in ministry. In due course, we lose our sense of belonging and start attending services infrequently, maybe even beginning to limit our interaction with our fellow church members. Of course, it could be that we got offended by someone/something or feel hurt and ignored for some reason, which leads us to turn our back on our church.

These and other reasons can sabotage God's work and prevent the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to bring spiritual renewal and revival. Feeling or becoming disconnected from God, from church or from our spiritual core is a common experience that many of us go through at different times in our lives. It does not necessarily indicate a permanent state or a lack of faith. Rather, it can serve as a wakeup call to seek a deeper relationship with God, to rediscover the importance and power of spiritual disciplines in our lives and the involvement in our church community, for these are the precursors of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, spiritual revival is ultimately a work of God's grace and cannot be manufactured or forced by our human effort. On the other hand, recognizing and addressing these hindrances in our personal and collective life we can create an environment conducive to spiritual renewal and revival. The story of Pentecost reminds us that God is ready and willing to initiate a new beginning when the time is 'right'. When that happens, we will receive **POWER** to witness and share the message of the Gospel with the world.



A Message for the Churches at Pentecost

We, the Presidents of the World Council of Churches, send you joyful greetings for the feast of Pentecost, for a day when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Church.

Acts 2:8

'And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?'

We, the Presidents of the World Council of Churches, send you joyful greetings for the feast of Pentecost, for a day when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. It is our deepest hope and prayer that, wherever you are, whatever your confession or tradition, your circumstances or your mother tongue, you will know profound spiritual blessings and feel the presence of God's Spirit with you.

The Christian faith does not have a holy language, but from that day of Pentecost in Jerusalem recorded in the book of Acts, Christians have celebrated that the Gospel can be heard in many different local languages, in the languages we learn from our parents and within the communities that form us. Christian faith is best lived, spoken and proclaimed in the language of our hearts, in which we first grow into speech.

In that very multi-cultural crowd that gathered to hear the sounds of the disciples' excitement and joy, were people from many parts of the world as St Luke knew it. Sometimes people think this story is one in which people from many places suddenly all understood the same language. But the story is that they each heard the Gospel in their own native language. It's the same, one Gospel, but they heard it in their different, local, languages. That's the miracle.

Today, the Church worldwide, has many local languages, different voices in which prayers are spoken, and such varied contexts in which justice and peace are longed for. The Church's linguistic diversity, and its diversity in so many other ways, is broad. AND, at the same time, the Church's unity is deep, rooted in the one Holy Spirit. The miracle is that rich diversity and loving unity can hold hands. This is a gift of the Spirit. And it is one that our divided world so badly needs. The Spirit of God speaks in gloriously different voices, in our own languages, but creates from us all a harmony of profound unity. Diversity is a gift of the Spirit, in the service of unity.

This Pentecost, let's celebrate the diversity of the Church, of the world and of all creation, and also celebrate the holiness of the Spirit that makes us one.

The Presidents of the World Council of Churches
Most Rev. Dr Rufus Okikiola OSITELU, Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide
Rev. Dr Henriette HUTABARAT-LEBANG, Gereja Toraja
Rt Rev. Philip WRIGHT, Church in the Province of the West Indies
Rev. Dr Susan DURBER, United Reformed Church
Rev. Dr Angélique WALKER-SMITH, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.
Rev. François PIHAATAE, Église protestante Maohi
H.H. Catholicos ARAM I, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia)
H.E. Metropolitan Dr VASILIOS OF CONSTANTIA AND AMMOCHOSTOS, Church of Cyprus

(source: <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/a-message-for-the-churches-at-pentecost>)

"Covenanting in God's Mission"



The first face-to-face World Communion of Reformed Churches Executive Committee meeting was held on May 20-24, 2023, at the Mannah Conference Center in Johannesburg, South Africa, under the theme, "Covenanting in God's Mission". The meeting was hosted by South African member churches. Angela Martins, former Chair of CIRMC and current Chair of CANAAC, attended the meeting.



Angela Martins (second from left) beside President of the WCRC, Rev. Najla Kassab (second right)

THE INTER-SCHOOL INTER-VARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

CELEBRATE 10 YEARS WITH US

THE SUNSET CRUISE TO NOSTALGIA

SATURDAY MAY 27, 2023
Time 4:00 to 8:00 PM
Departure Location: The West Bay Yacht Club

INCLUDES HORS D'OEUVRES, ENTERTAINMENT, SWIMMING AT STINGRAY CITY OR STARFISH POINT.

\$75
EACH
2 OR MORE FOR \$60 EACH
STUDENTS \$50 EACH

FOOD
FUN
FELLOWSHIP
GAMES
MUSIC
ENTERTAINMENT

MUCH MORE!

Savannah United Church
invites you to our

International Fun Day!

27th May
3pm - 6pm

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

SUMMER DAY CAMP

Cayman Islands

Children's Camp July 12-16
Teens' Camp July 19-23
8am - 6pm

"Ketch Di Fyah"

Cost: CI\$125
Venue: Prospect Youth Centre
Submit forms to cirmc.summercamps@gmail.com

What Are You Filled with?

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 5:18



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

May 28, 2023
Rev. L. Christopher Mason

Published by the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
292 Prospect Point Road
P.O. Box 1700 Grand Cayman KY1-1109 CAYMAN ISLANDS
Tel: 1 345 947-1963 Email: rdgs@cicucjci.com or cirmcinfo@gmail.com
Website: unitedchurch.ore.ky