

THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH—JUDE 3

OCTOBER — DECEMBER 2025

Church:

A Place to Bless
and Be Blessed

WITNESS | BY BOBBI DOWNEY

INSIDE

^{THE}**Apostolic Faith**

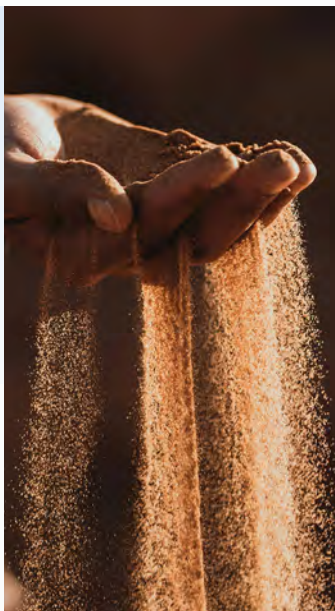
OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2025

VOLUME 118.4

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 VIEWPOINT
- 6 FROM THE WORD
- 18 WITNESS
- 32 WORLD REPORT
- 36 OUR CLASSICS
- 39 A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

FROM THE WORD



06 | AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE ON TIME

Time is an opportunity. Are you taking advantage of it?

FROM THE WORD



10 | EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is not just a promise for the disciples of the past, it is for believers of our day.



14 | OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

Jesus Christ is our intermediary, representing us before God the Father.

WITNESS



18 | THE POWER OF GOD IS REAL!

Each experience in Bernice's life has been a steppingstone to the next, and God has had a hand in it all.



22 | ONCE RELIGIOUS, NOW REDEEMED

Mudzimu discovered the wonderful change that true salvation could make in his life.

WITNESS



26 | CHURCH: A PLACE TO BLESS AND BE BLESSED

Attending church regularly is an opportunity to commune with God, have our souls refreshed, encourage one another, and so much more.

WORLD REPORT



32 | CAMP MEETINGS OFFER NEW AND RENEWED LIFE

Highlights from over a dozen Apostolic Faith conventions held around the world in July and August of 2025.



OUR CLASSICS



36 | A COVETOUS HEART CHANGED

"Sink or swim, live or die, I'll serve You!"

VIEWPOINT

BY SOLA ADESOPE,
SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

VICTORIES BEHIND AND AHEAD

**ONE WORD CAN CHANGE
EVERYTHING.**



A

postolic Faith saints around the world are thanking God for many spiritual victories that have been won at our camp meetings this summer. At the Portland camp meeting in July, we were thrilled with testimonies of souls saved, sanctified, filled with the Holy Spirit, re-anointed, healed, and delivered. Following it, my family was privileged to attend portions of our camp meetings in Missouri and Florida, where we witnessed the wave of revival continue. At the same time, we began receiving wonderful reports of God moving and working at other camp meetings in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean (read more about these events in the World Report on page 32). God has been good!

At the closing service of the camp meeting in Florida, as everyone was preparing to leave, I could not help but think of those who may be returning without the experience or answer from God that they had been seeking. The Lord reminded me of the account in Luke 5 when Peter had been fishing all night but had caught nothing. Jesus entered his boat and then told him, “Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught,” to which Peter replied, “Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net” (verses 4-5). When Peter obeyed the Lord’s instructions, a miracle happened: he caught more fish than his nets could hold!

For anyone who feels they have been toiling without success, nevertheless can be the bridge from discouragement to deliverance.

A key word from the account in Luke 5 is: *nevertheless*. That word changes the course of a sentence, and in Scripture, it sometimes changes the course of a life. It often signals a moment of divine reversal, when human limitations give way to God's power. For Peter, it meant that despite feeling tired and disappointed, and with little evidence to suggest that he would have success, he chose to trust the Lord anyway and obey His instructions.

Like Peter, some today may be feeling tired or discouraged. Some might be living in truly challenging circumstances and wondering how deliverance could even be possible. *Nevertheless*, at His Word we will seek Him first. At His Word, we will forgive and ask for forgiveness. At His Word, we will make restitution. At His Word, we will testify of what God has done for us. At His Word, we will press on in this good Gospel way, and we will see the goodness of the Lord.

If you are still seeking something from the Lord, there is good

news for you: the best is yet to come! Your blessing is not lost or forgotten; it is yet to come. For anyone who feels they have been toiling without success, *nevertheless* can be the bridge from discouragement to deliverance. God's Word is powerful, and there is great power when we obey it because Jesus will show up every time to give us victory. As you read this magazine, may the testimonies of others encourage you to keep trusting the Lord until He accomplishes all His good purposes in your life.



BY DARREL LEE

AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE ON TIME

Time is an opportunity. Are you taking advantage of it?



Occasionally we hear it said that time is money. Years ago, I was employed by a man who had that perspective. He instructed me to record each hour I worked in increments of one tenth of an hour, or six minutes. Then he factored in what I was paid and charged the client that amount, plus enough to cover overhead and make some profit. To him, time was an opportunity to make money!

While that may have been good business practice, Scripture teaches a different way of assessing our time. The Bible indicates that we are to evaluate time with eternity in view. In Psalm 90, we read the words of Moses, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psalm 90:12). We could “number our days” from the beginning of this year and determine how many more remain in 2025. However, rather than *counting* our days, the emphasis of this verse is on making our days *count*—of making the most of the time that each day brings.

The eternal perspective of time

The first two verses of Psalm 90 indicate that God is eternal in nature—He is from everlasting to everlasting—so time as we know it does not exist for Him. In contrast, we are mortal, so we view time from an earthly perspective. We see that concept in Moses’ statement that “a thousand years in thy [God’s] sight are but as yesterday when it is past . . .” (verse 4). The Apostle Peter expressed the same thought in the New Testament when he said, “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8).

I can illustrate that by telling you that in the year 1025, one thousand years ago, Boleslaw the Brave was crowned the first king of Poland. In the same year, Emperor Basil II died, having reigned longer than any Byzantine or Roman Emperor to that point.¹ Those incidents seem like the distant past to us, but from God’s point of view, what happened in the lives of Boleslaw and Basil II are the same as the news that we read yesterday. There is no distinction

Teach Us to Number Our Days

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”
— Psalm 90:12

Numbering our days is not about counting time, but **making time count.**





Planning with God in Mind

“If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” — James 4:15

James reminds us that life is short and uncertain. Saying “Lord willing” isn’t just tradition—it’s trusting God with our plans.

WISE PLANNING SAYS:

“If God allows . . .”

“If this is His will . . .”

“I’ll move forward as He leads.”

with Him—a thousand years is as a day. Given that, the man Methuselah, who lived for 969 years, had only a few more days than you have already had. No matter how many days you have yet to live, the fact that you are mortal means your lifespan will be brief from God’s eternal perspective.

Psalms 90 also says in verse 9 that “we spend our years as a tale that is told.” In the King James translation of the Bible, the word *tale* is the old English usage meaning “a measurement; a counting or enumeration of something.”² An example would be a *tale* of bricks, as used in the Old Testament record of the amount of bricks the Israelites were expected to produce for their Egyptian taskmasters (see Exodus 5:8). Just as the space bricks would occupy when laid in rows can be measured, our lives can be measured.

Moses went on to say, “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (verse 10). If you turned seventy years of age today, this is day 25,567 of your life, give or take a few days to account for leap years. Whatever the exact number, we would all agree that there are more days behind you than in front of you. No matter how old we may be at this moment, our days will be “soon cut off” when we measure them against eternity. So, we want to make our days count, and that is what Moses was emphasizing in this psalm.

Our uncertain future

As we consider how to use our days in a spiritually profitable manner, it is natural to consider what might be ahead in our lives. However, we cannot plan our future with any degree of certainty. Not long after our daughter was married, a prospective employer asked her what her five-year plan was. She responded that she was hoping for an uneventful five years. That must have impressed the man, because he hired her! However, within those five years, she gave birth to three sons. I am not sure that constitutes “uneventful,” but that was what occurred. The fact is, none of us knows what will happen in the days ahead.

In the Epistle of James, we learn that it is advisable to qualify any plans we do make. We read, “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:13-15). It is not a cliché to declare, “Lord willing, we will do this,” or, “If God allows, we will do that.” James tells us to plan with the Lord’s will in mind! That perspective should always be implied, even if we do not verbally declare it. We want God’s plan, rather than making our own and hoping He

will accommodate it. When we follow His leading for how we spend our days, we can be assured that our time is being used in a worthwhile manner.

In Luke 12:16-21, Jesus told a parable about a rich farmer who planned well from an earthly standpoint, but without taking God into consideration. The farmer became very wealthy, and eventually he thought within himself, “What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?” Notice that he thought within *himself*. His plans were self-inspired: without consulting God, he determined to tear down his barns and build greater ones to store his goods. Jesus stated that the farmer said to himself, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” God responded, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” Passing from this life was not in the farmer’s plan for the next day, but that is what happened. Jesus concluded the parable by saying, “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” One who is rich toward God considers His will in planning for the future and prioritizes eternal values above material possessions.

Moses learned that lesson. He had been raised in the palace of Egypt as the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter. But there came a day when he evaluated what lay ahead in his future. His own mother



REDEEMING THE TIME

“Whether we are considering a day, a five-year period, or an entire lifespan, redeeming the time is how we make each day count. **It is making the most of the time we have.**”



Where Did the Day Go?

We all have the same **1,440 minutes each day**. What matters isn't how much time we have, but how we choose to use it.

● TRY THIS SIMPLE ACTIVITY:

- Write down everything you did in the last twenty-four hours.
- Categorize each entry as **Eternal / Necessary / Distraction**
- ASK: What could I trade out in order to invest more time in what truly matters?

had trained him in the Hebrew heritage, and the Bible says that when he came of age, he determined that he would no longer be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He made a choice—a deliberate decision—that he was not going to live as an Egyptian any longer. He would rather “suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:25).

As events unfolded, Moses saw an Egyptian smiting an Israelite and took matters into his own hands. He slew the Egyptian, thinking that his Israelite brethren would understand that he was called to deliver them. However, they did not understand. As a result, Moses fled from Egypt and spent the next forty years in the desert. He probably became content herding sheep and living out of the limelight, but then his experience at the burning bush revealed that God was calling him to go back to Pharaoh and say, “Let my people go.” He was unsure of his ability to do so, but by that time he recognized the importance of following God's plan rather than his own. That is a valuable lesson to learn!

Redeeming our time

In Ephesians 5:15-16, Paul the Apostle wrote to the believers at Ephesus, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are

evil.” He also used the phrase “redeeming the time” in writing to the Colossians; we read in Colossians 4:5, “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.” In both passages, the phrase relates to how we are to live—the same meaning Moses was conveying in Psalm 90:12 when he referred to numbering our days. Whether we are considering a day, a five-year period, or an entire lifespan, redeeming the time is how we make each day count. It is making the most of the time we have.

Prior to Paul's instruction to the Ephesian believers regarding redeeming the time, he enumerated a number of sins and told them, “Be not ye therefore partakers with them” (Ephesians 5:7). They were not to let such sins be named among them but were to conduct themselves in a manner “as becometh saints.” Paul was laying out a clear distinction between living for God and living for oneself. He went on to admonish, “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (verse 11). His point was that believers are to be careful rather than careless about how they lived, and circumspect rather than as fools (verse 15).

Paul's advice to the Ephesians applies to us. We are not to be casual, convenience-oriented Christians. When we experience salvation, we are extracted from the ways of the world to become



“Among the lessons we all must learn after salvation is how vital it is to make our time count for eternity. **Time is too valuable to waste!**”

devoted to the God of Heaven. It takes the power of God to do that, but His power is sufficient. That has been proven, even by those who had no light of the Gospel. When one experiences the saving power of Jesus Christ, that person is changed in a moment.

The change God made in me

When I came to the Lord, I had no knowledge of what the Gospel would do nor how it would affect my daily life. As a college student at the time, I took a class at Oregon State University titled “Ten Ways of Being Religious.” During the segment on Christianity, the professor said that the only way an encounter between God and man could occur was if God initiated it. A girl in the class disagreed, saying that she could initiate an encounter with the God of Heaven. I did not know such an encounter could even exist! However, over the next several days, I began to be afraid and think, *What if God initiates an encounter with me?* I would go to bed at night and think subconsciously, *Not tonight! Oh, not tonight!* I would not have admitted that to anyone, and I didn't even admit it to myself at the time.

One night in my own bedroom at home, the call of God came. He was going to make sure that I made my days count from then on! Granted, that decision was up to me, but once that call came, refusing never occurred to me. Though I did not know how to pray, God gave me

the right words to say. I asked Him to forgive my sins, telling Him that I would try my best to serve Him if He would help me, and in a moment of time, God transformed my life. I did not know that what I experienced that night was called salvation, but I was a different person from that moment on.

When I returned to college, I had no understanding of how a Christian was supposed to live, but God gave me victory over the old habits and appetites that had been in my life. The temper and profanity that had filled my daily vocabulary were gone, and have been gone from that moment until now. Nobody had to tell me not to do the sinful things I had done before because I had no desire to do them. And gradually, God taught me more about Himself and how He wanted me to live.

Among the lessons we all must learn after salvation is how vital it is to make our time count for eternity. Time is too valuable to waste! We have all probably said on occasion, “I just don’t have time.” However, we all have exactly the same amount of time! When we retire at the end of this day, we will all have spent 1440 minutes. So, it is not a question of how much time we have, but a matter of prioritizing carefully by making good decisions about how it is spent.

I recently read that the average American spends over five hours a day on smartphones. Young people typically spend more than that, while those my age generally spend less. Whatever the exact number of minutes spent, that is approximately one third of our waking hours! Most of us check our phones dozens of times a day. While smartphone usage can be necessary and even productive, it can also be addictive and wasteful. Ultimately, the amount of time spent in any manner is not as important as making sure the time we spend counts for eternity.

Seventy-three days that counted for eternity

When I think about making time count, Shadrach Ajayi comes to mind. Shadrach was a missionary!

Shadrach, a baby boy in our church family, lived for just seventy-three days. During the last week or so of his short life, I had the privilege of visiting him

and his parents, Sam and Shade Ajayi, in the hospital. Brother Sam would tell the doctors and nurses who came into the room, “Shadrach is a missionary.” He would explain how Shadrach’s birth was a miracle, and his life was a testimony to the power of a mighty and loving heavenly Father who intervened in Shade’s difficult pregnancy and accomplished what was impossible in the eyes of man. Day after day, Brother Sam handed out Gospel magazines and tracts in Shadrach’s name. When I was there with them, he would introduce me, declare that Shadrach was a missionary, and ask me to give my testimony. He asked the same of others from the church when they visited. Often, he gave his own testimony. When Shadrach passed away and the undertakers came, Brother Sam introduced me, said that Shadrach was a missionary, and had me pray. As they left, he had me pray again. To every person who came to that room, he would declare, “Shadrach is a missionary,” and then use that opportunity to share the Gospel.

When I asked Brother Sam if I could tell Shadrach’s story for this message, I said to him, “You were really the missionary.” He responded with a smile, “Oh no, it was Shadrach!” Whatever the case, Shadrach’s brief life on earth taught us that time is an opportunity. His seventy-three days counted. I am quite sure many of those doctors and nurses never forgot Shadrach Ajayi.

The greatest opportunity

Paul saw time as an opportunity. As he concluded his letter to the saints at Ephesus, he asked them to pray that a door of utterance would be given to him—an opportunity to “make known the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:19).

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul referred to the greatest opportunity ever given when he told them that “today” is the day of salvation and “now” is the accepted time. He was emphasizing the urgency of accepting God’s offer of salvation, because that is the starting point of making our days count!

If you are unsaved today or need reassurance about your standing before God, take advantage of this opportunity and look Heaven’s way.



A Life That Counted: Shadrach’s 73 Days

Though he lived just seventy-three days, Shadrach Ajayi left an eternal impact. During his time in the hospital, his father declared again and again: **“Shadrach is a missionary.”**

To every doctor, nurse, or visitor who entered the room, his father handed out Gospel tracts, gave testimonies, and shared God’s power in Shadrach’s story. He used his son’s life—short as it was—as a platform for the Gospel.

No more important decision can be made in life than to ensure that you are right with God. Then you can spend your remaining days on this earth, however many or few they are, in a manner that will count for eternity!

¹ “Channels.” On This Day. May 5, 2025. <https://www.ontthisday.com/date/1025>.

² Chapman, Milo L., Purkiser, W.T., Wolf, Earl C., Harper, A.F., *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Volume 3, (Beacon Hill Press, 1967), pg.333.



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2000 to 2024 and continues to serve on the Board of Directors.

BY JOSEPHINE MCELVEEN

EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is not just a promise for the disciples of the past, it is for believers of our day.



In 2014, I purchased a car that I am still driving today. Even though

I have had it for over ten years, I'm still learning new things about it. Of course, I knew the basics, like how to start it and how to put it into the right gear. However, I was recently having a problem with it and asked for advice from one of the young ministers in my church who has a car like mine. He told me things about my car that I never knew! I said to him, "You mean I've been driving my car all this time and I didn't know that?"

Some of us have been in the Gospel a long time, but God always has more for us to learn. After the disciples had spent several weeks with their risen Lord, I wonder if they were starting to feel like they had all they needed from God. Jesus was with His disciples and followers for forty days following His resurrection. They

knew without a doubt that they had been in the presence of a resurrected Savior—they had infallible proof of His deity and authority. They could have thought, *Now I know that this Gospel is real! I'm ready to go out and tell the world!* But Jesus let them know that they needed something more from God before they could be sent out.

We read in Acts 1:4, "And, being assembled together with them, [Jesus] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Jesus asked His followers to do something that is not always easy: to wait. What they had already received from God was wonderful, but they didn't know what the future held and that they would need something more to be able to fulfill God's purpose for their

lives. They needed the power of the Holy Ghost.

Like the disciples, we also need to receive the promise of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit empowers us, and if we ever needed power, we need it today to be witnesses to this generation. We live in an era that is rich in information and higher learning, and that is all well and good, but winning the lost is going to take more than intellectual ability. It's going to take even more than our own experience. It's going to take the power of the Holy Ghost!

Who is the Holy Ghost?

The terms "Holy Ghost" and "Holy Spirit" are interchangeable in Scripture; they are translations of the same words in the original languages of the Bible. The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Trinity, which also includes the Father and the Son. He is God: He has the attributes of deity just as the Father and the Son do. He is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. He is not an abstract entity; the Holy Spirit is not an "it" or a "force." He has a distinct personality. The Holy Spirit is to be given the same reverence as God the Father and God the Son. We can get in trouble if we fail to recognize this. The enemy will try to bring confusion about anything that is important for us, including the Holy Ghost, so we need to know who He is and who He is not. We read in Genesis 1:1-2 that the Holy Spirit was present at the

Wait for the Promise

Before the Day of Pentecost, Jesus gave the disciples a clear instruction:

"Wait for the promise of the Father . . ." (Acts 1:4).

They had seen miracles and heard the risen Christ teach, but that wasn't enough. Jesus knew they would need more—**power from on high**—to fulfill their calling.

Creation, moving upon the face of the waters. Today as well, He is moving upon creation to carry out the will of the Father. After Jesus ascended, God sent the Holy Ghost to implement the plan of salvation that Jesus had accomplished through His death and resurrection. The Holy Ghost is constantly at work to bring souls to salvation.

The Holy Spirit works by bringing conviction that leads to salvation. We each have our own personal testimony of salvation, and though they are all different, in every case we did not and could not experience salvation until the Holy Spirit brought conviction. By the grace of God, the Holy Spirit calls everyone, and that is truly a miracle. As much as we want to see our own children saved, convicting a heart is something that no mom or dad can do. It is something no therapist or psychologist can do. Convicting sinners is only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.

When a sinner responds to conviction by repenting and turning to God in faith, his soul is saved and regenerated by the Holy Spirit (see Titus 3:5). The Spirit is also active when a soul is sanctified and made holy (see Romans 15:16). We thank God for the Apostolic Faith Church with our practices and guidelines, but following those does not sanctify the heart. Holiness is an inward work that is done through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost

After we have received salvation and sanctification, we still need more from God. We need to be filled with the power of the Holy Ghost. That is what Jesus was letting the disciples know when He told them that “they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4). Note that Jesus did not say it was optional

to wait for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This promise was not only for those who would become pastors or missionaries; it was for all of them, and it is still for all of us today (see Acts 2:38-39). God is faithful to reveal Himself, and then we decide how we will respond.

The 120 who tarried in Jerusalem did not really know what to expect. However, they had heard from John the Baptist, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11). Comparing the experience to water baptism would have given Jesus’ followers some sense of what would happen—that they would be submerged or covered by the Holy Ghost. That is how the Spirit comes to dwell in us.

Some people have a difficult time receiving the power of the Holy Ghost because they cannot fully understand the experience. They want to figure it all out first. We live in a society that analyzes and studies everything, but the Gospel is a walk of faith. We must allow God to work in ways that are beyond our comprehension. It took faith to have our sins forgiven at salvation; it took faith to have our carnal nature eradicated at sanctification; and it will take faith to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thank God, He supplies the faith we need.

We read in Acts 2:1, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” Being in “one accord” indicates that this group was saved and sanctified. They were in unity with God and therefore with each other as well.

Acts 2:2-4 says, “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit—also called the Holy Ghost—is not a feeling or a force. He is **God**, the third Person of the Trinity.

He is eternal, powerful, and personal.

The Holy Spirit:

- Was present at **Creation** (Genesis 1:2)
- Brings **conviction** for sin (John 16:8-11)
- Is active in the work of **salvation** (Titus 3:5)
- Participates in making hearts **holy** (Romans 15:16)
- Gives **power** to those who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire (Acts 1:8)

What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is when God fills believers with His Spirit—not just being with them, **but dwelling in them**. The outward evidence is **speaking in tongues**—speaking in an existing language that is not learned, but is spoken as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4).

John the Baptist compared the experience to a baptism in water. Instead of being fully immersed in water, we are **covered in divine power** (Matthew 3:11).

The baptism is not an emotion—**it’s power**.

How can I receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a gift. After you have received salvation and entire sanctification, you can ask God to fill you with His Spirit.

There is no formula for receiving, but the path involves these key elements:

Faith – Believe that the promise is for you.

Consecration – Yield every part of your life to God’s will.

Praise – Focus fully on God in worship and thanksgiving.

Tarry – Keep seeking God in prayer until you receive the experience.

Receiving the promise is not complicated. Salvation and sanctification are simple enough for a child to receive, and the same is true of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The Latter Rain Is Still Falling

“He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain...”—Joel 2:23.

Long before Pentecost, God promised to pour out His Spirit like rain—first in the **Early Church**, and again in the **last days**.

The **former rain** fell in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost. The **latter rain** began falling about 120 years ago in outpourings such as the **Welsh Revival** and at **Azusa Street**.

The Latter Rain of Holy Ghost fire is still falling today—on young and old, rich and poor, and wherever hearts are hungry for more of God.

of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” We can see from these verses that the Holy Spirit comes in power! Many of us have experienced a powerful prayer meeting when the fire of God fell. Sometimes, we may almost feel embarrassed to talk about the fire of the Holy Ghost because we don’t want to be labeled as fanatical. But the fire is not an emotion—it is power! We need it and we thank God for it.


Scripture does not say exactly what the disciples were praying when the Holy Spirit descended, but we do know that some of the

key elements for receiving are faith, consecration, and praise. As we pray, we need to get our focus off ourselves, off others, and on to God. We want to be engrossed fully in Him.

The same Spirit who was at work in our hearts when we were saved and sanctified is the One who will dwell in us when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Receiving the promise is not complicated; salvation and sanctification are simple enough for a child to receive, and the same is true of the baptism. Some people have received all three of these experiences in a single prayer meeting! That may seem impossible to us, but we serve a mighty God. It does not need to take years to believe, consecrate our lives, and be filled with the Spirit.

Like the disciples, the evidence that we have received the power of the Holy Ghost will be speaking in tongues, which means speaking a known language that we never learned. That is an unusual witness, and here again some people may not want to have that experience because they don’t want to appear strange or fanatical. The reality is, followers of Jesus will never fit in with the world. We are called to be a peculiar people. So why not receive the gift God has for us?

The founder of our church in Washington D.C., Mary Kelly, taught us not to be concerned about the tongues. She said that when the Holy Ghost comes, He will speak through us. We don’t have to be taught to speak in tongues or force Him to do anything; He will make Himself known. For some, this means just speaking a few words, while others cannot seem to stop. It is not about bringing attention to ourselves but about allowing the Holy Ghost to work through us to accomplish God’s will. We are not



When someone has a genuine hunger for God, nothing can stop that one from receiving.

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seeking for a language but for the power that we need, and we can only receive it the way God has ordained.

The former and latter rain

The promise of the Holy Ghost was mentioned in the Old Testament. Joel 2:28-29 says, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.” From these verses, we can note that everybody was included in the promise: young and old, male and female.

We also get a sense of some of the work the Holy Spirit accomplishes: giving prophetic words, dreams, and visions. The word *prophesy* is often used to refer to predictions about the future, but the definition includes more than that. It refers to giving any message that is inspired by God. It means proclaiming the Word of the Lord and preaching the Gospel. “Your old men shall dream dreams” means God will show great things even to those who are up in age. “Your young men shall see visions”



to fill a hungry heart. God did that for Sister Crawford, and He will do it for anyone today.

A necessity for each of us

Every one of us needs to be saved, sanctified, and filled with the power of the Holy Ghost. We may think we have enough without Him, but God's ways are beyond our ways. Without the power of the Holy Ghost, even highly educated people can be in error. If we lean to our own understanding, we will fail, but the Spirit of God can guide us, keep us, and use us to reach lost souls.

When I was saved, the only thing I knew about the Holy Ghost was that water baptism was done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Others have heard about the baptism of the Holy Ghost their whole lives. It doesn't matter if you've known about the experience for years or are hearing about it now for the first time; what matters is how you respond to what you have heard. Will you believe God and receive the promise?

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is not a trophy to put up on a shelf. This is a life-changing experience that each of us needs. We cannot tell everything about it here, but the Spirit will reveal even more to our hearts as we seek God. For those who have already been filled, He has more for us! God is ready and able to baptize, to re-anoint, and to refresh our souls. He will give us the fire that we need to share the Gospel in this generation.



Rev. Josephine McElveen is the Apostolic Faith District Superintendent of the Southern and

Eastern United States, and pastor of our church in Washington, D.C.

suggests that they would see how God would work in new ways, on a new level. For example, the technology we use for Gospel work today was envisioned by somebody long before it was put into use. They had a vision of what we are living today, where people all over the world have the opportunity to hear the Gospel. These are some of the ways the Holy Spirit empowers lives.

In the same chapter, the prophet Joel spoke about the Holy Spirit being given as the "former rain" and the "latter rain." Joel 2:23 says, "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month." The former rain was to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, which we read about in Acts 2.

During the centuries following the period of the Early Church, there are reports of some here

and there receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Then, in the beginning of the twentieth century, a spiritual awakening began. The latter rain was given as a new outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The Welsh Revival occurred in 1904, then the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, which spread all around the world. Our church is here today because the founder of this work, Florence Crawford, was led by God to a place where she could receive the latter rain.

Sister Crawford had a hunger for more of God, and I understand that she was a rich woman, but she went to seek God among poor people. They were people who didn't look or sound like her, but she recognized that they had the truth. When someone has a genuine hunger for God, nothing can stop that one from receiving. It does not matter who else is around or what rules the government and society have instituted—the Holy Spirit will override every opposition in order



God is ready and able to baptize, to re-anoint, and to refresh our souls. He will give us the fire that we need to share the Gospel in this generation.

BY PETE SFERLE

OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

Jesus Christ is our intermediary, representing us before God the Father.

In Old Testament times, God often spoke to His people through messengers, met with His people through intermediaries, and governed His people through rulers. These were the prophets, priests, and kings. In New Testament times, Jesus, the Savior of the world,

fulfilled all these offices. Hebrews 1:2 establishes that Jesus fulfills the office of prophet, saying that God “hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son.” In Hebrews 4:14, we read that Jesus also fulfills the office of high priest. It says, “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” And in 1 Timothy 6:15, we read that Jesus is “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,” fulfilling the office of king. Today, Jesus sits at the right hand of God as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

The Book of Hebrews expounds on Christ’s role as our High Priest. The author, generally accepted to be the Apostle Paul, devoted a significant portion of his letter to this topic, so he must have felt that this was important information for

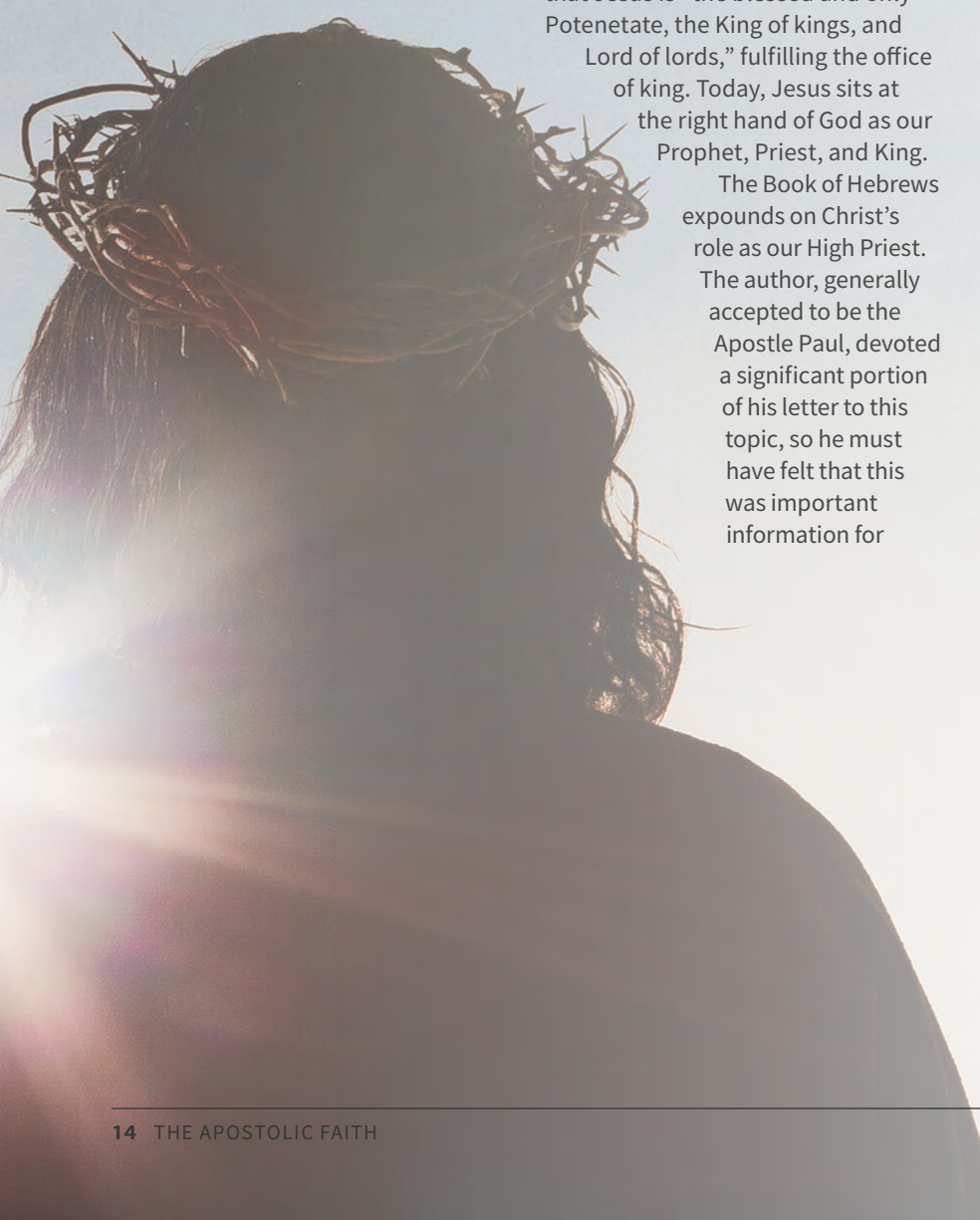
strengthening the faith of his audience. He was writing to converted Jews—those who had received a knowledge of sins forgiven through a born-again experience, which the Bible calls “salvation.” These new Christians were wavering in their faith, thinking it would be better to return to the laws, ceremonies, and system of works they had practiced in the Jewish religion. To persuade them against this, Paul demonstrated that Jesus is in every way better than what they had known before. He told them that not only did they have a High Priest in Heaven, but they had a “great” High Priest.

We too can be encouraged by the knowledge that we have a great High Priest in Heaven. Today, let’s briefly consider why God created the office, its functions, and the superior way in which Jesus fulfills this role in our lives.

The office of high priest

The imagery of the high priest that is used in Hebrews originated in the Old Testament and in the Law of Moses. After the Israelites fled Egypt, God gave Moses instructions for building a tabernacle in the wilderness. To oversee the worship practices that took place in the Tabernacle, He instituted the office of high priest and called Aaron, the brother of Moses, as the first to fill it. He named Aaron’s descendants as his successors and appointed the other Levites to assist as priests.

Though the high priest had charge over the Tabernacle priests, sacrifices, and worship, his most important function was to serve as an intermediary between God and man. He represented God to the people, and the people to God. In representing God to the people, he was the nation’s





Christ Fulfills Every Role

In the Old Testament, when interacting with His people God often used prophets to speak, priests to intercede, and kings to rule. In the New Testament, Jesus fulfills all three offices:

- **Prophet** – God has spoken to us by Him (Hebrews 1:2)
- **Priest** – He is our intercessor (Hebrews 4:14)
- **King** – He reigns over all (1 Timothy 6:15)

Today, Jesus still holds all three roles—**guiding, mediating, and ruling** from the right hand of God.

spiritual leader, responsible for upholding God's laws and moral standards. When the Children of Israel looked to their high priest, they were supposed to see a godly example—someone who taught and lived in accordance with God's will and reflected who He is.

In representing the people to God, once a year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest offered animal sacrifices for the sins of the nation and himself. Then he alone was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies where the presence of God dwelt and sprinkle the blood from the sacrifices on the mercy seat. This provided atonement for the sins of the people for that year, making it possible for God to dwell among them.

By carrying out this annual task, along with the various other sacrifices and observances, the high priest performed another important function of the office. His actions portrayed to the people that they were separated from God by sin, and a remedy was needed to bridge the divide. In addition, the repeated sacrifices illustrated that the blood of animals could not permanently remove sin.

A better way

The Mosaic Law, with its use of animal sacrifices performed by carnal men, was never intended by God to be a permanent solution for reconciling sinful people to Himself. Instead, it foreshadowed a better way. When God created the office of high priest, He was pointing forward to the day when the Messiah would come and fill it.

Jesus is that Messiah and great High Priest. He came representing God to the people of this world. He told His disciple Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). The people saw the Father in Jesus' compassion and authority. He had power to cleanse from sin and cure every disease, and He delivered and healed all who turned to Him. He also calmed a storm, multiplied food, raised Lazarus from the dead, and performed many more miracles.

The people saw the Father in Jesus' righteousness. He was tempted but did not sin, and they could look to Him as an example of how to live according to God's will. Jesus also revealed God in His teachings. We read in Matthew 7:28 that after He concluded His Sermon on the Mount, the people were "astonished at his doctrine."

With His death and resurrection, Jesus took on the role of high priest and became

The Message to the Hebrews

The Book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were tempted to return to their former religious system. Paul's message reminded them—and reminds us—that:

- Jesus is better than the old way.
- Salvation is not earned by works, but received by grace.
- Our High Priest is not on earth, but in Heaven.



Jesus didn't just offer the sacrifice—He became it.

the intermediary for the people, representing them to God. Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).

At the time the Book of Hebrews was written, the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing and a high priest was there representing the people. Paul's audience needed to understand that a better High Priest was representing them in Heaven. This superior Mediator did not just offer their sacrifice for sin to God; He became the sacrifice. The writer of Hebrews told them, "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). By shedding His Blood on the Cross to make atonement for sin, Jesus confirmed that He was the very Author of salvation.

Jesus is superior

In chapter 4 of Hebrews, we find three more ways in which Jesus is superior to the high priests of the Old Covenant. Paul wrote, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find

The Role of the High Priest

In the Old Testament, the high priest was:

- **A spiritual leader** – He represented God to the people.
- **An intercessor** – He represented the people to God.
- **A symbol** – The sacrifices he offered reminded the nation of their sin and their need for a remedy for sin.

Each act pointed forward to a greater high priest: Jesus Christ.

A Greater High Priest

The Law pointed to a better way.

- Jesus **revealed the Father** through His compassion, righteousness, and truth.
- Jesus **became the Sacrifice**, rather than only offering one.
- Jesus **rose again in victory** and now intercedes for us at the right hand of God.

He is the **Author of eternal salvation**—the fulfillment of everything the Law foreshadowed.


grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15-16).

He can relate to our struggles. No one can truly empathize with another person’s plight without walking the same path. We can tell people that we are praying for them, but unless we have experienced what they are going through, we can’t say, “I know how you feel.” However, there is Someone who does understand, who cares, and who can help.

Have you ever felt rejected? Jesus knows what that is like. The Bible tells us, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11). When He preached in His hometown of Nazareth, His countrymen were “filled with wrath” and “thrust him out of the city” (Luke 4:28-29). Even His half-brother, James, did not believe until after the Resurrection.

Have you ever been without a place to call “home”? The Bible tells us that Jesus had nowhere to lay His head at night. Are you overwhelmed with sorrow? When facing the Cross, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and told His disciples, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matthew 26:38). As He prayed, His sweat became as great drops of blood falling to the ground.

Jesus knows what it is like to be betrayed by a friend, mocked while being falsely accused, and He is familiar with pain. If you have ever been despised or persecuted for your faith, Jesus can empathize. He said, “If the world hates you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). He gave this encouragement: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10).



▼
We have a High Priest in Heaven who understands, who cares, and who can help.

We have a great High Priest in Heaven who can identify with whatever we are facing today. He is touched by our infirmities, moved with compassion for us, and through His sacrifice on the Cross, He is able to save, heal, and deliver us. There is no one better to turn to with our struggles.

He gives victory over temptation. The high priests who came before Jesus needed to offer a sacrifice for their own sins before they could perform the sacrifice for the people. However, our great High Priest “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

Jesus can relate to the trials of being tempted—though He came to earth as the Son of God, He was also fully human. He was subject to the same types of temptations as we are. At the start of His ministry, He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to fast and pray for forty days. At the end of that time, when He was hungry, tired, and alone—vulnerable both physically and mentally—the devil came to tempt Him.

Jesus offers us the greatest invitation ever extended. He invites us into the Holy of Holies, to the throne of grace.

Why Jesus Is a Greater High Priest

- **He can relate to us** – He suffered and was rejected by his closest companions.
- **He gives us victory** – His triumph over temptation opened the way for ours.
- **He grants us access** – The veil to the Holy of Holies was torn and now we can come boldly to the throne of grace.
- **He continually intercedes for us** – Right now, Jesus is representing us before the Father.

Jesus resisted by quoting Scripture, and His triumph opened the way for our victory.

A key reason why Jesus suffered temptation is given in Hebrews 2:17-18. It says, “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” We can look to our great High Priest for encouragement, strength, and an example of how to prevail over temptation.

He grants us access to God. Jesus offers us the greatest invitation ever extended. He invites us into the Holy of Holies, to the throne of grace. The moment He died, the veil in the Temple that separated the people from the Holy of Holies tore in two—from the top down. The Ark of the Covenant with its mercy seat, where the presence of God dwelt, was exposed. Where once only the high priest could go, and even then only once a year, now everyone has access.

Through His death, Jesus, our great High Priest, made a way for us to approach the very throne of God.

Animal sacrifices could not remove sin, but through the Blood of Jesus, we can be saved and sanctified—our sins forgiven and our hearts cleansed from all unrighteousness. We can be reconciled to God, made ready to enter His presence.

Because Jesus opened the way, we can “come boldly to the throne of grace,” approaching God with confidence that He will hear and answer our prayers. The writer of Hebrews explained, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:19-22).

God is waiting to hear from us. Day or night, we can call on Him. Jesus has invited us into His presence.

One Mediator

Under the Old Covenant of the Law, people relied on fallible men to represent them before God. We are blessed to live in the dispensation of a better way; we have a superior Mediator.

He is Jesus, and He is the only way. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

Today, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. How wonderful to know that the Son of God is representing you and me to the Father right now! With Jesus as our advocate, we can have victory. He “is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). We thank God for our great High Priest!



*Rev. Pete Sferle
is pastor of
the Apostolic
Faith Church
in Sacramento,
California.*

BY BERNICE PINNEY



I surrendered to God, and He changed my whole being and the course of my life, for the better.

THE POWER OF GOD IS REAL!

Each experience in Bernice's life has been a steppingstone to the next, and God has had a hand in it all.



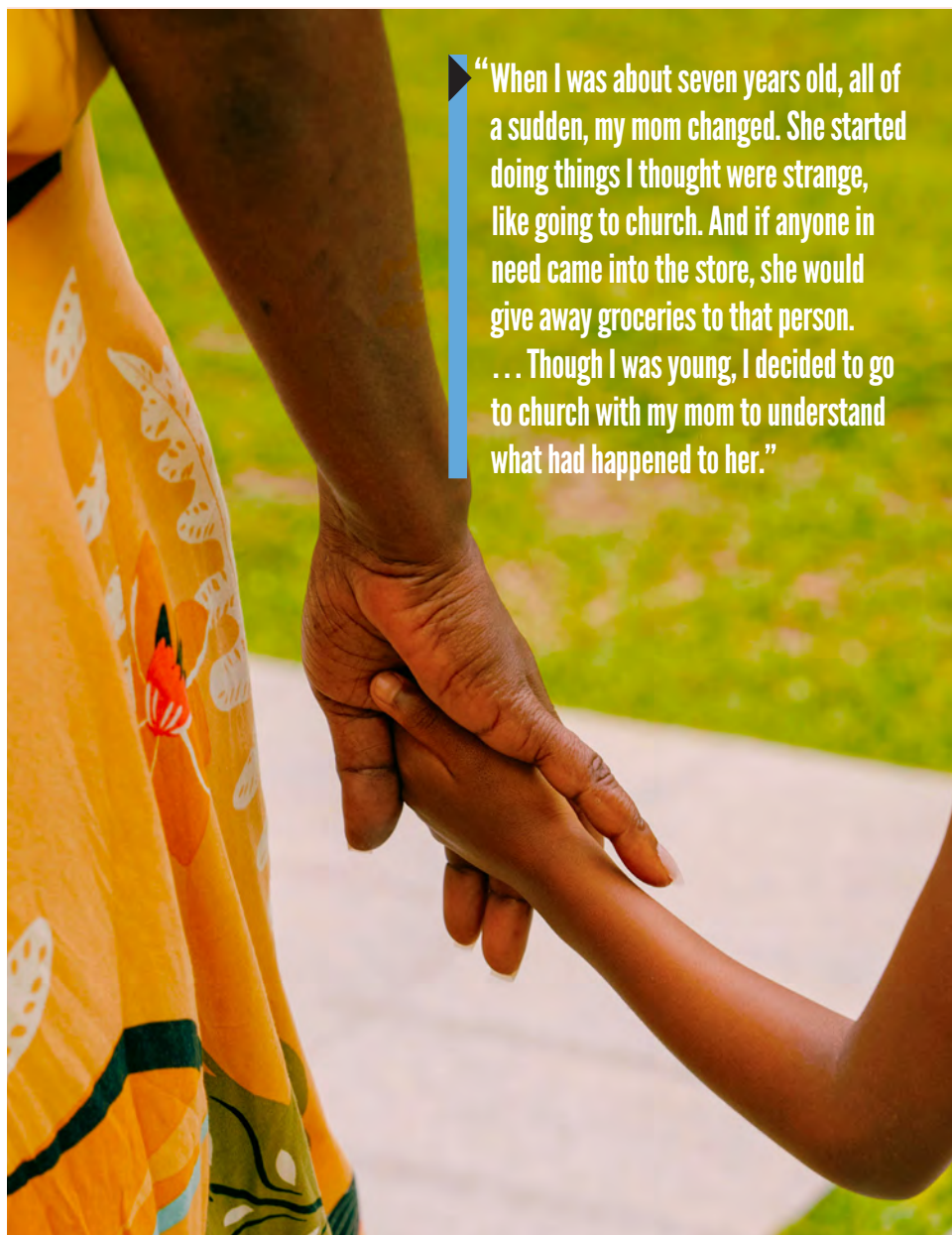
was born on the island of St. Thomas into a big family—there were ten of us children.

My mom owned a small grocery store and I was a mama's girl, so I was with her at the store all the time. When I was about seven years old, all of a sudden, my mom changed. She started doing things I thought were strange, like going to church. And if anyone in need came into the store, she would give away groceries to that person. Sometimes they were not even in great need, yet she would pack up a whole bag and give it away. That worried me—I thought we might not make enough money if she kept doing that.

Though I was young, I decided to go to church with my mom to understand what had happened to her. No one else in the family went with us, and she would stop on the way home and buy me a little cake. That made me really want to keep going.

The church services were held in the home of Pastor Algernon Blyden at that time. They were simple gatherings, but the power of God descended

“When I was about seven years old, all of a sudden, my mom changed. She started doing things I thought were strange, like going to church. And if anyone in need came into the store, she would give away groceries to that person. . . . Though I was young, I decided to go to church with my mom to understand what had happened to her.”





⚡ *Algernon Blyden, pastor of the Charlotte Amalie church from 1958-2001.*

there as the people prayed and praised God. Through that, I could see that these people had something real. At the same time, I found out that Pastor Blyden had worked in real estate

“Sister Stewart said to me, ‘Bernice, why don’t you just come and give your heart to the Lord?’”

before he was a Christian, and he had been wealthy. He had owned property and some stores, but when the Lord saved him, he gave them up to serve God. He began to preach in the streets and went door to door telling people about the Lord. I also noticed that sometimes his shoes had holes in them. He looked poor to me, and I felt that might happen to my mom too because of the way she was giving away groceries. As a little girl, the things I was seeing did not make sense to me.

I kept going to church with my mom but didn’t pray for myself because I was mostly there to find fault. Also, I had a reputation in the neighborhood for being bossy, almost to the point of being a bully. My mom was generous with customers, but I was not! I didn’t let anyone get away with anything, at the store or at school. Because of my reputation, I knew that if I became a Christian, the kids I

usually bossed around would make fun of me.

When I was thirteen years old, one day the church workers held a street meeting at the town square market. That particular time, one of the vendors did not want the church service to be held, so he called the police to remove us. However, when the police arrived, they just stood and watched the meeting. After it ended they told Pastor Blyden, “We were sent here to remove you from this corner but something kept us back. We couldn’t do it.” The power of God was so real that it stopped them.

Even though I had seen God’s power fall among His people many times, this incident made an impression on me. I began to realize that the Gospel was bigger than just the church group—it was real even for the police officers. Not long after that, following a church service, a woman named Sister Stewart said to me, “Bernice, why don’t you just come and give your heart to the Lord?” That day, I surrendered to God, and He changed my whole being and the course of my life, for the better.

Our church had open windows, so everyone outside could see that I had been praying. Before I left the building, the whole neighborhood knew that Bernice had gotten saved, and they couldn’t believe it! The other kids teased me saying, “Ain’t no way *you* are a Christian.

Anybody could be a Christian, but not *you!*” It didn’t seem real to them, but it was for me, and it only became more real as time went on. Because of what God had done for me, I was no longer worried about what the neighborhood kids thought of me. In fact, I started trying to encourage them to come to the Lord.

A voice captured for God

I have always loved to sing. As a child, in the evenings my dad used to ask me to sing for him to help him unwind after a tiring day at work. Sometimes I would be singing alone outside and then look up and find neighbors in our yard listening. In fact, later I found out that Sister Stewart heard me from her house, and she started praying, “Lord, capture this voice for You.” I barely knew who she was then, but the Lord honored her prayers.

One day, shortly after I was saved, a gentleman came to our house selling insurance. I was in the kitchen singing when my mother answered the door, and the salesman heard me. He was so impressed that he asked my mom if he could record me and send my song to someone he knew. We agreed, thinking nothing of it, and I sang him one of the love songs that I had written myself. A while later he came back and said a radio station liked my song and would pay me to introduce it on the air!

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The Charlotte Amalie Apostolic Faith Church in St. Thomas in 1973.

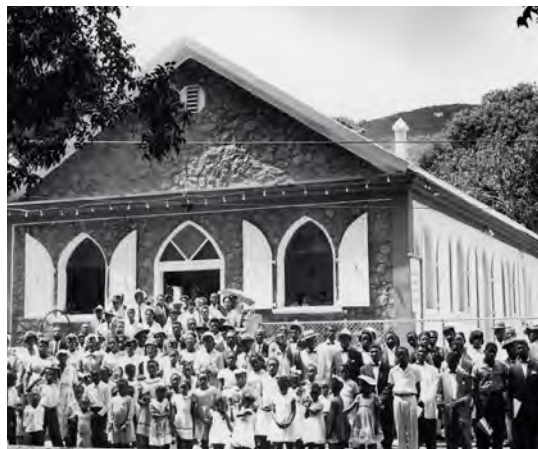


It seemed like a big opportunity and I signed a contract. However, I soon learned that the man running the radio station was not a godly man. I thought, *If I keep working with him, who knows where I will end up.* God helped me to see that I couldn't continue, so I backed out of the contract. As a consequence, I had to surrender the rights to my song.

Some months later, I heard that song on the radio. At first I was excited and told my mom that they were playing my song, but she corrected me right away. She let me know that type of music was not God's will for my life, and since I had given my heart to Him, it was no longer part of who I was. I thank God for that now because at the time, I didn't know anything about the world outside of our little island town. In the years since then, I've heard many stories of people who lost their way while seeking fame, but God had a definite plan for my life and He was there guiding me from the start. Instead of singing on the radio, I started singing at church services, street meetings—I even persuaded Pastor

A Voice Set Apart

As a child, Bernice loved to sing—so much that neighbors would gather to listen. Long before she gave her heart to God, someone was already praying: “Lord, capture that voice for You.” He did. She turned down a secular music opportunity and began singing in church services, street meetings, and even prisons.



✚ The dedication of the Charlotte Amalie Apostolic Faith Church in 1961.

Blyden to allow me to sing at prison meetings. I thank God for the voice He gave me, and for helping me to use it for His glory.

Trained up by mighty men and women of God

It did not take long for me to receive my deeper experiences because Sister Stewart was right there encouraging me to take the next step. The Lord sanctified me while I was praying with her, and immediately she started telling to me, “You have to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” I kept seeking God and soon received that experience as well.

The people in our congregation were persistent in the things of God. They stood for the Lord no matter what trials they faced. They had a zeal for God, and I did too. Everywhere the church went for ministry, I was always there. Pastor Blyden saw my passion for the Lord and he nurtured me spiritually. He would sometimes ask me to preach at the street meetings or send me with a friend or two to go talk to a person who had stopped coming to church. He would tell me, “Don't come back without them.” That could be a real challenge, but God helped me.

At the time I was saved, there were almost no young people in the church, but I didn't struggle over not having friends in the Gospel. My faith was strong because I had witnessed so much and then had my own personal experiences with God. I had no doubt that the Gospel was true and never thought of turning back. On the contrary, I had a mind to press forward. I loved the things of God and the Gospel became everything to me.

In time, more young people started coming to church and we began to hold youth services and other activities. Brother Clyde Penn and his wife, Sister Padecia, became the youth leaders, and they always encouraged us in the Lord. In the islands, every year there is something called “carnival”—it's

“The people in our congregation were persistent in the things of God. They stood for the Lord no matter what trials they faced.”

a big, ungodly festival with a party atmosphere that most young people love. On those days, our church leaders would organize a trip to the beach for the youth, to guide our spiritual lives and help us have fun in a godly way. We never lacked things to do for the Lord and with His people.

Our hearts were very hungry for God. We often spent Saturday evenings at church, just singing and praising God together. Many times, we stayed until people were arriving for the Sunday morning service the next day. When they opened the doors, the power of God was so strong that we couldn't hold the church service—all they could do was go to prayer too.

The Lord did many miracles among us, and many souls were saved. I remember one woman in particular who had been involved in witchcraft and came seeking deliverance from a demonic spirit. She brought all her witchcraft tools to Pastor Blyden to be destroyed, and both she and her husband surrendered their lives to God. The Lord delivered them completely and it was a powerful testimony in the neighborhood.

Doors opened by God

After high school, I moved to Brooklyn, New York, for four



years to attend college. Then I went back to St. Thomas and married a man by the name of St. Clair Pinney, who was part of the same congregation as my family. We lived in New York for five years, and then in 1978, God made a way for us to relocate to Houston, Texas. Along the way, God gave us three children.

In Houston, the Lord opened many opportunities for us. My husband got a great job as a plumber, which made it possible for me to stop working and be a stay-at-home mom. Eventually, when our youngest was a bit older, I decided to take a low-stress, part-time job at an insurance and notary company. Little did I know, God had a much bigger plan in mind. After a couple years, the Lord prompted me to buy the business. He provided the money to purchase it in a miraculous way, and over the next thirty-plus years, He blessed the company abundantly. Our clients were dear to us—I got to know about them and their challenges, prayed with them, and even attended their funerals when they passed away. That work

✧
*Bernice
with her
husband,
St. Clair,
at Portland
camp
meeting
in 2022.*

*The Reed
Road
Apostolic
Faith
Church in
Houston,
Texas in
2013.*



supported our family through many highs and lows, until we sold it in 2020.

During those years, God also helped me to serve as the youth leader at our church in Houston. We did not have many young people in the congregation at first, but God gave creative ideas to reach children in our community. One day, my son suggested, “Why don’t we buy cookies and drinks for the kids?” So we went door to door with cookies and juice, inviting neighborhood kids to church. Children started to come, and soon they were inviting their friends too. We also held vacation Bible school, served special meals, took group trips to recreation centers, and encouraged them to go to our church youth conferences and camp meetings. It was a great blessing to see many of those young people come to know the Lord and become part of our church family. In 2008, I was asked to serve as the pastor of the Houston church, and God helped me fill that role as well.

Too much to tell it all

God has done so much in my life that I can’t really tell it all, but I can say that the Lord has done great things for me. In 1995, my husband was in a near-fatal car accident, but God spared his life and gave him a

renewed determination to live for Him. God also carried us through a time of grief when our daughter passed away at age thirty, and then He helped us raise her two children until they were grown. A few years ago, I was diagnosed with cancer, but God turned that into a testimony too.

Through all the twists and turns of life, I have learned that we can trust the Lord to handle everything we face. Each experience has been a steppingstone to the next, and I can look back now and see that God had a purpose for everything He allowed. It all fit into His plan. God has been so good and so real in my life, and I give Him all the praise.

Rev. Bernice Pinney served as pastor of the Reed Road Apostolic Faith Church in Houston, Texas, from 2008 to 2025. At her retirement, many in the Houston congregation expressed deep gratitude for the years of love, hard work, and spiritual training that she invested in their lives. In addition to caring for their souls, she showed concern for their overall wellbeing and oversaw major repairs and renovations of the church building. Her labor for the Lord will be appreciated for generations to come.



BY MUDZIMU MATE

ONCE RELIGIOUS, NOW REDEEMED



Mudzimu discovered the wonderful change that true salvation could make in his life.

I just told God, “I want to end at that city foursquare,” and God came down and saved my soul.

A

s far back as I can remember, I always loved God. My family was Christian and I attended

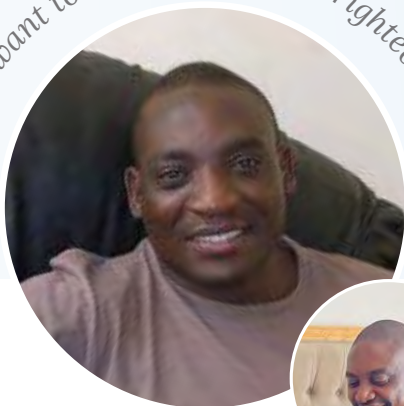
a missionary school in Zvishavane, Zimbabwe. As a young boy, I was involved in our church choir, the Scripture Union, the Preacher’s Club, and eventually became one of the youth leaders. Yet, despite all those Christian activities, there was no sense of satisfaction in my heart. I was doing everything I thought a Christian should do, but something was still missing.

After graduating from college, I started working and was no longer involved with church activities as I had been before. For a brief time, I took on sinful habits like drinking and smoking. Those choices made me feel even more empty inside. There was no happiness in my life, and I knew that whatever was missing was not something that work or friends could offer.

» *Mudzimu with his wife and children at camp meeting in Portland, Oregon, in 2024.*



“God I want to worship you in a righteous way.”



That heartfelt prayer, whispered at a low point, was the beginning of Mudzimu’s turnaround. **A few weeks later, God led him to the joy and peace he had been missing.**

At age twenty-one, I reached a breaking point. I resigned from my job and went to stay with my parents. When my mom discovered that I had been involved in sinful habits, she was so disappointed. She hadn’t expected such things from me. She cried when she spoke to me about it, which made me feel even worse.

One night, kneeling by my bedside, I prayed a very short but sincere prayer:

“God, I want to worship You in a righteous way.” I didn’t even know that there was a group of people who worshiped in that way; the prayer just came from my heart. But God saw my earnest desire and He was faithful to me.

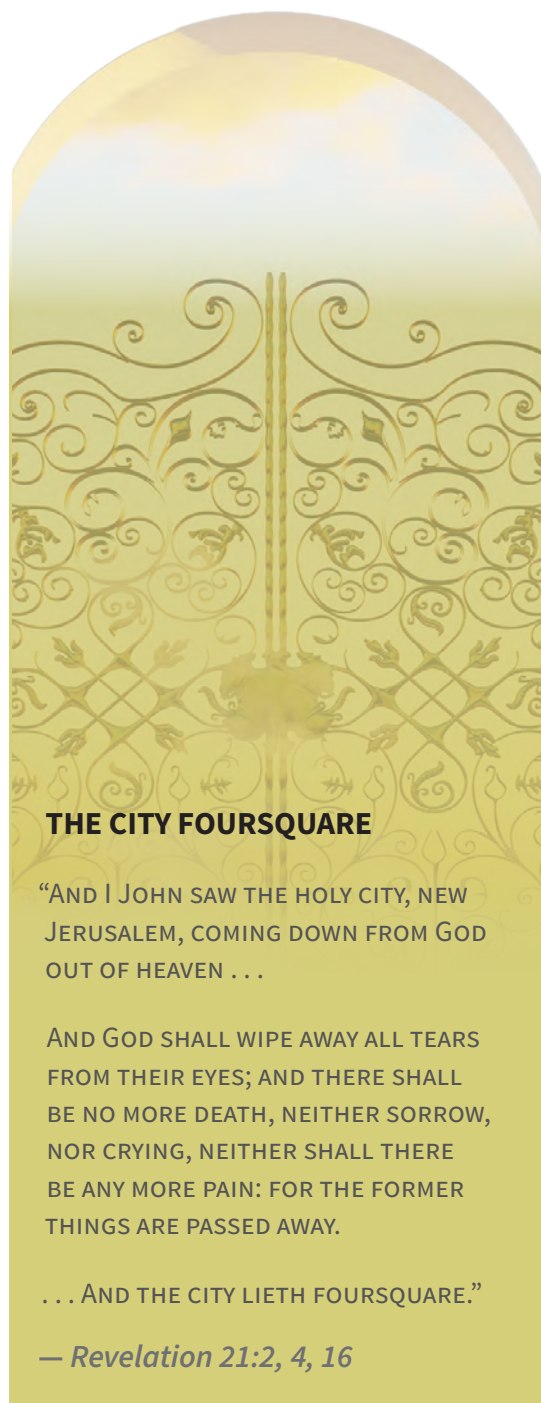
A couple weeks later, I met someone who invited me to his church, the Apostolic Faith. At my first service there, I felt like the preacher was talking about me specifically—it was as if he knew exactly where I was coming from. I did not pray after that service, but a few weeks later, while visiting my brother in Bulawayo, something urged me to look for the Apostolic Faith there. I found it and went to a Sunday service.

As soon as I stepped inside the church building that

morning, I knew it was a place where I wanted to be. The pastor preached about the New Heaven and the New Earth. He described the “city foursquare” so beautifully, and when the service ended, I went to the altar to pray. Though I didn’t know what to pray, the Lord helped me. I just told God, “I want to end at that city foursquare,” and God came down and saved my soul.

When I left the church, it was clear to me that I had found something I did not have before. There was so much joy inside! Back at my brother’s place, the first thing he said to me when he saw me was, “I can see you found the church.” It was clear to him too that something real had happened to me.

From that day forward, my life changed. My struggle with sinful habits stopped in an instant. I was hungry for more of God and started attending church services regularly. Soon, I learned about restitution. The Spirit of God led me to make right all the wrongs that I had done in the past. I went back to speak with managers from my former workplace and friends from school. I had to make restitution for a lot of wrong



THE CITY FOURSQUARE

“AND I JOHN SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN . . .

AND GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY ALL TEARS FROM THEIR EYES; AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH, NEITHER SORROW, NOR CRYING, NEITHER SHALL THERE BE ANY MORE PAIN: FOR THE FORMER THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY.

. . . AND THE CITY LIETH FOURSQUARE.”

— *Revelation 21:2, 4, 16*



“ANOTHER MIRACLE GOD DID WHEN HE SAVED ME WAS TO HEAL ME OF AN AILMENT I’D HAD FOR YEARS. EVERY SUMMER, I WOULD DEVELOP PAINFUL BLISTERS ON MY FEET, TO THE POINT THAT I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PUT ON SHOES. . . . THE SUMMER AFTER I WAS SAVED, I FOUND OUT GOD HAD TAKEN AWAY THAT DISEASE COMPLETELY.”

doings, and the Lord helped me to do it.

Another miracle God did when He saved me was to heal me of an ailment I’d had for years. Every summer, I would develop painful blisters on my feet, to the point that I would not be able to put on shoes. More than once, I went to the doctor and was given an ointment to use, but it did not take away the problem. One foot was so bad that I wondered if it would need to be amputated someday. However, the summer after I was saved, I found out God had taken away that disease completely. That was the first time in years that I was able to wear shoes the whole summer.

At church, I also learned about sanctification and began seeking that experience. In December of the same year I was saved, at my first camp meeting in Bulawayo, God sanctified me. The experience was just as real as salvation had been. At salvation I felt such joy, and when God sanctified me, He gave me an abundance of peace.

There was still more that God had in store for me. He knew I needed power to be able to serve Him. It was a few years later, as I was tarrying in prayer after a regular church service, that He baptized me with the Holy Ghost. It made another big difference in my life, because God gave me power to do more for Him.

God has done many wonderful works in my life, including leading my career in amazing ways. Around age twenty-eight, I started thinking about marriage, and I sought the Lord in prayer about it. In the right time, He led a beautiful woman into my life, and we married in 2007. Shortly afterward, He opened a way for us to relocate to South Africa through my work. The following year, we were blessed with a baby boy, Thapelo (which means “prayer” in Zulu), and God gave us a daughter, Kayla, six years later.

After living in South Africa for a few years, through my work another opportunity came up, which would have moved us to Canada. We really wanted to go there, and we tried everything to make it happen, but God did not allow it. We did not know why He closed the door to us. In time, though, we understood. In 2015, God opened a different door for us and allowed us to start a business in South Africa. He has blessed the business and grown it to include several employees, and we praise Him for it.

Over the years, God has healed our family many times, and those events have been spiritual landmarks in our lives. One time, my niece called to let me know that my sister had been admitted to the hospital. This was during the COVID pandemic and my sister was taken to a public hospital, which meant we were not allowed to visit her. We did not know what was wrong with her and the doctors refused to let us inside. I prayed about what to do, and God gave me the courage to put my faith in Him and ask the hospital to release her into her family’s

“At my first camp meeting in Bulawayo, God sanctified me. The experience was just as real as salvation had been. At salvation I felt such joy, and when God sanctified me, He gave me an abundance of peace.”

» Mudzimu and his wife, Christine



“Around age twenty-eight, I started thinking about marriage, and I sought the Lord in prayer about it. In the right time, He led a beautiful woman into my life, and we married in 2007.”



“One thing that our family knows very well is that God is good!”

PRAYER IN THE FACE OF FEAR

“GOD, HEAL MY SISTER IN THIS HOME WHERE SHE HAS BEEN BROUGHT. WE DO NOT WANT DEATH IN HERE, BUT WE WANT HER TO RECOVER.”

IN A MOMENT OF DESPERATION, THIS SIMPLE, HEARTFELT PRAYER WAS A TURNING POINT. GOD HEARD AND ANSWERED WITH HEALING.

care. To do that, they made me sign papers saying I was taking responsibility for the outcome.

When I first saw my sister, fear came into my heart. She could not walk or even talk, and it looked like her body was shutting down. I was not expecting to see her that way. I called my siblings and told them to come, in case this was the last time we would see her. When we got home, I had to carry her up the stairs to the bedroom. Then, I got on my knees and prayed, “God, heal my sister in this home where she has been brought. We do not want death in here, but we want her to recover.” God did a miracle for us. The next day, she started gaining strength. That day was a holiday, but we were able to find a private doctor who would see her, and He gave

her some medications to rehydrate her body and help her recover. Little by little, she did recover, and today she is still alive and strong. From the way she looked when she first left the hospital, we can only thank God for sparing her life and returning her health.

Another miracle God did for us was in 2022, when our family was preparing to go to Bulawayo for camp meeting. At the last minute, my wife became sick. Our bags were packed and everything was ready to go, but she could not travel in her condition. I went to our bedroom and knelt and prayed to God, and He healed her instantly. By His grace, she was able to make the trip of over 800 km (500 miles) so we could all be at camp meeting.

In 2024, God brought all four of us to the camp meeting in Portland, and I praise Him for that as well. One thing that our family knows very well is that God is good! He has done wonders in our lives, and I give Him glory.

Mudzimu Mate worships at the Apostolic Faith Church in Johannesburg, South Africa.

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Acknowledge

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” *Romans 3:23* “God be merciful to me a sinner.” *Luke 18:13*

Confess

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” *1 John 1:9*

Repent

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” *Luke 13:3*

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” *Acts 3:19*

Forsake

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him...for he will abundantly pardon.” *Isaiah 55:7*

Believe

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” *John 3:16*

If you are a new Christian, contact us and request the tract entitled “Starting Out.”

BY BOBBI DOWNEY

CHURCH: A PLACE TO BLESS AND BE BLESSED

Attending church regularly is an opportunity to commune with God, have our souls refreshed, encourage one another, and so much more.



The best part about attending church is that when we assemble with fellow believers to worship God, He meets us there!



Church has always been a key part of my life. As a young child, I

gave my heart to Jesus at an altar of prayer after a church service. Later, it was where I developed friendships, married, and learned how to grow as a Christian. The Gospel message was lived and taught to me by my parents, and they also put a high priority on attending church whenever possible. I'm thankful for that upbringing, as it led to positive habits that have held me steady in my faith over the years.

Recently, in studying the early years of the Children of Israel, I noticed the extensiveness of God's instructions to them. God knew what was best for the Israelites in every area of life and He patiently taught them. In addition to commandments about personal behavior, He outlined practices for corporate worship—times when the people were to gather and worship Him together. These included weekly observances of the



Sabbath as well as annual feasts. The Sabbath offered a needed rest from labor and time for spiritual reflection and instruction. The feasts reminded them of God's deliverance and faithfulness of the past, and pointed to promises to be fulfilled in the future. These gatherings helped reinforce the importance of daily obeying all of God's instructions and keeping Him at the center of their lives.

While much has changed in the world since the Old Testament times, the lives of the Israelites were similar in many ways to ours today. They married, raised families, worked, and rested. They loved, laughed, cried, and suffered. Some aspects of God's instructions for Christians today are clearly different from what He required of the Israelites—for example, after Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the Cross, animal sacrifices were no longer necessary. However, the underlying principles for a life that pleases

"It takes purpose and intentionality to keep God at the center of our lives, and a key element in doing so is corporate worship."

God have not changed. God still wishes, and even requires, our lives to be holy in every area and to be centered around Him.

It takes purpose and intentionality to keep God at the center of our lives, and a key element in doing so is corporate worship. Just as regular visits to the Temple and synagogues were a vital part of the Israelites' worship, attending church is critical for us today. We read in Hebrews

10:24-25, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." God instituted corporate worship, and I can say from experience that He blesses when we take part in it.

Benefits of attending church

When we attend church, we are setting aside time to serve and worship God, making Him a priority and purposing to focus solely on Him. There are many benefits in doing this. Here are a few:

Instruction: Bible doctrine and practical application is preached in church services, giving instruction on how to be ready for Heaven and how to live holy lives from day to day until we get there. It is an opportunity to learn and to hold ourselves accountable to what the Word of God says.

Reflection: As with the Children of Israel, we need to take time to rest from our labors and to engage in spiritual reflection. Attending church brings us to a physical place that is designated for this purpose, better enabling us to escape the cares of life and focus our hearts and minds on Christ.

Prayer: Time spent in prayer before and after church services is precious! It is then that we seek and thank the Lord together, while also praying for one another. Many spiritual victories have been won during these times.

Godly counsel: Attending church brings us together with like-minded believers who can encourage us and give godly advice. The ministers and elders have God-given wisdom and experience that they are happy to share, which will benefit us greatly.

Encouragement: When people stand and testify in our services of what God has done in their lives, it is very encouraging! Sometimes they share challenges they have faced and how God has helped them through, and those situations may be similar to something we are experiencing, giving us hope that God will help us as well.

Fellowship: Attending church gives a person spiritual support for good times as well as the difficult times of life. The family of God can help each other in a variety of ways, making us stronger together than we are apart. Being part



A Global Perspective

In some parts of the world, gathering for worship means risking imprisonment, persecution—even death.

Yet many still choose to meet in secret, driven by love for God.

When we freely gather with fellow believers, we are experiencing a privilege that some only dream of.



of a church community can also help fend off feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Music: Beautiful music with inspired lyrics can soothe the soul and enrich our lives. Many times, a meaningful melody will stay with us and continue to lift our spirits even after the service has ended.

Over the years, I have personally benefited from all

these blessings and more. There have been many special times when people prayed with me and encouraged me. One time in particular, I received my sanctification while praying at the altar with my cousin, and how we rejoiced together! I've also been able to pray with others and share in their joy when they received what they were seeking. These memories are priceless to me.

More than attend, participate!

It is possible to arrive at church, take a seat, and simply sit back and enjoy the meeting. However, I have found it benefits me even more if I fully participate. Here are a few steps we can take that will truly make us part of the service:

- Remember that we are entering God's house and that He called it a "house of prayer" (Isaiah 56:7). In our church, we have a room where people assemble to pray before services and to share prayer requests. Arriving early to pray is a great way to begin a meeting. Even if we only have a few minutes, we can kneel at our seats or bow our heads and ask God to bless all that will transpire.
- Extend greetings to others, making them feel welcome. Even those who always attend appreciate a friendly smile!
- Sing with enthusiasm during the time for congregational songs. If we are not blessed with musical ability, it's okay! The Bible says, "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise" (Psalm 98:4). Congregational singing is not only for the musically gifted—it's a time for everyone to join in joyful praise.
- Share a testimony about receiving salvation, a recent blessing, or an answer to prayer.
- Say a hearty "Amen!" when something touches our hearts.
- Pray among other brothers and sisters at the end of the service.

There are also many ways to participate as a church volunteer, depending on where our talents lie and what help is needed. In our congregation, to be invited to participate in one of these areas, the key qualification is having received the experience of salvation. Then, if we have musical abilities, we may be asked to join the choir or orchestra. Those who enjoy welcoming visitors or helping people find a seat may be called on to become part of the greeter or usher teams. There is often a need for Sunday school teachers, cleaners, people with audio/video skills, van drivers, and more.

When we participate in services, we will leave even more uplifted than if we simply "attended," and those around us will also be blessed by our contribution.

Invite a friend (or a stranger)

Often, it is at church that people hear the full message of salvation and choose to give their hearts to the Lord. What a privilege to be able to invite people to come and hear the Good News!

Throughout my daily interactions, I try to remember to prayerfully look for



Stronger Together

Worshiping and serving God alongside others creates relationships that strengthen and support our walks with God.

opportunities to mention that I attend church. These can become openings to extend an invitation. Especially with people like neighbors who have regular contact with me and know my testimony, there is potential that they will be interested in learning more about my faith.

Special events are also wonderful opportunities to invite someone to church. At my congregation in Portland, we have an annual Christmas on the Campground event that brings many visitors from our community every year. Sunday school activities, Vacation Bible School, special meetings, and holiday services are great times to invite others. People also love music and are often open to a concert invitation, especially when they hear that it's free!

It's a privilege

Sometimes health, work schedules, or other circumstances beyond our control can make us unable to attend church for a time. In those cases, God will walk beside us. A few years ago, our church was temporarily unable to hold regular services because of public health restrictions. I was grateful to be able to watch services online, and I also began to appreciate the blessing of attending church in person more than ever. Now, I try to purposely remind myself to be grateful for it. On the way to a service, I still sometimes comment to my husband, "Today we *get* to go to church!"

In some countries, there are severe restrictions on worship. For example, in China, only religious groups belonging to one of five state-sanctioned "patriotic religious associations" are permitted to hold worship



services. Regulations require clergy to pledge allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party and socialism, and to "resist illegal religious activities and religious extremist ideology."¹ Those who disobey these mandates may be imprisoned, beaten, and sometimes even killed. Despite these obstacles, and at great personal risk, many in China still choose to gather and worship with other believers.

When I read accounts like these, I cannot help but feel incredibly blessed to be able to freely assemble and worship with like-minded believers. It's a privilege that I don't want to take for granted.

The Best Part

"The priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God." — 2 Chronicles 5:14

Still today, God's presence fills the places where believers gather to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

A blessing awaits

God knew that corporate worship would help people serve Him successfully. He commanded the Children of Israel to worship Him together and blessed them when they obeyed. In 2 Chronicles 5:13-14, we read a beautiful account of how God met the Children of Israel when they gathered for the dedication of the Temple built by King Solomon. It says, "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God."

The best part about attending church is that when we assemble with fellow believers to worship God, He meets us there! Let's be sure to take advantage of every opportunity to gather with our church family and enjoy worshipping God together.

Bobbi Downey is a member of the editorial staff at the Apostolic Faith World Headquarters office in Portland, Oregon.

¹ United States Department of State, "2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: China (Includes Hong Kong, Macau, Tibet, and Zinjiang)," <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/china>, accessed April 15, 2025.

Evidence

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES OF THE POWER OF GOD

RITA COOK

Portland, Oregon

HEIDI SLETMOE

Grants Pass,
Oregon



It was like God gave me a grown-up version of salvation. It was so beautiful. The very next night, I had a similar experience of sanctification and the baptism—it was like receiving them all over again.

I'M SO THANKFUL THAT GOD SAVED ME WHEN I WAS JUST A LITTLE GIRL.

I can look back to many prayer meetings of drawing closer to the Lord in my youth. God wonderfully sanctified me when I was in seventh grade, and when I was in high school, He filled me with His Holy Spirit.

Later, there came a time when I felt like I needed to know for sure that this Gospel was what I was going

to do with my life. I had some doubts about my salvation and prayed, "Lord, I don't want to deal with these anymore. I want to be sure. If I have to start over and get saved again, that's okay. I just want to know for sure." Then, it was like God gave me a grown-up version of salvation. It was so beautiful. The very next night, I had a similar experience of sanctification and the baptism—it was like

receiving them all over again. It was so powerful, and now I have those special times to look back on too.

Since then, God has kept me through many things. This past week, there was a really hard situation at work. It was quite overwhelming and I didn't know what I could do about it. Sitting in my car before work, I messaged a prayer group that I belong to, just asking them for prayer.

Then when I got to work, the situation was not fixed but for that day we had an unexpected reprieve. After that, every single day God put me in different situations that were not so hard. It was powerfully obvious that He orchestrated that for me. I know He is with me and that He can take care of the whole situation. I just thank Him for that and thank everybody who prayed. – Rita Cook



Someone said, "Let's pray for Heidi." Everyone started praying, and the Lord was right there. He came down and healed me instantly.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR ME!

About three years ago, I started suffering some health issues. I went to various doctors, but none of them knew what was wrong with me. My health continued to get worse. It got to the point where I had to use a cane, a scooter, and a

wheelchair. My husband and I didn't know what was going on, but we just kept trusting the Lord to get us through day by day. Then, this past February, we had a special service in Grants Pass with a visiting minister. It was a wonderful meeting, and afterward, several people

went forward requesting prayer for healing. Someone said, "Let's pray for Heidi." Everyone started praying, and the Lord was right there. He came down and healed me instantly. I haven't used a scooter, a walker, or any help since then. I am working forty hours a week again.

Now, I have another reason to praise God. All during this year's Portland camp meeting, a song kept going through my mind: "Victory Ahead." Then on Tuesday, July 8, the Lord filled me with His precious Holy Spirit. I can't thank Him enough. – Heidi Sletmoe



The Gospel doesn't wear out; it wears in. We're not just victorious, but through the Blood of Jesus Christ we're more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

DURING THE SONG SERVICE IN CHURCH RECENTLY, WE SANG "THE CLEANSING STREAM."

Immediately my mind went back to August 2, 1941. That was the day my youngest brother was born at home and my Aunt Violet Mann came over to help my mother.

There was an incident, and I don't remember why it happened, but my aunt grabbed me and started to wash my mouth out with soap. That was the old-school way. I am quite sure that from then on, when Aunt Violet was around,

I was careful about my words—I made certain she didn't do that again.

This morning, I thought to myself that I had an experience of the Lord cleansing me. I was just a child when we moved to Medford where I went to church and heard wonderful songs. The Bible says that foolishness is bound in the heart of a child and the rod of correction will drive it far from him. I'm sure my dad did his part in trying to solve my problem. But in one fell swoop of God's grace, on January 6, 1953, I had a cleansing.

The Psalmist said, "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." I'm impressed with that because every snowflake has some impurity, but the Gospel has no impurity. The Lord cleansed me, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He changed my vocabulary. He changed my manner of speech, and I knew I was cleansed; it was real. Aunt Violet couldn't do it, my dad couldn't do it, but the Blood of Jesus Christ cleansed me from all iniquity.

I thank God for the Gospel that works; it

does the job. After all these years, my wife could tell you that I've never been unseemly in her presence. I might have said some things with more tact, but we should be able to improve as we get older.

The Gospel doesn't wear out; it wears in. We're not just victorious, but through the Blood of Jesus Christ we're more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Hallelujah! – Nolan Roby



Praise God! He healed me without any intervention from the doctors. I give thanks to Him.

I WENT FOR A ROUTINE HEALTH CHECKUP AND A TEST SHOWED THAT MY KIDNEYS WERE FAILING.

I was asked to repeat the test a few months later, and the diagnosis was confirmed. In fact, by that time, the

condition had worsened, and I was told to see a specialist. While waiting some months for that appointment, my wife and I prayed, and we asked for prayer. The test was repeated a few days before I saw the

specialist, and when he looked at the results, he said, "Your kidneys are fine." I wondered if he was fully aware of the problem, so I asked if he had seen the first two tests. He said, "Yes, the results were forwarded

to me. All I can tell you is that your kidneys are fine now." Praise God! He healed me without any intervention from the doctors. I give thanks to Him.
– Toluwase Asubiarno

CAMP MEETINGS OFFER NEW AND RENEWED LIFE

Highlights from over a dozen Apostolic Faith conventions held around the world in July and August of 2025.

► Camp meetings have been a tradition of the Apostolic Faith work since its founding, and they continue to be a source of great blessing. They are a time when many souls are saved and believers draw closer to the Lord, often praying through to deeper experiences and answers to prayer. This year was no exception! Following are highlights from several of these gatherings that were held in 2025.



◀ PORTLAND

The camp meeting at the world headquarters in Portland, Oregon, had its highest attendance in recent memory. Delegates came from all over the world, including from such faraway places as Australia, Chile, Ireland, Namibia, the Philippines, and Romania. From the beginning, there was an atmosphere of expectation, and the prayer services were powerful. As campers sought God at the altars, He poured out His Spirit in abundance, and many received their deeper experiences, guidance, healing, and more.

▼ SOUTH KOREA

The South Korea camp meeting also drew a large crowd with representatives coming from all six Korean branches as well as Japan and the United States. One high point was the ordination of a pastor for the Daejeon congregation. Another was the Saturday prayer service in which one from the United States received the baptism of the Holy Ghost while many others were refilled and blessed.



▲ EASTERN CARIBBEAN

Every service of the Eastern Caribbean camp meeting began with the congregation singing "There shall be showers of blessing." The saints gathered at the Smith Bay church on the island of St. Thomas with joy and expectation, and even the frequent power outages could not dampen their spirits. Several of the teachings focused on "Unity," and a rich atmosphere of fellowship was felt throughout the meetings.

▼ WESTERN EUROPE

The Western Europe camp meeting was held in the United Kingdom and began with an opening message of “Arise and Shine,” taken from the camp theme: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come,” found in Isaiah 60:1. The listeners were encouraged to look to Jesus, the Source of all spiritual light and the means by which darkness is banished from one’s life. During one of the services, a special event took place—Mathieu Bobo retired as the Paris pastor, and Patricia Sossa was ordained to take his place. The camp meeting was a great success, and toward the close, a water baptismal service for twenty-five candidates was held.



▲ BOTSWANA

In Botswana, the focus of the camp meeting was “The Promises of God.” In the opening message, all were reminded that God’s promises are sure and personal. They were urged to take hold of the promises with boldness so that God’s will might be fulfilled in their lives. By the close of the meetings, seven had claimed salvation while others were healed, revived, sanctified, and baptized with the Holy Spirit. During the last evening service, everyone had the opportunity to tell what God had done for them in a “Testimony and Praise Night.”



▲ MIDWEST UNITED STATES

The Midwest United States camp meeting followed soon after Portland’s, and Superintendent General Sola Adesope and his wife, Tolu, were blessed to attend for the first time in twenty-two years. During the meetings, campers were encouraged to embrace the acronym PUSH, which stands for “Pray Until Something Happens.” Many did, and earnest prayer meetings led to victorious testimonies.

▼ SOUTHERN & EASTERN UNITED STATES

After leaving Midwest camp, the Adesopes continued to the Southern and Eastern District camp meeting. There, the two themes of “It Is High Time” and “The Best Is Yet to Come” reminded everyone of the urgency of the hour and the bright hope of God’s promises. By the closing service, many were rejoicing in a renewed life in Christ and God’s blessings outpoured.





▲ ROMANIA

The Romania camp meeting took place under an awning in a beautiful outdoor setting. Saints from nine branch churches gathered at the Valea Lui Liman campsite in the foothills of the Poiana Rusca mountains.

Throughout the week, the messages centered on facing the challenges of today. Morning Bible teachings were taken from 2 Timothy, chapter 3, which is an admonishment to continue in the faith as the world further declines into sin. The evening messages included such topics as “Young People and the Dangers of Artificial Intelligence,” “Challenges of the Last Days,” and “Effective Prayer.” Inspired by the beautiful views and timely messages from God’s Word, those who attended left strengthened and encouraged in the Lord.



▲ REPUBLIC OF BENIN

More than five thousand attended this year’s Republic of Benin camp meeting. The inspiring music, testimonies, and messages led to fervent prayer meetings during which 564 were saved. In addition, many received their deeper experiences and were healed.

Testimonies during the services told of God’s goodness. Among them, a couple thanked God for delivering them from masked robbers who tried to take their motorcycle by attacking them with

machetes. Miraculously, they were not injured, and the thieves did not get the motorcycle. A woman praised God for protecting her during an accident that could have taken her life. A man thanked God for sparing his life. He said he was ill for several months and at one point, he lost consciousness and people around him thought he was dead. However, God was with him. While unconscious, he saw the Kingdom of God and then was restored to life, completely healed.

▼ WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA

A children’s program, presented by Sunday school students from the Lagos region in Nigeria, began the 2025 West and Central Africa camp meeting. In a skit, they depicted the account of the infirm man at the Pool of Bethesda, illustrating how Jesus not only healed him but freed him from sin. The children closed with a reminder that Jesus still sees every need and desires to set people free.

The Sunday morning service followed, and during the announcements, a good report was given of the campground building project. In the past two years, with the help of generous donations, the dome over the tabernacle and two more of the six wings were completed. Now only three remain unfinished.

By the close of the camp meeting, many had been set free from sin or healed of various afflictions, and 973 were water baptized. The final Sunday morning message, taken from Ephesians 6:10, was an admonishment not to turn back. The preacher encouraged all upon their return home to remember, “God can keep you.”



► MALAWI

The theme for the Malawi camp meeting was “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Revelation 3:11). Echoing the theme, a workers’ conference focused on the Apostolic Faith origin, purpose, and doctrines, and encouraged attendees to hold fast to the teachings that have stood the test of time. The opening message also captured the camp theme. Using the example of Job, the preacher admonished all to hold fast to their integrity.

Testimonies throughout the week showed God’s power to save, keep, and heal. One man said that he had been religious, but had no power over sin, so his homelife was contentious. Then in 1988, he heard that he must repent and forsake his sins. When he did, God saved him, transforming his heart. Since then, his home has been peaceful. A woman said that an illness had left her blind, but when God saved her, He also restored her sight, and she continues to enjoy His blessings. At the close of the camp, many left with renewed resolve and joy in their hearts.



▲ DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The third annual Dominican Republic camp meeting had a theme of “El Camino de la Fe,” which means, “The Way of Faith.” From the start, the saints were encouraged to look to God in faith, and the meetings were filled with His blessings. Among these were a powerful Spirit-filled prayer meeting following the Friday evening service and the water baptism of three individuals. A new pastor was also ordained for the Samana church, and a minister and two outreach workers were installed to serve at the same location. Overall, the camp meeting was marked by blessings of salvation, sanctification, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and other gifts that come from God in “The Way of Faith.”



◀ DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Congregations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had reason to rejoice before the camp meeting even began. Earlier this year, a donation through the Portland headquarters made it possible to dig a well on the City of Faith campground in Ngandapio. The property had sat idle since 2019 due to a lack of fresh water. This year, the saints were able to take advantage of the prime location, spacious setting, and beautiful views.

One highlight of the camp meeting was the testimony of a man who thanked God for a unique opportunity to witness. He said he was called to Matadi when a critical machine in a factory broke down. The employees had been sent home while engineers worked on the problem for two weeks without finding a solution. Though he had not studied engineering in college, when God saved him, He gave him an understanding of mechanics. This led the engineers to consult him, and in their sight, he knelt and prayed before examining the machine. Suddenly, God gave him inspiration, and within a half hour, the machine was running again.

By the close of the camp meeting, nearly 850 had attended and enjoyed fresh water from the well. More importantly, fifty-six drew from the Living Waters and received salvation.

BY LOWELL MONTGOMERY

A COVETOUS HEART **CHANGED**

“Sink or swim, live or die, I’ll serve You!”

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THIS PAPER IN 1952.



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hen a young man invited me to an Apostolic Faith meeting, I told him I did not

need salvation. I said, “I do not smoke cigarettes, drink, carouse around, or play cards.” I was not a thief, did my work faithfully, and thought I was all right. However, I am thankful that I did go to church with him.

That night my wife and I sat in the back row. When people testified, I thought, *I would give my right arm if I could stand before a group of people like this and say I was saved!* The Spirit of the Lord spoke to my heart, “It is going to take everything you have and everything you ever hope to have to get this old-time religion.”

My spiritual eyes were opened, and I found I was

not so good. There was sin in my life. I had a covetous heart. Everything I got hold of I wanted to keep. I was too cheap to drink or smoke.

I deprived my little wife of things she could easily have had. She brought her check home from work, and I took it and put it in the bank. When she asked for something that she should have had, I said, “Do you need it?” Right then a quarrel was on. Our home was nearly broken up because of my covetousness.

In that church service, I realized a responsibility lay upon my shoulders. What was I going to do with the Gospel call? I felt condemned.

The next morning, someone asked me how I liked the service. I replied, “I didn’t like it at all. I didn’t like the singing,

A Change Only God Could Make

“Before my conversion, I liked to hear the cash register ring. But the Lord took the love for the dollar out of my heart.”

Salvation transformed Lowell’s priorities. Greed gave way to generosity, and God gave him a new heart—one filled with peace, and a desire to make things right.



and God saved my soul. I can't sell tobacco anymore." He said, "You won't have to do it," and he moved me to work in the meat department.

There was a man who came in our store building about every night who, in my estimation, was crooked. Before I was saved I had said, "I will beat him at his own game"—and I did. When God saved my soul, He showed me that man whom I had wronged, and I said, "Lord, give me grace and I'll make it right." He came into the store and bought his groceries. I followed him out to his car and said, "A long time ago I beat you out of some money, because I thought you were a crook. I am here to pay it back to you." He would not take the money because he knew he was wrong—but my record is clear today. I have made many restitutions.

Before my conversion, I liked to hear the cash register ring. But when the Lord saved my soul, He took the love for the dollar out of my heart.

A little later, the Lord sanctified me. It was marvelous! I knew I was sanctified. After that I heard about the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I did not know what it was, but I said, "I want it, and with God's help, I'm going to get it." God baptized me with His Holy Spirit and empowered me for His service. That experience is as fresh today as it was when it happened.

These days are not gloomy for me. I am so happy I don't know where to start praising God or when to quit. My soul is overflowing with His great joy! My wife and I would not have stayed together much longer if I had not been saved. But the Lord saved both of us, and we have been married almost forty-nine years. That is what God did for us. He took away our

A Cleared Record

At salvation, God stirred Lowell's heart to make things right:

- He **quit tobacco sales** to honor his convictions.
- He **repaid a man he had wronged**, even though that man himself had also been deceitful.
- He made **many other restitutions**, clearing his conscience before God and man.

the testimonies, or the preaching, and I am not going back!" He said, "You might like it better next time."

God's people prayed for us, and months later my wife and I did go back to church. As we continued attending, God strove with my heart. One time I went out to my car, put my head on the steering wheel, and cried like a baby. My wife said, "If you want to go pray, I will wait here." But I would not humble myself to do it.

The night finally came when I bent my knees at the altar of prayer and cried out, "O God, have mercy on my soul." The enemy said, "You can't get it." I said, "I guess I can't," and got up to go. However, I could not find an easy way to go out, so I went back to the altar and dropped on my knees once more. I said, "Lord, sink or swim, live or die, I'll serve You."

In a flash, God saved my soul. The Lord put peace into my heart and took my sins away. The covetous heart was changed!

On Monday morning I went back to the same job with joy in my soul. The Lord helped me do the things I thought were going to be hard. I asked my employer to step into the back room and then told him, "Roy, I cannot work here any longer. I prayed

sins and set us free. We have a happy home, and we have had a wonderful time serving the Lord together these many years.

I've experienced many physical difficulties, have been sick and at the point of death, but I know that Jesus cares for me. He has been good to me. I am thankful that I cast my anchor in the right direction forty-four years ago, and it still holds.

Lowell Montgomery was a minister of the Apostolic Faith Church for many years, and he also served as a Board Member and Corporate Secretary. He was a gentle and inspirational man who, though plagued in later years with many physical difficulties, modeled a cheerful and loving spirit. His hearty smile was a lift to everyone with whom he came into contact. He went Home to be with his Savior on July 9, 1977.

BY LOWELL MONTGOMERY

THE BLESSING OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

FROM A SERMON
PREACHED AT THE
1954 PORTLAND
CAMP MEETING.

If the hearts of Christians are bound together with love and devotion for Christ, marvelous things can be accomplished.

No Barriers in the Body of Christ

There is no economic, cultural, or national divide in God's family. His invitation is to "whosoever will." Whether in Africa, Asia, North America, or anywhere else—we are one in Christ.

There is nothing quite so sweet as Christian fellowship, but there is only one way to have it, and that is through deliverance from sin and by living the way Christ wants us to live. We read in 1 John 1:7, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Only the departure from darkness will bring that light. Only by walking in His light will we find that great love of Christ and the fellowship we need. Oh, let us walk together in His light! Let us experience fellowship one with another.

In Psalm 119:63 we read, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee [God], and of them that keep thy precepts." The psalmist's fellowship was with all of God's people, not only a select few. God wants all His people to be as one.

The Bible also proclaims, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Whether you are in a church congregation that is large or small, if you believe in His name, you can expect the presence of God to be there.

God's Word says in Psalm 133:1, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Why is it that after a church service, many times it will be 11:00 or 12:00 at night before people leave the altars of prayer? It is because we love praying with and for one another. In Amos 3:3, we read, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" We receive answers from God as we have unity.

Fellowship with God's people gets sweeter every day. If our hearts are banded together with love and devotion for Christ, we shall see great

"LET US WALK TOGETHER IN HIS LIGHT!"

and marvelous things accomplished. It can be done if we will look to God in faith and believe that He will work through us.

There is no nationality barrier among God's

people. His love is for the "whosoever will," so whether we are from North America, Asia, Africa, or any other place in the world, we can have wonderful fellowship with all our Christian brothers and sisters.

Malachi 3:16 tells us that a "book of remembrance" is written for those who speak often to one another about God. Hebrews 10:25 reads, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Clearly, Christian fellowship has God's approval.

During a prayer service, when the ministers anoint the sick with oil and pray for that individual, our hearts unite in faith that God is going to hear and answer prayer. Faith will bring the blessing every time. How we love God for this wonderful way!

In the Book of Philippians, we read, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:1-5). When we get to that place of esteeming others more than ourselves, how the glory of God floods our souls!

With God's love deep in our hearts, fellowship with other believers becomes our joy. It is wonderful to see what God does when we look to Him and believe.



A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and endorse all the teachings contained in it. Following is a summary of our basic doctrines.

THE DIVINE TRINITY consists of three Persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost, perfectly united as one. *Matthew 3:16-17; 1 John 5:7.*

REPENTANCE is a godly sorrow for and a renouncing of all sin. *Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 4:17.*

JUSTIFICATION (or salvation) is the act of God's grace through which we receive forgiveness for sins and stand before God as though we had never sinned. *Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION, the act of God's grace whereby we are made holy, is the second definite work and is subsequent to justification. *John 17:15-21; Hebrews 13:12.*

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST is the enduement of power upon the sanctified life, and is evidenced by speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. *John 14:16-17, 26; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4.*

DIVINE HEALING of sickness is provided through the atonement. *James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24.*

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS will be as literal and visible as His going away (*Acts 1:9-11*) and will consist of two appearances. First, He comes to catch away His waiting Bride. *Matthew 24:40-44; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.* Second, He comes to execute judgment upon the ungodly. *2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14-15.*

THE TRIBULATION will occur between Christ's coming for His Bride and His return in judgment. *Isaiah 26:20-21; Revelation 9 and 16.*

CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN is the 1000 years of peaceful reign by Jesus on earth. *Isaiah 11 and 35; Revelation 20:1-6.*

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT is the final judgment when all the wicked dead will stand before God. *Revelation 20:11-15.*

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH will replace the present heaven and earth, which will be destroyed after the Great White Throne Judgment. *2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1-3.*

ETERNAL HEAVEN AND ETERNAL HELL are literal places of final and eternal destiny. *Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:22-28.*

MARRIAGE is a covenant between one man and one woman that is binding before God for life. Neither person has a right to marry again while the first companion lives. *Mark 10:6-12; Romans 7:1-3.*

RESTITUTION is necessary, wherein wrongs against others are righted. *Ezekiel 33:15; Matthew 5:23-24.*

WATER BAPTISM is by one immersion "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." *Matthew 3:16; 28:19.*

THE LORD'S SUPPER is an institution ordained by Jesus so that we might remember His death until He returns. *Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23, 26.*

FOOT WASHING is practiced according to the example and commandment Jesus gave. *John 13:14-15.*

You may obtain additional information about these doctrines and learn about our other publications in both English and foreign languages by writing to the Apostolic Faith Church at 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. or visiting our website at www.apostolicfaith.org. Before these magazines are sent out, they are always prayed over for the healing of the sick and the salvation of souls.

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Jesus
THE LIGHT *of* THE WORLD