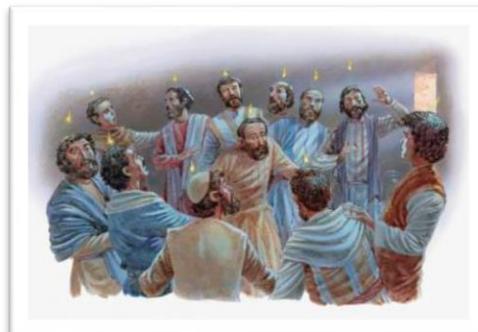


Reflection on Pentecost

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In a couple weeks, we will be celebrating the fulfillment of a promise of God – the gift of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost. This was something prophesied in the Old Testament Book of Joel (Joel 2: 28,29) c. 835 BC - 28

“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. 29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.



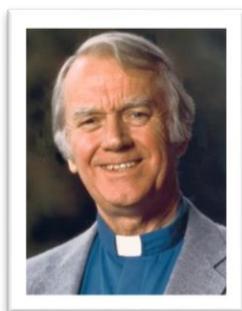
Acts 2:1ff details how this promise manifested in the Early Church

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The impartation of the Holy Spirit had such a profound impact on the early believers that this event has been called the Birthday of the Church. Jesus Himself spoke of this in Acts 1:8 -

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

This is reflected in the BCP's Proper Preface for Whitsunday (Pentecost Sunday) – ... according to whose most true promise, the Holy Spirit came down as at this time from heaven, lighting upon the disciples to teach them, and to lead them into all truth; giving them both the gift of tongues, and also boldness with fervent zeal constantly to preach the Gospel unto all nations...



Clearly, the fruit of the Holy Spirit's presence in the Church was empowerment to witness boldly. But witness to what? Or whom? I had the privilege of serving as Rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, WA for a decade. St. Luke's is the Mother Church of the Charismatic Renewal Movement which brokered the largest revival and harvest of souls in Church History. The Charismatic Renewal was an expression of an earlier movement of the Holy Spirit in the 20th C. These "Pentecostal" believers named themselves "Full Gospel" – suggesting that they were sharing the full counsel of God (in the Scriptures) where the rest of the Church was not preaching or living into the fullness of what God offers! Could that be part of the problem with the North American Church?

Fr. Dennis Bennett, the Father of the Charismatic Renewal Movement, had a simple message – You must know Jesus, the Risen Lord in a personal way and receive the Infilling or Baptism of the Holy Spirit - See his book "Nine O'Clock in the Morning."

The fruit of this Spirit-filled life is spontaneous witness to the love of God with healings and other signs of the Kingdom. We need this in our churches today!