God’s Spirit Poured Out

Global Leadership Summit Devotional

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Introduction

 John began the 18th chapter of Revelation saying, “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with [or owing to] his glory” (NKJV). We quote this full passage often as we rehearse our involvement in the Great commission at the end times. Ellen White often attached readiness for this work to Acts chapter 2 (See for example GC603, EW277, 5T383). She has advised that the whole book of Acts is our lesson book and urged that we should read, receive, and present its contents (Letter 32, 1910; SDABC 1055).

Regarding Pentecost, she said, “The time had now come. The Spirit had been waiting for the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. For ten days the disciples offered their petitions for the outpouring of the Spirit, and Christ in heaven added His intercession. . . and He now claimed the gift of the Spirit, that He might pour it out upon His disciples (Acts 1–4; 1:8, 9; Eph. 4:8)” (SW Nov. 28, 1905; SDABC 1055).[[1]](#footnote-1) She assures us, “The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We also may receive of the fullness of His blessing” (RH June 4, 1889).[[2]](#footnote-2) “The time has come when we must expect the Lord to do great things for us. . . . Before the work is closed up . . ., we shall receive the outpouring of the Spirit of God” (Letter 30, 1907).[[3]](#footnote-3)

Scripture: Acts 2: 17-18

17And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.NKJV

 “In our time, end times, God promises to “pour out” His Spirit in abundant supply, not limiting the gift by gender (“your sons and your daughters”), age (“your old men,” “your young men”), or status (“menservants … maidservants”), thus fulfilling Moses’ prayer of long ago that all of God’s people would have the gift of the Spirit (Num. 11:29). *Then Moses said to him, Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!* (

Applications

“The Lord has a special work to do for us individually. As we see the wickedness of the world brought to light in the courts of justice and published in the daily papers, let us draw near to God, and by living faith lay hold of His promises, that the grace of Christ may be manifest in us. We may have an influence, a powerful influence, in the world.”[[4]](#footnote-6)

In response, TMI provides encouragement, structures, and resources. Leadership must provide for the general and specific development for all who receive the gifts and thereby are called to various ministries. Someone noted recently that those who receive gifts from the Spirit must be trained to apply the gifts in specific ministry and service.

Children’s Ministries (CHM) is guided by Christ’s mandate to feed the lambs (John 21:5) and to let the children come to Him (Mark 10:13, 14). It seeks to lead children into loving, serving relationships with Jesus and a commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church with aims for service to others.

This year the North American Division CHM will launch Operation Wheels for Arizona Conference where a large number of refugees has settled. Right after their vacation Bible school they will raise funds for a bus to transport refugee children to school, church programs, and other places in their communities.

East and West Kenya Unions CHM launched a ministry to street children two years ago. They bring children and youth off the street, house them, feed them, educate them, and show them the love of Jesus.

Ellen White said, “In the near future many children will be endued with the Spirit of God, and will do a work proclaiming the truth to the world.… They will do a work in the world that not all the powers of evil can counteract.”[[5]](#footnote-7)

Women’s Ministries (WM) is committed to encouraging, challenging, equipping, nurturing, supporting, and facilitating Seventh-day Adventist women in carrying the Gospel message to the world. They believe Ellen White that, “The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them. . . . They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed” (See also 4T642).[[6]](#footnote-8) Their anchoring objective is for expanding avenues of dynamic Christian service for women, challenging every Adventist woman to use her gifts in the Church’s mission.

Including Evangelism in Rwanda during the summer of 2016 WM contributed to multiple evangelistic meetings by speaking, sewing baptismal garments for pastors and candidates, collecting offering at meetings, and filming activities for sending out the gospel virtually. Their prison ministries in this region provided both Bible studies and clothing.

This year Adventist women lead out at the 40th Women's Christian Temperance Union Convention in Ottawa, Canada, that featured seven Adventist speakers, including representatives from General Conference, Papua New Guinea, and Australia. All the main speakers were Adventists and an Adventist missionary from Papua New Guinea was elected second vice-president of the Temperance Union.

The Adventist Education ministry is Christ-centered and aims to disciple all who come for formal education. The distinctive characteristics of Adventist education—derived from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White—point to the redemptive aim of true education: to restore human beings into the image of their Maker. It unites three cooperating agencies: home, church, and school and extends its efforts throughout life in lifelong learning endeavors for all.

Adventist education currently reaches nearly two million students and nearly 103,000 teachers at various levels. It aims to involve them all in the life, mission, work, and witness of the Church. Currently it collaborates to expand the capacity for health ministries through the establishment of new medical schools in Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, and Rwanda, and dental schools in Argentina and Brazil. Ellen White says in reference to Joel’s prophecy: “In the closing scenes of this earth’s history, many . . . children and youth [who receive a true Christian education] will astonish people by their witness to the truth, . . .” (Joel 2: 28-29).[[7]](#footnote-9)

Every person is called by God to play a role in proclaiming the gospel. The question then, for all of us, is what is my purpose; what role am I created and gifted to play? In their devotional series for discovering and leaving a legacy, Gordon, Britton, and Page define purpose as what you can do to make an impact on others in your sphere. They link it to a sense of calling and investment in a cause. They show that when you realize your calling you have a sense of being “made for this!” Your cause, they say, is a situation that moves you to do something about it. Their work highlights the importance of linking mission and meaning as revealed by God. They delineate their top five questions to help you determine your purpose:

1. What does the world need?
2. What am I made to do to help fill this need?
3. What can I do to make a difference and leave a positive mark?
4. What breaks my heart?
5. What’s at risk if I don’t do what I am called to do?[[8]](#footnote-10)

They say: Your purpose is ultimately something that (1) frees you, (2) challenges you, (3) inspires you, and (4) gives you a sense of mission and meaning; and it establishes your legacy.

Nehemiah’s story is an illustration of this. Nehemiah was serving in his position comfortably, faithfully, and successfully when God called him for a new leadership assignment, to rebuild the wall at Jerusalem. He was challenged and inspired by this cause. This cause gave him a sense of mission and meaning and ultimately shook him free from his current position. He could no longer enjoy the security of his current life. He was called to return to broken down, dysfunctional Jerusalem. Then the challenge got worse.

* He had to develop his own resources for the work.
* He had to call all of God’s lethargic people into involvement in the work.
* He had to withstand sharp criticism and intimidating opposition to the work.

We are studying how the Holy Spirit operates in the lives of individuals and the Church. A few weeks back we looked at “The Holy Spirt and the Sanctuary.” There are many corresponding lessons in that study for us today.

* The leaders were called by God and gifted by the Holy Spirit for specific work.
* All the people were called to participate in some way in building the sanctuary.
* The building work was precisely outlined and directed by the Holy Spirit.

That same Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writers of Scripture and who inspired the building of the sanctuary also directed Nehemiah in rebuilding the wall at Jerusalem. I would say that this wall represents for us today that collection of building block characteristics that distinguish the SDA Church. Walls are richly illustrative.

* Walls define territory; although there is typically space and latitude within, they set apart a given territory; they give identity and definition to a community.
* Walls signal to those on the outside that these people are a particular, set-apart community, that they are united in cause, interdependent—supportive of each other, defending each other, and nurturing each other.
* Walls require that, although all people cannot do the same thing, all must do something to contribute to the community and its reason for existence.
* Walls provide safety and protection for those inside their realm.
* Walls are a visible, constant defense against external perils. They protect those inside from assaults from the outside while also protect them from wandering ignorantly and carelessly into dangers of the outside.
* Walls with doors signal refuge and invite in outsiders who need this safe, supportive, community and what it offers.

Church leaders are Nehemiahs on the symbolic walls of the Church. Leaders must ensure that every member of the community, identifies his/her spiritual gifts and his/her call from God. Leaders support all in fulfilling their purpose and engaging in their cause in ministry and service.

Ellen White says in My Life Today, regarding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, of Joel 2:28, 29—and thereby Acts 2: 17-18, “We are living in the last days, in a time when we may expect much from the Lord. These words should bring us to the throne of grace to claim great things of Him. . . . on the men and women and on our sons and daughters the Holy Spirit is to come; . . . Heaven is full of blessings, and it is our privilege to claim the rich promises of God for our individual selves. We need to seek the Lord day and night that we may know just what steps to take and just what we ought to do.”[[9]](#footnote-11)

Appeal

Paul declared we are to be God’s helping hand (1 Corinthians 3:9). “In God’s great plan for the redemption of a lost race, He has placed Himself under the necessity of using human agencies as His helping hand. He must have a helping hand, in order to reach humanity. He must have the cooperation of those who will be active, quick to see opportunities, quick to discern what must be done for their fellow men.”[[10]](#footnote-12)

We are to do all we can to strengthen our abilities in our spiritual gifts. “God is pleased to have us become more and still more efficient colaborers with Him. . . . To every man He has given an appointed work, according to their several ability.”[[11]](#footnote-13) “Our powers are to be regarded as sacred trusts, to be used to the glory of God and the good of our fellow men.” (Manuscript 6, 1902).[[12]](#footnote-14)

Ellen White said in The Signs of the Times, August 21, 1901, “The church is to work actively as an organized body . . . unselfishly to give the truth to those nigh and afar off . . . Laborers together with God; . . . God’s husbandry, . . . God’s building.”[[13]](#footnote-15) “Shall those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of the truth become narrow in their plans.”[[14]](#footnote-16) “In every land and in every community there are many opportunities for helpful service.”[[15]](#footnote-17)

With these opportunities for service there will come the empowerment to carry out the service. In Acts 2 we see that Peter calls on the prophecy of Joel 2, and claims its promises of the outpouring of God’s Spirit in the last days. Acts 2:4 emphasizes that all believers—not just the apostles—were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is poured out on all people, “signaling a theme at the heart of Acts: God will use all (vv. 17–18) to bring salvation to all” (v. 21) (see Eph. 4:11–16. 2:19 See Luke 21:25–26.)[[16]](#footnote-18) Under God’s control we can be certain that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (Matthew 24:14). We must all strive to do our part and to lead others to do their part.

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