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The Battle is the Lord's

Are you ready to fight for him?

by Paul Jordan

Who does God choose to send into battle for his name and for his people? The bravest, the strongest, the best trained, and the first in the bunch?



One of my favorite stories in the Bible – and the Bible is full of stories – is about how God chose to use someone whom no one else would have thought qualified. That person wasn't even a grown-up, just a teenager from a big family of the tribe of Judah in Israel. He was the youngest of a bunch of brothers and a couple of sisters. His name was David, and he knew God.

David appears in the Bible for the first time when the prophet Samuel is led by the Lord to anoint him as the future king (1 Samuel 16). He was probably only thirteen or so on the day when he was summoned home from the sheep fields to be anointed by this stranger, his bemused brothers looking on. But something happened to David on that day.

“Samuel anointed him and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.”

The spirit of the Lord came upon him? – God himself came to live in David in a powerful way.

A nation at war

The narrative then quickly moves to a battle scene (1 Samuel 17). Israel's King Saul is fighting – again. “King Saul and the men of Israel were gathered in line of battle against the Philistines.”

Israel? Battle? Philistines? Israel was God's chosen people. God chose Israel. To be chosen is to be loved. God loved Israel, his people. He wouldn't give up on them. His love is all about faithfulness.

Battle? Many of the stories of the Bible are about God's people fighting. Sometimes they fought for survival, but they also fought in order to take land and be established. They fought because God was commanding them and they fought to bring glory to his name.

People only fight for things if they're worth something. In fact, to fight for something is to declare its worth. It is to say, this king or this cause, this child or this friend, is worth fighting for. Or in other words, I am willing to suffer for this. Ask any winning athlete and they'll tell you. Great cost, but it was worth it.

Still today, we can see such battles all around us. Everything that costs us in building God's kingdom is part of the fight. Striving after holiness. Defending God's ways. Winning souls for God. It's a fight. These days it's "not against flesh and blood" but in those days the Philistines were the worst enemies of God's people and this battle would go down in the history books.

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This article is adapted from a presentation given at the "He is Alive" youth festival in Oudenaarde, Belgium.

Paul Jordan directs the work of [Kairos in Europe and the Middle East](#). He lives in Leuven, Belgium with his wife Noemi.

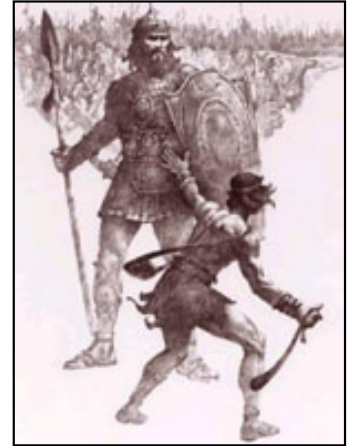
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The Battle is the Lord's, by Paul Jordan, continued



Goliath – a giant of a killer

Picture the drama. “The Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side.”

Enter Goliath. “There came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits...”

Six cubits?! Well, these days that’s about 8 feet, 10 inches (2.7 metres). A giant just walked on stage.

The narrator says, “He had a helmet of bronze ...and was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.”

He was armed to the hilt. Just his coat weighed about 100 pounds (45 kg)! Talk about Heavy Metal. So he’s big and he’s strong.

And then the giant begins his taunt: “He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, ‘Why have you come out to draw up for battle?’”

In other words “You really shouldn’t have bothered getting out of bed. I’m going to kill you.”

“Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I kill him, then you shall be our servants.”

Goliath lays down the challenge. In short: let’s save time, if one of your men can kill me, game over, you win. Of course, the odds are not worth betting on. Goliath has never lost.

Knees buckle

Now imagine the effect on God’s army. We’re looking for a volunteer. Everyone takes one step back. Not me – I just need 2 more months to finish my dissertation. Not me, I just got married! Not me, I need to build my career! Not me, I’m too young. Not me, I’m not good enough...

When I was younger we used to play soccer in the park. Noone ever wanted to go in goals. “I have a bad back. It’s not my position. I went in goals last year.” It’s remarkable how quickly young men develop excuses. You can bet there were a few on that day.

But then Goliath raises the stakes further, his outspoken pride unwittingly sealing his fate. "...I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together."

I defy! Another translation of the word is "blaspheme." Yes he is taunting Israel. To defy Israel, however, is to defy Israel's God. But make no mistake, it is no small thing to defy the living God.

So what happens as these words fall on the ears of the King? What happens as Israel hears these words? "When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid."

Guess what. They start to be afraid. Really afraid. Earlier in the same book it talks about the men of Israel fearfully hiding in caves. You can imagine them having a hard look at the map to the caves again. "For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening."

Day after day, no one even tried to fight. Deeply Afraid. Shrinking soldiers. Impotent Israel. No one will fight. Nothing can be done. There is no hope... Or is there?

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The Battle is the Lord's, by Paul Jordan, continued



And David heard him

Scene change. We're back in the sheep fields with the teenage shepherd, young David. David's three eldest brothers were at the battle. His father asks David to take the boys some food. "Take these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers."

David sets off and comes "to the encampment, as the army was going forth to the battle line, shouting the war cry." David went and "greeted his brothers. As he talked with them, behold, the champion ... Goliath... came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke the same words as before." Once again the giant begins his provoking, defying taunt.

Then four simple words: "And David heard him."

David didn't just hear him like you hear background music in a store. He heard him. He understood. He perceived that there was something significant going on here. It's the kind of hearing that normally happens in slow motion in movies. Young David's head slowly turning. His eyes meeting the giant's.

Who does he think he is?

"And David said to the men who stood by him, What shall be done? ... Who is this Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

You can hear the indignation rightly rising in David. What are we going to do about this? Who does he think he is? He is defying our God! We have to act, brothers. Why is nobody doing anything about this?!

"Eli'ab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, 'Why have you come down?'" Eliab was David's oldest brother. No.1 meets No. 8.

I actually grew up with six younger brothers so I'm no stranger to the clashes. But older brothers, like Eliab and I, can too easily douse the youthful fire. David's response to his 'big brother' is so human it's almost comical.

"What have I done now?" ... And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way." David won't stop. Eventually even King Saul hears about David.... "and he sent for him."

Give me a place in the battle

After a heated discussion in the royal war room, David says: "Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." In other words: "with all respect King Saul, send me to fight Goliath!"

Saul retorts, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.” You can’t do it David. Why? Well Saul gives a couple of reasons. Firstly, you’re too young. And secondly, he’s a pro. This guy Goliath has made a career from killing people and you don’t even know what a Gillette Mach III is!

Now Saul’s reasoning isn’t all that bad but he’s missing two crucial truths. Firstly, David has experience that Saul doesn’t know about – Saul underestimates David. But more significantly Saul misses the spiritual truth.

David answers, “Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.”

David believes that because Goliath has defied God, Goliath simply has no chance. The battle is the Lord’s. It’s not blind faith or youthful rashness, it’s truth-based courage.

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The Battle is the Lord's, by Paul Jordan, continued



Your clothes don't fit

“And Saul said to David, ‘Go, and the Lord be with you!’” So Saul agrees. Exasperated or exhorting? Hard to tell.

“Then Saul clothed David with his armor.” Maybe a sign of official commission? Maybe it made him look more impressive? Maybe Saul just wants to protect him? Maybe the boy is so hidden in the armour as to reduce the embarrassment factor for Saul? All we know is that it doesn't fit.

“David then said to Saul, ‘I cannot go with these; for I am not used to them.’” Perhaps Saul expects David to do things the way he would. But David is young and he's going to take an innovative approach. The goals remain, but the method looks different.

Instead “he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the brook.”

Showtime

Imagine the scene. The young boy appears on the battle field, the underdog gladiator on whom rests Israel's future. “He drew near to the Philistine.”

Much at stake. Hollywood can't match this moment.

Who knows if his brothers were aware of what was going on. Gasps. It's David. What's he doing? I can't believe you let him out of your sight. Dad's going to kill us... But this is David's day. He is on stage. And no one else can take his turn.

Approaching, Goliath sees him. “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks? Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air ...” You are not serious? Sending a little boy? A babe cannot win a war!

David boldly proclaims: “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head.”

Quite a speech. And then, the motor of his zeal, “...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.”

So that all the earth may know that God is alive! David declares his love. The fuel in David's heart is the Spirit of God. And his seemingly risky, selfless action is so that God can be known. And so it begins.

The battle is the Lord's

He runs at him. He doesn't even tentatively pick his steps like a predator about to pounce. He runs. "The battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand. ...David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine."

Interestingly, David doesn't say he will give you into my hand this time but our hand. Not only is he doing this so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, he is also doing this on behalf of his people. "David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground." A thud echoes in a stunned valley as six cubits of warrior hit the dust. Disbelief gives way to glory. What a day! What a victory!

David has taken his turn!

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The Spirit spreads

The giant is down and David quickly finishes the job. But now look what happens to the spectator peoples: “When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout ...” A few verses ago Israel was dismayed. Deeply afraid. But now Israel lets out a great shout. You can bet there was some dancing that night.

Since God lives, David lives and as David lives out his call, the people around him come to life.

Happy day

What a story. You would tell your children about it. And your children’s children. And your children’s children would tell their friends. “My Grandfather was there when David took out Goliath. The Philistines ran away that day!”

On that day David remembered the truth that God is alive. And it fired his hope. Whilst the people hid in their mental caves David rose to be fully alive.

On that day young David stepped out – even against popular opinion. Whilst many preferred to wallow in selfish fear, David carried the flag, confident in God.

On that day David took his place in the battle, he put himself on the line to bring glory to the name of the Lord.

Fast forward

The simple truth is that the Kingdom of God is built on the backs of men and women like David. With a hope that fires courage in the face of fear. Who take steps confident in the promises of the Lord. And who are, above all, ready to sacrifice for the sake of the glory of the Lord. For that is what it means to love him.

The story of David and Goliath ends with a brief interchange between David and the King: “And King Saul said to him, ‘Whose son are you, young man?’ And David answered, ‘I am the son of your servant Jesse from Bethlehem.’”

Israel had more battles to fight, but years later a baby would be born in Bethlehem who would win once and for all. An anointed shepherd king, a descendant of David, would be born. One who would battle “Goliath” with a cross and usher in a new age for the whole human race.

The battle is, and always was, the Lord’s.

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A Tribute to Steve Clark

- a father of the charismatic renewal and a founder of the Sword of the Spirit

This May Steve Clark completes his term of office as President of the [Sword of the Spirit](#). Steve has worked tirelessly for more than 40 years in laying the foundation for the covenant communities movement which began in the late 1960s. He was instrumental in establishing the first covenant community in 1970 and in establishing the [Sword of the Spirit](#) in 1982, an international community of communities, which currently number 75 communities worldwide. Steve is also the founder of the [Servants of the Word](#), a missionary brotherhood of men living single for the Lord in the Sword of the Spirit.

Steve Clark's book, [Building Christian Communities, Strategy for Renewing the Church](#), written in 1972, gave the principles for building renewal communities. The Sword of the Spirit today is a living testimony to Steve's labors and skills in laying a foundation that has weathered many storms and challenges. Last year some 265 coordinators and mission leaders gathered in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic for the [International Coordinators Meeting](#) (ICM) of the Sword of the Spirit. A highlight of the ICM was an honoring session for Steve Clark. Here are a few of the tributes and a brief biography.

Words of Tribute

- > [A Great Man of God](#), by Jean Barbara
- > [A Vision for Christian Community](#), a brief overview of Steve's life by Michael Shaughnessy
- > [A Founder and Spiritual Father](#), by Carlos Vargas
- > [Ecumenical Contribution](#), by Paul Dinolfo
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Words of Tribute to Steve Clark



Jean Barbara (left) and Steve Clark at the ICM in 2008

A Great Man of God

by Jean Barbara, President of the Sword of the Spirit

Jesus is our model because he set his face like flint in serving the mission that his Father had entrusted to him. I have the privilege of honoring one of Christ's disciples who also, some 40 years ago, set his face like flint to serve the Lord in the communities movement and the mission of the [Sword of the Spirit](#). (Years before that, he was already serving the Lord in the Cursillo Movement.) He is a man who, like the Apostle Paul, did not count his life of any value nor as precious to himself, if only he could accomplish his course and the ministry he received from the Lord.

Is Steve a great man of God? By all means. Many years ago the Vatican newspaper l'Osservatore Romano praised his books, giving a laudatory front-page review of his book, [Man and Woman in Christ](#). In the charismatic renewal he is a legend. Among many Evangelical and Free Church brethren, such as Charles Simpson, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, and more than one of the recent Presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, he is regarded as a peerless teacher. The whole first generation of Servants of the Word were personally taught and formed by Steve. All of us in the Sword of the Spirit have been directly or indirectly impacted by his wisdom, his teaching, his sincere love of the brethren. More importantly, those who know him well testify to the excellence of his character, the visible fruit of the Spirit in his life.

Has this great man of God always been the object of international praise and recognition? No: [during a time of crisis for the Sword of the Spirit in the early 1990s] he was sometimes vilified, insulted, and defamed — even by some of his closest friends and allies.

What was his response? He looked to the Lord, and then did not count his great gifts nor his due position — as one of the fathers of charismatic renewal and as the founder of the Sword of the Spirit — as something to be grasped, but rather emptied himself, doing nothing out of selfishness or conceit, counting others as better than himself. Humility is a virtue that is forged in fire, extreme fire, both within and without. Steve joyfully went through the fire. And the fruit of humility is not something to be enjoyed by the humble person, but rather by those around him. For a humble servant becomes the channel of the life and wisdom of God to those he serves.

Steve is also a man of patience, a man of long suffering, a gentle man of God. I have seen him deal patiently not only with less than perfect teachers and theology, but with brothers and sisters and situations, where the patience of many others would have been severely put to the test. Once again the fruit of patience is not primarily for the benefit of the patient man, but on others who through this gentleness experience grace, confidence and renewed faith. For every notable public accomplishment, there were scores of quiet conversations in which Steve encouraged the down-hearted, guided the perplexed, gently corrected the wayward, imparted vision and built up leaders and community members of all ages.

Steve is a man after God's heart. As I said before, there is a mystery in divine election, but I would add, in particular in God's appointment of a founder. A mystery, however, that reveals something of God's nature, of God's own heart. A man after God's heart is also a man who like his master does not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with justice and mercy deals with his brethren.

I once heard of a definition of three different types of leaders. The first is the one of whom the people say: he accomplished all these great things in our midst. The better leader is the one of whom people say: he and we accomplished all those great things. But the greatest of the three is the one of whom the people say: we accomplished all those great things.

So, I can gladly say to Steve on behalf of my fellow coordinators: all those great accomplishments in the Sword of the Spirit. "We did them!"

[Jean and his wife, Marie-Therese have four children: Victor, 22, who is serving as a gapper in Detroit; Nicole, 20, UCO leader in Lebanon; Peter, 19, a gapper in Belfast, and Philip, 8. Jean served as Senior Coordinator of the People of God, Lebanon, from 1990 until 2008 and currently is head of the Community Building Team for the European and Middle East Region and leads the Sword of the Spirit mission in the Middle East. He was President of the European and Middle East Region of the Sword of the Spirit from 1999 until 2005, and Moderator of Christ the King Association until 2002.]

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A Tribute to Steve Clark, continued



Steve Clark 1967

A Vision for Christian Community

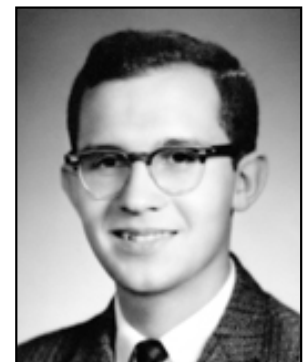
a brief overview of Stephen B. Clark's life in
the development of covenant community

by Michael Shaughnessy



Steve was born on June 1, 1940, in New York City. He attended Bellerose Public School on Long Island and then received a scholarship to attend Peddie Boys School in Hightstown, New Jersey. In 1958 Steve began his university studies at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, intending to major in history. It was there, in 1960, that he came to a more personal faith as he looked to ground his life in the truth. Reading about Christianity convinced his intellect, but two books about Francis of Assisi – *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis* and *The Mirror of Perfection* – were key in bringing him to a personal faith. In reading these books he saw that being a Christian involved a living, personal relationship with Jesus Christ: there was more to faith than intellectual assent. Like Francis, Steve quickly decided even more was needed. Francis of Assisi had made a decision to live as a radical disciple of Christ. This call to radical discipleship provided the vision for Steve to decide to live single for the Lord and to call others to serious personal discipleship.

While at Yale, Steve was also involved with the Morehouse Catholic Chaplaincy. He studied Catholicism in depth and decided to be baptized. When Steve presented himself for baptism, the priest quickly discovered there was no need to teach him the catechism – Steve had already studied it extensively. The Catholic chaplaincy at Yale had what they called a community, and it was, in part, this attempt at community that began to form the basis of Steve's vision for building a community of disciples on mission. He saw that those who were involved in Christian activities together grew in faith and



holiness, while those who only attended church on Sunday seemed to struggle with their faith and often left the Church during their college years.



After graduating from Yale in 1962, Steve spent a year studying philosophy and learning German on a Fulbright Scholarship at the University of Freiburg in Germany. In the autumn of 1963 he returned to the United States and began to pursue a doctorate at the University of Notre Dame, in South Bend, Indiana. There, he connected immediately with the Cursillo Movement, a retreat – based renewal movement he had previously encountered as a summer missionary in Latin America. Cursillo seemed like it might be a vehicle for forming mission communities with an evangelical focus. At that time Cursillo was only beginning in the United States and according to Cursillo's rules, Steve was still too young to attend or lead a retreat. Nonetheless, he attended one in East Chicago, Indiana. Two months later he helped put on the very first Cursillo retreat to be held in South Bend. In less than two years he was asked to give the opening address at the National Cursillo Convention in Kansas City and to serve on the National Secretariat in East Lansing. Steve and the other young leaders of Cursillo were also curious about the apparent spiritual power found in Pentecostalism. They decided to read *The Cross and the Switchblade* and *They Speak with Other Tongues*, and so were prepared by the Lord for what he was about to do in pouring out his Spirit anew.



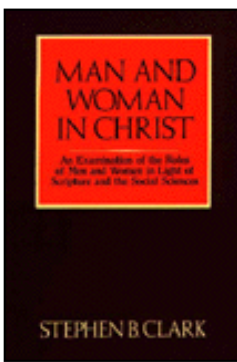
Early in 1967, the charismatic renewal erupted in the Catholic Church. Steve was among those first to be “baptized in the Holy Spirit.” He became one of the renewal's leading spokesmen and authors, writing *Baptized in the Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, *Finding New Life in the Spirit*, *Growing in Faith*, and *Knowing God's Will*.

In the autumn of 1967 Steve, together with Ralph Martin, Gerry Rauch, and Jim Cavnar, moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan where the University of Michigan was located. It was there that the first charismatic covenant community emerged. These four began a charismatic prayer meeting that met on Thursday night in an apartment above Campus Corner Drug Store with a dozen people attending. Within weeks, more than one hundred people were attending, so they moved the prayer meeting to the basement of St. Mary's Student Chapel. People began coming from all over the American Midwest, some driving four hours each way to learn more about the work of the Holy Spirit.

Soon a second weekly prayer meeting was started. Bruce Yocum, one of those involved in the beginnings of community, noted: “We wanted something more that could focus on our own relationships with one another in Ann Arbor. So we started a Monday night meeting in addition to the Thursday meeting. God began to lead us into something deeper. In the summer of 1969 we began to receive prophecies about “covenant”. We didn't understand this very well, so we started doing a Scripture study on “covenant” which led pretty quickly to the idea of Christian community. By the beginning of 1970, we were talking about establishing a community by making significant commitments to one another.

Among these commitments were those made by the men living single for the Lord as [Servants of the Word](#). Steve was founding a brotherhood of celibate men as part of his vision for building a bulwark of communities.”

From his time at the Morehouse Catholic Chaplaincy at Yale, to his involvement in



Cursillo, and during the early days of the charismatic renewal, Steve had been developing his thoughts and vision for Christian community. They provided the basis for the book *Building Christian Communities*. Soon, communities began springing up, not just in North America, but in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Lebanon.

Steve began writing *Man and Woman in Christ* in the 1970s at a time when feminism was front-page news. But this book is about much more than the roles of men and women. It also gives an assessment of the contemporary state of the Christian people as well as a vision for what it could be, and the means to make that vision a reality. Steve completed *Man and Woman in Christ* in 1980, and it was selected in 1981 by the evangelical magazine *Christianity Today* as one of the significant books of the year.



In his forty years of leadership in the communities movement, Steve has written more than twenty books and several hundred articles – and most importantly, he has taught and disciplined the main leaders of what is today the [Sword of the Spirit](#). It is his original vision for evangelistic communities that continues to form and shape that work today. Steve Clark's term as President of the Sword of the Spirit will end in May 2009. His leadership, we hope and pray, will continue many years thereafter.

[This article is adapted from a presentation given by Michael Shaughnessy at an honoring session for Steve Clark in May 2008 during the [International Coordinators Meeting](#) of the Sword of the Spirit in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Mike Shaughnessy is an elder in [The Servants of the Word](#) and the Director of [Kairos in North America](#). Kairos is an international federation of outreaches to high school, university and post university aged people.]

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A Tribute to Steve Clark, continued



A Founder and Spiritual Father

who transmitted spiritual life to new leaders of covenant communities

by Carlos Alonso Vargas

I came to know Steve Clark as someone who could detect people's leadership potential, and foster and promote that leadership. That's precisely what he did in my case – to foster my leadership gift and encourage me to exercise it. This is the same thing Steve has done with many, many people throughout several decades. He is able to transmit spiritual life to new leaders.

This is one of the reasons why I believe that Steve has a charisma not only as a founder but as a father. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:15, "Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel." I think this describes Steve's relationship to us in the Sword of the Spirit – we have perhaps had many leaders, many who have helped us to grow and to shape our communities. But the one who gave life to us as a community of communities, through a foundational charisma from the Holy Spirit, is Steve.

I personally consider that he has the spiritual stature of some of the founders of great movements in the history of the church such as Anthony of the Desert and Benedict of Nursia. In my view, Steve, as a founder and a teacher, has the stature of a church father. Perhaps only the future history of the church will be able to make an objective appraisal of Steve's spiritual weight, but I am proud to honor him, with no doubt whatsoever, as the father of the Sword of the Spirit, the father of covenant community, and, in fact, my spiritual father.

[Carlos Alonso Vargas has served in the past as President of the [Sword of the Spirit](#). He is a Coordinator of [Comunidad Arbol de Vida](#), in San Jose, Costa Rica.]

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A Tribute to Steve Clark, continued



A Pioneer of Ecumenical Covenant Communities

by Paul Dinolfo

As a Protestant in the Sword of the Spirit, I have found Steve's ecumenical credentials a great encouragement. Since his conversion to Christianity, Steve has combined a strong commitment to his own church, the Catholic Church, with an openness to Christians from other church communions. His openness to Pentecostals helped prepare the first Catholics to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. His commitment to the Catholic Church helped shape the Catholic charismatic renewal so that it did not become a divisive movement as it had in so many other church communions prior to 1965. Subsequently the Catholic charismatic renewal became a model for the charismatic renewal. I believe this contributed greatly to the subsequent success of the charismatic renewal movement.

As Christians from many different church communions began coming together in Ann Arbor, Steve recognized the hand of God and saw what was happening as an answer to the ecumenical vision of Vatican II. Steve embraced this grass roots, daily-life ecumenism and developed the theological and practical teaching to support it. He developed the main outlines of our understanding of cooperative ecumenism, convergent ecumenism, and our ecumenical approach. Steve pioneered the development of the first ecumenical covenant community. There are currently nine fully-developed ecumenical communities in the Sword of the Spirit. Steve has been directly involved in the formation of seven of them.

In this regard it is also important to note the ecumenical impact of all of Steve's teaching. It is always deeply grounded in Scripture. Steve has influenced the Sword of the Spirit so that our teaching is likewise grounded in Scripture. This makes the Sword of the Spirit accessible to Christians from all church communions.

[Paul Dinolfo is the Senior Coordinator Work of Christ Community Lansing, Michigan, USA.]

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A Tribute to Steve Clark, continued



Steve Clark's Generous Investment

as a mentor, father, and model for future generations of leaders

by Ande Kebe

For four decades, Steve has not only inspired men and women around him with his witness of a life radically set apart for the Lord, nor just equipped them through his wisdom, teaching, and vision to build community, but he has also continued to invest in young leaders by personally engaging them, helping them, and challenging them to grow in Christian maturity.

The greatest impact that Steve has had on the next generation of the [Sword of the Spirit](#) is by continuing to go to the front lines of youth work and help win young men to the life of mature Christian discipleship and leadership. Steve has inspired, trained, and equipped these young men to serve and to be strong leaders. But most fundamentally he has loved each one of them and helped them to follow God's will for their lives.

I speak for many young men around the Sword of the Spirit in saying that Steve's generous personal investment as a mentor to me and even more importantly, his fatherly love for me have had a tremendous impact on my desire to respond generously to the Lord's call to be a builder in the Sword of the Spirit and [Kairos](#). His investment in the leaders of our movement will bear tremendous fruit in the future generations around the world.

[Andy Kebe is a [Kairos](#) Mission Leader in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA.]

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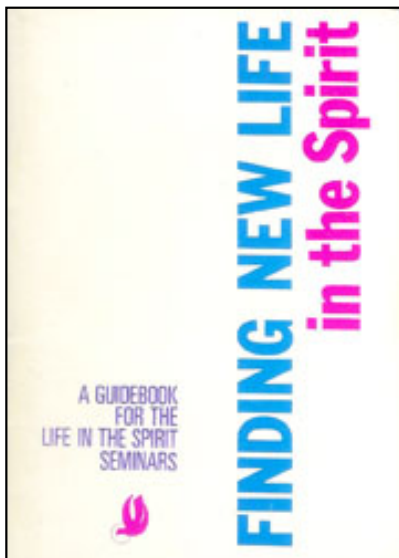
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A Selection of Books

by Stephen B. Clark

Stephen B. Clark has written more than twenty books and several hundred articles. Here is a selection of books in chronological order:

Baptized in the Spirit and Spiritual Gifts, 1969



Finding New Life in the Spirit

1972

From his time at the Morehouse Catholic Chaplaincy at Yale in the early 1960s, to his involvement in the Cursillo movement, and during the early days of the charismatic renewal, Steve Clark had been developing his thoughts and vision for Christian community. They provided the basis for the book [Building Christian Communities](#), published in 1972.

Quotes from Book Reviews

Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences, 1980

This book is both an intellectual *tour de force* and a practical handbook for Christian survival in the twilight years of the twentieth century. Faithful Christians will ignore it at their own peril. Those who would synthesize Christianity with women's lib will ignore it at the risk of losing their intellectual integrity.

Dale Vree

Editor, *New Oxford Review*

There can be no doubt about the vast learning of the author in almost every area of human knowledge. He seems to move freely and easily in several fields at the same time... As for the scriptural aspect of the book, it is only fair to say that the author displays professional competence at every point. As in all other sections of his work, here too his information is vast, solid, and accurate. His exegetical method is correct and is used properly.

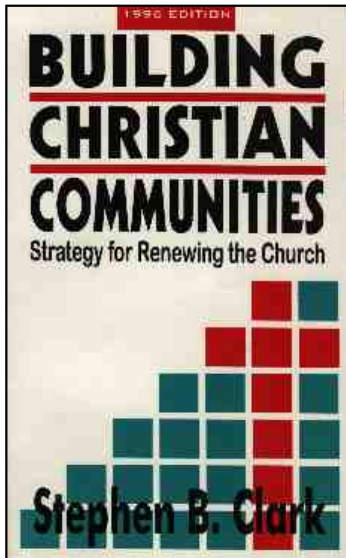
Manuel Miguens, O.F.M.
Professor of Sacred Scripture
S. John's University, New York

Redeemer: Understanding the Meaning of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Servant Publications, 1992

Stephen Clark's rich and fascinating exposition of the most magnificent of all biblical themes is an outstanding achievement. Deep learning, deep orthodoxy, and deep insight mark this book throughout. It is both a devotional and an ecumenical milestone.

J.I. Packer

Board of Governors' Professor of Theology at
Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia
Author, *Knowing God*

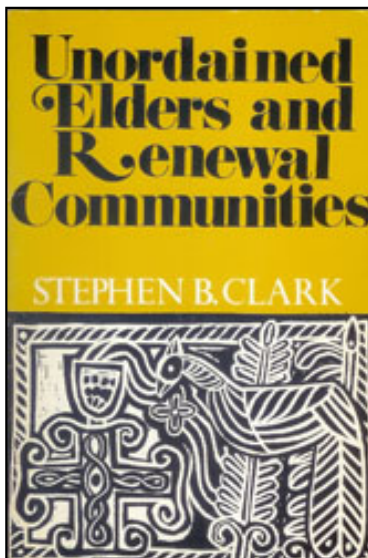


Building Christian Communities: Strategy for Renewing the Church

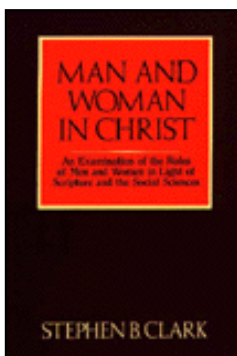
1972

Growing in Faith, 1974

Knowing God's Will, 1974



Unordained Elders and Renewal Communities, Paulist Press, 1976



Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences
Tabor House, 1980

Steve began writing [Man and Woman in Christ](#) in the 1970s at the time when feminism was front-page news, but this book is about much more than the roles of men and women. It also gives

Back when I was in graduate school at Wheaton College, I asked a well-known pastor for his definition of great Christian teaching and preaching. 'Two things,' he said, 'stay with the major themes of Scripture and talk about Jesus.' Stephen Clark in *Redeemer* has down both of these things marvelously well.

Peter Gillquist

Department of Missions and Evangelism
Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese

The quality which makes this book unique comes from a blend of compassionate common sense with strong faith. Stephen Clark is able to perceive what we often pass by in the Old or New Testament, and then he gives that ancient message vibrancy for today.

Carroll Stuhmueller, C.P.

Professor of Old Testament Studies
Catholic Theological Union

Catholics and the Eucharist: A Scriptural Introduction, 2000

Clark's approach to the subject, as indicated in the book's subtitle, is entirely scriptural. While any number of theologians have spoken of the "liturgy of the Sacrament" in the context of the "liturgy of the Word," this author goes much further into detail, carefully examining many biblical themes that lie at the heart of eucharistic theology, such as revelation, covenant, sacrifice, presence, resurrection, and worship. One may describe this work as a sort of "spelling out" of the implications of that Gospel scene of the two disciples walking with the Risen Jesus along the road to Emmaus. Countless passages of Holy Scripture are here interpreted through the light of the Christian Mystery, all of them coming to perfection when the Lord is known in the breaking of the Bread. For the richness and complexity of this treatment, nonetheless, Clark's book is a masterpiece of pedagogical simplicity. I can easily recommend it to high-school students.

The significance of Clark's achievement is

an assessment of the contemporary state of the Christian people as well as a vision for what it could be and the means to make it happen. Steve completed *Man and Woman in Christ* in 1980, and it was selected by Christianity Today as one of the significant books of the year in 1981.

Redeemer: Understanding the Meaning of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Servant Publications, 1992

Catholics and the Eucharist: A Scriptural Introduction, Servant Publications, 2000

Charismatic Spirituality: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Scripture and Practice, 2004

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perhaps more obvious if one contrasts his approach with the treatment of the Bible and the Eucharist in Roman Catholic theology that was standard for centuries, not only in the pre-Vatican II theological manuals used in seminaries, but even in such monumental works as St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. In all these examples of systematic theology, Holy Scripture was treated near the beginning, under the heading "Revelation," whereas the Eucharist usually appeared only toward the end, in a section called "Sacraments." Thus, although the Bible and the Eucharist were sometimes juxtaposed in ascetical works, such as Book IV of *The Imitation of Christ*, they were rarely studied together in courses of systematic theology. One may hope that Clark's book, which bridges this unfortunate divide, thereby points to an interpretive path that other writers will feel disposed to follow.

With respect to style, Clark's treatment of these biblical themes is supremely meditative, a feature that renders the book useful for *lectio divina*. He has obviously spent many prayerful hours being nourished by the pages of Holy Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, and his work provides living models for how it may be done. Indeed, each chapter ends with an explicit biblical meditation.

Patrick Henry Reardon
Senior Editor, *Touchstone Magazine*
[See [full review](#)]

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A Tribute to Steve Clark, continued



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- [Building a Christian Society - Part I](#)
- [Building a Christian Society - Part II](#)

- [The Life of a Disciple](#): a commentary on the beatitudes
- [If Anyone Would Come After Me](#): the cost of discipleship
- [Our Mind Matters](#): Doctrine has significance because Christianity is based on the truth

- [The Written Word of God](#): Do you read the Word of God as if your life depended upon it?
- [Scripture: Taking the Word to Heart](#)

- [The Obedient Son](#): the humility of the Son of the King
- [The Redeemer Who Died](#)
- [Christ's Humility and Victory](#)
- [Dying to Defeat Death](#): The death of Jesus was a victory over death itself

- [The Real Meaning of Christmas](#): what the Incarnation means for us

- [The Grace of Pentecost](#): What does Pentecost mean for us today?
- [Gifts and Graces](#): Part I - The Breath of God
- [Gifts and Graces We Can Expect](#): Part II
- [Gifts and Graces for All](#): Part III, the gifts of the Spirit in Isaiah 11:1-5

- [Emotions: Resources for the Christial Life](#)
- [Do Christians Have Enemies?](#) Our Lord's kingship is not of this world. Neither are his enemies

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God Is In Control

by Jon Wilson

Current events these days are reminding us that we live in a very unstable world. From financial markets to corporate woes, from insurgents and militias to political unrest, the headlines come fast and furious. With even moderate exposure to the media, it is easy for Christians to get swept along in the tide of the daily news, without really processing it in a Christian way.

How can we bring a redeemed perspective to the upheaval in the world today, both for ourselves and for others who need to hear the Gospel?

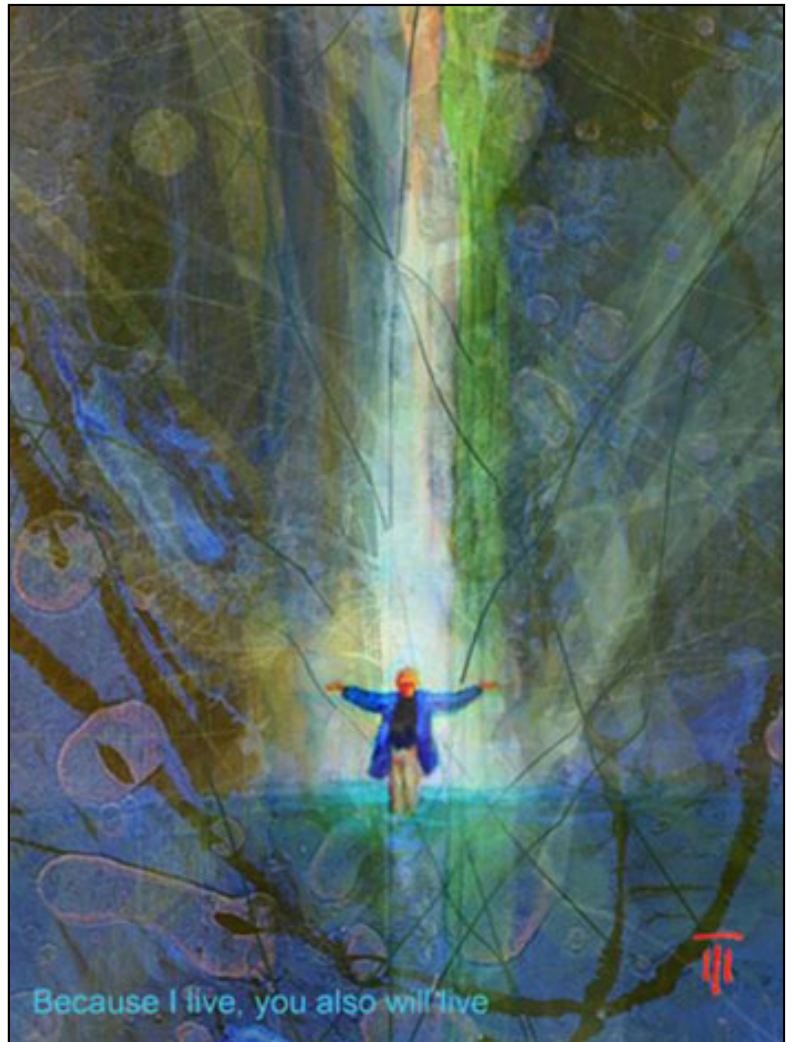


Illustration by Jamie Treadwell

To begin with, let's look at someone in the Bible who was in the midst of trying circumstances. In Psalm 11, the writer shows us how he responds to crises in his life. He begins with his bottom line: "In the Lord I take refuge." He goes on to quote those who are urging him to panic:

How then can you say to me:
 "Flee like a bird to your mountain.
 For look, the wicked bend their bows;
 they set their arrows against the strings
 to shoot from the shadows
 at the upright in heart.
 When the foundations are being destroyed,
 what can the righteous do?"

Don't we hear these voices in the media? The frantic tone, the call to panic, the claim that the troubles of the day are unprecedented. In the face of this voice, I find myself oscillating between two responses: "Man, I've got to do something!" and "All hope is lost!"

So what is the psalmist's response?

The Lord is in his holy temple;
the Lord is on his heavenly throne.
He observes the sons of men;
his eyes examine them.
The Lord examines the righteous,
but the wicked and those who love violence
his soul hates.
On the wicked he will rain
fiery coals and burning sulfur;
a scorching wind will be their lot.
For the Lord is righteous,
he loves justice;
upright men will see his face.

The psalmist's response is that, fundamentally, the Lord is in control of what is going on in the world. God is not on the defensive, reacting to world events. The image of God being in the temple, being on the throne, communicates power, authority, rule. The world is his, and he is directing events to accomplish his own purposes in the world. So how does God want us to respond to crises around us? Verse 1 shows us the posture we should take: "In the Lord I take refuge."

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[Jon Wilson is a coordinator of [Word of Life](#), a member community of the Sword of the Spirit. He and his wife, Melody and their four children live in Ypsilanti, Michigan, USA.]

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God Is In Control by Jon Wilson, continued

There is a way in which we can assent to the notion of God being in control of even chaotic circumstances around us, yet find ourselves in doubt regarding another, more personal, question: Does God care about me? Or put another way: What is going to happen to me and my family? In the Sermon on the Mount, in the context of encouraging us to have a single-hearted focus on the Lord, to not have our allegiance divided between our obedience to God and our obedience to the things of the world, Jesus speaks to this question:

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" (Matthew 6:25-27)

The point here isn't that you should practice some sort of mind over matter, and not worry just because it's better to live 'worry free'. The point is, we don't need to worry. It is unnecessary.

I have a special knack for worrying. In fact, it goes back several generations in my family. My mother likes to tell about my grandma, who would regularly call my mother, relate some situation that was on her mind, and then ask, "Do you think I should worry?" Like it's some sort of task or burden that we can choose to take up, if we are convinced that it is our duty. It's worth a smile, but I think it's this type of thinking that Jesus is addressing. He is freeing us from this burden, this duty. He cares for me, for you, he has everything under control, and we can be free from worry, like the birds of the air.

I find it helpful to think about God's love through analogy. My family has recently taken in a couple pet birds. Here are these beautiful, fragile, little creatures, completely dependent on us for their sustenance. Our hearts are tender toward them, and we wouldn't dream of just neglecting their needs. For their part, they sing, play, fly, and eat, happy as, well, larks. Or I think of my children: do I want my kids concerned about where their next meal is going to come from? Even if I was down to my last dollar, I would want to protect them from worry, to make them feel secure and cared for. If this is the way I care for my children and my pets, how much more does God care for me?

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God Is In Control by Jon Wilson, continued

There are, of course, hard questions here. Is it God who is making evil happen in the world? Is he just allowing evil? Why do innocent people have to suffer? There are no easy answers. It does seem clear, though, that God is not asking for an unexamined assent to his rule, nor should we ignore these issues and set ourselves up for disaster when we come face to face with them in our own lives. At the same time, we need to learn to live with the tension and ambiguity that comes from having finite understanding. We have to hold firmly to the knowledge that our God is a good God, one who hates evil, and who will right every wrong and dry every tear in the consummation of his kingdom.

Which leaves us, I suppose, with one final question: Why the hard times? Here's where the rubber hits the road. If we say that God is in control of difficult times, and that he is using them to accomplish his purposes, are we also willing to say in the same breath that he is good and he loves us? Can we trust that his judgments are merciful? The passage 1 Peter 5:7-10 implies that our anxiety is linked to pride, and that a proper humility before the Lord will be coupled with peace and trust.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. . . . And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

When we see ourselves as in control of our own lives, a form of pride, we are more prone to worry and anxiety. God wants to humble us, to show us our place before him. But he is doing this so that we can be peaceful and content, relying on him, the true source of our provision. Reminding us that he is in control in the midst of a chaotic, unstable world is one way that he can bring us peace and contentment. So even in the midst of our busy lives, in which we do our utmost to fulfill our calling as God's children, he wants us to trust him, be at peace, and be still before him.

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"Home"

by *Natasha McCastle*

I collapse on my twin-size bed in a new room, with boxes to be unpacked all around me. My family had to move – again! We were recently evicted yet from another home due to financial shortcomings. This has been my reality for the past five years.

My name is Natasha McCastle and I'm a native of Detroit, Michigan. Like many growing up around me, I was raised by a single mother and often this was a struggle. But looking over my short eighteen years of life, I can easily see where God has protected and blessed me.



The first way I knew that God was at work in my life was through the elementary and middle school I attended. I went to Cornerstone Schools, a private institution with tuition reasonable enough for most middle class families to handle. However, these tuition payments should have been impossible for my mother, who had three children attending at the same time, but God somehow saw us through with the support and help of friends. Cornerstone offers a Christ-centered education, and while at the school, I was provided a basic understanding of God. Through Cornerstone I was also introduced to [YouthWorks-Detroit](#) – an organization and people who have greatly impacted my spiritual walk. It was during my eighth grade year at Cornerstone that I experienced losing a home for the first time. After this tragic event, I went into a state of shock and anxiety over my family's financial situation. I began to be stressed over the lack of income and other things I had no control over. During this time, I had no real relationship with God.

Once I entered high school, my housing situation became even less stable. In my 10th grade year, I moved a total of three times. No matter how many different homes we moved to, I never felt like any of them was my home. During this difficult time I was again introduced to YouthWorks-Detroit through the Gospel Lords youth group. In the beginning, it was just a time during the week where I could put all my stress aside and hang out with my friends, but it soon became much more to me. Because I was a member of the Gospel Lords, I was able to attend the Youth Equipped to Stand (YES!) retreat.

God again stepped powerfully into my life at this retreat. At the YES! Retreat, for the first time ever, I was able to interact with youth who had a personal relationship with God. They had a *real home*! Not the physical building – I'm almost sure they all had that – but a spiritual home. A place that didn't charge rent, would not evict you, and would always be there. I wanted to be like them – to have a *true home*. While at the retreat, I was prayed with and I asked God to give me his Holy Spirit.

Following the retreat, I experienced an overhaul of emotions. I no longer feel anxiety over things that I cannot control, because I have given all of my problems to God. My faith in God and understanding of him have grown. I have made my home in him, and he is my stable shelter.

“[The Lord will provide] a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.” – Isaiah 4:6

Natasha McCastle is currently a senior at Martin Luther King, Jr. high school in Detroit, Michigan, USA. In the fall of next year she will attend Michigan State University to major in finance. Natasha has served this year as a volunteer staff worker for [Youth Works-Detroit](#), helping to run the Bezalel Project after-school program, and serving as a leader in the youth group. After receiving her tax certification this year, she also assisted a number of young people from the summer Street Team program by teaching them how to do their taxes. Her career goal is to become a financial analyst and her lifetime goal to create and operate a non-profit financial literacy program for youth within the city of Detroit.

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Quotes From Early Church Fathers on Pentecost



The Glory of the Holy Spirit

from Gregory of Nyssa's commentary on the Song of Songs

When love has entirely cast out fear, and fear has been transformed into love, then the unity brought us by our savior will be fully realized, for all men will be united with one another through their union with the one supreme Good. They will possess the perfection ascribed to the dove, according to our interpretation of the text: One alone is my dove, my perfect one. She is the only child of her mother, her chosen one.

Our Lord's words in the gospel bring out the meaning of this text more clearly. After having conferred all power on his disciples by his blessing, he obtained many other gifts for them by his prayer to the Father. Among these was included the greatest gift of all, which was that they were no longer to be divided in their judgment of what was right and good, for they were all to be united to the one supreme Good. As the Apostle says, they were to be bound together with the bonds of peace in the unity that comes from the Holy Spirit. They were to be made one body and one spirit by the one hope to which they were all called. We shall do better, however, to quote the sacred words of the gospel itself. I pray, the Lord says, that they all may be one; that as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, so they also may be one in us.

Now the bond that creates this unity is glory. That the Holy Spirit is called glory no one can deny if he thinks carefully about the Lord's words: The glory you gave to me, I have given to them. In fact, he gave this glory to his disciples when he said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit. Although he had always possessed it, even before the world existed, he himself received this glory when he put on human nature. Then, when his human nature had been glorified by the Spirit, the glory of the Spirit was passed on to all his kin, beginning with his disciples. This is why he said: The glory you gave to me, I have given to them, so that they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, I want them to be perfectly one.

Whoever has grown from infancy to manhood and attained to spiritual maturity possesses the mastery over

his passions and the purity that makes it possible for him to receive the glory of the Spirit. He is that perfect dove upon whom the eyes of the bridegroom rest when he says: One alone is my dove, my perfect one.



Gregory of Nyssa was born in Caesarea, the capital of Cappadocia (in present day Turkey) around 335 AD. He came from a large Christian family – four brothers and five sisters. Gregory became a professional orator like his father, married, and settled down to the life of a Christian layman. Basil, his eldest brother who became a bishop (who earned the title "Basil the Great"), and his friend Gregory of Nazianzus persuaded him to dedicate his life to the work of the gospel and the defense of the Christian faith. Gregory became a married priest around 362 and was later ordained as a bishop. Along with Basil and fellow-Cappadocian Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329-391), Gregory of Nyssa forms the third of a trio of Christian thinkers, collectively known as the Cappadocians, who established the main lines of orthodoxy in the Christian East.

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Pentecost - painting by El Greco, 17th century

Pentecost and the Sending of the Holy Spirit

by Irenaeus of Lyons

When the Lord told his disciples to go and teach all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, he conferred on them the power of giving men new life in God.

He had promised through the prophets that in these last days he would pour out his Spirit on his servants and handmaids, and that they would prophesy. So when the Son of God became the Son of Man, the Spirit also descended upon him, becoming accustomed in this way to dwelling with the human race, to living in men and to inhabiting God's creation. The Spirit accomplished the Father's will in men who had grown old in sin, and gave them new life in Christ.

Luke says that the Spirit came down on the disciples at Pentecost, after the Lord's ascension, with power to open the gates of life to all nations and to make known to them the new covenant. So it was that men of every language joined in singing one song of praise to God, and scattered tribes, restored to unity by the Spirit, were offered to the Father as the first-fruits of all the nations.

This was why the Lord had promised to send the Advocate: he was to prepare us as an offering to God. Like dry flour, which cannot become one lump of dough, one loaf of bread, without moisture, we who are many could not become one in Christ Jesus without the water that comes down from heaven. And like parched ground, which yields no harvest unless it receives moisture, we who were once like a waterless tree could

never have lived and borne fruit without this abundant rainfall from above. Through the baptism that liberates us from change and decay we have become one in body; through the Spirit we have become one in soul.

The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of God came down upon the Lord, and the Lord in turn gave this Spirit to his Church, sending the Advocate from heaven into all the world into which, according to his own words, the devil too had been cast down like lightning.

If we are not to be scorched and made unfruitful, we need the dew of God. Since we have our accuser, we need an advocate as well. And so the Lord in his pity for man, who had fallen into the hands of brigands, having himself bound up his wounds and left for his care two coins bearing the royal image, entrusted him to the Holy Spirit. Now, through the Spirit, the image and inscription of the Father and the Son have been given to us, and it is our duty to use the coin committed to our charge and make it yield a rich profit for the Lord.



Irenaeus was an important second century church father (130-200 AD). He was born in Smyrna in Asia Minor, where he studied under bishop Polycarp, who in turn had been a disciple of John the Apostle. He studied in Rome under Justin Martyr. Around 178 AD he was made bishop of Lyons in Southern Gaul. In contrast to Justin - whose writings he used and respected - Irenaeus rejected the philosophical approach to Christianity, which for him "rested on revelation, tradition, and on the power of the Holy Spirit." He did not entirely abandon philosophy and many of his works are indebted to it. He saw his main ministry in refuting the heresy of the Gnostic teachers.

Irenaeus is the first great theologian of the early church. His major work, *Against Heresies*, written around 180 AD, was a refutation of Gnostic errors. He exposed the absurdities of the Gnostic cults of the day and included a strong presentation and defense of orthodox belief. His work is the earliest compendium of Christian theology surviving from ancient times and is the first work that cites virtually every book of the Christian writings that we now call the New Testament.

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The Anointing with the Holy Spirit

**from the Catecheses
of Cyril of Jerusalem**

When we were baptized into Christ and clothed ourselves in him, we were transformed into the likeness of the Son of God. Having destined us to be his adopted sons, God gave us a likeness to Christ in his glory, and living as we do in communion with Christ, God's anointed, we ourselves are rightly called "the anointed ones". When he said: Do not touch my anointed ones, God was speaking of us.



We became "the anointed ones" when we received the sign of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, everything took place in us by means of images, because we ourselves are images of Christ. Christ bathed in the river Jordan, imparting to its waters the fragrance of his divinity, and when he came up from them the Holy Spirit descended upon him, like resting upon like. So we also, after coming up from the sacred waters of baptism, were anointed with chrism, which signifies the Holy Spirit, by whom Christ was anointed and of whom blessed Isaiah prophesied in the name of the Lord: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor.

Christ's anointing was not by human hands, nor was it with ordinary oil. On the contrary, having destined him to be the Savior of the whole world, the Father himself anointed him with the Holy Spirit. The words of Peter bear witness to this: Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit. And David the prophet proclaimed: Your throne, O God, shall endure for ever; your royal sceptre is a sceptre of justice. You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above all your fellows.

The oil of gladness with which Christ was anointed was a spiritual oil; it was in fact the Holy Spirit himself, who is called the oil of gladness because he is the source of spiritual joy. But we too have been anointed with oil, and by this anointing we have entered into fellowship with Christ and have received a share in his life. Beware of thinking that this holy oil is simply ordinary oil and nothing else. After the invocation of the Spirit it is no longer ordinary oil but the gift of Christ, and by the presence of his divinity it becomes the instrument through which we receive the Holy Spirit. While symbolically, on our foreheads and senses, our bodies are

anointed with this oil that we see, our souls are sanctified by the holy and life-giving Spirit.



Cyril was born in Jerusalem around 315 AD. He was ordained deacon, then presbyter, and then bishop of Jerusalem around 349. During a time of great division in the church, between the Council of Nicea in 325 and the Council of Constantinople in 381, Cyril labored to reconcile the disputes between church leaders. He was exiled from his bishopric three times, for a total of sixteen years, for his bold proclamation of faith in Christ's full divinity during a time when many bishops and emperors favored various forms of the Arian heresy. In 381 he attended the Council of Constantinople and voted in favor of the formula which completed the Creed often known as the Nicene Creed. He died around 386.

Cyril is author of the *Catecheses*, or *Catechetical Lectures* on the Christian faith – a series of eighteen lectures delivered during Lent to those about to be baptized at Easter, and then a series of five lectures on the sacraments which were delivered after Easter to the newly baptized.

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[Easter Tree of Life](#) - painting by Jamie Treadwell

The Spirit Restores Paradise to Us

by Basil the Great

“The Spirit restores paradise to us and the way to heaven and adoption as children of God; he instills confidence that we may call God truly Father and grants us the grace of Christ to be children of the light and to enjoy eternal glory. In a word, he bestows the fullness of blessings in this world and the next; for we may contemplate now in the mirror of faith the promised things we shall someday enjoy.

If this is the foretaste, what must the reality be? If these are the first fruits, what must be the harvest?”



Basil of Caesarea, also known as Basil the Great, was born in Cappadocia (now present day Turkey) in 330 AD. He studied at Constantinople and then at Athens (351-356) where two of his classmates were Gregory of Nazianzus (who became a close friend) and the future Emperor Julian the Apostate. Basil wanted to be a lawyer and orator, but his sister Macrina persuaded him to seek the monastic life instead. After making a tour of the monasteries of Egypt in 357, he founded a monastic settlement near his home where he lived for five years. Basil established guidelines for monastic life which focus on community life, liturgical prayer, and manual labor. Basil expressed a preference for the communal life of the monastery over the solitary life of the hermit, arguing that the Christian life of mutual love and service is communal

by its nature. His Rules became the standard for monastic life in the East. Together with Pachomius he is remembered as a father of communal monasticism in Eastern Christianity.

Basil returned to public life at the call of his bishop, Eusebius of Caesarea, to join in the battle against Arianism. He was ordained priest and then succeeded Eusebius as bishop in 370 AD. In addition to his work as a theologian and defender of the faith, Basil was known for his care of the poor and underprivileged. In 367-8, when Cappadocia suffered a severe and widespread famine, Basil sold his family's extensive land holdings in order to buy food for the starving, persuading many others to follow his example, and putting on an apron to work in the soup kitchen himself. In this crisis, he refused to allow any distinction to be made between Jew and Christian, saying that the digestive systems of the two are indistinguishable. He also built a hospital for the care of the sick, housing for the poor, and a hospice for travelers.

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Spring-time in the White Mountains of Vermont - by Don Schwager

The River Flows

song and music by Ed Conlin


From the throne of God and from the Lamb the river flows.
Life redeeming, ever healing, age to age it goes.
No more sun, the Holy One – our light that ever shines.
Crystal clear, the river here, will swell our hearts to join the cry!

Awake, O sleeper, rise to life, and Christ will give you light!
Lift your head – behold the river.
He mounts his throne to shouts of praise; be opened heaven's gates.
Enter in, O King of Glory!

"Come!" the Spirit calls, and with the bride the Spirit cries:
"Souls that thirst can drink their fill of water without price.
Blest are those who wash their robes to gain the tree of life.
Face to face with endless grace, lift up your hearts to hear the cry!"

Awake, O sleeper, rise to life, and Christ will give you light!
 Lift your head – behold the river.
 He mounts his throne to shouts of praise; be opened heaven's gates.
 Enter in, O King of Glory!

O King of Glory!

Click  to listen to an MP3 audio clip of [The River Flows](#), written by Ed Conlin and sung by Oki Varona, John Hughes, and Ellen Karagoulis.

Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee" - St. Augustine of Hippo

Ed comments on his song ...

There is a space formed by the particular shape of our life. It is meant for God himself to indwell. This must be felt as a lack... and it comes about through daily circumstances. It may be caused by the cavern of a lonely heart, the ache of a lost one, the yearning that comes from "not yet being home." In truth we are to glory in this emptiness – for it is the price we pay for such an immense dignity. To wait in courage for God to fill our particular emptiness is one of the most profound of love's acts.

[The song *The River Flows* is included in a Music CD entitled, [In Spirit and Truth](#). The CD and sheet music can be ordered from [Tabor House](#).]



Ed Conlin is a member of the [Servants of the Word](#), a missionary brotherhood of men living single for the Lord. He lives in community in the inner city of Detroit, Michigan, USA, and works as a licensed substance abuse counselor and chaplain with the Capuchin Franciscan Ministries in Detroit.

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