

**Week of Prayer
for
Christian Unity 2024**

Sunday, January 21, 2024

Sunday, January 28, 2024

Two sermons by

Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.

Bethany
CHURCH

21 North Olive Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91801



A Brief Introduction to Mel & Patsy Robeck

Most of you have seen us around Bethany Church for as long as you have been attending. Patsy and I have been members of this congregation for about 43 years. Patsy served several terms on the Bethany Church Board, especially on the Missions Committee. Our four sons, Jason, John Mark, Peter, and Nathan grew up here. Most of you don't know me personally, largely because I am essentially an introvert. Most of you who do know me, know me as "Mel," and that Patsy is my wife, but very few of you know that my first name is actually Cecil. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. is my professional name but either name works on Google

Patsy and I have been married for nearly 55 years. We met when both of us were students at Bethany Bible College in Scotts Valley (Santa Cruz), California. When we graduated in 1970, I was licensed to preach, and following my graduation from Fuller Theological Seminary with the Master of Divinity degree in 1973, the Assemblies of God ordained me. I then began my PhD work in Church History and New Testament.

For 50 years, Patsy served as a registered nurse, and for 35 of those years, she worked in a range of positions at the Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena. Because the hospital had no formal chaplaincy program and they knew that Patsy was a Christian, hospital leadership asked Patsy to supervise the local pastors who came to pray for the sick. She also began and led an interreligious Bible study there. Patsy and the Chaplain from Arcadia Methodist Hospital got together, and wrote a proposal, which resulted in the hospital establishing a fulltime chaplaincy program.

From January 1973 through June 1974, I taught the New Testament and Advanced Greek at Southern California College, now Vanguard University, in Costa Mesa. I served as President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies in 1983-1984, and then edited its journal, *Pneuma*, for nine years. I served at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, for 48 years (1974-2022). For 18 years, I served as an administrator up to and including Associate Dean of the School of Theology. During 14 of those years, I also held an overlapping faculty position in which I taught courses in the New Testament and the Church History departments. Since 1992, I have been a Professor in Church History and Ecumenics and Special Assistant to the President for Ecumenical Relations.

For 40 years, I have represented Pentecostals in the Ecumenical Movement. I served as the President of the North American Academy of Ecumenists from 1998-2000. I have worked with the National Council of Churches, the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Secretaries of Christian World Communions, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and the Global Christian Forum. I recently co-edited the two-volume work, *The Church: Towards a Global Vision*.

I have visited or worked in 62 countries, 26 of them with Patsy. I have written two and edited or co-edited seven books, including the *Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*. I have written several hundred biblical, historical, and ecumenical articles. My work has been translated into Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Slovenian, and Spanish. I am currently completing a detailed three-volume study of the Azusa Street Mission (1906-1936).

Each of our lives is unique. When you read this, you will realize how unique my life has been. I grew up in a pastor's home, and it happened so early in my life, I have no memory of when I became a believer. I have always known Jesus. Shortly after I turned 21, the Lord called me to prepare for a teaching ministry.

Since that time, I have never had to apply for a job, and I never sought any of the global ecumenical opportunities. They have always come by invitation. I have simply asked the Lord to lead Patsy and me, relied upon His leading, walked through the doors He has opened, and sought to follow him faithfully.



Mel & Patsy Robeck简介

梅尔和帕齐·罗贝克简介

你们中的大多数人自从参加伯大尼教堂以来就在伯大尼教堂见过我们。帕齐和我成为这个会众的成员已经有大约 43 年了。帕齐曾在伯大尼教会董事会任职数届，特别是在宣教委员会。我们的四个儿子杰森、约翰·马克、彼得和内森在这里长大。你们中的大多数人都不认识我个人，很大程度上是因为我本质上是一个内向的人。大多数认识我的人都知道我叫“梅尔”，帕齐是我的妻子，但很少有人知道我的名字实际上是塞西尔。Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. 是我的专业名称，但任一名称均适用于 Google。

帕齐和我结婚已近 55 年。我们是在加州斯科茨谷（圣克鲁斯）伯大尼圣经学院就读时认识的。1970 年我们毕业时，我获得了传教资格，1973 年我从富勒神学院毕业并获得道学硕士学位后，神召会任命了我。然后我开始了教会历史和新约的博士学位工作。

Patsy 担任注册护士长达 50 年，其中 35 年在帕萨迪纳亨廷顿纪念医院担任过各种职务。由于医院没有正式的牧师计划，而且他们知道帕齐是基督徒，医院领导层要求帕齐监督前来为病人祈祷的当地牧师。她还在那里开始并领导了一项跨宗教圣经研究。帕齐和阿卡迪亚卫理公会医院的牧师聚在一起，写了一份提案，最终医院建立了全职牧师计划。

从 1973 年 1 月到 1974 年 6 月，我在位于科斯塔梅萨的南加州学院（现为先锋大学）教授新约和高级希腊语。1983 年至 1984 年，我担任五旬节研究学会主席，并编辑了该学会的期刊《Pneuma》长达九年之久。我在帕萨迪纳的富勒神学院服务了 48 年（1974 年至 2022 年）。18 年来，我一直担任神学院行政人员直至副院长。在其中的 14 年里，我还担任过重叠的教职，在新约和教会历史系教授课程。自 1992 年以来，我一直担任教会历史和普世主义教授以及普世关系主席的特别助理。

四十年来，我一直代表五旬节派参与普世运动。1998 年至 2000 年，我担任北美普世教会学会主席。我曾与全国基督教协进会、梵蒂冈促进基督徒合一主教团、世界归正会联合会、世界路德宗联合会、洛桑世界福音化委员会、世界基督教协进会（WCC）、基督教秘书会等机构合作。世界共融、美国天主教主教会议、洛杉矶总教区和全球基督教论坛。我最近与他人共同编辑了两卷本《教会：走向全球视野》。

我曾在 62 个国家访问或工作过，其中 26 个国家是与 Patsy 一起的。我写了两本书，并编辑或共同编辑了七本书，其中包括《剑桥五旬节主义指南》。我写了数百篇圣经、历史和普世主义文章。我的作品已被翻译成芬兰语、法语、德语、匈牙利语、意大利语、韩语、波兰语、罗马尼亚语、俄语、斯洛文尼亚语和西班牙语。我目前正在完成对阿苏萨街传教团（1906-1936）的详细三卷本研究。

我们每个人的生活都是独一无二的。当你读到这篇文章时，你会意识到我的生活是多么独特。我在牧师的家里长大，这件事发生在我生命的早期，我不记得我是什么时候成为信徒的。我一直都认识耶稣。我 21 岁后不久，主呼召我为教导事工做准备。从那时起，我就不再需要申请工作，也不再寻求任何合一的机会。他们总是应邀而来。我只是祈求主带领帕西和我，依靠他的带领，走进他所打开的门，并寻求忠实地跟随他。

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

Sunday, January 21, 2024

*You Shall Love the Lord Your God...
and Your Neighbor as Yourself.*

Luke 10:27

Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.

Introduction

Thousands of pastors around the world are preaching from this passage of Scripture today. This Sunday marks the middle of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Since I have worked in the field of Christian Unity for the past 40 years and the Assemblies of God seldom speaks about Christian unity, especially visible Christian unity, Pastor Dennis has invited me to speak to you on this important subject.

In this passage, Jesus was responding to a lawyer who had asked Him what he needed to do to receive eternal life. Jesus began by reciting the words of the *Shema* found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. The Hebrew word *shema* literally means “Hear,” or “Listen.” “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” God instructed Israel to recite this text every day. It often appears in Hebrew today etched on the front of synagogues and temples. I like to tell my students that according to Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus added to the *Shema*, that we are also to love the Lord our God with all our *minds* (Matthew 22:37). Loving God with all our minds involves a deep commitment to their studies.

Jesus called the *Shema* the greatest and first commandment, but He added a second one, which He says is like the first. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus went on to say that these two lines summarized the entire teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament. So, why did those who planned this year’s Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, choose this abbreviated text from Luke 10? First, it points to the command that we are to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, strength, and mind. For us to affirm this statement *together* is an act of unity. All Christians affirm their love for God. Second, God, who loves the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life (John 3:16) expects us also to love our neighbors as ourselves.

The term “neighbors” refers not only to those who live next door to us; it actually refers to everyone. In this week in which we offer prayers for the visible unity of all Christians, I wonder, “How often do we think of other Christians and other churches as the neighbors we are commanded to love?” If we are like most Christians, my guess is that we do not remember them as often as we should. I can tell you from long experience, people in all churches tend *not* to think of other churches as their “neighbors.” We tend to distance ourselves from them. They are *those* people. We tend to view them as not being *with us*, but as being something else.

Luke recorded an instance in which Jesus sent his disciples out to proclaim the Gospel. In Luke 9:49-50, they return, and John excitedly tells Jesus that he had come across someone he didn’t know and he had tried to stop the man from using Jesus’ name to cast out demons. Why did you do that? Jesus wanted to know. John explained, “He is not one of us.” Jesus then commanded John, “Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you, is for you.” All too often, we think about other Christians and their churches as not being one of us. We tend to look at them in the same way that John did; but today, Jesus calls us to love these people as neighbors, just as we love ourselves.

About thirty-five years ago, our pastor invited me to preach a sermon here at Bethany Church and to speak of my work with the Catholic Church. At the conclusion of the service, two men approached our pastor and asked that he return the money they had put into the offering. When he asked them why, they told him that they refused to support a church that allowed someone to suggest from the pulpit that the Catholic Church is a Christian Church. Catholics are not *with us*, they would say. The pastor did the right thing, I think, when he refunded their “offering.” Sadly, they had not given their “offering” to the Lord; they had given their “offering” to the church, expecting the church to support their ideology. I am happy to tell you that the Catholic Church actually stands *with us*. It is a Christian church, though I will likely need to explain that to some of us at a later date.

This story is not unique, nor is it a uniquely Pentecostal story. Thirty years ago this week, I was invited to preach the sermon for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service at St. Vibiana’s, the original Catholic Cathedral in downtown Los Angeles. Many church leaders in Southern California were present. The rain that afternoon was torrential! When we arrived at the Cathedral, there were a number of people picketing outside in raincoats and umbrellas. My heart sank. I thought that they might be anti-Catholic Pentecostals or even a group of Protestant Fundamentalists. As I tried to make a dash into the Cathedral between raindrops, one of them grabbed my arm and shoved some papers into my hand. I thanked him and ran inside. When I finally settled down, I took a quick look at the papers. To my surprise, the pickets were Catholics. The papers accused Archbishop Mahoney of desecrating the pulpit by allowing me to preach the sermon that day. The reason they gave was that *I was not one of them. I was a heretic!*

You see, these perceptions or attitudes of the other often run deeply in both directions, when we think of other churches. We perceive other Christians as not “with us” because they do not preach what we call the “full gospel!” They are not Pentecostals, or members of the Assemblies of God, and we are not “with them” because we are not Roman Catholics, or Baptist, or Presbyterian, or...the list continues. Yet this morning, Jesus calls us again, to love God, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. That includes everyone who we might judge as not being “with us.”

My Call to Ecumenism

The ministry to which God called me is to work for greater unity between Christians of all kinds. It is called ecumenism. The word *ecumenism* and words like *ecumenical* come from the Greek word *oikos*, “house,” and *oikumene* that refers to a *household*. When in Matthew 24:14 Jesus said, “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world,” Matthew used the Greek word *oicumene* for the household, which is *the whole world*. In 1 Timothy 3:15, the Apostle narrows its meaning when he refers to the “Household of God,” as *the Church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.*” The ministry to which the Lord has called me is to work with our “neighbors,” that is, other followers of Jesus. Jesus says that they are “for us,” fellow believers, even though they are not necessarily “with us,” that is, part of our church or our denomination. My call is to help the world to see that all who are part of the Church, with Jesus as our head, are part of the same household. Only when we recognize this truth can we speak to the world with a unified voice. God has reconciled us to Himself and to one another. God can do the same for you.

In the mid-1970s, I joined a relatively small group of Pentecostal scholars called the Society for Pentecostal Studies. In 1982, they unexpectedly elected me to serve as their President. I was deeply troubled by an argument that many of the members were having with each other over how we did our work of scholarship. I wanted to use my Presidential Address to speak to that division. I prayed about what to say, and I waited for nine months. I did not expect the answer that the Lord gave to me. I also did not expect to receive it in the way that I received it. It came in a vision.

In late August 1983, Jesus woke me in the middle of the night. He stood at the end of my bed and said, “Mel, I want you to speak about ecumenism.” “What? No!” I responded. “I can’t do that! I have no

ecumenical experience. I have never even read a book or taken a class on the subject.” And I went back to sleep. Later that night, He woke me again, still standing at the end of my bed, and once again, He said, “Mel, I want you to speak about ecumenism.” At that time, the Bylaws of Assemblies of God that governed ordained ministers stated,

The General Council of the Assemblies of God *disapproves* of ministers or churches participating in any of the modern ecumenical organizations on a local, national, or international level in such a manner as to promote the Ecumenical Movement, because....

What followed that statement were a number of others arguing that the Ecumenical Movement is, “not with us,” and it came with the threat that any minister who violated these Bylaws could be subject to discipline, and his or her ministerial credentials could be revoked. I think I asked, “Lord, have you ever read the Assemblies of God Bylaws? I cannot do what you are asking! It will get me into trouble with the Assemblies of God.” And I went back to sleep.

The Lord persisted, as he woke me a third time that night. He still stood at the end of my bed, and He repeated His request, “Mel, I want you to speak about ecumenism.” By this time the Lord had my full attention. Then I remembered that when I was six or seven years old, my Sunday School teacher said, “When the Lord asks you to do something, you must always obey Him. It doesn’t matter how hard it seems, you must do what He asks you to do.” I also thought that if I did not obey Him, I had no right to call myself His minister. In light of our Bylaws, just the idea of talking about ecumenism scared me, since it might appear that I supported the Ecumenical Movement. I wrestled with the idea before I agreed to do what the Lord was asking. I finally told the Lord that I would do it on one condition. “I *know* that I will get in trouble with the Assemblies of God if I do what you have asked me to do. All I ask is that you take care of me when that happens.” I went back to sleep, slept soundly, and woke in the morning refreshed, but utterly confused. How could I do what the Lord wanted? How did it answer my prayer to settle a dispute between several Pentecostal scholars. I did not really know where to begin.

When I went to my office and began working my way through my growing collection of books, articles, and tracts from the earliest sources of our Pentecostal Movement, I knew that searching for the word *ecumenism* would be fruitless, so I searched for two other things. First, I wondered what our Pentecostal forebears said about “Christian Unity.” Second, I wondered if they ever preached from John 17:20-23 in which Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers.

What I discovered amazed me! I had grown up hearing many anti-Catholic and anti-ecumenical sermons, however, that was not what I found in our earliest sources. Instead of the fear that the Assemblies of God currently expressed through its Bylaw, and our ignorance of what ecumenism was, I found our forebears full of hope about the future of visible Christian unity. Many preachers called for us to make greater effort towards visible Christian unity, and they frequently cited John 17 in support of this idea. Some even argued that the Pentecostal Movement was *the answer* to Jesus’ prayer, and that our revival would sweep over all the churches, showing the world that we were *One Household* reconciled to God and with each other.

In my address, I explained that we could not afford to fight among ourselves regardless of the issue. We were too few, and the need of our churches was too great. We scholars are here to serve the whole Church with our scholarship, I contended. We need to stand together and become a group of scholars that demonstrates to the whole Church what we Pentecostals have to offer to them. I went on to argue that we needed to be humble enough to recognize that we Pentecostals are not the whole Church. Other Christians and other churches have gifts to offer to us as well, and we might benefit by accepting those gifts from the rest of the Church.

When I gave my address, it received mixed reviews. Some of my colleagues embraced it immediately, while others were clearly upset by what I had said, arguing that we would gain nothing from ecumenical contact. You can imagine, then, how stunned I was, when I found out a month later, that a copy of my address had ended up on desks at the National Council of Churches in New York City, the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in Vatican City. Suddenly, I began to receive invitations from leaders in these ecumenical organizations to meet and to speak with them, which is exactly what I had worried about when I argued with the Lord! What should I do in light of my call and in light of our Bylaw?

I did the only thing I knew to do. As an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God, I called my District Superintendent, William Vickery. I told him of my vision and the purpose of my Presidential Address, and I told him what I understood regarding our Bylaw that governed ecumenical participation. I was very clear that I had done nothing to solicit these invitations; I had done only what the Lord had asked me to do. Brother Vickery told me that he thought there might be a way for me to accept some of these invitations since I was free to share my Pentecostal testimony with those who were inviting me. “I will call our General Superintendent and consult with him.” The next day, he called me back and told me that I had permission to proceed, though I had to follow a few basic rules. First, leaders do not like surprises; I must keep them informed. Second, I was always to ask for their approval in advance, to participate in any ecumenical activity. Third, I must always make clear that I am not an official representative of the Assemblies of God.

The National Council of Churches in the USA

As I completed my term as President of the Society for Pentecostals, the Society requested that I become the editor of their academic journal, *Pneuma*, the Greek word for “Spirit.” That gave me a platform from which to speak, and to seek new voices for the Society to hear. The Director of the Commission on Faith and Order for the National Council of Churches met and invited me to become a member of the Commission. After receiving the appropriate approvals, I worked with the Commission for the next 18 years, engaging in common prayer and worship, preaching to them on occasion, participating in theological discussions on “spiritual discernment” and on the “Church,” writing papers, and analyzing and commenting on National Council policy. I hosted a large consultation for the Faith and Order Commission at Fuller, the first time any Evangelical body had ever engaged with the National Council of Churches. Subsequently, the National Council invited me to address a meeting of their Governing Board, in Kansas City. I spoke to them, and I distributed a special issue of *Pneuma* to each delegate.

When I first began working with the National Council of Churches, the Director of Faith and Order invited me to be, one of four Christian leaders from different church families (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Pentecostal) to sign a “Welcome Letter” addressed to Pope John Paul II at the time of his first visit to the United States. I saw nothing wrong with signing such a letter, so I joined the papal welcome as a simple gesture of hospitality.

Once the Council published that welcome letter, however, I began to receive letters and telephone calls, many of them anonymous, criticizing and threatening me. A website titled “The Antichrist’s Family Photo Album,” even posted my picture online. Most contacts made it clear that they came from Assemblies of God ministers. A Fundamentalist named Jack Chick, known for his anti-Catholic cartoon booklets, published a paper titled *Battle Cry*, to which many of these Assemblies of God people subscribed. He published my name as representing the Assemblies of God and he urged his readers to do all they could to stop those of us who had signed the letter. If the Assemblies of God allowed me to do such things, he assured them, the Assemblies of God would soon welcome the Antichrist. Such a charge really shook me. As I thought about it further, however, I became convinced that ignorance and fear drove Jack Chick and these Assemblies of God pastors to act the way that they did.

The telephone calls took a toll on our family. When I traveled for the seminary across the US or when I was out of the country engaged in ecumenical work, our sons often answered the phone. One of our sons told a caller who identified himself only as an Assemblies of God minister, that if he would leave his name and number, I would be happy to return his call when I got home. The minister refused to give his name or number, but he told my son that he would contact our headquarters, and seek to have my ordination revoked. He was not alone! He then left my son with the message, "Tell your father that he is going to hell if he continues to do what he is doing."

I also received several letters, most of them anonymous. One of our Assemblies of God missionaries wrote to me to say that Catholics are not Christians. He informed me that I was naïve if I thought they were; that obviously, I did not know anything about the history of the Church (although that was my field of doctoral studies), and he capped it off by calling me "an enemy of the Church." The General Superintendent of Italy asked the Pentecostal World Fellowship to discipline me, and when they told him that they did not have the authority to do so, he resigned in protest from its leadership and banned me from contacting any Assembly of God church in Italy. This sentiment continues.

Four years ago, the French Assemblies of God invited me to speak to a gathering of about 100 pastors in Lyon, on the subject of "Christian Unity." I spoke from Ephesians 4:1-6, never mentioning the Catholic Church. In a question and answer period following my address, they attacked me quite viciously, again informing me that I know nothing about the Catholic Church, which they claimed taught that Mary was part of the Godhead, and she was to be worshipped. I explained that Catholic teaching has never advocated the worship of Mary. As one pastor explained, "You have never been a Catholic. You don't know what you are talking about. You can't trust them. All Catholics are liars!" The French Assemblies of God had been translating my book on Azusa Street into French, but following that meeting, they cancelled my contract with them. You see, Pentecostals have not learned how to agree to disagree with one another and still love each other as our "neighbors" when we disagree. These Pentecostals are my "neighbors," my Assemblies of God neighbors. Jesus has called me to love them as I love myself if I want to follow Him. I believe that this commandment for me to love them applies, even if they do not love me.

The Pentecostal Fellowship of North America

The call to love my "neighbors" in the formal Ecumenical Movement is only part of my ecumenical calling. As you can see, it also involves my Pentecostal neighbors in the Assemblies of God. In 1994, the Chairman of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) invited me to address a gathering of several hundred Pentecostal leaders and pastors in Memphis, Tennessee. From the time of the Azusa Street revival in 1906, Pentecostal churches have split many times, sometimes over doctrine, at other times over personalities, sometimes over governance, sometimes over money, and far too often over racial and ethnic differences. The leaders at this three-day national Conference, representing various Pentecostal denominations and independent churches, white, black, and brown, gathered in Memphis to discuss racism in our Movement. They asked me to give the opening address on the "Historical Roots of our Racial Unity and Division."

Jesus said that we are to love our neighbors just as we love ourselves, but the churches that belonged to the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, including the Assemblies of God, had not loved their African American neighbors, even their African American Pentecostal sisters and brothers. Race has long separated American Christians, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. observed that the eleven o'clock hour each Sunday was the most segregated hour of the week. Sadly, we Pentecostals are no different from the rest of the country. For 50 years, the PFNA, of which the Assemblies of God was the largest member, had denied membership to all African American Pentecostal denominations. By 1994, however, it was finally ready to acknowledge its racism.

As I pondered how best to awaken the conscience of those who attended that meeting, I decided that the most honest thing I could do was to be specific about the treatment of African Americans by the Assemblies of God. It was very painful for me to tell that story, and while it was not my intention to do so, my address embarrassed our denominational leaders. When the Assemblies of God formed in Hot Springs, Arkansas in April 1914, a number of southern white ministers in the racially integrated Church of God in Christ broke from that Black-led church to join the white Assemblies of God. In the mid-1940s, our Executive Presbytery debated establishing Assemblies of God churches among African Americans, with a sign on the front of each designating them as “Assemblies of God Colored Branch,” so that whites would not be surprised. They decided instead to refer all African Americans to the Church of God in Christ. Following the Civil Rights legislation of Congress in the 1960s, we justified moving our churches from the inner city to the suburbs so that our white members could feel more comfortable and did not have to worry about interracial relationships developing among their children. We refused to ordain any African American until the mid-1960s. I spoke on our racist history, another addressed our contemporary realities, and a third person addressed hopes for the future.

These addresses led to a time of soul-searching, confession and forgiveness, as our General Superintendent, Thomas Trask, washed the feet of the Senior Bishop of the Church of God in Christ, Charles Blake, and Bishop Blake returned the gesture to Thomas Trask. It led to the replacement of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America with the new, multi-racial organization called the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA). The PCCNA adopted a Manifesto condemning racism and promising our intention to work for greater unity. The Foursquare pastor, Jack Hayford, led everyone as we stood and read it together, agreeing to expose and work against racism wherever we found it. It brought some initial healing between our leaders, and new commitments to “love our neighbors as ourselves,” regardless of race or ethnicity.

While at one level, the meeting was a small success, it failed to go very deeply on the local level. Once again, I became a target of Assemblies of God ministers, who wrote or called our General Superintendent to let him know that they would no longer support the Assemblies of God with their tithes and offerings if we became further involved in such discussions. One of our Executives in Springfield, Missouri, began to keep track of my historical work, sought to have me barred from using the Assemblies of God Archive, which is open to the public, and accused me of re-writing Assemblies of God history in an unacceptable way. Our leadership, however, worked quietly behind the scenes to develop our relationships with members of the African American, Hispanic American, and other ethnic communities, and our ethnic mix has improved substantially.

The General Council of the Assemblies of God

Throughout the 1990s, the theology faculty at Central Bible College, our national Bible College at the time, began a campaign to have me defrocked because of my ecumenical work. The faculty forbade their students from reading *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, which I edited, or any article that I wrote. They spoke at their alumni meetings attempting to work up support to have me defrocked, and they published at least one article to that effect. What they failed to do was to follow Jesus’ command. I contacted the faculty member who led that group and asked for a face-to-face meeting, explaining that Jesus had instructed us saying, “If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one” (Matthew 18:15-20). I flew to Springfield, Missouri, and met with four members of their faculty in a very difficult meeting of several hours. As we began, they advised me that they had consulted an attorney, who required that they tape the conversation. Knowing that I had nothing to hide, I agreed. They began by reading a formal statement from their attorney into the record. Then they explained how ignorant I was, told me that the people from other churches, especially Catholics, were not really Christians, charged me with violating our Bylaws, and demanded that I stop all further ecumenical work.

As I sat there, my thoughts went to the words of Peter in Acts 5:29, where he responded to the High Priest's demand that the apostles stop teaching in the name of Jesus. "We must obey God rather than men," Peter said. I remembered the Lord's call in my vision, but I did not mention Peter's response to them. In the end, I could not change their minds, and they continued to believe that I had not received any call from the Lord. We think, they noted, that you have been deceived.

The Lord gave me strength and grace during that conversation. I did not get angry; I simply told them about my visionary experience of Jesus' call, and I explained what had happened since, including all of my ecumenical work. I listened and responded respectfully to all of their accusations and charges. As they spoke, I began to realize just how uninformed they were about other followers of Jesus, those not "with us" in the Assemblies of God. I also heard how afraid they were that by speaking and working with various ecumenical bodies, especially the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church, I was somehow compromising our Pentecostal testimony. When I arrived at home feeling pretty beat up, Patsy greatly encouraged me by reminding me of Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10).

They raised the issue to such a level that our General Superintendent finally summoned me to Springfield, Missouri, to appear and explain myself before the highest governing body between our biennial General Council meetings, the Executive Presbytery. Once again, I flew to Springfield, where our General Superintendent, Thomas Trask, scheduled a one-hour meeting. As the Presbytery listened to my story, they asked to extend the discussion for another hour before they took a vote. I was informed that while they did not understand why God would call me to work ecumenically, they were convinced that the Lord had, indeed, called me to do what I do, and with only one person voting against me, they blessed me, allowing me to continue the Lord's work. Our General Secretary later told me that they voted to expunge or erase the record of that meeting. Officially, it never took place. That is what I call re-writing Assemblies of God history. The one Presbyter who voted against me, later wrote to tell me that the rest of the Executive Presbytery was wrong in not disciplining me. He would continue to watch me.

Fuller Theological Seminary and the International Catholic – Pentecostal Dialogue

When I completed my doctoral studies in 1985, the new Dean at Fuller, Dr. Robert Meye, invited me to join him as the Assistant Dean and later as Associate Dean of the School of Theology. The Theology Faculty invited me to become Assistant and then Associate Professor of Church History. I taught two New Testament courses and a range of historical and ecumenical courses. That year, David du Plessis, an Assemblies of God minister, who been disciplined for engaging in ecumenical activities, came to my office. He had co-founded the International Roman Catholic – Pentecostal Dialogue in 1972 with the assistance of Fr. Kilian McDonnell, OSB. He asked me to join the Steering Committee of the International Roman Catholic - Pentecostal Dialogue, and to present the Pentecostal paper for the next gathering of that Dialogue. I told him that I needed to ask permission of my District Superintendent as well as Fuller's President. Both of them readily encouraged me to proceed. I joined that Dialogue in November 1985, and I began working with the Vatican as we, Pentecostals and Catholics, have sought to understand each other.

In 1986, the Dialogue received my paper on "The Holy Spirit and the New Testament Vision of *Koinonia*" very well. In 1988, I was asked to co-author a second paper, with another Assemblies of God minister, Dr. Jerry Sandidge. It was titled, "The Ecclesiology of *Koinonia* and Baptism: A Pentecostal Perspective." Unfortunately, Jerry was battling cancer, and he was unable to do more than provide me with some basic material that I used in the introduction, and a couple of ideas for the conclusion. I wrote the paper and sent it to the Pentecostal team. When I arrived in Emmetten, Switzerland the day before the Dialogue, the Pentecostal team met, and spent nearly the entire day criticizing me and telling me that the paper was unacceptable. I explained that I had done exactly what they had asked me to do, but several of them from other Pentecostal denominations argued that if I were a minister in their church, they would

defrock me. The Pentecostal Chair, Justus duPlessis even brought a theologian from his own denomination, the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, specifically to counter what I had written. I was literally in tears.

What was at stake was that the rest of the team had only one view of baptism and how it was to be performed. Since they had asked me to speak of Pentecostal baptismal practice around the world, my paper explained that the Pentecostal Movement around the world sometimes differed with us in the United States. Most of us immerse confessing believers, a single time, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit according to Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19, just as we do it here at Bethany Church. However, some Pentecostal denominations baptize infants. Others immerse the candidate three times, once in the name of each person in the Trinity. Still others do not immerse at all, but pour water on, or sprinkle the candidate with water, while Oneness Pentecostals baptize using only the Name of Jesus according to Acts 2:38.

Since it was too late for us to offer a different paper, I made the presentation, which my team intended to refute. Fr. Kilian McDonnell, OSB the Catholic Co-Chair, who was chairing the meeting was the first person to respond. He declared it to be the most honest and helpful paper ever presented in the Dialogue. When the Pentecostal Co-Chair heard that, he stood and declared his complete agreement with Fr. McDonnell. In spite of these issues, when the Pentecostal Co-Chair resigned the following year, the Pentecostal team elected me to serve as the Pentecostal Co-Chair of the Dialogue, a position that I still hold. The paper was later published in the most significant ecumenical journal in North America.

As the new Co-Chair, in 1994, I was one of five non-Catholic, ecumenical delegates invited to Rome, along with 65 Catholic bishops, to a meeting exploring ways to help the Vatican assist Catholic priests to become more ecumenical. I was assigned a seat directly across the table from Cardinal Edward Cassidy, the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. He stood in front of me to give his opening address. He began, expressing his disappointment that the bishops from Latin America had visited his apartment the previous evening. They had come to complain that I had been invited to that meeting. They argued that no Pentecostal should be included in Vatican business, because Pentecostal groups are "sects." Catholic teaching reserves the term "Church" only for Catholics and the Orthodox. They use the term "ecclesial community" to describe those churches that stem from the 16th Century Protestant Reformation. The term "sect" is a derogatory term. The Vatican officially refuses to recognize "sects" such as Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses as Christian. They argued that I should be removed from the meeting.

Cardinal Cassidy then informed all the bishops present, that the Catholic Church had been engaged in a formal Dialogue with Pentecostal churches since 1972. He spoke of a "long and fruitful relationship" between us stemming from the Dialogue and he told all of us what he had told the Latin American bishops the previous night. "If you would go home and get acquainted with the Pentecostals in your region instead of coming to Rome to complain about them, perhaps things would change between us." I was greatly encouraged, by his remarks. Since that time, the Vatican has sent representatives to Latin America several times to explain the official position of Rome regarding Pentecostals. Before Cardinal Bergoglio became Pope Francis, he was the Archbishop Cardinal of Buenos Aires, Argentina. There, he received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and often participated in large Pentecostal evangelistic gatherings.

Concluding Remarks

Thus began my journey into ministry as an ecumenist, a life spent developing diplomacy among Christian churches first among Pentecostal churches and the National Council of Churches, and then with the Catholic Church and later with the World Council of Churches, Secretaries of Christian World Communions, and other organizations at the international level. At times, it has been very painful journey, but it has also been a wonderful story as I have observed walls between churches begin to crumble. I have

visited 62 countries, taught, preached, and led discussions in many of them, and Patsy has accompanied me to many of them. Our travel has given us a truly global vision of the Church, and introduced us to some of the difficult realities that face today's world. Patsy and I have developed close friendships with many of the top leaders in almost every major Christian family – Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, Mennonite, and many more. As a professor, I have had the privilege to teach roughly 10,000 students from many denominations and from many countries,

- introducing them to what God has been doing and continues to do in the global Church,
- encouraging them to be faithful to the call of the Lord upon their lives
- urging them to be open to the person and work of the Holy Spirit, and
- charging them to seek greater unity between the followers of Jesus Christ.

While I have sometimes had a difficult experience, especially from some of my ministerial colleagues in the Assemblies of God, I can tell you that the Lord has been faithful to me throughout my ministry. I agreed to do what He asked of me that August night in 1983 on one condition, and He was faithfully present when many of our ministers did not understand why I should welcome Pope John Paul II to the United States. He had my back, when many criticized me for addressing our racial biases, even when other Pentecostal leaders asked me to do it. He helped me to understand the fears harbored by faculty members at Central Bible College. And He provided me with a strong sense of peace, when I appeared before the Executive Presbytery to explain my call. The Lord also provided me with job security, with the invitation I received to teach and lead the School of Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. Had I taught at an Assemblies of God college, I would likely have lost my job.

When Dr. Richard Mouw became Fuller's President in 1992, he talked with me about my ecumenical work, and explained that he wanted me to engage even more broadly in the ecumenical world. He provided me with the funds to make nearly 200 international trips, and he cut my teaching load in half so I could take them. He went before the faculties and announced that these changes were his ideas, not mine, and he named me "Fuller's Ambassador to the Global Church." Later, I was promoted to Professor of Church History and Ecumenics, and I received an administrative appointment as Special Assistant to the President for Ecumenical Relations.

In April 2013, the District Presbytery of the Assemblies of God for Northern California-Nevada, the District which holds my ministerial credentials, named me their "General Liaison to Christian Communities," and sent a letter to our national office, suggesting that our Executive Presbytery, the body that had interviewed me about my ecumenical activities do the same. In 2014, I received a letter from Dr. George O. Wood, our General Superintendent, announcing that on January 22, 2014, the Executive Presbytery named me the "General Liaison to Christian Communities in the United States." As such, I received complete freedom to engage in ecumenical activities in the US and to speak authoritatively on behalf of the Assemblies of God when I do.

You might wonder whether the past attacks that I have endured have left me angry, hurt, or even broken. You may also wonder whether I have any desire to take revenge on those who called my life and ministry into question. My unequivocal answer is, "Absolutely Not!" Not even when these things took place did I ever have such thoughts in mind. They are my "neighbors," those who I have been called to love. I knew the One who had called me to my ecumenical vocation always had my back. I knew that I could trust Him to be there when I needed Him – and He was! Indeed, the Lord has been present throughout my entire ecumenical journey. It was He, who helped me to understand what motivated my critics. They were ignorant, that is, without any knowledge of what ecumenism is. They were also afraid of what might happen to me, and more importantly, what might happen to them if I worked with people that they did not believe to be Christians. I have often prayed that the Lord would open their eyes so that they could see what I have seen and what I have been privileged to experience simply by loving my neighbors.

I have found that I do my best ecumenical work when I choose to treat all people who claim to be followers of Jesus, as my sisters and brothers in Christ, as my Christian “neighbors.” If anyone tells me that he or she is a Christian, a follower of Jesus, then I accept him or her as my sister or brother. In the same way, I accept any church that confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to be part of the Body of Christ, and that includes the Catholic Church. Only God knows the heart of each individual, and only He has both the right and the ability to say who is or who is not a genuine follower of Jesus. Siblings, that is, sisters and brothers, often disagree. They argue and fight, and sometimes they call each other names. The same is true between sisters and brothers in the Church. However, siblings typically look for ways to overcome their differences. So should we.

The Apostle Paul is very instructive when he tells us in 1 Corinthians 13:12-13, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.” I know only what the Lord has revealed to me in His Word and in His call. There is much more that I need to know, and it may be that I learn what it is, only when I am willing to receive it through others, who know what He has revealed to them. It requires only that I love my “neighbors” in humility, and allow them to speak into my life.

Next week, I will continue the story of my call to work for Christian unity. As we go to our homes this week, do you think that it would be possible for us to think of those in other churches as the “neighbors” that the Lord has called upon us to love? Do you think that we could pray for them in such a way that we could place their welfare before our own? We are not to judge them; that is God’s work. Pray for them by name and be specific with your request.

Engage with your family members, with friends, and with those who live, work, or study near you, especially if they come from other churches. Ask them if they have a faith tradition, and then ask them how they came to faith. Listen to them carefully. Listening to them, *really listening* is the first step to learning. Lift them up and encourage them. Be ready to share your faith journey with them as well. These are a few simple steps that each of us can take, which could help us to understand how wide the “Household of God,” our neighborhood, really is.

周年祷告会：基督徒团结之周 2023

“使他们成为一体”

西西尔·M·罗贝克 (Cecil M. Robeck , Jr.)

20 “我不但为这些人祈祷，也为那些因着他们的话信我的人祈求，21 使众人都合而为一。父啊，正如你在我里面，我在你里面，使他们也在我们里面，使世人可以信你差了我来。22 你所赐给我的荣耀，我已经赐给了他们，使他们合而为一，正如我们是一体的。23 我在他们里面，你在我里面，使他们完全合而为一，叫世人知道你差了我来，并且知道你爱他们如同爱我一样。” 约翰福音 17:20-23 新标点和合本 (NRSV)

你分享的关于基督徒团结和大公教运动的经历和见解令人深思。在现代社会中，信仰团结对于促进和平共处至关重要。耶稣的祷告提醒我们要努力实现门徒之间和各个信徒之间的团结，以展现上帝的爱。你对全球教会分裂的观点也引起了思考。在推动团结的过程中，理解和尊重不同的信仰观点变得至关重要。

前言

上个星期天，我开始了关于基督徒团结或大公教运动的两场布道，我们被提醒“要爱邻舍如同爱自己”。我个人的大公教之旅始于一次出乎意料的异象，主在其中吩咐我讲论大公教运动。并非每个人都理解我的呼召或职业，但从今天的圣经经文中，你可以看出耶稣对其门徒之间的团结是他最深切关切的之一。这段经文是耶稣在被钉十字架的前一晚祷告的一部分，不仅是为十二门徒之间的团结祷告，也是为通过他们的信息相信的人之间的团结祷告 - 也就是我们。他为所有信徒之间的团结祷告，以便世人能够认识到父因爱他们差遣了子。耶稣将有效的宣教与贝瑟尼教会长期以来的核心关注点之一 - 我们与所有其他基督徒的团结联系起来。

几年前，帕茜和我参加了在瑞士日内瓦举行的一次会议，约旦王子加兹宾穆罕默德向基督教观众发表了演讲。他在那里敦促改善基督徒与穆斯林的关系。然而，他在演讲结束时说了以下的话。“如果你真的希望我们相信上帝在耶稣基督里与你们和好，你们必须彼此和好。在你们教会之间还没有和好的时候，你们对我们没什么可说的。” 到目前为止，我们基督徒未能回应耶稣的祷告。当上帝看着我们时，上帝只看到一个教会，以耶稣基督为首，然而今天，全球有超过45,000

个教派。教会为什么拒绝参与回应耶稣的祷告呢？看起来我们的琐碎、恐惧和无知是继续分裂我们的原因。

许多五旬节派基督徒认为耶稣祷告中所祈求的团结仅仅是“属灵团结”，是一种对肉眼不可见的东西。他们主张耶稣的祷告已经得到了回应。只有上帝知道谁是真正的耶稣追随者。我们对此感到满意。但是，如果这种团结是看不见的，而我们的教会又在肉眼可见地相互对立，那么世人怎么能看到这种团结呢？

还有一些人认为，如果所有的教会都只模仿新约教会，我们就能实现完全的团结。但我想知道他们是否读过我所读的同一个新约。在福音书之后的几乎每一卷新约书中，我们都会发现教会的成员之间争吵不休！

在五旬节之后，使徒甚至还未离开耶路撒冷，在使徒行传第6章，他们被迫解决两组犹太基督徒寡妇之间的争端，即住在耶路撒冷的希伯来人和住在国外的希利尼人。到了使徒行传第15章，我们发现一场激烈的争论，涉及各种犹太基督徒，包括使徒，关于外邦人是否应该被允许成为教会的一部分。最终他们决定支持外邦人。然而，后来，保罗因彼得未能遵守教会对此事的决定，在加拉太省引起了问题，保罗责备了彼得（加拉太书2:11-14）。

在哥林多教会，保罗面对着教会内的许多分裂，有人说：“我是属保罗的”，另一人说：“我是属亚波罗的”，还有人说：“我是属矶法的”，还有人说：“我是属基督的。”然后保罗问：“基督分裂了吗？保罗为你们受了十字架吗？”他谴责他们的小集团主义和分裂。而且，一些信徒甚至在世俗法庭起诉其他人。“不要求自己的益处，只要求别人的益处，”保罗教导他们（哥林多前书10:24）。尽管主的晚餐旨在成为他们团结的标志，但一些人的饮食过度 and 沉醉使其他人感到羞辱和饥饿（哥林多前书11:17-34）。

保罗在写给腓立比教会的信中说：

“使我的喜乐充满，就是你们思念的，存着同样的爱心，齐心合意，一心一意，什么都不可私图好争，也不可虚荣；总要谦虚，各人看别人比自己强。各人不要单顾自己的事，也要顾别人的事。你们当以基督耶稣的心为心”（腓立比书2:2-5）。

然后，他请教会中的一位同事调解两名妇女友阿爹和循都基之间的争执，这场争论干扰了腓立比教会（腓立比书4:2-3）。在这些案例中，你可以看到即使是新约教会也需要努力保持团结。属灵的团结可能是一个开始，但耶稣在这里祈祷的是一个世界可以看到的团结。可见的团结并非自动产生，也不容易实现。它需要祷告，专注于至关重要的事物，愿意倾听，真正倾听对方，能够弘

扬我们所共有的东西，并愿意采取行动！将他人的利益置于自己之前是一项劳动密集的工作。上帝赐给我们新约，它就像一面镜子，揭示了我们在与其他基督徒和他们的教会发生分歧、争论甚至打斗时可以有多自私和罪恶。不幸的是，我们所有人都在一个分裂的时代中成长和生活。我们行事的方式让人觉得这是正常的，而且我们往往抱怨或拒绝改变现状。

宗教运动假设所有教会已经在属灵上彼此团结。所有承认耶稣基督为他们的救主的人都“在基督里”。宗教运动的意图只是从我们共享的属灵团结开始，以这种方式建设，使我们能够在世界面前以可见的形式展示我们的团结。宗教合一的目的是帮助教会在世界可以看到的团结中共同成长，展示基督的和解之爱和力量。为此，宗教合一者使用两套主要工具，一套称之为“信仰与秩序”，另一套为“生活与工作”。

信仰与秩序

在我的经验中，关于信仰或教义事项以及我们如何组织自己，是朝着基督教统一更为困难的工作。我在全国委员会和世界教会委员会的信仰与秩序委员会工作了四十年。在这项工作中，各教会共同研究他们的教义。在某种程度上，他们比较各自的教义，问：“我们有哪些信仰是共同的，或者在哪些信仰上存在分歧？”然而，比较各自的神学只是工作的开始。一旦他们回答了关于相似和不同之处的问题，真正的工作就开始了。我们必须回答：“我们在这些教义上为什么存在分歧？”我们的立场中有什么问题？我们能否克服这些分歧？如果是的话，我们应该如何对待它们？

在过去的四十年中，我一直与团体共同努力定义教会的性质和我们共同的使命。我将用其中一个曾经是我们讨论的众多问题之一来说明这项工作。让我首先告诉你，所有基督教教会都认为洗礼的重要性，但并非所有教会都同意其含义、时机、传递方法，甚至传统神父在给某人施洗礼时说的话。

也许我可以通过一个问题帮助我们更好地理解这个问题。一个人如何成为基督的身体的一部分，也就是教会的一员？我们中的一些人说，只要我们承认自己的罪并接受耶稣基督为我们的主和救主，我们就成为教会的一部分。牧师们经常在祭坛呼吁时这样说。一些人甚至可能主张，真正决定性的是对基督信仰的这种告白，而不是洗礼。毕竟，罗马书10:9说：“你若口里认耶稣为主，心里信神叫他从死里复活，就必得救。”其他人则争辩说：“不！只有当我们接受水洗时，我们才成为教会的一部分。按照马可福音16:16的说法，‘信而受洗的必然得救。’”这些看似是两个非常不同的起点。

为了使事情更加复杂，我们中的一些人坚持认为只有那些有过有意识信仰告白的人才资格接受洗礼。另一些人则主张婴儿可以受洗，因为他们是上帝的约民之一。在使徒行传16:15中，吕底亚

“和她一家的人都领了洗。”同样，在使徒行传16:33中，卫兵“和他全家的人都领了洗。”这被称为“家庭洗礼。”虽然使徒行传16章中的文本都没有明确提到婴儿，但那些实行婴儿洗礼的人指出，这些文本的语言并没有将婴儿从家庭或家庭中排除在外。此外，婴儿洗礼是古老的基督教实践。信徒社群实质上是在上帝的约民中代表婴儿进行代祷。他们相信主会在这些孩子对自己的行为负责之后将他们带到信仰中。再次，我们有不同的出发点。信仰告白必须在洗礼之前，或者洗礼可能在一个人的信仰告白之前。

但等等，还有更多！洗礼候选人全身浸入水中和将水倾倒在候选人头上的实践也是非常古老的做法。有人认为真正的洗礼需要将候选人完全浸入水中。毕竟，希腊文中洗礼的意思是“浸入”。另一些人认为，虽然水很重要，但水的量并不重要。水只是象征着我们受洗归入基督，所以在候选人头上倒水是相当足够的。早期教会在这一点上非常务实。约翰使徒去世后仅三十年，叙利亚教会向所有教会发布了一项指令，其中包括以下规定。

在流动的水中[河流或河]以父、子和圣灵的名义施洗。如果没有流动的水，在其他水域[绿洲或池塘]中施洗。如果没有冷水，那么在温水中施洗。如果既没有冷水也没有温水[干旱时]，则在父、子和圣灵的名义下，向头上倒水三次。但在受洗之前，让施洗者和受洗者禁食，其他任何人如果可以的话，但你应该命令受洗者在受洗前禁食一两天。《教义》7:1-4

救世军和贵格会却不相信用水进行字面上的洗礼，而是认为当他们承认耶稣基督为他们的主和救主时，他们经历了一种属灵的洗礼，并由圣灵（哥林多前书12:13）“归入基督”洗礼。再次，我们有非常不同的起点。

我希望您能开始看到神学对话可能变得多么复杂。在洗礼的主题上仍然存在其他差异。还有许多其他问题，比如主的晚餐，或圣餐，或承认的事工的性质，以及谁在教会中拥有最终权威。但我们必须问，这些不同的理解是否如此不同，以至于它们应始终构成分裂教会的问题。它们是否互斥，或者有可能找到互相肯定的方式？

一旦我们确定了差异，我们寻找通向团结的道路，这不需要任何教会妥协其认为是绝对必要的信仰。毕竟，洗礼应该是我们在耶稣基督中团结的标志。这是一次性事件，由整个信仰社群庆祝，作为一种“欢迎进入信徒团契”的形式。它是为所有那些已经死于过去罪恶的人准备的，现在进入了“在基督里”的新生活。当我们找到那条道路时，我们应该能够以一种一致的声音说话。在那之前，我们所能做的最好的事情就是展示我们的道路在哪里交汇，或者彼此靠拢。我们的工作正朝着更大程度上在这一主题上趋同的方向发展，因为我们理解为什么我们这样实践洗礼。

罗马天主教 – 五旬宗对话

虽然世界教会协会信仰与秩序委员会同时与许多不同的教会共同处理这些问题，但双边对话，即两个教会之间的对话，经常也涉及“信仰与秩序”的问题。我参与了与梵蒂冈的五次神学对话，每次对话都持续了五到八年。我们已经公布了其中四次的结果，第五次报告将于2025年发布。在与天主教教会的这些对话中，我们一致认为我们已经享有一定程度的基督徒的团契，尽管不是完全的。天主教教会承认，它对分裂负有与新教改革者同等的责任，教皇约翰·保罗二世多次为早期天主教徒的罪过道歉。教皇方济各特别为意大利五旬宗教会道歉，为他们在20世纪大部分时间里在天主教徒手中受到的迫害。

天主教教会现在承认我们的洗礼是有效的，我们是基督里的姐妹和兄弟。如果您成为天主教徒，主教将不会重新给您施洗。我们在福音化、改变信仰、共同见证方面的工作，让我们一起定义这些术语，并寻找我们可以共同努力引领更多人走向耶稣基督的方式。天主教徒已经同意，有许多作为婴儿受洗的天主教徒如今没有活的信仰。他们承认他们的门徒计划经常失败。对话的一个结果是，他们鼓励我们传福音给这样的天主教徒，只要我们不反对或鼓励他们离开天主教教会。他们希望有更多“重生的”信徒帮助引导其他天主教徒更亲近主。

由于许多五旬宗教徒并不确信天主教徒甚至是基督徒，我们花了八年时间解决这个问题，解释为什么，并寻求澄清。我们五旬宗教徒经常使用16世纪的标准来评判他们，而没有意识到他们已经进行了许多变革，使他们更加接近我们。我们还根据我们在观察天主教徒时所看到的情况制定我们的标准。当他们向圣徒或圣母祈祷时，我们视之为崇拜。然而，天主教教义明确指出，他们只崇拜上帝。天主教徒信仰和实践中的某些民间传统，就像在五旬宗教徒中一样，经常令人困惑。它并不总是符合教会的教导。我们的共同工作鼓励天主教徒和五旬宗徒就信仰转变、门徒训练以及一个人如何全身心参与教会的持续生活等主题发表自己的看法。我们的对话为我们提供了新工具，帮助我们就这些和其他问题做出明智的决策，以便更清晰地向我们的天主教邻居表达我们的爱。

对话的第六轮以《不要扑灭圣灵》为题，取自帖撒罗尼迦前书5:19。它回答了许多拉丁美洲主教提出的关于我们如何理解某些恩赐以及我们所作的许诺，特别是关于言语、预言、医治和辨别的问题。如今，天主教教会在其Charismatic Renewal中拥有多达1.6亿的参与者，包括方济各教皇，他告诉他们：

“我期望这个运动与教会中的每个人分享圣灵的洗礼。这是您所接受的恩典。分享吧！不要把它留给自己！”“我期望这个运动服务于基督的身体、教会、耶稣基督的信徒团体的团结。”“我期望这个运动……服务于贫困和那些在身体或灵魂上最需要的人。”

在我们的对话中，我们能够共同定义和解释这些恩赐，并回答拉丁美洲主教提出的许多问题。我们共同报告说：

天主教徒和五旬宗教徒可以共同为他们各自的团体为所有基督教传统带来的恩赐而欢欣鼓舞。天主教徒承认五旬宗教徒唤醒了圣灵的更敏感的关注，并在当代教会中行使属灵恩赐。……天主教徒和五旬宗教徒都认识到，当代圣灵的倾注是为基督的整个身体带来的一种超出他们期望的恩典。（《不要扑灭圣灵》14）

世界改革宗教会与五旬节派的对话

在我开始参加基督教世界共同体秘书年度会议后不久，世界改革宗教会的总秘书问我是否能够启动一场改革宗和五旬节派领袖之间的对话。他说，由于我们属于两个不同的教会家族，我们应该更加亲近。我回应说，由于对话既昂贵又耗时，我想知道是否能够找到我们之间的问题，我们可以共同解决。

第二年，他问我们是否能够帮助解决韩国许多长老会教堂与世界上最大的教堂之一，名为纯福音教会的神召会之间的争端。该教会的牧师是赵镛基（David Yonggi Cho）。我了解到他们之间的问题，因为我在我的课堂上有来自这两个传统的韩国学生。我们同意在1995年进行初次会面，并制定了一个为期五年的计划。长老会指责赵牧师采用了儒家的敬祖传统。然而，赵牧师教导他的信徒只以出埃及记20:12为准则，尊敬或崇拜祖先。最终，长老会理解了这一点，并邀请神召会加入韩国基督教协进会。2013年，韩国神召会在釜山赞助了世界改革宗教会大会，与长老会一同参与。

路德宗世界联合会-五旬节对话

1996年，世界路德宗联合会的总秘书问我是否愿意共同开展一场路德宗与五旬节派的对话。他告诉我，埃塞俄比亚的麦迦尼耶稣教会在埃塞俄比亚有超过300万成员。他们在信仰和治理上是路德宗的，但在实践上是五旬节派的。他们说方言、预言、为医治祈祷，在灵里跳舞，还会有在灵里倒下的经历。他告诉我：“大多数其他的路德宗不知道该如何对待这些兴奋的路德宗信徒。你们五旬节派已经有一个世纪的时间以这种方式敬拜了。你们能帮助我们理解我们的埃塞俄比亚教会吗？”我欣然同意进行对话。由于他的退休以及路德宗已经致力于解决的先前议程，花了20年的时间才正式建立对话。

与此同时，我会见了由路德宗运营的法国斯特拉斯堡的普世教会研究所的主任。我们同意进行初步讨论，重点是我们如何经历基督。我们的问题包括我们如何在讲道中、在圣礼或圣礼仪中，以

及通过圣灵的恩赐中经历基督。我们对我们达成的一致度感到惊讶，并于2010年发布了我们的报告。我们一致同意，正式的对话将以路加福音4:18-19为基础，题为“主的灵在我身上”。我们在去年11月完成了这份报告。世界路德宗联合会和五旬节派世界团契将于2025年开始新一轮的讨论。

更多与天主教的宗教合一工作

梵蒂冈开始邀请我参与许多活动。我有幸与教皇约翰·保罗二世一同乘坐私人列车，还有与教皇本笃十六世再次从梵蒂冈内部前往阿西西小镇，我们在那里共度一天，共同为世界和平祈祷。我受邀与教皇约翰·保罗二世一同主持祈祷。我与教皇约翰·保罗二世一同在罗马的多次仪式上走过游行队伍，并与他一同坐在主席台上。有一次，在竞技场外搭建了一个平台，我们纪念了20世纪所有基督教殉道者的逝世。在那里，我们在一万人的观众面前，有几位领导者带领大家一同宣读尼西亚信经。我在第三条目中领读，以“我信圣灵，就是赐生命的主”为开端。

当教皇约翰·保罗二世于2005年去世时，我代表基督徒在洛杉矶的圣天使大教堂之一的多次追悼仪式上发言，省长以及其他州、县和地方代表也出席了，人数达到了3000人。我提醒他们，教皇约翰·保罗二世宣布在这个绝望的文化中，基督带来和平，在这个暴力的文化中，基督带来希望，在这个死亡的文化中，我们见证耶稣基督所赐的生命的现实。我解释说，教皇约翰·保罗二世最常引用的经文是希伯来书13:8，“耶稣基督，昨日、今日、一直到永远都是一样的。”

当枢机主教选举拉茨宾格枢机为本笃十六世教皇时，我再次前往罗马，在圣彼得大教堂前的主席台上与其他宗教合一的客人一同座位，见证了本笃十六世教皇的就职典礼。十年后，当他辞去教皇职务后，帕茜和我再次与其他宗教合一的客人一同参加了弗朗西斯教皇的就职典礼。第二天，我们有幸首次见到他。2019年，我被邀请在教宗格利高里大学教授一门课程，并在那里发表一场公开讲座，该大学是为了对抗新教改革而成立的。如今，情况大不相同。教职人员坚持帕茜和我在逗留结束时与弗朗西斯教皇私下会面。我们有十分钟的时间，就我们三个人而言，他总是以“请为我祷告。我真的需要！”结束对话。

1995年5月，我接到了美国天主教主教联合会在华盛顿特区的电话。我被告知教皇约翰·保罗二世将发布一封新的通谕，即一封面向整个天主教世界的信。它的标题是《愿它们都成为一体》。主教团的宗教合一办公室主任想知道我是否愿意担任三名“神学专家”之一，可以向美国所有新闻机构解释这封通谕。当我问他们为什么选择我来解释教皇的话语时，他告诉我，我以公正的声誉而闻名。我同意并与许多新闻机构交谈，解释这封通谕对教会意味着什么。毫无疑问，即使在今天，五旬节派的执行长团绝对不会相信我来解释我们总监的任何言论。

美国天主教主教团多次邀请我协助教导分配给各个教区的大致目的多元教务官了解我们五旬节的历史和神学。我在华盛顿特区授课的一个班级中的一位神父后来成为了萨克拉门托的多元教务官。后来，他代表主教邀请我在蒙福圣体主教座堂为基督徒团结周的布道。杰米·索托主教邀请了二十五位神的教牧参加布道前的晚宴，我被邀请分享我对合一主义的看法。我为该布道编写了整个礼仪，其中包括祈祷、圣歌，以及来自各个教派的牧师，包括神的教会的地区主任和助理主任的承诺。

我自1987年以来一直与洛杉矶天主教总教区的多元教务办公室合作，并自1992年以来一直共同主持这些月度讨论。我们一起完成了许多项目，解释洗礼的意义，我们不同的崇拜方式，我们对传福音的理解，我们传统中玛利亚的地位等等。去年，我为即将在天主教堂晋升为执事的大约十五对夫妇做了一场关于合一主义的三小时讲座。

生活与工作

根据路加福音4:18-19，耶稣来世的目的有：

- 给贫穷的人传福音，
- 宣告被掳者得释放，
- 宣告瞎眼者得看见的恢复，
- 释放受压迫的人，[以及]
- 宣告主恩悦的悦纳年

这段经文探讨了路加福音4:18-19中耶稣使命的不同诠释。在跟随耶稣的过程中，祂呼召我们参与祂的事工。我们可以以两种方式理解其中的每个短语，可以在属灵层面理解，也可以以字面意义理解。我们往往倾向于选择一种观点并排斥另一种。如果我们将这些要点属灵化，我们将向属灵贫穷者传福音，告诉那些在属灵束缚中的人，耶稣可以释放他们，为属灵盲目者带来福音之光，为属灵受压迫者祈祷。这是白人五旬节教徒通常解释这些话语的方式。

另一方面，如果我们像许多黑人和棕色五旬节教徒以及许多历史悠久的黑人和主流教会那样，直接地理解这些建议，我们将把我们的事工重点放在带来满足贫困人需求的“好消息”上。我们将专注于面临监禁的人和那些已经被监禁的人，其中许多人来自我们的社区。我们将花时间帮助那些

有身体残疾的人。我们将努力拆除各种压迫体系，如种族主义、性别歧视、阶级主义等各种形式的压迫。

这两种解释哪一种是正确的呢？我的感觉是它们同样有效。通过在这些领域与其他基督徒合作，我们可以见证上帝通过耶稣基督给予我们的和解之爱。世界基督教协会认真对待这两种解释，他们的教会共同努力带来变革。与“信仰和秩序”不同，“生活和工作”的问题通常不会担心教义上的分歧。它们关注我们每天都面临的社会问题。共同努力，我们可以解决社区的需求，无论是新移民的到来、住房、教育机会、贫困、人权，还是提升所有其他按照上帝的形象创造的人的尊严。

尽管我主要专注于教义问题，即“信仰和秩序”，我的合一工作有时也涉及“生活和工作”。在2000年，世界基督教协会的信仰和秩序委员会在古巴举行会议。在我到达时，信仰和秩序主任告诉我，我们将与菲德尔·卡斯特罗会面。委员会希望我成为他们的发言人。“为什么是我？”我问。他告诉我，在古巴有将近500个五旬节教派的教会，五旬节教徒的数量超过了世界基督教协会成员教会。“只是谈谈五旬节教徒的兴趣，”他告诉我。我同意这样做，相信我应该利用这个出乎意料的机会在古巴政府面前代表我们所有人。

最终，菲德尔·卡斯特罗在那周飞往多伦多参加加拿大总理皮埃尔·特鲁多的葬礼，但他派遣古巴共产党中央委员会宗教事务办公室主任卡里达·迭戈博士，驱车65英里从哈瓦那前来，带着半打工作人员与我们会面。由于我是指定的发言人，迭戈博士要求我开启会议。

我指出五旬节教会在古巴革命之前已有半个多世纪的历史，我们的信徒是为国家祈祷的良好公民。我解释我们的教会正在迅速发展，并提到政府对它们的一些限制，不允许它们扩展，购买财产，有些甚至不允许进行修理。我指出，我们的家庭教会因其高声崇拜可能扰乱了邻居。我提出请求，允许古巴的牧师参加美国的教派和宣教大会，如果可能的话，允许美国教会领袖访问我们在古巴的教会。最后，我呼吁为所有古巴教会提供更大的宗教自由。

对此，迭戈博士表示教会已经得到新的自由，但她明确表示古巴政府不希望有更大的教堂。她说，大教堂有太多的权力，政府不希望教会共同行使这种权力来反对政府。她告诉我们，如果邻居不喜欢教堂传来的噪音，他们可以找到一个住在别处的教会成员，简单地交换房子。讨论持续了两个小时，并在午餐时继续进行。迭戈博士结束了会议，告诉我应该对他们目前的政策感到满意，因为新约教会都是“家庭教会”。“我们只是在帮助你们更加符合圣经，”她宣布。

秘书们来自基督教世界联盟

我与之共事30年的第二组人是基督教世界联盟的秘书们。大约有30个不同的教派家族参与，例如浸信会世界联盟、卫理公会世界协议、路德宗世界联合会、圣公宗协商理事会等。他们每年共同聚会三天，共同祈祷，向彼此报告各教派家族的活动，讨论共同关心的问题，有时会与政府领导人会面。当他们这样做时，他们代表着全球25亿基督徒的声音。政府领导人会倾听。

多年来，他们一直邀请五旬宗世界联谊会的总秘书参与，但他甚至拒绝承认他们的邀请。由于对五旬宗没有参与感到沮丧，秘书们请求梵蒂冈请我成为全球五旬宗运动的代表之声。在获得许可后，我开始参加。帕茜经常和我一起参加，而他们不时请教她对各种主题的看法。我努力代表全球所有五旬宗徒的利益，虽然我在五旬宗运动内没有任何职务，但他们把我当作同行。

1999年，秘书们在耶路撒冷会晤，我们拜访了五个最大的基督教家族的领袖。所有这些领导都是巴勒斯坦人。我们想让他们知道，全球25亿基督徒与这些基督徒及其需求站在一起。在一个下午，我们和这些领导一起在伯利恒广场上与一千多名巴勒斯坦基督徒一起敬拜，而周围的屋顶上有枪口对准我们所有人。巴勒斯坦权力机构主席亚萨尔·阿拉法特在中途加入，站在舞台上，而我身边的一名保镖拔出手枪。我可以告诉你，在这样的时刻，崇拜变得真实起来！

在另一次机会上，我们会见了南非总统塔博·姆贝基，他是纳尔逊·曼德拉的继任者。我们询问他的行动（1）缓解贫困，（2）如何确保平等对待所有南非人，以及（3）为数百万居住在棚户区的黑人和有色人种提供住房。我们鼓励他，承诺我们的祈祷，并指出许多教会愿意协助南非的发展。然而，我们还传达了他对我们代表的25亿基督徒负责的需求。

我们六个人在2004年在布宜诺斯艾利斯的总统府与阿根廷副总统克里斯蒂娜·费尔南德斯·德基什内尔会面。我们提出了阿根廷宗教自由的问题，因为天主教在那里占据着特权地位。然后，我们在街上会见了贝尔戈里奥总主教，他为我们倒咖啡，并告诉我们他在穷人中的事工。我们要求他帮助政府在阿根廷建立更大的宗教自由。十年后，他成为了教皇弗朗西斯。2017年，我们去了哥伦比亚的波哥大，那里有41个家庭拥有87%的土地，贫困和无地的人受到压迫。因此，他们发展了几支革命性的“军队”，并进行了几十年的游击行动。我们与和平高级专员会面，他介绍了政府的和平进程，我们还与两支游击组织的代表会面。有时听到他们描述来自几十年暴力的痛苦是很困难的。我很高兴听到五旬宗帮助他们进行再整合，并且许多游击队员在这个过程中信奉了耶稣基督。

在这些情境中，我们以一个整体的身份出现，代表着25亿基督徒，致力于“生命与工作”的问题。我们只寻求

- 向我们会面的各方提出道德和伦理问题，

- 鼓励各方之间的和平与正义，
- 为终结宗教歧视和迫害而代祷，并
- 倡导并支持更大范围的宗教自由和人权。

在神召会中，通常避免任何可能与政治立场混淆的讨论。这在许多方面都是有益的，然而，代表全球教会的普世运动可以自由地共同发声，探讨那些看似与政治相关，实际上基于道德、伦理和圣经问题的议题。为人权而言可能听起来像是一种强烈的政治行为，无论谁掌权。然而，所有基督徒都有责任发声反对不义。从根本上说，这是一种道德行为，而非政治行为。例如，谴责种族主义是一种道德行为，尽管许多人认为它是政治行为。在这些方面合作的教会可以对我们周围的世界产生重大影响。这种合一主义影响着日常生活和工作。

在我的合一之旅中，我曾与国家教会联合会的信仰与秩序委员会合作，首先是在教会教义方面，后来是与世界教会协会合作。我敦促他们认真对待我们有关在圣灵中受洗的五旬宗见证，并认可在崇拜中圣灵的恩赐的价值。两年前，世界教会协会邀请我担任一个名为《走向教会的全球愿景》的两卷研究的主要编辑，总共近800页。世界教会协会的信仰与秩序委员会主任告诉我，我的工作改变了整个委员会的方向。作为对他说法的证明，他们出版了这两卷，当我于去年六月从委员会退休时，他们选举了五位五旬宗教徒来填补我独自担任了34年的职位。

全球基督徒论坛

1998年，世界基督教协会的总秘书邀请我参加了一次在瑞士日内瓦附近与其他大约30名合一主义者进行的磋商。他告诉我们，世界的未来看起来既暗淡又危险，他认为教会必须在为时已晚之前找到一种共同面对未来的方式。他想知道是否有办法让福音派和五旬宗教徒参与更广泛的合一讨论。我环顾四周，意识到除了一个天主教主教和我之外，桌上的每个人都是世界基督教协会的成员。我告诉他们，如果世界基督教协会发出邀请，这将不会发生。桌上的人中有太多错误的人。我们需要帮助。

次年，我们带着一个新团队回到了日内瓦。一半的参与者来自福音派或五旬宗教堂。当从一开始就包括他们时，这个团队对这个想法更加开放。我们讨论了这样一个团队可能共同做些什么。经典的合一主义者想知道谁应该写第一篇论文，以及主题应该是什么。我解释说，由于我们的牧师受过的培训不够高，他们中的许多人可能不理解这样的论文，这样的过程将失败。我们需要制定一个简单的入门问题。我建议每个基督教领袖肯定都能告诉其他人他们如何信仰。答案会有所不

同，但我们都可以听他们的回应，看上帝如何在他们的生活中起作用。如果他们愿意，他们可以告诉我们有关他们蒙召事工的经历。我的建议引起了相当大的争论。

经验丰富的合一主义者担心这并不真正是合一主义。我解释说，我们五旬宗教徒并不特别合一，我们需要找到一种与他们接触的方式。我们决定尝试在福音派身上尝试这个过程，看看他们是否喜欢。他们确实喜欢，于是我们在2002年将代表福音派、五旬宗教、新教、东正教、圣公会、天主教以及非洲设立的教堂的大约70名基督教领袖聚集到了富勒神学院。他们发现这个过程令人振奋，因为他们发现彼此是基督的姐妹和兄弟。当他们开始分享他们的故事时，你可以看到他们之间的墙壁明显消失，之前不会想要与对方交谈的人开始认出对方是基督徒同胞，为对方祈祷，并寻找在回家后进一步发展社区的方法。我们在世界各地举办了許多地区性会议，今年4月我们将在加纳举行第四次全球聚会。

结束语

神召会中的许多人未能认识到普世参与的价值。神召会的领导层公开淡化几乎所有的普世主义。至少有两个重要原因。首先，我们的传道人没有被教导普世运动所提倡的那种团结，即可见的团结，这对教会或世界来说是一件好事。其次，因为我们的传道人缺乏知识，他们常常害怕其他教会的教导。因此，参与普世主义的五旬节派必须谨慎对待普世主义的参与。如果没有更好的教育水平和更多的理解，我们将独自面对世界。尽管如此，我们的外国传教部仍拒绝与梵蒂冈或任何其他普世机构直接合作，因为担心分裂。不过，过去他们的主管曾多次联系我寻求帮助。由于我与天主教高层领导人的个人关系，我能够代表神召会向梵蒂冈求情进行干预。他们的干预导致政府撤销了对我们一所大学的指控，并使我们的位牧师因违反传教法律而免于入狱，终止了对我们在另一个国家的教会不公平征税的提议，并解决了天主教徒和五旬节派之间的争端分布在三个拉丁美洲国家。

我所告诉你们的，只是自从主呼召我谈论普世合一以来我所经历的一些经历。一开始我很害怕，但现在我已经不再害怕了。今天主仍然在做很多工作。基督仍在建造他的教会。他祈求我们都合而为一，以便世人相信天父差遣了他，但这一祷告仍未实现。我们伯大尼教会有机会帮助阿罕布拉和世界各地的教会以荣耀上帝并带领他人认识耶稣基督的救恩的方式聚集在一起。

五旬节派经常声称我们独自拥有“完整的福音”，但保罗呼吁谦卑，并警告说，“我们现在在镜子中看到的東西模糊不清”（哥林多前书13:12）。我们还有很多東西需要学习。我们毫无畏惧地分享主如何遇见我们并在我们的生活中实现救恩的故事。仅仅讲述我们的故事常常会打破墙壁，我们有很多東西可以给其他基督徒。最后，每个基督徒都有能力通过我们谈论其他教会的方式，无

论我们是否将他们视为基督里的兄弟姐妹，以及我们是否允许自己信任他们，来证明教会的可见合一。基督徒的合一始于个人友谊。当我们在这些友谊中共同成长并学会彼此信任时，它就会成长。

我希望你记住两件事。首先，你要“爱主你的神……又爱邻舍如同自己”。其次，请记住耶稣为我们所做的最后祈祷，即我们“……都合而为一……让世人相信是你差遣了我。”我们可以在伯大尼教堂共同祈祷，愿这样的倡议能够继续发展，基督徒能够找到彼此并共同努力，以令人信服的方式将好消息带给世界。让我们找到方法与其他地方教会建立更紧密的联系，以便阿罕布拉的人们会看到耶稣在十字架上所做的确实使我们与上帝和彼此和解。

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

Sunday, January 28, 2024

“That They May Be One”

Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.

²⁰ ‘I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. John 17:20-23

Introduction

This past Sunday, I began a two-part sermon on the subject of Christian Unity or Ecumenism, in which we were reminded to “love our neighbor as ourselves.” My personal ecumenical journey began unexpectedly with a vision in which the Lord instructed me to speak on ecumenism. Not everyone understands my calling or vocation, but you can see from today’s biblical text that unity between the followers of Jesus was one of His deepest concerns. This passage is part of a longer prayer that Jesus prayed the night before He was crucified, a prayer not only for unity among the twelve, but also for unity among those who would believe through their message - us. He prayed for unity among all believers, so that the world might recognize that the Father has sent the Son out of His love for them. Jesus linked effective mission, long a central focus of Bethany Church, to our unity with all other Christians.

Several years ago, Patsy and I attended a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, where His Royal Highness Ghazi bin Muhammad, a Jordanian Prince, addressed a Christian audience. He was there to urge better Christian-Muslim relations. However, he closed his speech with the following statement. “If you really want us to believe your claim that God has reconciled you in Jesus Christ, you must be reconciled to one another. Until your churches are reconciled with one another, *you have nothing to say to us.*” So far, we Christians have failed to respond to Jesus’ prayer. When God looks at us, God sees only one Church, with Jesus Christ as its head, yet today, there are over 45,000 denominations worldwide. Why has the Church refused to participate in responding to Jesus’ prayer? It seems that our pettiness, fears, and ignorance are what continue to divide us.

Many Pentecostals believe that the unity for which Jesus prayed was a prayer only for our “spiritual unity,” something invisible to the eye. They contend that Jesus’ prayer has already been answered. Only God knows who is a genuine follower of Jesus. We are satisfied with that. But how can the world see this unity if it is invisible, while at the same time, our churches are visibly at odds with one another?

Others contend that if all churches would just pattern themselves after the New Testament Church, we would have complete unity. Yet I wonder if they have read the same New Testament, I have read. In nearly every New Testament book following the Gospels, we find members of the Church fighting with one another!

Following the Day of Pentecost, the Apostles had not even left Jerusalem, when in Acts 6 they were forced to settle a dispute between two groups of Jewish Christian widows, the Hebraists, Jews who lived in Jerusalem, and the Hellenists, Jews who lived abroad. By Acts 15, we find an intense argument between

various Jewish Christians, including Apostles, over whether Gentiles should be allowed to become part of the Church. They decided in favor of the Gentiles. Yet later, Paul rebuked Peter for his hypocrisy of not living up to the Church's decision on the subject and causing problems in the province of Galatia (Galatians 2: 11-14).

In the congregation at Corinth, Paul confronted numerous divisions in the church where "One of you says, 'I follow Paul'; another, 'I follow Apollos'; another 'I follow Cephas'; still another, 'I follow Christ.'" Then Paul asks, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?" He condemns their cliquishness and schism. If that were not enough, some believers were even suing others in secular courts. "Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other," Paul instructed them (1 Corinthians 10:24). And while the Lord's Supper was intended to be a sign of their unity, gluttony and drunkenness on the part of some left others of them humiliated and hungry (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

To the Philippian congregation, Paul wrote,

Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:2-5).

Then he asked a colleague in the congregation to mediate a squabble between two women, Euodia and Syntyche, whose argument was disrupting the Philippian church (Philippians 4:2-3).

You can see in these cases that even the New Testament Church had to work to maintain their unity. Spiritual unity may provide a beginning, but Jesus prays here for a unity that the world can see. Visible unity is not automatic, nor does it come easily. It requires prayer, a focus on what is essential, a willingness to listen, *really listen* to the other, the ability to lift up what we share, and a willingness to act! Placing the interests of others before our own is labor intensive. God gave us the New Testament, which acts as a mirror for us, revealing how selfish and sinful we can be as we disagree, argue, and even fight with other Christians and their churches. Sadly, all of us have grown up and live in an age of division. We act as if it is normal, and too often, we have thrown our hands into the air, or refused to change the situation.

The Ecumenical Movement assumes that all churches already enjoy *spiritual unity* with one another. All who confess Jesus Christ as their Savior are "in Christ." The intention of the Ecumenical Movement is simply to begin with our shared spiritual unity, building from it in such a way that we can demonstrate our unity before the world in a visible form. The purpose of ecumenism is to help churches grow together in a unity that the world can see, a unity that demonstrates Christ's reconciling love and power. To do that, ecumenists work with two primary sets of tools. The one they call "Faith and Order." The other is "Life and Work."

Faith and Order

In my experience, discussions on matters of faith or doctrine, and how we order ourselves is the more difficult work toward Christian unity. I have spent forty years working on the Faith and Order Commissions of both the National Council and the World Council of Churches. In this work, the churches study their doctrines *together*. In some ways, they *compare* their doctrines, asking, "*What beliefs do we hold in common, or on which beliefs do we differ?*" Comparing their respective theologies, however, is only the beginning of the work. Once they have answered the questions about similarities and differences, the real work begins. We must answer, "*Why do we differ on these doctrines?*" *What is at stake* in our position? *Are we able to overcome these differences? If so, how should we approach them?*

During these past forty years, I have spent my time with groups trying to define the nature of the Church and our mission together. I will illustrate this work using only one of many issues that have been part of our discussions. Let me begin by telling you that all Christian churches believe in the importance of baptism, but not all churches agree on its meaning, its timing, its method of delivery, or even the words that the minister declares when baptizing someone.

Perhaps I can help us understand the issue a bit better with a question. *How does a person become a member of the Body of Christ, that is, the Church?* Some of us say that we become part of the Church as soon as we confess our sin and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Ministers often say this in their altar calls. Some might even argue that it is really this confession of our faith in Christ that is definitive, not baptism. After all, Romans 10:9 says, “if you *confess with your lips* that Jesus is Lord *and believe in your heart* that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Others argue, “No! We become part of the Church only when we undergo water baptism. You are not saved apart from baptism, as Mark 16:16 says, ‘The one *who believes and is baptized* will be saved.’” These appear to be two very different starting points.

To make matters more complicated, some of us insist that only those who have made a conscious confession of faith are eligible for baptism. Others argue that infants can be baptized because they are part of the covenant people of God. In Acts 16:15, Lydia “and the members of her *household* were baptized.” Similarly, in Acts 16:33, the jailer “*and all his family* were baptized.” These are called “household baptisms.” While neither text in Acts 16 explicitly mentions infants, those who practice the baptism of infants point out that the language does not exclude infants from the household or the family. Besides, infant baptism is an ancient Christian practice. The community of believers essentially intercedes on behalf of the infant as part of the covenant people of God. They trust that the Lord will bring these children to faith once they are accountable for their own action. Once again, we have different starting points. A confession of faith must precede baptism, or baptism may precede one’s confession of faith.

But wait, there is more! Both immersion of the baptismal candidate and the practice of pouring water on the head of the candidate are also very ancient practices. Some argue that true baptism requires full immersion of the candidate in water. After all, the Greek word for baptism means, “to dip.” Others argue that while water is important, the amount of water is not. Water is only symbolic of our baptism into Christ, so pouring water on the candidate is quite adequate. The early church was very pragmatic at this point. Just thirty years after the Apostle John died the church in Syria issued a directive giving the following instruction to all the churches.

Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in running water [a stream or river]. If there is not running water, baptize in other water [an oasis or pool]. If there is not *cold* water, then baptize in *warm* water. *If there is neither cold nor warm* [a drought], *pour water over the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* But before baptism, let the person baptizing and the one being baptized fast, and any others who can, but you shall command the baptized to fast for one or two days before. *Didache* 7:1-4

The Salvation Army and Quakers, however, do not believe in a *literal* baptism with water, but argue that they undergo a *spiritual* baptism when they confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and are baptized “into Christ” by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). Again, we have very different starting points.

I hope you can begin to see how complicated theological dialogues can become. There are still other differences on the topic of baptism. There are also many other issues like the Lord’s Supper, or Eucharist, or the nature of recognized ministry, and who holds ultimate authority in the Church. But we must ask, are these different understandings so different that they should always constitute church dividing issues. Are they mutually exclusive, or is it possible to find ways that are mutually affirming?

Once we have identified the differences, we search for a path towards *unity*, which does not require any church to compromise what it believes to be absolutely, essential. After all, baptism is supposed to be a sign of our unity in Jesus Christ. It is a one-time event, celebrated by the whole believing community as a kind of “welcome into the fellowship of believers.” It is for all those who have died to past sin, and have now entered into new life “in Christ.” When we find that path, we should be able to speak with a single voice. Until that time, the best we can do is show where our paths converge, or are moving towards one another. Our work is leading towards greater convergence on the subject as we understand why we practice baptism as we do.

Roman Catholic – Pentecostal Dialogue

While the World Council of Churches’ Commission on Faith and Order works on such issues with many different churches at the same time, bilateral dialogues, that is, dialogues between two churches often address issues of “Faith and Order” as well. I have worked on five such theological dialogues with the Vatican, each of which has lasted from five to eight years. We have published the results of four of them, with a fifth report due in 2025. In these dialogues with the Catholic Church, we have agreed that we already enjoy a level of Christian *koinonia* or fellowship, even though it is not complete. The Catholic Church has recognized that it was as responsible for division as the Protestant Reformers were, and Pope John Paul II apologized on several occasions for the sins of earlier Catholics. Pope Francis apologized specifically to the Pentecostal churches of Italy, for the persecution they received at the hands of Catholics through much of the 20th Century.

The Catholic Church now recognizes our baptism as valid and us as sisters and brothers in Christ. If you were to become a Catholic, the bishop would not re-baptize you. Our work on evangelization, on proselytism, and on common witness, allowed us to define these terms together, and to search for ways that we can work together to bring more people to Jesus Christ. The Catholics have agreed that there are many Catholics who have been baptized as infants, but who have no living faith today. They recognize that their discipleship program has often failed. One result of our dialogue is that they encourage us to evangelize such Catholics, as long as we don’t speak against, or encourage them to leave the Catholic Church. They want more “born again” believers to help lead others in the Catholic Church to a closer walk with the Lord.

Because many Pentecostals are not convinced that Catholics are even Christians, we spent eight years addressing that problem, explaining why, and asking for clarifications. We Pentecostals often use the 16th Century standards to judge them, without realizing that they have made many changes that bring them closer to us. We also base our standards on what we think we see when we watch Catholics. When they pray to the Saints or to Mary, we view them as worshipping. However, Catholic teaching clearly states that they worship God alone. Popular belief and practice among Catholic lay people, as it is among Pentecostals is often confusing. It does not always measure up to the church’s teachings. Our work together encouraged Catholics and Pentecostals to speak for themselves on subjects like conversion, discipleship, and what it means for a person to be fully engaged in the ongoing life of the Church. Our dialogues have offered us new tools that help us to make informed decisions about these and other issues, so that we can demonstrate our love towards our Catholic neighbors more clearly.

The sixth round of dialogue took the title, “Do Not Quench the Spirit,” from 1 Thessalonians 5:19. It addressed questions raised by many Latin American bishops about how we understand certain gifts, and the promises we make, especially about tongues, prophecy, healing, and discernment. Today, the Catholic Church has as many as 160,000,000 participants in their Charismatic Renewal, including Pope Francis, who has told them,

I expect this movement to share [the] baptism in the Holy Spirit with everyone in the Church. It is the grace you have received. Share it! Don’t keep it to yourselves!” “I expect this movement to serve the unity of the body of Christ, the Church, the community of believers in

Jesus Christ.” “I expect this movement...to serve the poor and those in greatest need, physical or spiritual.”¹

In our dialogue, we were able to define and explain these gifts together and answer many of the questions raised by the Latin American bishops. Together, we reported that

Catholics and Pentecostals can rejoice together over the gifts that each of their communities represents to all Christian traditions. Catholics recognize that Pentecostals have awakened a greater sensitivity to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the exercise of spiritual gifts in the Church in the contemporary era. ...Both Catholics and Pentecostals recognize the contemporary outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a grace for the whole body of Christ that has exceeded their expectations. (“Do not Quench the Spirit” 14)

World Communion of Reformed Churches – Pentecostal Dialogue

Shortly after I began to attend the annual meeting of the Secretaries of Christian World Communions, the General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches asked me if we could begin a dialogue between Reformed and Pentecostal leaders. He said, since we belong to two different Church families, we should get better acquainted. I responded that since dialogues are both expensive and time consuming, I wonder if you could find a problem between us that we could address together.

The next year, he asked if we could help to settle an ongoing dispute between the many Presbyterian churches in Korea and the largest church in the world, the Assemblies of God congregation known as Yoido Full Gospel Church. Its pastor was David Yonggi Cho. I was aware of the problem between them, because I had Korean students from both traditions in my classes. We agreed to an initial meeting in 1995, where we mapped out a five-year plan. The Presbyterians accused Pastor Cho of adopting the Confucian practice of *ancestral worship*. However, Pastor Cho taught his congregation only to *venerate or honor their ancestors* in a way consistent with Exodus 20:12, not worship them. In the end, the Presbyterians understood, and invited the Assemblies of God to join the Korean National Council of Churches. In 2013, the Assemblies of God of Korea sponsored the WCC Assembly in Busan, Korea, with the Presbyterian churches.

Lutheran World Federation – Pentecostal Dialogue

In 1996, the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation asked me whether we might open a Lutheran – Pentecostal Dialogue together. He told me that the Ethiopian Church Mekane Jesus had over 3 million members in Ethiopia. They are Lutheran in their doctrine and governance, but they are Pentecostal in their practice. They speak in tongues, prophesy, pray for healing, dance in the Spirit, and they experience being slain in the Spirit. “Most other Lutherans,” he told me, “do not know what to do with these exuberant Lutherans. You Pentecostals have had a century of worshipping this way. Can you help us to understand our Ethiopian Church?” I readily agreed to talk. Because of his retirement, and prior agenda items that the Lutherans had already committed themselves to address, it took twenty years to get the formal dialogue established.

In the meantime, I met with the Director of the Ecumenical Institute in Strasbourg, France, operated by the Lutherans. We agreed to hold a preliminary discussion that focused on how we encounter Christ. Our questions included how we encounter Christ, especially through preaching, in the sacraments or ordinances, and through the gifts of the Spirit. We were surprised at the amount of agreement we had and

¹ See: <https://www.charis.international/en/click-here-address-of-his-holiness-pope-francis-to-the-participants-in-the-international-conference-of-catholic-charismatic-renewal-8th-july-2019/>

we published our report in 2010. We agreed that the official Dialogue would be based upon Luke 4:18-19 and titled, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.” We completed the report this past November. The Lutheran World Federation and the Pentecostal World Fellowship will begin a new round of discussions in 2025.

More Ecumenical Work with Catholics

The Vatican began to invite me to participate in numerous functions. It was my privilege to travel by private train with Pope John Paul II, and again with Pope Benedict XVI, from inside the Vatican to the little town of Assisi, so that we could spend the day, praying together for the peace of the world. I was invited to lead the prayer with Pope John Paul II. I walked in a processions with Pope John Paul II, and sat on the platform with him during several services in Rome. On one occasion, a platform was built outside the Coliseum, where we commemorated the deaths of all Christian martyrs of the 20th Century. There, before a crowd of 10,000 people, several of us led them in the Nicene Creed. I led in the third article, beginning with the words, “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.”

When Pope John Paul II died in 2005, I spoke on behalf of the Christian at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels during one of his several memorial services, in which the Governor, as well as other State, county and local representatives attended in a crowd of 3000 people. I reminded them that the Pope John Paul II proclaimed that in this culture of despair, Christ brings peace, in this culture of violence, Christ brings hope, in this culture of death, we witness to the reality of life available in Jesus Christ. And I explained that the verse Pope John Paul II cited most often was Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

When the Cardinals elected Cardinal Ratzinger as Pope Benedict, I again traveled to Rome, where I sat on the platform with other ecumenical guests in front of St. Peter’s Basilica, as Pope Benedict XVI was installed. A decade later, after he resigned from the papacy, Patsy and I attended the installation of Pope Francis together, again with other ecumenical guests. The next day, we were privileged to meet him for the first time. In 2019, I was invited to teach a course and gave a public lecture at the Pontifical Gregorian University, founded to counter the Protestant Reformation. Today, it is much different. The faculty insisted that Patsy and I meet privately with Pope Francis at the end of our stay. We had ten minutes, just the three of us, and he ended the conversation as he always does asking us, “Please pray for me. I really need it!”

In May 1995, I received a telephone call from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C. I was told that Pope John Paul II would release a new Encyclical, that is, a letter for the entire Catholic world. It was titled, *Ut Unum Sint*, which means, “*That All May Be One.*” The Director of the Bishops’ Ecumenical Office wanted to know if I would serve as one of three “theological experts” who could interpret the encyclical to all news agencies in the United States. When I asked how they decided to pick me to interpret the Pope’s words to the public, he told me that I had a reputation for fairness. I agreed and spoke with a number of news agencies, explaining what that Encyclical meant for the Church. I can tell you that without a doubt in my mind, even today, the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God would *never* trust me to interpret anything coming from the pen of our General Superintendent.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops also invited me on several times to help teach the Ecumenical Officers assigned to various dioceses about our Pentecostal history and theology. One of the priests in a class that I taught in Washington, D.C. became the Ecumenical Officer in Sacramento. Later, on behalf of the Bishop, he invited me to preach the sermon for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. Bishop Jaime Soto invited twenty-five Assemblies of God pastors to a dinner before the service, at which I was asked to share my thoughts on ecumenism. I wrote the entire liturgy for the service, which included prayers hymns, and commitments offered by pastors from a wide range of denominations including the District Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of the Assemblies of God.

I have worked with the Ecumenical Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles since 1987, and have co-chaired these monthly discussions since 1992. We have done a number of projects together, explaining the meaning of baptism, our different ways of worship, what we mean by evangelization, the place of Mary in our traditions, and so forth. This past year, I give a three-hour lecture on ecumenism to about fifteen couples who were about to be ordained as deacons in the Catholic Church.

Life and Work

According to Luke 4:18-19, Jesus came

- to bring good news to the poor,
- to proclaim release to the captives,
- to proclaim recovery of sight to the blind,
- to let the oppressed go free, [and]
- to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord's favor.

Have you ever wondered what this means? In following Jesus, He has called us to enter into His ministry. We can interpret each of these phrases in two ways. We can understand each of these items *spiritually* or we can understand each one of them *literally*. Our tendency is to choose one way of viewing them and to dismiss the other. If we spiritualize these points, we will preach the Gospel to the *spiritually poor*. We will tell those in *spiritual bondage* that Jesus can free them. We will bring the light of the Gospel to those who are *spiritually blind*. We will pray over the *spiritually oppressed*. That is how *white Pentecostals* typically interpret these words.

On the other hand, if we take these points literally as many of *Black and brown Pentecostals* and many historic Black and mainline churches do, we will focus our ministry on bringing "Good news" that meets the needs of *those in poverty*. We will focus ministry on those facing incarceration and *those who are incarcerated*, many of whom come from our neighborhoods. We will take time to help those with *physical disabilities*. We would work to *dismantle the various systems of oppression* such as racism, sexism, classism, and many other forms of oppression.

Which of these two interpretations is the right one? My sense is that they are equally valid. By working with other Christians in these areas, we can bear witness to the reconciling love that God has given to us through Jesus Christ. The World Council of Churches takes both interpretations seriously, and their churches work together to bring about change. Unlike "Faith and Order," issues of "Life and Work" do not typically worry about doctrinal differences. They focus on social issues that confront all of us every day. Together, we can address the needs of our community, whether it be the arrival of new immigrants, housing, educational opportunities, poverty, human rights, and lifting the dignity of all others who are created in the image of God.

Even though I have focused my work primarily on doctrinal issues, "Faith and Order," my ecumenical work has sometimes also involved "Life and Work." In 2000, the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches met in Cuba. Upon my arrival, the Director of Faith and Order told me that a small party of us would be meeting with Fidel Castro. The Commission wanted me to be their spokesperson. "Why me?" I asked. He told me that with nearly 500 Pentecostal house churches in Cuba, Pentecostals outnumbered the WCC member churches. "Just speak to Pentecostal interests," he told me. I agreed to do so, believing that I should take advantage of the unexpected opportunity to represent all of us before the Cuban government.

In the end, Fidel Castro flew to Toronto that week to attend the funeral of Pierre Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, but he sent Dr. Caridad Diego, Director of the Office of Religious Affairs of the Central

Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, on a 65-mile drive from Havana with a half-dozen support staff to meet with us. Since I was the appointed speaker, Dr. Diego asked me to open the meeting.

I pointed out that Pentecostal churches predated the Revolution by over half a century, and that our people were good citizens who prayed for their country. I explained that our churches were growing rapidly, and I addressed the limitations the government put on them, not allowing them to expand, to purchase property, and for some, to make repairs. I noted that our house churches with their loud worship probably disturbed neighbors. I asked that Cuban pastors be allowed to attend denominational and mission conferences in the United States, and if possible, that American church leaders be allowed to visit our churches in Cuba. Finally, I called for greater religious freedom for all Cuban churches.

In response, Dr. Diego offered that the churches were already receiving new freedoms, but she made it clear that the Cuban government does not want larger churches. Large churches have too much power, she said, and the government does not want the churches exercising that power together to speak out against the government. She told us that if the neighbors do not like to hear the noise from the churches, they can find a church member who lives elsewhere, and simply swap houses. The discussion went on for two hours and it continued over lunch. Dr. Diego closed the meeting, telling me that I should be quite happy with their current policy since the New Testament churches were all “house churches.” “We are just helping you to be more biblical,” she announced.

Secretaries of Christian World Communions

The second group with whom I worked for 30 years is the Secretaries of Christian World Communions. About thirty different church families participate, for instance, the Baptist World Alliance, the Methodist World Council, the Lutheran World Federation, the Anglican Consultative Council, and so forth. They meet together for three days each year. They pray together, provide reports to one another about what each church family is doing, address issues of common concern, and from time to time, they meet with government leaders. When they do, they represent the voices of 2.5 billion Christians worldwide. Government leaders listen.

For many years, they had invited the General Secretary of the Pentecostal World Fellowship to participate but he refused even to acknowledge their invitation. Frustrated at having no Pentecostal participation, the Secretaries asked the Vatican to ask me to become the voice of the worldwide Pentecostal Movement. After receiving permissions, I began to attend. Patsy often attended with me and from time to time, they invited her opinion on various subjects as well. I worked hard to represent the interests of all Pentecostals throughout the world, and while I held no office within the Pentecostal Movement, they accepted me as a peer.

In 1999, the Secretaries met in Jerusalem, where we visited the heads of the five largest Christian church families. All of these leaders were Palestinians. We wanted them to know that the world’s 2.5 billion Christians stand in solidarity with these Christians and their needs. On one afternoon, we worshipped together with these leaders and well over a thousand Palestinian Christians on Bethlehem Square for six hours, while guns were pointed down at all of us from surrounding rooftops. Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority came in mid-service, and took a place on the platform, while one of a number of bodyguards stood next to me with pistol drawn. I can tell you that worship becomes real at such points!

On another occasion we met with President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, the successor of Nelson Mandela. We asked about his actions (1) to alleviate poverty, (2) how he intended to ensure equal treatment of *all South Africans*, and (3) provide housing for millions of Black and Colored citizens living in shantytowns. We encouraged him, promised our prayers, and noted that many churches stood ready to aid

in the South Africa's development. However, we also communicated the need for his accountability to the 2.5 billion Christians we represented.

Six of us met with the Vice-President of Argentina, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, at the Pink House in 2004. We raised the issue of religious freedom in Argentina, since the Catholic Church held a privileged position there. We then met down the street with Cardinal Bergoglio, who served us coffee and told us of his ministry among the poor. We asked him to help the government establish greater religious freedom in Argentina. A decade later, he became Pope Francis.

In 2017, we went to Bogota, Colombia, where forty-one families own 87% of the land, and the poor have been oppressed and landless. As a result, they had developed several revolutionary "armies," and engaged in guerilla action for decades. We met with the High Commissioner for Peace, who laid out the government's Peace Process, and we met with representatives of two of the guerilla groups. It was sometimes difficult to hear the pain that they described, coming from a decades of violence. I was very pleased to hear that the Assemblies of God helped them with the reintegration process, and that many of the guerillas had come to Jesus Christ in the process.

In each of these situations, we came as one body, representing 2.5 billion Christians, working on issues of "Life and Work." We sought only

- to raise moral and ethical issues to the various parties with whom we met,
- to encouraged peace and justice between the various parties,
- to intercede for the end to religious discrimination and persecution, and
- to advocate for and support greater religious freedom and human rights.

The Assemblies of God typically avoids any discussion that may be confused with taking a political position. That is good for many reasons, yet an Ecumenical Movement that represents a global Church may freely speak with a single voice about issues that at times appear to be political, but their real foundation has to do with morality and ethics, biblical issues. Speaking up for human rights can sound like a very strong political act, regardless of who is in power. Yet it is the responsibility of all Christians to speak out against injustice. At its root, it is a moral act, not a political one. Condemning racism, for instance, is a moral act, though many believe that it is a political act. Churches that cooperate with one another in these ways can have a significant impact on the world around us. This kind of ecumenism affects daily life and work.

During my ecumenical journey, I have worked on the doctrine of the Church, first with the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches, and later with the World Council of Churches. I have urged them to take seriously our Pentecostal testimony of baptism in the Spirit, and to recognize the value of the gifts of the Spirit in worship. Two years ago, the WCC invited me to serve as the primary editor of a two-volume study resulting in nearly 800 pages, titled, *Towards a Global Vision of the Church*. The World Council's Director of the Faith and Order Commission informed me that my work has changed the entire direction of the Commission. As proof of his statement, they published these two volumes and when I retired from the Commission this past June, they elected five Pentecostals in the place I occupied alone for 34 years.

Global Christian Forum

In 1998, the General Secretary of the WCC invited me to a consultation near Geneva, Switzerland with some thirty other ecumenists. He told us that the future of the world looked both bleak and dangerous, and he argued that churches must find a way to face that future *together* before it is too late. He wanted to know if there was some way that we could interest Evangelicals and Pentecostals to engage in a broader

ecumenical discussion. As I looked around the room, I realized everyone at the table except one Catholic Bishop and me, were members of the World Council of Churches. I told them that if the World Council of Churches issued the invitation, it would not happen. Too many of the wrong people were at the table. We needed help.

The following year, we returned to Geneva with a new group. Half of the participants came from Evangelical or Pentecostal churches. The group was much more open to the idea when included from the beginning. We discussed what a group such as this might do together. The classic ecumenists wanted to know who should write the first paper, and what the topic should be. I explained that since our pastors are not very highly trained, many of them would not understand such papers, and such a process would fail. What we needed was to develop a simple entry-level question. I suggested that every Christian leader can surely tell the others how they came to faith. Answers will vary, but all of us can listen to their response and see how God has worked in their lives. If they wanted to do so, they could tell us about their call to the ministry. My suggestion brought about considerable debate. .

The seasoned ecumenists worried that it wasn't really ecumenism. I explained that we Pentecostals weren't particularly ecumenical, and that we needed to find a way to engage them. We decided that we would try this process on Evangelicals to see how they liked it. They did, and we brought about 70 Christian leaders representing Evangelical, Pentecostal, Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican, Catholic, and African Instituted Churches from about 30 different countries to Fuller Theological Seminary in 2002. They found the process to be invigorating as they discovered one another as sisters and brothers in Christ. As they begin to share their stories, you could watch as walls between them visibly disappeared, and people who would not have thought to speak with one another before, began to recognize each other as fellow Christians, pray for one another, and look for further ways to develop community upon their return home. We have held many regional meetings around the world, and we will hold our 4th Global Gathering this coming April in Ghana.

Concluding Remarks

Many in the Assemblies of God fail to recognize the value of ecumenical engagement. Assemblies of God leadership publicly downplays nearly all ecumenism. There are at least two significant reasons. First, our ministers are not taught about the kind of unity that the Ecumenical Movement promotes, visible unity, as a good thing for the Church or for the world. Second, because our ministers lack knowledge, and they are often afraid of the perceived teaching of other churches. Thus, Pentecostals who engage in ecumenism must exercise caution regarding their ecumenical involvement. Without better educational standards and increased understanding, we face the world alone. Still, our Division of Foreign Missions refuses to work directly with the Vatican or any other ecumenical agency out of its fear of division. However, in the past, their Director has contacted me for help several times. Because of my personal relationship with top Catholic leaders, I have been able to intercede with the Vatican to intervene on behalf of the Assemblies of God. Their interventions have led to governments dropping charges against one of our colleges, and kept one our ministers out of prison for violating the law regarding proselytism, ended a proposal for the unfair taxation of our churches in another country, and settled disputes between Catholics and Pentecostals in three Latin American countries.

What I have told to you, are only a few of the experiences I have had since the Lord called me to speak on ecumenism. At the beginning, I was afraid, but I have lost my fear. The Lord is still very much at work today. Christ is still building His Church. His prayer that we should all be one, *so that the world will believe that the Father sent Him* is still unfulfilled. We at Bethany Church have the opportunity to help churches in Alhambra and throughout the world to come together in ways that will glorify God and bring others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Pentecostals have often claimed that we alone have the “Full Gospel,” yet Paul calls for humility, warning that, “We now see in a mirror, dimly” (I Corinthians 13:12). We still have much to learn. We have nothing to fear in sharing the story of how the Lord met us and made salvation real in our lives. Just telling our story often breaks down walls, and we have much to give to other Christians. In the end, every Christian has the ability to demonstrate the visible unity of the Church by the ways we speak of other churches, whether we treat them as sisters and brothers in Christ, and whether we allow ourselves to trust them. Christian unity begins through personal friendships. It grows as we grow together in those friendships and learn to trust one another.

I hope that you will remember two things. First, you are to “*Love the Lord your God...and your neighbor as yourself.*” Second, remember Jesus’ final prayer on our behalf, that we “... *may all be one...so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*” We can pray together at Bethany Church that such initiatives will continue to grow, and that Christians will find each other and work together to bring the Good News to the world in a compelling way. Let us find ways to build closer ties with other local churches, so that the people in Alhambra will see that what Jesus did on the cross really did reconcile us to God and to one another.

2023 年基督徒合一祷告周

你要爱主你的神.....

爱邻如己。

路加福音 10:27

小塞西尔·M·罗贝克

介绍

今天，世界各地数以千计的牧师正在根据这段经文讲道。这周日是基督徒合一祷告周的中间。由于过去40年我一直在基督徒合一领域工作，而神召会很少谈论基督徒合一，尤其是可见的基督徒合一，丹尼斯牧师邀请我就这个重要的话题向你们演讲。

在这段经文中，耶稣是在回答一位律师，这位律师问他需要做什么才能获得永生。耶稣首先背诵申命记 6:4-5 中示玛的话。希伯来语“shema”的字面意思是“听”或“听”。“以色列啊，你要听：主我们的神，主是独一的主。你要尽心、尽性、尽力爱主你的神。”上帝指示以色列人每天背诵这段经文。如今，它经常以希伯来语出现在犹太教堂和寺庙的正面。我喜欢告诉我的学生，根据马太福音，耶稣在示玛中补充说，我们也要尽心尽意地爱主我们的神（马太福音22:37）。全心全意地爱上帝意味着对学习的深深投入。

耶稣称示玛为最大和第一条诫命，但他添加了第二条诫命，他说这与第一条诫命一样。“你要爱人如己。”耶稣接着说，这两句话概括了希伯来圣经旧约的全部教导。那么，为什么那些计划今年基督徒合一祷告周的人选择了路加福音第 10 章的这段缩写文本呢？首先，它指向我们要尽心、尽性、尽力、尽意爱主我们的神。对我们来说，共同确认这一声明是一种团结的行为。所有基督徒都确认他们对上帝的爱。其次，神如此爱世人，甚至将他的独生子赐给他们，叫一切信他的，不至灭亡，反得永生（约翰福音3:16），他期望我们也爱人如己。

“邻居”一词不仅指住在我们隔壁的人，也指住在我们隔壁的人。它实际上指的是每个人。在这一周，我们为所有基督徒的可见团结祈祷，我想知道，“我们有多少次认为其他基督徒和其他教会是我们被命令去爱的邻居？”如果我们像大多数基督徒一样，我的猜测是我们并没有像我们应该的那样经常记住它们。我可以根据长期的经验告诉你，所有教会的人都倾向于不将其他教会视为他们的“邻居”。我们倾向于与他们保持距离。他们就是那些人。我们倾向于将它们视为不与我们同在，而是视为其他事物。

路加记载了耶稣差遣门徒出去传播福音的事例。在路加福音 9:49-50 中，他们回来了，约翰兴奋地告诉耶稣，他遇到了一个不认识的人，他试图阻止那个人用耶稣的名字赶鬼。你为什么这么做？耶稣想知道。约翰解释说：“他不是我们中的一员。”耶稣命令约翰说：“不要阻止他，因为谁不反对你，谁就是支持你的。”我们常常认为其他基督徒和他们的教会不是我们中的一员。我们倾向于以约翰那样的方式看待它们。但今天，耶稣呼召我们像爱邻居一样爱这些人，就像我们爱自己一样。

大约三十五年前，我们的牧师邀请我到伯大尼教堂讲道，并谈论我在天主教会的工作。仪式结束时，有两个人找到我们的牧师，要求他退还他们投入奉献的钱。当他问他们为什么时，他们告诉他，他们拒绝支持允许有人在讲坛上暗示天主教会是基督教会的教会。他们会说，天主教徒不和我们在一起。我认为，当牧师退还他们的“奉献”时，他做了正确的事。可悲的是，他们没有把“祭物”献给主；他们向教会做出了“奉献”，期望教会支持他们的意识形态。我很高兴地告诉你们，天主教会实际上与我们站在一起。这是一座基督教教堂，尽管我稍后可能需要向我们中的一些人解释这一点。

这个故事并不是独一无二的，也不是一个独特的五旬节故事。三十年前的本周，我受邀在洛杉矶市中心最初的天主教大教堂圣维比亚纳教堂为基督徒合一祈祷周讲道。南加州的许多教会领袖都出席了。那天下午的雨下得很大！当我们到达大教堂时，外面有很多穿着雨衣和雨伞的人在纠察队。我的心沉了下去。我认为他们可能是反天主教的五旬节派，甚至是一群新教原教旨主义者。当我试图在雨滴之间冲进大教堂时，其中一个抓住了我的手臂，把一些文件塞到我手里。我谢过他就跑了进去。当我终于平静下来后，我快速浏览了一下报纸。令我惊讶的是，纠察队都是天主教徒。报纸指责马奥尼大主教允许我那天讲道，褻渎了讲坛。他们给出的理由是我不是他们中的一员。我是异教徒！

你看，当我们想到其他教会时，对方的这些看法或态度往往是双向的。我们认为其他基督徒不“与我们同在”，因为他们没有宣扬我们所谓的“完整福音”！他们不是五旬节派，也不是神召会的成员，我们也不是“和他们在一起”，因为我们不是罗马天主教徒、浸信会教徒、长老会教徒，或者……这样的例子还在继续。然而今天早上，耶稣再次呼召我们要爱神，并爱人如己。这包括我们可能认为不“与我们在一起”的所有人。

我对普世主义的呼召

神呼召我从事的事工是为了促进各类基督徒之间的更大团结。这就是所谓的普世主义。“普世主义”一词和“普世主义”等词源自希腊语“oikos”，意为“房子”，而oikumene则指的是一个家庭。当

耶稣在马太福音 24 章 14 节中说：“这天国的福音要传遍天下”时，马太用希腊词 oicumene 来表示家庭，即全世界。在提摩太前书 3:15 中，使徒将“神的家”称为永生神的教会、真理的柱石和堡垒时，缩小了其含义。主呼召我从事的事工是与我们的“邻居”，即耶稣的其他跟随者一起工作。耶稣说他们是“为了我们”，信徒同工，尽管他们不一定“与我们同在”，即我们教会或教派的一部分。我的呼吁是帮助世界看到所有以耶稣为元首的教会成员都是同一个家庭的成员。只有认清这个真理，我们才能以统一的声音向世界说话。神已经使我们与他自己以及彼此和好。神也可以为你做同样的事。

在 20 世纪 70 年代中期，我加入了一个相对较小的五旬节学者团体，称为五旬节研究协会。1982 年，他们出人意料地选举我担任他们的主席。许多成员因我们如何开展学术工作而发生争执，这让我深感不安。我想利用我的总统讲话向该部门发表讲话。我祈祷该说什么，然后等了九个月。我没想到主给了我答案。我也没想到会以我收到的方式收到它。它出现在一个异象中。

1983 年 8 月下旬，耶稣在半夜叫醒了我。他站在我的床尾说道：“梅尔，我想让你谈谈普世主义。”“什么？不！”我回答了。“我不能这么做！我没有普世主义的经验。我甚至从来没有读过关于这个主题的书或上过课。”然后我就回去睡觉了。那天晚上晚些时候，他再次叫醒了我，我仍然站在我的床尾，他再次说道：“梅尔，我想让你谈谈普世主义。”当时，管理任命牧师的《上帝议会章程》规定：

神召会总理事会不赞成牧师或教会以促进普世运动的方式参与任何地方、国家或国际层面的现代普世组织，因为……。

发表该声明后，其他一些人认为普世运动“不属于我们”，并且威胁说任何违反这些章程的牧师都可能受到纪律处分，他或她的部长资格可能被撤销。我想我问过：“主啊，你读过《神召会章程》吗？我不能做你所要求的！这会让我与神召会陷入麻烦。”然后我就回去睡觉了。

主坚持不懈，那天晚上他第三次叫醒我。他仍然站在我的床尾，重复了他的请求：“梅尔，我想让你谈谈普世主义。”这时主已经完全吸引了我的注意力。然后我想起当我六七岁的时候，我的主日学老师说：“当主要求你做某事时，你必须始终服从他。不管看起来多么困难，你都必须做他要求你做的事。”我还认为，如果我不服从他，我就没有权利称自己为他的牧师。根据我们的章程，光是谈论普世主义的想法就让我感到害怕，因为我可能看起来支持普世主义运动。在我同意按照主的要求去做之前，我对这个想法进行了一番思考。我最后告诉主，我愿意这样做，但有一个条件。“我知道，如果我按照你的要求去做，我将会给神召会带来麻烦。我只要求你在发生这种情况时照顾我。”我又睡了，睡得很香，早上醒来时精神焕发，但完全困惑。我怎样才能遵行主的旨意呢？它如何回应我解决几位五旬节学者之间争端的祈祷？我真的不知道从哪里开始。

当我走进办公室，开始翻阅我收集的越来越多的五旬节运动最早的书籍、文章和小册子时，我知道寻找普世主义这个词是没有结果的，所以我寻找了另外两件事。首先，我想知道我们的五旬节派祖先对“基督徒团结”有何看法。其次，我想知道他们是否曾经宣讲过约翰福音 17:20-23，其中耶稣为所有信徒的合一祷告。

我的发现令我惊讶！我从小就听过许多反天主教和反普世主义的布道，然而，这并不是我在最早的资料中发现的。我发现我们的祖先对可见的基督教合一的未来充满了希望，而不是对神召会目前通过其章程表达的恐惧，以及我们对普世主义的无知。许多传道人呼吁我们为可见的基督徒合一付出更大的努力，他们经常引用约翰福音第 17 章来支持这一想法。有些人甚至认为五旬节运动是对耶稣祈祷的回应，我们的复兴将席卷所有教会，向世界表明我们是一个与神和好、与彼此和好的家庭。

我在讲话中解释说，无论发生什么问题，我们都无法承受相互争斗的后果。我们的人数太少，而我们教会的需要却太大。我认为，我们学者来这里是为了用我们的学术为整个教会服务。我们需要站在一起，成为一群学者，向整个教会展示我们五旬节派必须向他们提供什么。我接着说，我们需要足够谦虚，认识到我们五旬节派并不是整个教会。其他基督徒和其他教会也有恩赐可以提供给我们，我们可以通过接受教会其他成员的这些恩赐而受益。

当我给出地址时，收到的评价褒贬不一。我的一些同事立即接受了它，而另一些同事显然对我所说的话感到不安，认为我们从普世接触中不会得到任何好处。那么，你可以想象，当我一个月后发现我的地址副本出现在纽约市全国基督教协进会和瑞士日内瓦世界基督教协进会的桌子上时，我是多么震惊，以及梵蒂冈城促进基督教团结秘书处。突然，我开始收到这些合一组织领袖的邀请，要与他们见面、谈话，这正是我与主争论时所担心的！根据我的呼吁和我们的章程，我应该做什么？

我做了我唯一知道要做的事。作为神召会的任命牧师，我给我的区总监威廉·维克里 (William Vickery) 打电话。我告诉他我的愿景和总统演讲的目的，并告诉他我对管理普世参与的章程的理解。我很清楚，我没有做任何事来征求这些邀请；我只做了主要求我做的事。维克里弟兄告诉我，他认为我可能有办法接受其中一些邀请，因为我可以自由地与那些邀请我的人分享我的五旬节见证。“我会打电话给我们的总警司并与他商量。”第二天，他给我回电话，告诉我我有权继续，但我必须遵守一些基本规则。首先，领导者不喜欢意外；我必须让他们了解情况。其次，我参加任何合一活动总是要事先征得他们的批准。第三，我必须始终澄清，我不是神召会的正式代表。

美国全国教会理事会

当我担任五旬节派协会主席的任期结束时，该协会要求我成为他们的学术期刊《Pneuma》的编辑，《Pneuma》是希腊语中“精神”的意思。这为我提供了一个发言的平台，并为协会寻求新的声音。全国教会理事会信仰与秩序委员会主任会见并邀请我成为该委员会的成员。在获得适当的批准后，我在接下来的18年里与委员会一起工作，参与共同的祈祷和敬拜，偶尔向他们讲道，参与有关“属灵洞察力”和“教会”的神学讨论，撰写论文，以及分析和评论全国委员会的政策。我在富勒为信仰与秩序委员会主持了一次大型咨询会，这是福音派团体第一次与全国教会理事会接触。随后，全国委员会邀请我在堪萨斯城举行的理事会会议上发表讲话。我与他们交谈，并向每位代表分发了一本 Pneuma 特刊。

当我第一次开始与全国教会理事会合作时，信仰与秩序主任邀请我作为来自不同教会家族（天主教、东正教、新教和五旬节派）的四位基督教领袖之一签署一封“欢迎信”，地址为：教皇约翰·保罗二世首次访问美国时。我认为签署这样一封信并没有什么大问题，所以我加入了教皇的欢迎仪式，作为一个简单热情好客的姿态。

然而，当理事会发表那封欢迎信后，我开始收到信件和电话，其中许多是匿名的，对我提出批评和威胁。一个名为“敌基督家庭相册”的网站甚至将我的照片发布到网上。大多数联系人都明确表示他们来自神召会牧师。一位名叫杰克·奇克（Jack Chick）的原教旨主义者以其反天主教漫画小册子而闻名，他发表了一篇题为《战斗呐喊》的论文，许多神召会人士都订阅了该论文。他公布了我代表神召会的名字，并敦促他的读者尽一切努力阻止我们这些在这封信上签名的人。他向他们保证，如果神召会允许我做这样的事，神召会很快就会欢迎敌基督者。这样的指控着实令我震惊。然而，当我进一步思考时，我开始相信，无知和恐惧驱使杰克·奇克和这些神召会牧师做出这样的行为。

这些电话对我们一家人造成了伤害。当我去美国各地的神学院或当我出国从事普世工作时，我们的儿子经常接电话。我们的一个儿子告诉一位自称是神召会牧师的来电者，如果他愿意留下自己的姓名和电话号码，我很乐意回家后回电。部长拒绝透露他的姓名或电话号码，但他告诉我儿子，他将联系我们的总部，并寻求撤销我的任命。他并不孤单！然后他给我儿子留言：“告诉你父亲，如果他继续做他正在做的事情，他就会下地狱。”

我还收到了几封信，其中大部分是匿名的。我们神召会的一位传教士写信给我说天主教徒不是基督徒。他告诉我，如果我这么认为，那我就太天真了。显然，我对教会的历史一无所知（尽管

那是我的博士研究领域)，而他最后称我为“教会的敌人”。意大利总督要求五旬节世界团契对我进行纪律处分，当他们告诉他他们无权这样做时，他辞职以抗议其领导，并禁止我联系意大利的任何神召会教会。这种情绪仍在继续。

四年前，法国神召会邀请我在里昂向约 100 名牧师聚会发表演讲，主题是“基督徒合一”。我是从《以弗所书》4:1-6 讲到的，从未提及天主教会。在我演讲后的问答环节，他们非常恶毒地攻击我，再次告诉我，我对天主教会一无所知，他们声称天主教会教导玛丽是神性的一部分，她应该受到崇拜。我解释说天主教教义从来不提倡崇拜玛利亚。正如一位牧师解释的那样，“你从来都不是天主教徒。你不知道自己在说什么。你不能相信他们。所有天主教徒都是骗子！”法国神召会一直在将我关于阿苏萨街的书翻译成法语，但在那次会议之后，他们取消了我与他们的合同。你看，五旬节派还没有学会如何同意彼此的不同意见，并且当我们有不同意见时仍然像我们的“邻居”一样彼此相爱。这些五旬节派是我的“邻居”，我的神召会邻居。如果我想跟随耶稣，耶稣呼召我要爱他们，就像爱自己一样。我相信这条要求我爱他们的诫命适用，即使他们不爱我。

北美五旬节团契

在正式的普世运动中呼吁爱我的“邻居”只是我普世呼召的一部分。正如你所看到的，它也涉及到我的五旬节邻居参与神召会。1994年，北美五旬节团契(PFNA)主席邀请我在田纳西州孟菲斯举行的数百名五旬节领袖和牧师聚会上发表演讲。自1906年阿苏萨街复兴以来，五旬节派教会已经多次分裂，有时是因为教义，有时是因为个性，有时是因为治理，有时是因为金钱，而且常常是因为种族和民族差异。在这次为期三天的全国会议上，代表各个五旬节教派和独立教会(白人、黑人和棕色人种)的领导人聚集在孟菲斯，讨论我们运动中的种族主义。他们请我就“我们种族团结和分裂的历史根源”发表开幕词。

耶稣说我们要爱我们的邻居，就像我们爱自己一样，但是北美五旬节团契的教会，包括神召会，并不爱他们的非裔美国人邻居，甚至他们的非裔美国人五旬节兄弟姐妹。长期以来，美国基督徒之间的种族隔离一直存在，马丁·路德·金博士观察到，每周日的十一点是一周中种族隔离最严重的时间。可悲的是，我们五旬节派与这个国家的其他人没有什么不同。50年来，PFNA(神召会是其最大成员)一直拒绝所有非裔美国五旬节教派加入。然而到了1994年，它终于准备好承认其种族主义。

当我思考如何最好地唤醒参加那次会议的人的良心时，我决定我能做的最诚实的事情就是具体说明神召会对待非裔美国人的方式。讲述这个故事对我来说非常痛苦，虽然我无意这样做，但我的演讲让我们的教派领袖感到尴尬。1914年4月，当神召会在阿肯色州温泉城成立时，种族融

合的基督上帝教会中的一些南方白人牧师脱离了黑人领导的教会，加入了白人神召会。20世纪40年代中期，我们的行政长老会讨论在非裔美国人中建立神召会教堂，并在每个教堂的正面贴上一个标志，将其指定为“神召会有色人种分会”，这样白人就不会感到惊讶。相反，他们决定将所有非裔美国人转介给基督上帝的教会。根据20世纪60年代国会的民权立法，我们有理由将教堂从内城区搬到郊区，以便我们的白人成员感到更舒服，而不必担心孩子们之间发展跨种族关系。直到20世纪60年代中期，我们才拒绝任命任何非裔美国人。我谈到了我们的种族主义历史，另一个人谈到了我们当代的现实，第三个人谈到了对未来的希望。

这些讲话引发了一段自我反省、忏悔和宽恕的时刻，我们的总督托马斯·特拉斯克 (Thomas Trask) 为基督上帝教会的高级主教查尔斯·布莱克 (Charles Blake) 洗脚，布莱克主教也向托马斯·特拉斯克 (Thomas Trask) 回敬了这一手势。它导致北美五旬节团契被名为北美五旬节/灵恩教会 (PCCNA) 的新的多种族组织所取代。PCCNA 通过了一份宣言，谴责种族主义，并承诺我们将致力于加强团结。Foursquare 牧师杰克·海福德 (Jack Hayford) 带领大家站起来一起阅读这本书，同意揭露并反对种族主义，无论我们在哪里发现种族主义。它给我们的领导人带来了一些初步的治愈，并带来了新的承诺，即“爱我们的邻居就像我们自己一样”，无论种族或民族。

虽然在某种程度上，这次会议取得了小小的成功，但未能深入到地方层面。我再次成为神召会牧师的目标，他们写信或打电话给我们的总督察，让他知道，如果我们进一步卷入此类讨论，他们将不再用什一税和奉献来支持神召会。我们密苏里州斯普林菲尔德的一位高管开始跟踪我的历史工作，试图禁止我使用向公众开放的神召会档案馆，并指责我重写神召会的历史。一种不可接受的方式。然而，我们的领导层在幕后默默地努力发展我们与非裔美国人、西班牙裔美国人和其他族裔社区成员的关系，我们的族裔混合状况得到了显著改善。

神召会总会

整个20世纪90年代，中央圣经学院（当时的国立圣经学院）的神学教师发起了一场运动，要求因我的普世工作而解除我的教职资格。教师禁止学生阅读我编辑的《Pneuma：五旬节研究学会杂志》或我写的任何文章。他们在校友会上发表讲话，试图争取支持让我被解除职务，并且他们为此至少发表了一篇文章。他们没有做到的是遵守耶稣的命令。我联系了领导该小组的教员，要求进行一次面对面的会议，解释说耶稣指示我们说：“如果教会的另一个成员得罪了你，当你们两个人都得罪时，就去指出错误。”独自一人。如果那个肢体听你的话，你就重新获得了那个肢体”（马太福音18:15-20）。我飞往密苏里州斯普林菲尔德，与他们的四名教职人员会面，进行了几个小时的非常艰难的会议。当我们开始时，他们告诉我他们已经咨询了律师，律师要求他们对谈话进行录音。我知道自己没有什么可隐瞒的，就同意了。他们首先宣读了律师的正式声明并记录

在案。然后他们解释我是多么无知，告诉我其他教会的人，尤其是天主教徒，并不是真正的基督徒，指责我违反了我们的章程，并要求我停止所有进一步的普世工作。

当我坐在那里时，我的脑海里浮现出使徒行传 5 章 29 节中彼得的话，他在其中回应了大祭司要求使徒停止奉耶稣之名教导的要求。彼得说：“我们必须服从上帝，而不是服从人。”我在异象中记得主的呼召，但我没有提到彼得对他们的回应。最终我无法改变他们的想法，他们仍然认为我没有接到主的呼召。他们指出，我们认为您被欺骗了。

在那次谈话中，主给了我力量和恩典。我没有生气；我只是告诉他们我对耶稣呼召的异象经历，并解释了此后发生的事情，包括我所有的普世工作。我倾听并尊重他们所有的指控和指控。当他们说话时，我开始意识到他们对耶稣的其他追随者，即那些没有在神召会中“与我们在一起”的人是多么无知。我还听到他们非常担心，通过与各种普世教会机构，特别是世界基督教协进会和天主教会的交谈和合作，我在某种程度上损害了我们五旬节派的见证。当我回到家时，心情很沮丧，帕西提醒我登山宝训中耶稣的话，极大地鼓励了我：“为义受逼迫的人有福了，因为天国是他们的”（马太福音）5:10）。

他们将这个问题提出到了这样的程度，以至于我们的总督察最终将我召唤到密苏里州斯普林菲尔德，在我们两年一次的总理事会会议之间的最高管理机构——执行长老会面前出庭并解释自己的情况。我再次飞往斯普林菲尔德，我们的总督察托马斯·特拉斯克 (Thomas Trask) 在那里安排了一次一小时的会议。当长老会听完我的故事后，他们要求在投票前再讨论一个小时。我得知，虽然他们不明白为什么上帝会呼召我以合一的方式工作，但他们相信主确实呼召我做我所做的事情，并且只有一个人投票反对我，他们祝福我，允许我继续主的工作。我们的总书记后来告诉我，他们投票决定删除或删除那次会议的记录。从官方角度来看，这件事从未发生过。这就是我所说的重写神召会历史。那位投票反对我的长老后来写信告诉我，执行长老会的其他成员没有对我进行纪律处分，这是错误的。他会继续观察我。

富勒神学院与国际天主教-五旬节对话

1985年，当我完成博士学业时，富勒学院的新任院长罗伯特·梅耶博士邀请我加入他的行列，担任神学院的助理院长，后来又担任副院长。神学院邀请我担任教会历史助理教授和副教授。我教授了两门新约课程以及一系列历史和普世课程。那一年，因参与普世合一活动而受到纪律处分的神召会牧师大卫·杜普莱西斯来到我的办公室。1972年，他在神父的协助下共同创立了国际罗马天主教-五旬节对话。基利安·麦克唐纳，OSB。他邀请我加入国际罗马天主教-五旬节对话指导委员会，并为下次对话会议提交五旬节文件。我告诉他，我需要征求学区总监和富勒校长的许可。他们俩都欣然鼓励我继续前进。我于1985年11月参加了该对话，并开始与梵蒂冈合作，因为我们五旬节派和天主教徒都试图相互理解。

1986年，《对话》很好地收到了我的论文《圣灵与Koinonia的新约异象》。1988年，我被邀请与另一位神召会牧师杰里·桑迪奇 (Jerry Sandidge) 博士共同撰写第二篇论文。它的标题是“Koinonia 和洗礼的教会学：五旬节派的观点”。不幸的是，杰瑞正在与癌症作斗争，他除了向我提供一些我在引言中使用的基本材料以及一些关于结论的想法之外，无能为力。我写了这篇论文并将其发送给五旬节团队。当我在对话的前一天到达瑞士埃梅滕时，五旬节派团队开会，几乎花了一整天的时间批评我并告诉我这篇论文是不可接受的。我解释说，我已经完全按照他们的要求做了，但其他五旬节教派的几个人认为，如果我是他们教会的牧师，他们就会解除我的职务。五旬节派主席贾斯图斯·杜普莱西斯 (Justus duPlessis) 甚至从他自己的教派 (南非使徒信仰传教团) 带来了一位神学家，专门来反驳我所写的内容。我真的泪流满面。

关键在于团队的其他成员对洗礼以及如何进行洗礼只有一种看法。由于他们要求我谈论世界各地的五旬节洗礼实践，我的论文解释说世界各地的五旬节运动有时与我们美国的不同。我们大多数人都按照耶稣在太福音 28:19 中的话，奉父、子、圣灵的名，一次将认信的信徒浸入水中，就像我们在伯大尼教堂所做的那样。然而，一些五旬节教派为婴儿施洗。其他人则将候选人浸入水中三次，以三位一体中每个人的名义浸入一次。还有一些人根本不浸泡，而是把水倒在候选人身上，或者用水洒在候选人身上，而合一五旬节派则根据使徒行传 2:38 仅使用耶稣的名施洗。

由于我们提供不同的论文已经太晚了，所以我做了演示，我的团队打算反驳它。神父。主持会议的天主教 OSB 联合主席 Kilian McDonnell 是第一个做出回应的人。他宣称这是对话中提出的最诚实和最有帮助的论文。当五旬节联席主席听到这一消息时，他站起来宣布完全同意神父的观点。麦克唐纳。尽管存在这些问题，当五旬节联合主席第二年辞职时，五旬节团队选举我担任对话的五旬节联合主席，我仍然担任这个职位。这篇论文后来发表在北美最重要的普世主义杂志上。

1994年，作为新任联合主席，我是五名非天主教普世主义代表之一，与65名天主教主教一起受邀前往罗马参加会议，探讨如何帮助梵蒂冈协助天主教神父变得更加普世主义。我被安排坐在教皇促进基督教团结委员会主席、红衣主教爱德华·卡西迪对面的座位上。他站在我面前致开幕词。他开始对来自拉丁美洲的主教前一天晚上造访他的公寓表示失望。他们来抱怨我被邀请参加那次会议。他们认为五旬节派不应参与梵蒂冈的事务，因为五旬节派团体是“教派”。天主教教义只为天主教徒和东正教保留“教会”一词。他们使用“教会团体”一词来描述源自16世纪新教改革的教会。“宗派”一词是一个贬义词。梵蒂冈正式拒绝承认摩门教或耶和華见证人等“教派”为基督教。他们认为应该将我从会议中除名。

卡西迪枢机主教随后告知在场的**所有主教**，自 1972 年以来，天主教会一直在与五旬节教会进行正式对话。他谈到我们之间源于对话的“长期而富有成效的关系”，他告诉我们所有人他所讲的内容前一天晚上告诉了拉丁美洲的主教们。“如果你回家熟悉你所在地区的五旬节派，而不是来罗马抱怨他们，也许我们之间的事情会改变。”他的言论使我深受鼓舞。此后，梵蒂冈多次派代表前往拉丁美洲，解释罗马对五旬节派的官方立场。在红衣主教贝尔戈利奥成为教皇方济各之前，他是阿根廷布宜诺斯艾利斯的大主教红衣主教。在那里，他接受了圣灵的洗礼，并经常参加大型的五旬节福音聚会。

结束语

就这样，我开始了作为一名普世教会主义者的**事工之旅**，一生致力于在基督教会之间发展外交，首先是五旬节派教会和全国基督教协会，然后是天主教会，后来是世界基督教协会、基督教世界共融秘书、以及其他国际组织。有时，这是一个非常痛苦的旅程，但它也是一个精彩的故事，因为我观察到教堂之间的**墙壁开始倒塌**。我访问过 62 个国家，在其中许多国家进行教学、讲道和领导讨论，帕齐也陪同我去了其中许多国家。我们的旅行使我们对教会有了真正的全球视野，并向我们介绍了当今世界面临的一些困难现实。帕齐和我与几乎每个主要基督教家庭的许多高层领导人都建立了密切的友谊——天主教、东正教、英国国教、路德教、改革宗、浸信会、门诺派等等。作为一名教授，我有幸教授了来自许多教派和许多国家的大约 10,000 名学生，

- 向他们介绍神在全球教会中一直在做和继续做的事情，
- 鼓励他们忠于主对他们生命的呼召
- 敦促他们对圣灵的位格和工作持开放态度，以及
- 责备他们寻求耶稣基督的追随者之间更大的团结。

虽然我有时会经历困难的经历，特别是来自神召会的一些牧师同事，但我可以告诉你，在我的事奉过程中，主一直对我信实。1983 年 8 月的那个晚上，我同意做他要求我做的事，但有一个条件，当我们的许多牧师不明白为什么我应该欢迎教皇约翰·保罗二世来到美国时，他忠实地在场。当许多人批评我解决我们的种族偏见时，即使其他五旬节派领袖要求我这样做，他也支持我。他帮助我理解了中央圣经学院教职人员所怀有的恐惧。当我出现在行政长老会面前解释我的呼召时，他给了我一种强烈的平安感。主也为我提供了工作保障，并邀请我在富勒神学院任教并领导神学院。如果我在神召会学院任教，我很可能会失业。

当理查德·莫博士 (Richard Mouw) 于 1992 年成为富勒会长时，他与我谈论了我的普世主义工作，并解释说他希望我更广泛地参与普世主义世界。他为我提供了近 200 次国际旅行的资金，并

将我的教学负担减少了一半，这样我就可以承担这些任务。他走到全体教员面前，宣布这些改变是他的想法，而不是我的，他任命我为“富勒全球教会大使”。后来，我被提升为教会历史和普世学教授，并被任命为总统普世关系特别助理。

2013年4月，持有我牧师资格的北加州神召会区长老会任命我为“基督教社区总联络员”，并向我们的国家办公室发了一封信，建议我们的执行官长老会，就我的合一活动采访我的机构也做了同样的事情。2014年，我收到了我们总督导乔治·伍德博士的一封信，宣布长老会行政长老会于2014年1月22日任命我为“美国基督教社区总联络员”。因此，我获得了在美国参与普世活动的完全自由，并可以代表神召会进行权威发言。

你可能想知道我过去所遭受的攻击是否让我感到愤怒、受伤，甚至心碎。你可能还想知道我是否愿意向那些质疑我的生活和事工的人进行报复。我的回答很明确：“绝对不是！”甚至当这些事情发生的时候，我心里也没有产生过这样的想法。他们是我的“邻居”，是我蒙召去爱的人。我知道呼召我参加普世圣召的那一位永远支持我。我知道当我需要他时，我可以相信他会在我身边——他确实在！事实上，主在我的整个合一旅程中一直存在。是他帮助我理解了我的批评者的动机。他们是无知的，也就是说，对什么是普世主义一无所知。他们还担心我可能会发生什么，更重要的是，如果我与他们不相信是基督徒的人一起工作，他们可能会发生什么。我经常祈祷主打开他们的眼睛，使他们能够看到我所看到的以及我仅仅通过爱我的邻居就有幸经历的事情。

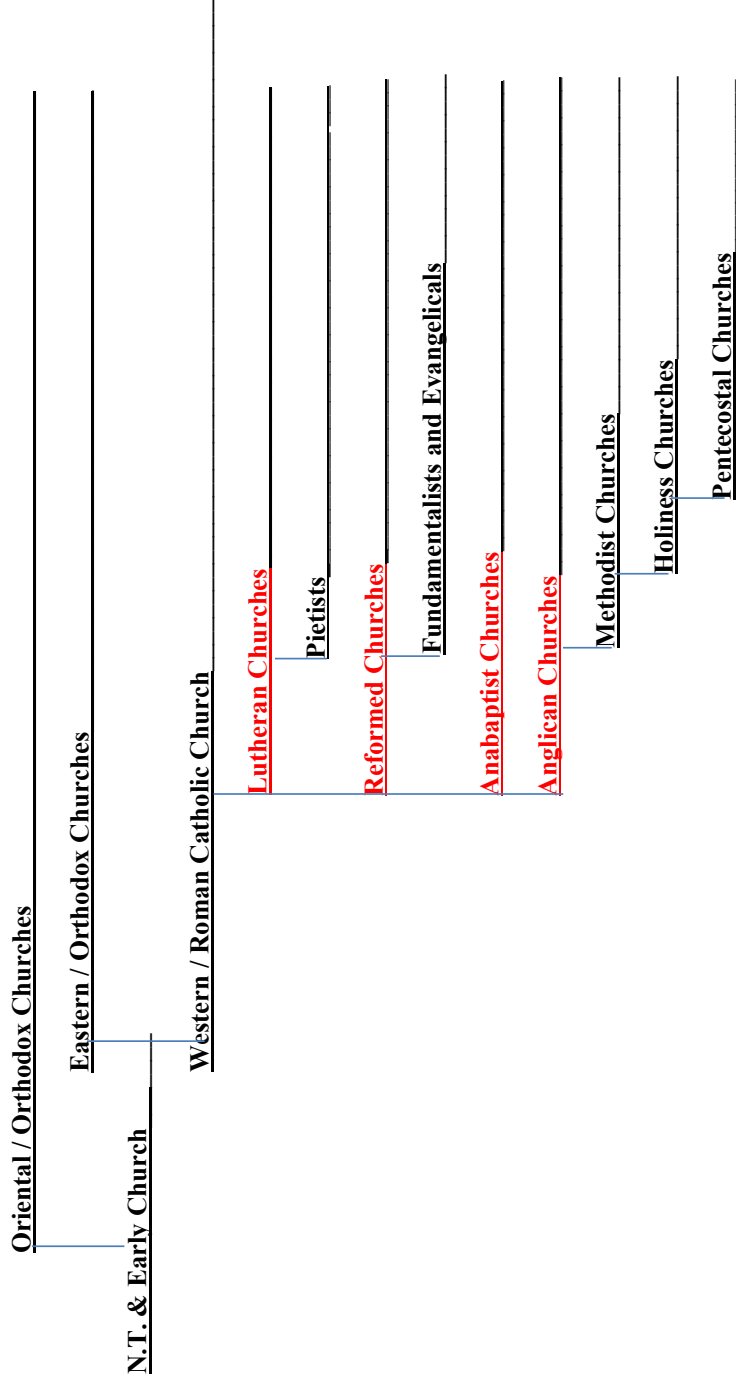
我发现，当我选择将所有自称是耶稣追随者的人视为我在基督里的姐妹和兄弟，视为我的基督徒“邻居”时，我就做了最好的普世工作。如果有人告诉我他或她是基督徒，耶稣的追随者，那么我会接受他或她为我的姐妹或兄弟。同样，我接受任何承认耶稣基督为救主和主并成为基督身体一部分的教会，其中包括天主教会。只有神知道每个人的心，也只有他有权利、有能力说谁是、谁不是耶稣的真正跟随者。兄弟姐妹，即姐妹和兄弟，常常意见不一致。他们争吵、打斗，有时还互相谩骂。教会里的弟兄姊妹之间也是如此。然而，兄弟姐妹通常会寻找克服分歧的方法。我们也应该如此。

使徒保罗在哥林多前书 13 章 12-13 节中告诉我们，“现在我们对镜子看是微弱的，到那时我们就要面对面了。现在我只知道一部分；然后我就会完全知道，就像我已经被完全知道一样。”我只知道主在他的话语和他的呼召中向我启示了什么。我需要知道的还有很多，也许只有当我愿意通过其他人接受它时，我才能了解它是什么，他们知道他向他们揭示了什么。它只需要我谦卑地爱我的“邻居”，并允许他们在我的生活中发言。

下周，我将继续讲述我呼吁为基督徒团结而努力的故事。当我们本周回家时，你认为我们有可能将其他教会的人视为主呼吁我们去爱的“邻居”吗？你认为我们可以为他们祈祷，将他们的福祉置于我们自己的福祉之上吗？我们不应该评判他们；那是神的工作。为他们祷告，并具体说出你的请求。

与你的家人、朋友以及在你附近生活、工作或学习的人交往，特别是如果他们来自其他教会。询问他们是否有信仰传统，然后询问他们是如何获得信仰的。仔细听他们说。倾听他们的声音，真正的倾听是学习的第一步。抬起他们并鼓励他们。也准备好与他们分享您的信仰之旅。这些是我们每个人都可以采取的几个简单步骤，可以帮助我们了解我们的邻居“上帝的家”到底有多大。

An Abbreviated Family Tree of Christian Churches



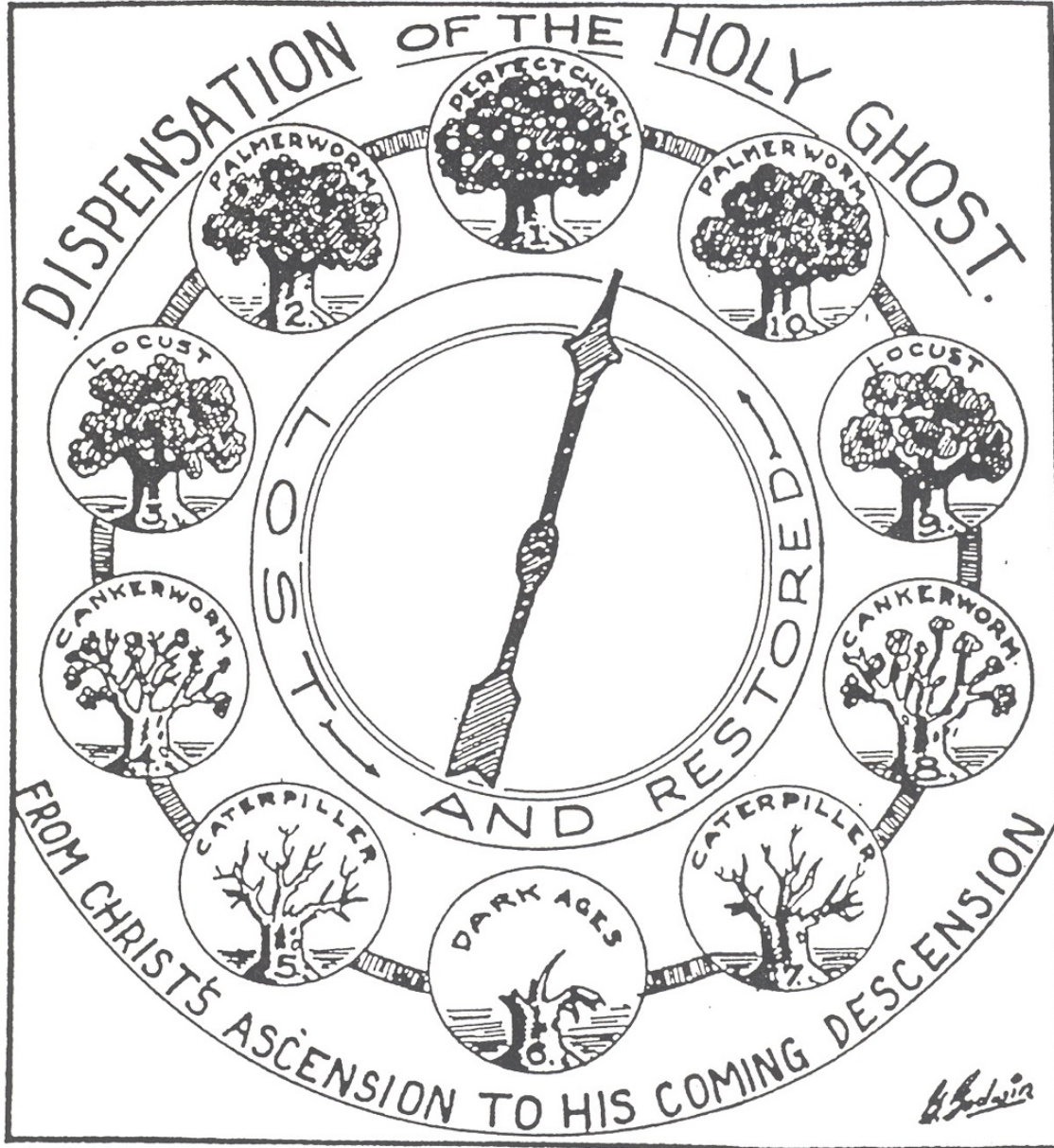
Centuries

1	4	11	16	17	18	19	20
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The historic Protestant Churches formed during the 16th Century Protestant Reformation. All churches include members who have enjoyed the Pentecostal baptism in the Holy Spirit. We know them as Charismatics.

A Restorationist View of Church History

Taken from
Aimee Semple McPherson's sermon
"Lost and Restored"



Aimee Semple McPherson, founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, believed as many early Pentecostals did at the beginning of the 20th Century, that Christ established His Church through the Apostles, but that over the centuries it declined. She suggested four criticisms of the Church that led it into the Dark Ages: formality, coldness, organization, and building up walls between us.. Others would add things like apathy and compromise.

Aimee Semple McPherson developed this diagram to explain the various stages in Church History. Her explanation of Church history began at the top of the circle with an apple tree. It had 18 apples, nine of which represented the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, and the other nine represented the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. *Their* presence made the New Testament Church, a “Perfect Church”. In developing her argument, she appealed to Joel 1:4 to describe the Church’s slide into darkness. According to her schema, this was a period marked by apathy, compromise, and apostasy.

That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.
(Joel 1:4)

At the bottom of the circle, the Church had entered the so-called, “Dark Ages”. Once the Church had lost everything, “Sister” saw in Joel 2:25, the Lord’s intervention that provided the explanation for the remainder of the Restorationist story. The Lord spoke to Israel through the prophet Joel upon their repentance, saying,

“I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you”.
(Joel 2:25)

Aimee then argued, as other early Pentecostals did, that the restoration of the Church began with Martin Luther re-discovering the doctrine of justification through faith. John Wesley followed Luther by restoring the Church’s emphasis on sanctification. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, did not compromise, but proclaimed the Gospel to the poor. The “latter rain” began to fall with Evan Roberts and the Welsh revival as well as Pandita Ramabai’s work among young widows in India, in the ninth tree. By the time we get to the tenth tree, we have come nearly full circle. Baptism in the Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues has returned, and in her words, “the gifts and fruits are again appearing upon the tree”. “Let us get back to Pentecost,” she challenged her audience, “and on to the fullness of Pentecostal power and glory recorded in God’s word, for Jesus is coming soon, very soon, for His perfect waiting church.”

教会历史的复兴主义观点

取自

艾米·森普尔·麦克弗森的布道

艾梅·森普尔·麦克弗森 (Aimee Semple McPherson), 国际四方福音教会 (International Church of the Foursquare Gospel) 的创始人, 和 20 世纪初许多早期五旬节派教徒一样, 相信基督通过使徒建立了他的教会, 但几个世纪以来教会衰落了。她提出了对教会的四点批评, 这些批评导致教会进入黑暗时代: 形式、冷漠、组织和在我们之间筑起围墙。其他人会添加冷漠和妥协的东西。

艾米·森普尔·麦克弗森 (Aimee Semple McPherson) 绘制了这张图表来解释教会历史的各个阶段。她对教会历史的解释从圆圈顶部的一棵苹果树开始。它有18个苹果, 其中九个代表哥林多前书 12:8-10中提到的圣灵的恩赐, 另外九个代表加拉太书5:22-23中圣灵的果子。他们的存在使新约

教会成为“完美的教会”。在阐述她的论点时，她援引约珥书 1:4 来描述教会滑入黑暗的情况。根据她的图式，这是一个以冷漠、妥协和叛教为标志的时期。

蝗虫吃掉了棕榈虫剩下的东西；蝗虫剩下的，被蛀虫吃掉了。溃疡虫留下的东西被毛毛虫吃掉了。（约珥书 1:4）

在圆圈的底部，教会进入了所谓的“黑暗时代”。当教会失去一切时，“修女”在约珥书 2 章 25 节中看到，主的介入为复兴派故事的其余部分提供了解释。主通过先知约珥对以色列人的悔改说：

“我打发到你们中间的大军队，就是蝗虫、蝻子、蚂蚱、剪虫，那些年所吃的，我要补还你们。”（约珥书 2:25）

艾梅随后辩称，正如其他早期五旬节派人士所做的那样，教会的复兴始于马丁·路德重新发现因信称义的教义。约翰卫斯理追随路德，恢复了教会对成圣的重视。救世军创始人威廉·布斯没有妥协，而是向穷人宣讲福音。随着埃文·罗伯茨（Evan Roberts）和威尔士复兴运动以及潘迪塔·拉马拜（Pandita Ramabai）在印度年轻寡妇中的第九棵树的工作，“晚雨”开始降临。当我们到达第十棵树时，我们几乎已经绕了一圈了。圣灵的洗礼和说方言的证据又回来了，用她的话来说，“恩赐和果子再次出现在树上”。“让我们回到五旬节，”她向观众发起挑战，“并看到神话中所记载的五旬节大能和荣耀的丰盛，因为耶稣很快就会来，为了他完美的正在等候的教会。”