

Theme: Extend Welcome

Thought For The Week - June 29, 2014

About 30 miles north of Nairobi, Kenya, is a small community called Kijabe, the Place of the Winds. It is perched on the escarpment wall overlooking the Great Rift Valley. When I lived in East Africa, one of my assignments was to write about the work at the Mission Hospital there for donors in the United States. The views from Kijabe are extraordinary, and I always enjoyed my visits there.

One afternoon the nursing director and I were trying to concentrate on a quiet task together when the wind became particularly gusty, blowing our papers around. "Wind can be so unsettling," I remarked as Norma got up to close the windows.

"Yes, but I think maybe that's its job here on Earth – to rearrange things," she replied. With the windows closed we were nearly oblivious to the wind. It howled around the buildings as we carried on with our task.

Later, thinking about what Norma had said, I remembered how the Holy Spirit came with the sound of the wind at Pentecost. The Spirit came to rearrange people's lives, changing their priorities and reordering history. For the people who were there, nothing was ever the same again!

Mary Jane Clark

Remembrances of Pentecost

"When the Day of Pentecost was fully come." - this was God's timing - a feast day when although the followers of Christ were likely in hiding in the upper room, approx. 2 million people had been brought to Jerusalem from all over the then known world to celebrate Shabat - 7 weeks after the Passover feast. God had allowed them to be scattered, and had given them a business incentive to create communities all around the Mediterranean Sea - and now they were all there.

Passover had also meant that they had come to sacrifice - but they had been brought by God to see the sacrifice - His sacrifice of His only Son -for John the Baptist had said - "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world". They had also been brought by God to witness His power, and the power of the Holy Spirit as Christ had been raised from the dead. Many who had perhaps witnessed the crucifixion, also witnessed the resurrected presence of Christ during that period between the resurrection and ascension - in fact in one of His appearances there were over 500 present.

God has not lost any of His power - and now at this apex of history, the world is anxiously waiting to see God at work. You see God has a time for everything - "at the appointed time God sent forth His son, born of a virgin....." "After the day of Pentecost was fully come...": two examples of God's great time table. And there were 3 marks of the people - those disciples of Jesus as they met in the upper room - they were in love with Jesus Christ, --they were active in prayer and devotion they were waiting for the gift of the Father - the coming of the Holy Spirit.

"Suddenly on every head there were tongues of fire, and they all began to speak the glory of God in different languages" - imagine the sound - soon the room was too small and they began to spill out onto the street - in languages familiar to the great crowd who were drawn by the sound. The people who were there perhaps had been present at the crucifixion - perhaps some had consented to it - perhaps some were enemies of Christ - but there was no fear on behalf of those who were there. Peter the one who had cringed before the servant girl, now, full of the Holy Spirit begins to preach - boldly - loudly.

We don't know how many were there, but 3,000 believed - and at a ratio of 1 to 10 that would mean that possibly 30,000 were there. What powerful preaching, what a group of converts, hearing from the heart of God to their hearts. Words - their own history that they knew, but now it is inspired. And so they go home - a great crowd of witnesses to travel all over the world - Jesus is alive - the Messiah has come - God be praised. What a birth, what a blessing, what a filling. Next week we celebrate communion, as the bread is broken, may we be broken, as the wine is poured out, may we be poured out, to create a vacuum to be filled with a new love of Jesus Christ, and the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to come and plant his gifts in us to the glory of Jesus.

Prayer Thought For The Week

Each day in the Community of Christ Temple, dedicated to the pursuit of peace, we pray for just and lasting peace and uphold the nations of the world.

Today we remember the people of Argentina in our prayers. The Argentine Republic, located in South America, is a land of abundant natural resources and a well-educated population. Income distribution, even though improved over the last decade, remains considerably unequal. Corruption and drug trafficking continue to be significant issues for Argentina. Community of Christ has a recognized presence in Argentina.

May God's Spirit guide our thoughts as we seek to be people of peace.

God of all the Earth, we pray that the light of peace will invade the darkened places of this world. We pray for those who suffer the injustices of human selfishness. We pray for courage to be your presence in acts of justice, tenderness, and love. We are humbled by your Divine forgiveness when we have not been compassionate or loving or just.

We uphold for your blessing the people of Argentina. Strengthen all who work for peace and bless their activities to foster justice in their nation and among all nations. Guide all who work to bring an end to drug abuse and illicit trafficking in all nations, and help us confront these issues in our local and global communities. Hear us, O God, as we pray for all who are victims of abuse, neglect, hatred, and war. May your light fill the world.

We lift our hearts, minds and voices to you, Great God of peace. Fill us with the light of Christ and let it shine through us as an ensign to all nations. Amen.

Stewardship Thought For The Week

God has a plan for each of us. Jeremiah 29:11 is one of the popular expressions of this certainty. "For surely I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

God provides us all the ingredients we need to carry out his plan for us. He gives us resources. He gives us abilities. He gives us our very lives. And he gives us a plan, a recipe, for our lives through Holy Scripture and by directly inspiring our actions. But few of us follow God's plan completely. Tithing is a particular area of challenge

Take Up Your Cross

The everlasting God has in His wisdom foreseen from eternity the cross that He now presents to you as a gift from His inmost heart. This cross, He now sends you, He has considered with His all-knowing eyes, understood with His divine mind, tested with His wise justice, warmed with loving arms and weighed with His own hands to see that it be not one inch too large and not one ounce too heavy for you. He has blessed it with His holy Name, anointed it with His consolation, taken one last glance at you and your courage, and then sent it to you from heaven, a special greeting from God to you, an alms of the all-merciful love of God.