

# Compelled By His Spirit

*to go, grow, teach, learn, tell and love*

## SUNDAY MAY 24 Each One Reach One but No One Alone

by Rev. Jeffrey Bos *CRWM missionary in Bangladesh*

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you 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. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." John 17:20-23 (NIV)

Each one reach one! Bangladeshis love slogans. However, this one seems to come from a more individualistic society. I heard it last year when a supporting church asked me to write a meditation encouraging members "each one to reach one." I wrote back and asked whether we might not be setting ourselves up to be disappointed – is it conceivable to think that each one might reach one? Indeed, God sent One – His Son. But what makes anyone of us think that we, anyone or each one, could possibly reach one? It's a daunting task unless we realize that mission is and always has been God's before it becomes ours. Instead of wondering what kind of mission God has for me, we should be asking what kind of we God wants for His mission.

In my office I have a photograph of a statue of Christ in a cemetery. Christ's eyes gaze heavenward and his arms are extended, reaching out as if to call the dead to life. But the Christ in the photo is handless - the cement hands have been broken or dislodged from His arms. My students often comment on these missing hands. I ask them, "Are we not the hands of Christ in the world, and, if we are, then where are we?" Are we lying in broken, crumbled bits on the ground? As if Christ's hands have succumbed to the pressures of hurricanes and monsoons and crumbled into a hundred useless pieces?

God's mission to the world is incomplete until we take up our part of the mission partnership and join hands. Not as solitary individuals going head-to-head with the world, but as a composite of parts working hand-in-hand in partnership – fingers, thumb and palm attached to the outreached arm of Christ. This is God's mission. When we, His hands, are joined to the strong arms of Christ, we do not merely proclaim and preach truth, but we reveal the love of God that has come down to us.

Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (Jn 20:21). The "you" is plural. The one Father sends the one Son; the one Son sends the one and only church. Partnership is not just a mission strategy – it's the theological bottom line.

For God's mission is to become our mission, we must hang on to the "we" and the "our." Otherwise the plural shifts to the word "mission" and we carry our missions separately. Being held together in complete unity is what makes the church the hands of Christ in the world. It also assures us that no one of us is in this alone, but that together, everyone might reach everyone. And the Love of God will be all in all.

**Prayer:** *May the church be brought to complete unity to let the world know the love of God. Amen.*

**Thank you for participating in the celebration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Christian Reformed World Missions ministries around the world. Our Pentecost theme this year is: Compelled By His Spirit.**

Responding as a church around the world to the global task of missions is exhilarating, urgent and requires our obedience. There are still many who need to hear the hope and joy of the gospel message. The devotions you are about to read come from Christian Reformed World Missions' missionaries around the world, people with a real presence and passion for missions.

We hope you will be encouraged by their devotionals and discover how the Spirit empowers and compels His people to go, grow, teach, learn, tell and love.

**To read more about our exciting ministries, visit [www.crwmm.org](http://www.crwmm.org).**

## MONDAY MAY 25 A Haitian Creole Lesson

by Rev. Zachary and Rev. Sharon Segaar-King  
*CRWM missionaries in Haiti*

"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." James 4:13-17 (NIV)

In a land so susceptible to natural and human disasters where average people devote well over three-quarters of their income to simply feed themselves, the people of Haiti have learned to preface all of their future plans with one simple phrase: "Si dye vle" (If God wills). We North Americans, so accustomed to stability and predictability, have learned this lesson in the last twelve months. Some (even many) of our best reasoned and rationalized plans and hopes have evaporated along with our employment, retirement, educational aspirations, and even the roofs over our heads. Now we wonder, "What plans should we make?" The Haitians have got it right.

God calls us to align our future plans with His plans for our future. God wants us to do what He wants. He wants His Kingdom to grow. He wants His Gospel to be proclaimed. He wants His hungry fed and their thirst quenched. The Spirit compels us to make God's will our will (1 Cor. 9:16). Haitians say, "Si dye vle," or, "If God wills," because nothing in this life happens without God's agreement or, at least, His permission. Let's take this little Haitian Creole lesson to heart, "Si dye vle." Let's seek God's will this Pentecost so that we, by the Spirit's power, can participate in the best thing this life has to offer: the growing Kingdom of God.

**Prayer:** *Almighty God, send forth your Spirit upon us so that we might hear and follow Your will. Amen.*



TUESDAY MAY 26

## Overcoming the Chasm

by Rev. Henry Persenaire-Hogeterp  
CRWM missionary in Niger

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” John 20:19-22 (NIV)

Do you ever feel like there is an unbridgeable gap between you and Muslims? The jarring images of Muslims we see on television can be down right scary. Every morning as I sit and get ready for the day, I hear the somber call of the muezzin, the Islamic cleric who calls Muslims to the mosque for prayer, drifting across the air. In that moment I feel the gap. How will Muslims, who follow their religion with such devotion, ever come to know Jesus, the only Savior?

I have many books on my shelf on how to reach Muslims with the Gospel. But methods will not bring us one inch closer. It’s in contemplating the depths of God’s love in Christ that the chasm begins to be bridged. God sent Jesus from the farthest distance imaginable in order to reach us. As we see the wounds in Jesus’ hands and side, we sense the immensity of God’s love that overcame the chasm created by our sin. We hear Jesus say to us, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:21)

Samuel Zwemer called Islam the prodigal son among non-Christian religions. We know that while the son was still a long way off, the father ran and embraced him. Compelled by the Father’s love, may we run with hands extended to the lost brother saying, salaam alaikum, “peace be with you.” Jesus sends us, and the Spirit equips us to bridge the chasm.

**Prayer:** *Holy Father, as we gaze upon Jesus who was crucified so that we could be brought into fellowship with you, we are awe struck by Your amazing love. May Your truth in love flow from our lives to the lives of Muslims and all those who need to know You. Holy Spirit, nurture in us a faith that says, “Here I am. Send me.” In the name of Jesus, Amen.*

WEDNESDAY MAY 27

## Loving in a Language We Can Understand

by Ruth Padilla De Borst  
CRWM missionary in Costa Rica

“We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own languages!” Acts 2.11 (NIV)

They were amazed. Perplexed. How on earth could they, men and women from the many different people groups thrown together by the Roman Empire, understand what these uneducated Galilean men were saying? This truly was a dramatic event. The disciples, who only days before had been cowering behind locked doors, were being propelled into the limelight. They no longer needed nor were able to hide. Because – “Ready or not, here I come!” – the Holy Spirit had sought them out, not only to comfort and encourage, but to send them out. No longer alone and fearful, they could now announce the Good News of God’s love for all people through Jesus Christ in a way that the pilgrims who had congregated in Jerusalem for the Pentecost celebration could understand the message of God’s love.

**Prayer:** *Father, in Christ, You became human and walked among us. You loved us in a language we could understand. By Your Spirit, enable us to reach out to others – our children, friends, neighbors and strangers – in such a way that they may receive Your love through us. Amen.*



THURSDAY MAY 27

Boasting

Anonymous

*CRWM missionary in West Africa*

"I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20, The Message)

Our massive, oozing blisters and faded African robes, whose vibrant colors had been bleached out by gallons of sweat, testified to the many miles trekked under the scorching Sub-Saharan sun.

We had hand-carried copies of the newly-translated Pular New Testaments to isolated Christians nearly 150 miles away, distributing scripture in dozens of unreached villages all along the way. An awesome experience, but even now, over a year later, I hesitate to write about it. Why?

Well, it's just too risky. This particular trip provided perfect fodder for feeding the little, self-absorbed "me" god that we find hidden deep within every human heart. These insatiable monsters, our "I-dolls", with their never ending appetite for the praise and approval of others, just love to hear the stories – of all the things "we've" done. In mission, as in life, glory compels us. But, the fundamental question is: whose glory? What is motivating us, really? As a missionary living in the bush, ego crucifixion is a daily battle. My "I-doll" actually thrives on the moderate sacrifices I have to endure, especially when they produce "great stories" of "significant results" that make everybody "feel good".

Unfortunately, most of the 1.8 billion unreached people in the world live in very challenging environments. Reaching them with the gospel requires enormous sacrifices that usually don't provide us with the quick results and large numbers needed to feed our boasting-starved egos. So, to this day, millions of lost souls remain completely untouched by the gospel. It's simply not worth going there. Or is it?

"I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me."

**Prayer:** *Lord, authenticate this verse in our lives individually, and corporately as Your body. May Your Name be glorified in and through us. Amen.*

FRIDAY MAY 29

Go Now, and Speak My Words to Them

by Rev. Lawrence Spalink

*CRWM missionary in Japan*

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley..." Ezekiel 37:1a (NIV)

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

God granted the prophet Ezekiel fantastic visions of doom and glory. At times, Ezekiel collapsed to the ground, overcome with melancholy or awe, at these great revelations. But repeatedly, God's Spirit came into him and raised him to his feet, empowering him to overcome his weaknesses. The Spirit showed him visions of the future and gave him words to speak "to a rebellious nation," to call those who were dead in their sins to come out of their graves and live again.

The vision of the "valley of dry bones" is a snapshot of God's plan for rebellious Israel as well as for the rest of His world gone astray. A great host of those given new life is being raised up. The same Spirit of God who called and equipped Ezekiel, filled the disciples at Pentecost and now fills us today to carry on His life-giving message: "Dry bones: live again!" How? "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit!"

**Prayer:** *Lord, fill us again with Your Spirit. Show us visions of Your glory and give us dreams of Your coming Kingdom. Stand us up, send us out, and give us the words to speak that bring life! In Jesus' name, Amen.*



## SATURDAY MAY 30 Compelled by Christ's Love

by Rev. Albert Strydhorst  
CRWM missionary in Nigeria

"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died." 2 Cor. 5:14 (NIV)

Scripture Reading: Acts 20:17-24

He kept a steady voice as he spoke, but his face carried the weight of hurt and disappointment. "My father told me I was no longer his son, that I had shamed our entire family." And then, gathering his thoughts, he concluded, "My parents are obliged to reject me."

This was the testimony of a young Fulani believer in Guinea, relating the cost of his decision to follow Jesus. His parents were required – compelled by their Muslim community – to reject him.

What are the situations or people that compel us? Maybe it's family honor – or peer pressure. Maybe it's our own desires.

The apostle Paul was compelled by Christ's love. He knew that his missionary work was fraught with danger. People pleaded with him not to go on (Acts 21:10-12). But Christ's love, that had so changed and filled Paul's life with compassion for the lost, compelled him to go on, to tell the Good News, to face hardship – even death – with unshakeable hope.

The novelty of missionary work wears off quickly. The joy of seeing someone come to Christ turns to tears when they are rejected by their family. The excitement of an inquirer's curiosity one day becomes the irritating interruptions of next week. Disinterest becomes disheartening.

What motivates you and I? "For Christ's love compels us..." May His love so change us and fill our lives with compassion for the lost that we do not grow tired and lose heart.

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, fill us with Your love. Encourage those who have paid a great cost to follow You. Father God, fill us with Your Spirit and keep us attentive to Your urging. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## PENTECOST SUNDAY MAY 31 Compelled by His Spirit

by Rev. Wayne De Young  
CRWM missionary in Mexico

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." John 3:5-8 (NIV)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NIV)

Jesus spoke of the Spirit of God being like the wind. The fulfillment of that Spiritual Wind came on Pentecost. The sound of the rushing of a mighty wind in Jerusalem drew people from all over Europe and Northern Africa to hear the message of the gospel. The tongues of spiritual fire settled on the believers, filling them with the power of the Holy Spirit just as Jesus said, "Wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes and empowers you."

Men and women all over the globe continue to be filled with the Spirit's power. They are driven by the mighty Wind of the Spirit to share the gospel.

Forty years ago, I was driven by the Spirit of God to become a missionary in Mexico. Since that time I have witnessed God's same powerful movement in the hearts of His evangelists. They just can't help but share the gospel. They go to their neighbors, friends, relatives, their birthplaces and the villages where they used to live to bring the best news anyone could hear. They can't stop doing it.

The apostle Paul and his disciples couldn't either. Paul's first response to his conversion experience was to preach about Jesus. He and his followers were chased, jailed, stoned, whipped, and tortured, but they just couldn't stop sharing the best news they had ever heard: Jesus died; Jesus rose; Jesus saves; Jesus is Lord; Jesus is coming. They were blown by the Wind to the farthest reaches of the world. They were sent and empowered by the Spirit. They were counseled and advised by the Spirit and were compelled by this same Spirit to proclaim the Good News. They couldn't do otherwise - neither can you nor I.

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, send Your Spirit on us like You did at Pentecost. We come to You through the blood of Jesus, Your Son. Amen.*

