

The Story of Empowered 21

Plans are also underway for a “global celebration of the Holy Spirit.”

by Vinson Synan

In 2006 a massive and unforgettable event occurred in Los Angeles celebrating the centennial of the historic Azusa Street Revival that launched the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement on a global scale in 1906. The leader of this celebration was Billy Wilson who brought thousands of persons to pay tribute to William J. Seymour and the meetings in an old abandoned Methodist Church building that changed the face of Christianity in the twentieth century. Out of this meeting came a movement called “Empowered 21,” (or E21 as it is also known), which has developed into the most extensive ecumenical network of Spirit-filled believers in this century.

The Empowered 21 movement had its origin in a vision given to Robert Fisher in the last years of the twentieth century concerning a fitting celebration of the centennial of the Azusa Street revival which lasted from 1906 to 1909. His grandfather, Elmer Fisher, was an assistant to Seymour at Azusa Street. To plan for the event, Fisher organized the “Center for Spiritual Renewal” in Cleveland, Tennessee, in 2000. Unfortunately, he passed away before the event took place and his friend Billy Wilson was asked to complete the plans for the celebration and lead the conference. The celebration, which met in the Staples Center in Los Angeles in April 2006, was a resounding success as more than 50,000 persons attended the various events that were celebrated in several Los Angeles venues.

Fisher had been a faithful member of the Charismatic Concerns Committee that, through the North American Renewal Services Committee (NARSC), had organized the massive Charismatic conferences that met in Kansas City (1977), New Orleans (1986-87), Indianapolis (1990), Orlando (1995) and St Louis (2000). In some ways, Empowered 21 became a successor to these meetings which brought together thousands of Charismatic Catholics and Protestants to celebrate the worldwide outpouring of the Holy Spirit in all the churches.

After the Azusa Street celebration in 2006 the Center began a connection with Oral Roberts University when Wilson and his friend Mart Green were chosen to lead the Board of Trustees of the University. From this association came a vision for another meeting on the campus of ORU in 2010. Although the meeting was under the auspices of ORU, the Center for Spiritual Renewal was chosen to administer the event.

The vision statement of Empowered 21 is powerful and pointed: “That every person on earth would have an authentic encounter with Jesus Christ through the Power and Presence of the Holy Spirit ... by Pentecost 2033.” Its mission statement proclaims that: Empowered 21 will help shape the future of the global Spirit empowered movement throughout the world by focusing on crucial issues facing the movement and connecting generations for intergenerational blessing and impartation. “Thus the major focus is on what is called the ‘Nextgen’ (next generation) in order to continue the ‘spiri-

tual grace’ of the Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal into future generations. Underlining all the efforts of the vision is a prayer for a ‘fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the 21st Century.’” These themes have permeated all the event and planning sessions of E21 from the beginning.

Driven by this vision, in the following months Wilson led 17 unique “conversations” with some 500 church leaders and scholars from 54 nations and 15 universities with the goal of answering the question “what does it mean to be Spirit empowered in the 21st century?” and “what steps can be taken to engage new generations in the Spirit-filled experience?” Armed with the wealth of knowledge from these conversations, E21 conducted two major events on university campuses. The first was the “Global Congress on Holy Spirit Empowerment” which drew 10,000 persons to Oral Roberts University in April 2010 where 210 workshops produced a futuristic book edited by Vinson Synan titled *Spirit Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century*. The second was a meeting at Regent University in March of that year in conjunction with the Society for Pentecostal Studies which emphasized the “Convergence” of Spirit empowered generations and movements. Over 800 leaders registered for this event. Catholic Charismatic leaders who have participated in these E21 events include: Charles Whitehead and Fr. Peter Hocken from England; Matteo Calisi from Italy; and Walter Matthews, Bob Canton and Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan from the United States.

Empowered 21 continued page 11

NEWSBRIEFS

In Jesus all the nations will put their hope!

by Msgr. Joseph Malagrega

I had the privilege of accompanying the Youth Delegation from the United States to the **First Worldwide Charismatic Youth Encounter** from July 10 to 15 of this year. This event was sponsored by **ICCRS**, and hosted by the Charismatic Renewal of Brazil. The theme was **“In Jesus all the nations will put their hope.”**

This Encounter was held in the beautiful location of **Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil**. This city is located at the point where Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina meet, and is the site of the great waterfalls. (*Many of you may remember the waterfalls from the movie The Mission.*)

I have been in the Charismatic Renewal for 41 years, and have attended many conferences. This Encounter was by far the most energetic I have ever attended. Over **6,000 youth** attended the Encounter. The overwhelming majority were Brazilian youth—over 4,000. Another 1,500 came from other Latin American countries. Most of the Brazilian and Latino youths traveled for days on buses, and shared primitive lodgings in schools and other facilities. But their enthusiasm was enormous!

There were **24 delegates from the United States, 20 from the Hispanic Renewal, 4 from the Haitian Renewal**. We joined the scattering of those from other countries, including a large Korean delegation, and a large African delegation. Let me characterize my impressions under three categories:

1. **Mission:** As you can see from the theme, the entire Encounter centered around evangelizing the world. The aim of the Encounter was to mobilize the youth of the Renewal to be witnesses to Jesus in all circumstances of life. The witness of the Renewal of Brazil is impressive. As the leaders of the Brazilian Renewal stated: *“We announce that the Church in Brazil is in a permanent state of Mission!”* And seeing the youth respond, we all believe it! One of the most impressive evangelistic endeavors that the youth of Brazil have is called “Renewed Universities.” This is a placement of prayer groups in over 700 universities in Brazil. They are seeking to do the same in other countries—let them come here!

2. **Church involvement:** Any Charismatic would be impressed by the number of

priests and bishops involved in the Renewal in Brazil. The Encounter was fully Catholic: sacramental, Marian, Eucharist-centered, doctrinal. May the entire Church—hierarchy and laity—embrace renewal in the Holy Spirit!

3. **Gospel values:** The speakers clearly challenged the young people to not only be excited about witnessing to Jesus, but to do so with holy lives. Patti Gallagher Mansfield, invited from the United States, called all the young people to chastity and radical Gospel-living. It is wonderful when you go to a youth encounter and there is no watering down of Christian values!

May the power that was unleashed among the Youth in Foz do Iguaçu pervade the entire Catholic Charismatic Renewal! ♦

During this time, the E21 movement was organized on an international scale with a “Global Cabinet” and eleven regional cabinets around the world. Included in these groups were leaders from all the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in the world. Representing Catholic Charismatics on the Global Council is Oreste Pesare from Italy, Director of International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services. The first global gathering after the events at ORU was the E21 Asia Congress held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in October 2011 which drew some 15,000 persons. The latest extension of the E21 vision is the creation of a new “Youth Ministries Network” (NGYN2I) to advance the cause of Spirit-filled youth ministries in all the churches of the world.

Other plans for the future include the convening of an “E21 USA National Congress” for Hispanic leaders which

will convene in Orlando, Florida in November 2012. Also the E21 Global Cabinet has called for worldwide celebrations on Pentecost Sunday each year to celebrate the birthday of the Church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room. On Pentecost Sunday 2012 many thousands gathered in local celebrations around the world. Totally ecumenical, the vision is to see Pentecost Sunday rise to the level of Easter and Christmas as great days for Spirit-filled Christians to make a common witness to the world. Plans are also underway for a “global celebration of the Holy Spirit” through eleven regional Pentecost Celebrations to be held in major cities of the world on the week before Pentecost in 2014. All of this will lead up to a Global Congress on the Holy Spirit to be held in Jerusalem on May 17, 2015.

The Empowered 21 movement under the capable and visionary leadership of

Wilson and the many worldwide leadership groups that he has gathered seems poised to bring coordination of the Spirit-filled Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in the world to a level that has not been seen heretofore. Although most of the participants have come from ‘Classical Pentecostal’ and non-denominational backgrounds, strong efforts are being made to include more Roman Catholic and Orthodox leaders on the worldwide cabinets and in planning future events. ♦

Vinson Synan is Dean emeritus at the Regent University School of Divinity in Virginia Beach, VA and is an ordained minister in the Pentecostal Holiness Church. An author of many books,



Vinson is known as a leading historian of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. He serves on the Global Cabinet of the E21 movement.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

“The Brothers of the Beloved Disciple welcome you to San Antonio”

by Sean Stilson, novice

It is our belief as Brothers of the Beloved Disciple that when the Holy Spirit began the Catholic Charismatic Renewal he meant to renew the entire Church, and that includes religious life. Our community was born out of the conviction that a life centered on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, silent Eucharistic adoration, and the recitation of the Divine Office is not incompatible with charismatic worship, spontaneous praise of God, and praying in tongues. Rather, these seemingly distinct spiritualities are complementary and work together to bring about a deeper union with the Lord.

I joined the community about two years ago. I had been involved in the Charismatic Renewal from my youth, so I was happy to discover a religious order whose primary mission is to open others to the full life of the Holy Spirit

and all his gifts, including tongues, prophecy, and healing. Through the charism of our community I have grown in my love for our Blessed Mother whom Jesus, from the cross, gave to the Beloved Disciple to be his own mother.

In January Gabriel Ruiz and I entered novitiate, which is a year focused on spiritual formation. It has certainly been tough. As novices, we are largely secluded from interaction with our family and friends. While it is easy to become lonely, this separation from the world provides us with more opportunity for prayer, study, and union with God. Other members of our community are also traveling through trial to triumph. Fr. Joseph Mary Marshall is offering up his difficult recovery from cancer, and aspirant Daniel Dominguez is trusting the Lord with his recovery from spinal surgery.

Brothers of the Beloved Disciple

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Bro. Kirk Vandeventer and Fr. Will Combs continue to serve in the parish. Fr. George Montague, co-founder and moderator, teaches theology at St. Mary's University and is writing his 26th book. Fr. Bob Hogan, co-founder, is busy preparing for the National Leaders' and Ministries' Conference this November here in San Antonio. For those of you who will be attending, we look forward to seeing you here. ♦



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PENTECOST *Today* ANNOUNCEMENT

The National Service Committee has decided to reduce the number of issues of *Pentecost Today* in 2013 from four to two: a Spring issue, and a Fall issue. We have done so for two principal reasons: finances and the shifting of time and energy to new media such as our presence on Facebook and the development of our e-Newsletter.

If you would like to receive the e-Newsletter, please send an email to Chariscenter@nsc-chariscenter.org with the subject: **Subscribe e-Newsletter.**

As for finances, please see the Friends of the NSC Column in this issue and/or see a further explanation on our website under *Pentecost Today*.

We ask for your prayers as we go forward to continue this work of Renewal.

God's impossible surprises

by Deacon Bill Brennan,
Diocese of Stockton

Long ago, in the early times of our faith tradition, God surprised his people in their time of darkness (slavery) by intervening in their situation, changing everything in the process, and leading them into freedom in the Promised Land.

The Promised Land entered in my own faith journey bringing about a radical intervention on the part of the God of surprises. It surprised me, because I had believed my whole life to that day that such an intervention in the life of an average, ordinary person was simply impossible. It happened thirty-nine years ago (May 4, 1973 to be precise), and nothing has been the same since. That was the day on which I met the God of surprises in the experience of the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit. I celebrate that event every

year as I celebrate my birthday, marking it on my calendar. I remember what God has done for me.

Much to my astonishment, the surprises did not stop with that event in 1973; they just kept coming and continue to this very day. If they had told me on May 3rd, the day before discovering the thrill of being immersed in the Holy Spirit, that I would begin the adventure of a lifetime and where that adventure would take me, I would have said, "But that is not possible!" I have said many times since then, "I can't explain it, but I know that God did it!"

One of the latest surprises came with my nomination for and election to the position of chairing the Steering Committee of the Association of Diocesan Liaisons (ADL). It is humbling, to say the least, but it is also exciting because of the timing. We—the whole church and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal—are celebrating this year three major events: the 50th anniversary of Vatican II, the

45th anniversary of the birth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and the Year of Faith, which begins this October. For its part, the ADL joins with the National Service Committee in observing all three of these events and urges all diocesan liaisons to promote them and celebrate them in their respective dioceses.

And the ADL Steering Committee invites the liaisons to consider joining us in April (15 -19) for the 2013 ADL Conference, which will be held in the San Francisco Bay Area. Our theme will be "Vatican II and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal: A Teachable Moment."

God seems to delight in surprising his people. May we never lose the ability to be surprised, astonished, even astounded by the great things God has done for us. And may he never stop pouring out his Spirit on all mankind. ♦

For more information on the Diocesan Liaison ministry go to www.NADL.net.

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**From the
Executive
Director**

.....



by Walter Matthews

Serving the Renewal, Fostering the Grace

In the recently published ICCRS document, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, there are a number of affirmations. I want to highlight two: first, the outpouring of the Spirit in our day is a surprise of the Spirit, a sovereign gift of God, an unexpected grace. Second, "If baptism in the Spirit is the normal development of the Christian life that begins with the sacraments of initiation, it follows that this grace is not something unique to the Charismatic Renewal. It is present in different forms in the lives of many other Catholics without reference to the specific terminology or style of the Renewal. The special calling of the Renewal is to name this grace, to propose an ecclesial context and a specific pedagogy for receiving it, and to foster the full development of its fruits.

As it is said, the Charismatic Renewal is not a movement like the other ecclesial movements. We have no founders and no way of life to which everyone subscribes. On the other hand, we are a movement in the eyes of the Church because we have form and structure. We are identifiable. We are "charismatics."

What then is the role or charism of the Renewal as a movement? As the ICCRS document makes clear we are "to name this grace." Thus, "The mission of the National Service Committee is to foster the dynamic grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) which empowered the members of the early Church at Pentecost." (NSC Mission Statement.)

Continuing, the ICCRS document states that the Renewal is "to propose an ecclesial context and a specific pedagogy for receiving it, and to foster the full development of its fruits." The broad ecclesial context for most of us is, of course, the Catholic Church, but with an openness to our brothers and sisters in the broken Body of Christ. The pedagogy is the Life in the Spirit Seminar and its variations emphasizing that baptism in the Holy Spirit, while "a life-transforming experience of the love of God the Father poured into one's heart by the Holy Spirit, received through a surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ" (p 13) is also a way of life. The NSC Mission Statement states that we accomplish our mission by, among other things,

"Encouraging the awareness and the experience of the full role of the Holy Spirit among Catholic Charismatic Renewal groups and ministries, with the goal of reminding the Church to be fully conscious of this role."

This action of the Holy Spirit leads to:

- ❖ Experiencing union with God
- ❖ Inner transformation, leading to personal holiness
- ❖ Ministry empowered by the charisms for evangelization and service
- ❖ Building communities that witness to a renewed Catholic life.

Finally, the NSC works to foster the full development of the fruits of baptism in the Holy Spirit through Conferences (see you in San Antonio), publications like *Pentecost Today*, leaflets and other materials, electronic media like our website and Facebook, and Outreach Events for leaders and Renewal participants. It also staffs an office that supports the ministries of the NSC and serves as the national office for the Renewal. ♦

Friends of the NSC

We want to make all of our donor Friends of the NSC as well as all readers of *Pentecost Today* aware of the NSC's financial needs as of August 31.

Some background: the NSC has been passing deficit budgets since 2002, praying and trusting that the Lord would provide. And he has! In all of the last ten years the Committee's net income over expenses did better than budgeted. In seven of those years the Committee actually ended in the black, sometimes helped by a generous gift or a bequest.

However, in 2009 the Committee's negative Budget increased into the \$60,000 range and has continued there. While all three years were better than expected, two of them ran in the red eroding cash reserves.

For 2012 the approved Budget is negative \$60,750. Our best projection at this point is, while we will do better than budgeted, we will still end substantially in the red for the year and thereby eliminate the Committee's cash reserves.

Impacting this year's finances is the fact that the 45th Anniversary Conference in Philadelphia ended in the red, somewhere between \$20 - \$25,000. The NSC's portion will be about \$8,000. Added to this is \$10,000 that we had budgeted to net as well as the additional monies to cover some Conference related expenses, not covered by the Conference, bringing the total shortfall for the NSC of \$20,000.

We ask your prayer and generous response to our Appeals.

We especially ask those who receive *Pentecost Today* to send a donation of any amount and we ask Prayer Groups, while not neglecting to support the local Renewal, to take a collection for the work of the NSC. The goal for smaller groups might be \$45 for the 45th Anniversary. For larger groups a more generous donation would be appreciated.

Donations can be mailed or can be made online on our secure website www.nsc-chariscenter.org.

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For Your Information

The mission of *Pentecost Today* is to serve and be a voice for the National Service Committee's mission "to foster the dynamic grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit." We do this by publishing articles that instruct and give practical wisdom, with a particular emphasis on strengthening leaders and leader formation, in a visually appealing and inviting format.

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Outreach events around the country

The National Service Committee members are busy with Outreach Events. In September in Nashville, Jim Archer and Tammie Stevens of the NSC presented a Leadership Day. Jim Archer had these enthusiastic words in anticipation of the weekend: "Lots of words, awesome, overflowing with life, anointed, intimate, powerful and filled with the love of the Father and the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit! A day to be present as we experience the Presence of God! Nashville will be a time of both edification and transformation as we gather and minister as one body in Christ. Lord may our hearts be open to all you have in store for us!"

Tammie stated her enthusiasm that, after having been at two Leaders' and Ministries' Conferences held in Nashville, it was a joy to be able to journey with them in her new position on the NSC and share growing in holiness and charisms in community. The members of the NSC as a body share the enthusiasm expressed here by Jim and Tammie in all they offer. It really brings the Renewal alive when they are called to share their amazing gifts.

The focus of all these events come from the NSC Mission Statement:

"Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the love of the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit which leads to the Renewal of the grace and culture of Pentecost."

"Encouraging the awareness and the experience of the full role of the Holy Spirit among Catholic Charismatic Renewal groups and ministries."

What we have seen and heard

by Jane Guenther



"Assisting leadership development and serving and offering leadership to the Renewal."

In September as well, NSC member Caroline Gambale-Dirkes spoke at the Fall Conference for Archdiocesan Renewal Ministries in Colorado along with former NSC member Fr. Dave Pivonka. The beautiful focus of opening wide our hearts to receive the Spirit provided a wonderful weekend for youth and young adults. Next fall the NSC Leaders' and Ministries' Conference will be held in Colorado hoping to build on the seeds planted at this Conference.

November 16-18, Gerry Mader and Johnny Bertucci will be hosting a Men's Retreat in Columbus, Ohio entitled *Men of His Kingdom*. The website lists all outreach events that are being planned in 2013.

"Teacher what must I do to gain eternal life?" In this Scripture Jesus challenged the man who had followed all the commandments to give it all. The NSC members are a group who have the heart of generosity and joy knowing that what we possess and the talents we are blessed with are given to us as disciples and servants and we are invited to use these gifts for the good of others.

To offer one of these events in your Archdiocese call 1-800-338-2445 or email Chariscenter @nsc-chariscenter.org with "Outreach Event" in the subject line. ♦

Pentecost Today 2012 INDEX is available on the National Service Committee website: www.nsc-chariscenter.org.

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The Vision Statement of the National Service Committee

Catholic Charismatic Renewal invites all people to experience the Holy Spirit who opens us to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ and the love of the Father. The Holy Spirit empowers us for personal holiness, renewed Catholic life, and evangelization.

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