

Sermon Notes

Pentecost & Christian Aid Sunday 11 May 2008



Transforming Spirit, Transformed people
Acts 2:1-21, 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

Transforming Spirit

Pentecost is a celebration of a turning point in history. Through God's gift of the Holy Spirit, we have God's presence with us, in us and working through us. At Pentecost, we see the transforming power of the Spirit that:

- **gives life.** The word for Spirit in both Hebrew (*ruach*) and Greek (*pneuma*) also means 'breath'; it is the same word used in Genesis (2:7) when God breathed life into the first human being. The gift of the Spirit to the gathered community at Pentecost is a new creation. God's action at Pentecost is about bringing life to the world, to every individual and community – a process which continues today. This is echoed in Christian Aid's mission to bring 'life before death'.
- **overcomes barriers.** At Pentecost, the confusion and disconnection of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) was reversed. Boundaries of race, wealth and language were shattered. People from all nations heard the Word in their own tongue, and were given the ability to speak other languages. The Holy Spirit brought connection, communication, and the sense of belonging to a wider global community.
- **empowers people.** The Holy Spirit brought about a radical transformation in the disciples, and empowered them to go out with confidence and spread the good news. The power of the Spirit is active in each of us today – bringing comfort, restoration and inspiration. We see in the stories of presented by Christian Aid how Rekha and Dumata how empowering individuals can transform a community.

Transformed people

These actions of the Spirit show the changes God wants to bring about in the world. And the message of Pentecost is that God calls and equips us, as transformed people, to play our part in this mission. We are called to:

- **live in a new way.** Pentecost marked the birth of a movement of people sent out to proclaim a new way of living. The Holy Spirit helps us to see things differently; to see things and people for what they really are. We need to challenge the comfortable excuses we make to ourselves about our own lifestyles, and see the injustices around us. Are we open to the prompting of the Spirit in our lives and in our world?

- **speak out.** At Pentecost, the Spirit provoked the disciples to go out to prophesy and testify on the streets of Jerusalem. Many joined their number as a result. As followers of Christ, we are also called to proclaim God's love, and the justice he requires. Do we have the courage to speak out for poor and marginalised people? Campaigns like Jubilee 2000 show that when many people speak out together, amazing transformation is possible. We need to speak out urgently today on the issue of climate change.

- **work together.** At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit united people in purpose and mission. They witnessed not only in words but also in actions, going on to share all their resources to ensure no one in their community was in need (Acts 2:45). We, too, are called to work together to serve God's people and purpose. We are reminded in the epistle that we each bring different gifts to this task, but they come together for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7). In Christian Aid Week we all have different roles to play, but for a single cause: to transform the world.

These sermon notes are produced by Christian Aid.

For Small Groups

You may like to make a real difference by using your small group time to collect on behalf of Christian Aid.

Then when you meet together at the end take time to share and pray for needs around the world particularly the terrible calamity that has hit Burma and places that are in turmoil because of injustice and conflict.

Alternatively explore the bible passages and see how they speak to you concerning God's Holy Spirit transforming our lives and how we can share in transforming the world.