

The Spirit Our Power

FROM NAYIRI KARJIAN, ASSOCIATION GENERAL MINISTER | MAY 28. 2020

Soon after humans were created, the gods held an extraordinary meeting. Their agenda? Humans must never discover the secret of life. But where should they hide it? At the top of the very highest mountains, suggested one. In the depths of the ocean, said another. So they considered one plan after another without success until they came up with the perfect solution - bury the secret of life in their hearts; they will never think to look there! And so they did.

I have come to believe that the Holy Spirit is the secret of life buried deep within our hearts, and perhaps she is the best kept secret in the Church as well.

As we celebrate Pentecost, the third major holy day of the church, the first two being Christmas and Easter, I find myself wondering why Pentecost is often forgotten, neglected, even ignored especially in formerly mainline protestant congregations like us.

I wonder why Pentecost does not share equal time and attention with Christmas and Easter, and the Holy Spirit with Jesus Christ. Why is God coming to earth incarnate in human form, more of a celebration than God coming to earth in spirit form? Why is one part of the Trinity we call Jesus more important than the other part we call Spirit? And, why is the church always the church of Jesus Christ and hardly ever the Church of the Holy Spirit?

It seems to me that the Church has neglected this Spirit part of God. It has ignored, even overlooked Pentecost and hence the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the church has not known how to deal with this Spirit, the feminine side of God, the mystical, elusive, slippery, hard to grasp part. Perhaps the Church has ignored the Spirit because she

is a bit scary to rational minds as she eludes us moving, stirring in unexpected and surprising ways.

In so doing the Church has deprived us of the third person of the Trinity, the part of God who lives within us. She is the Spirit who is breath and wind, fire and peace, wisdom and mystery. She is the source of our power. We have been impoverished because of her "absence." I wonder how different our world be if we recognized the Spirit, God in our hearts and in the hearts of others , if we recognized the divine in each other.

In so doing the Church has usurped our power and encouraged our powerlessness. God the masculine, external being in heaven, almighty, omnipotent, omnipresent, is far, distant, and unreachable. This God is all powerful and does not share power with us. As a result we humans have not known God within, have not grown with a faith that empowers and emboldens us, but have been encouraged to remain childishly dependent, hopelessly powerless, and eternally fearful of all that is. Our faith has remained childish in a God who, many think, wants our blind obedience and unthinking devotion.

I believe that the Holy Spirit within us is God in us, and that God shares power with us; that God did not create us helpless victims but creative victors who can partner with God to heal and mend the world. I believe that God, more than anything, wants our partnership, our connecting, our growing in the image of Christ, so empowered and empowering one another we can dream and prophesy, we can heal and reconcile, we can imagine and fulfill all the possibilities set before us! Come Holy Spirit!