

THOUGHTS

By the father/son team
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SPEAKERS ON THE WORD TODAY

PENTECOST

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Jesus wanted His disciples to wait for the filling of the Spirit before they went into the world to witness.

We are too weak in our own strength and determination—we must have God's Power—the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit uses God's Word. God's Word=God's Power.

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No amount of planning and strategy can take the place of God's power and blessing on any goal or project.

The Christian Church is under attack! Economic slow downs are threatening many Lutheran schools, high schools and churches. Giving is way down! The "average" church goer has dropped out of sight. They never do much. And when times get rough they "cut back" their "token" gifts. Even the committed scale back their gifts.

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Two large Christian ministries are cutting back! Focus on the Family has cut over three hundred employees. They have discontinued a major ministry to teenagers.

Rick Warren's ministry (Purpose Driven Life) launched a new periodical with the help of Reader's Digest. After only 3 issues they have pulled the plug—cancelled the project.

The Word Today is also forced to cut back. We have cancelled half of our English broadcasts in America. We have cut back some repeat air times in our foreign countries. So far we have not cut any foreign languages (thank God).

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From the radio audience this year's anniversary offering from 31 people totaled \$9,962.00. One committed giver sent \$5,000.00, one sent \$1,600.00 and another sent \$1,100.00. Two sent \$500.00 each. The other 27 people sent \$1,262.00. No doubt some of the smaller gifts were sacrificial—and God will bless accordingly. But, what about the 130 people on our mailing list who did not respond at all in May? (Some, of course, probably couldn't and others give quarterly or annually, but certainly this doesn't account for everybody).

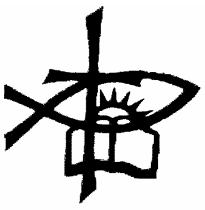
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More people must get involved! We need the Holy Spirit. We need a strong outpouring of God's power!

God help us as we attempt to move forward for Him. To God be the glory!

Sincerely,
Paul R. Schroeder

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*The Bible is God's Word . . . Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh . . .
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*

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Well, the Lord *did* tell us to, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it (Genesis 1:28b)." That's likely the most obedient we humans have been to any order God has given! We now are not only filling the earth, we're all moving toward larger cities in which to live. Trends show that "megacities" will dominate the experience of societies fifty years from now. Today there are 22 cities in the world with population over 10 million. By 2050 almost 70% of the world's inhabitants will live in massive urban networks and there will likely be at least 30 megacities globally (c.f. "Megacities of the World: A Glimpse of How We'll Live Tomorrow; Yahoo News).

Such changes will sorely tax our resources, as is evidenced by a UN warning that by 2050 if dramatic changes are not made to the global fishing industry the stocks of most desirable fish could be depleted. Fish provide protein, not just a tasty alternative, for millions of people around the world. Humanity is not just filling the world, we are literally overrunning it! With proper stewardship we could stave off disaster, but I think that the momentum toward an upward lifestyle is catching on globally and there are *billions* of people who want it. The earth cannot sustain such a strain on its resources.

This is not only a matter of economics or politics; it's a spiritual matter. I am not one who condemns Western lifestyle to encourage a socialist agenda. However, it seems obvious that Christians in the Western world have established for themselves an artificially high standard of living; we have not practiced contentment as a society. We have given lip service to Jesus' sentiment, "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we wear?'" For the pagans run after all these things, and you heavenly Father knows that you need them (Matthew 6:31-32)." We have fairly ignored this as a lifestyle choice.

Christians have been assessing the global material disparity, and much to their credit have been engrossed in mission work, serving by funding and building for the poor around the world. However, there is a catch-22, namely that as expectations rise about living conditions elsewhere, resources will be taxed and depleted. A finite world of resources cannot indefinitely sustain infinitely rising lifestyles for the entire planet.

The Christian of the future will need to be prepared to survive in a politically uncertain, economically unstable, socially pressurized climate. Our message of salvation in Jesus will never change, however it will be proclaimed to an ever more desperate population. The inhabitants of tomorrow's world, it seems, will be *consumed* by ideals and issues pertaining to consumption; getting Green and simply *getting* will increasingly dominate thinking. Christians who have grown up with too much will need to completely retool their minds to keep their spiritual priorities in place. In the world of the future, our children will be tested on whether they can indeed live on the promise of Christ, "Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (v.33)."

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder

THE WORD TODAY reaching the world with GOD'S WORD