

Some Very Good Pentecost Sunday News From Nashville

We are living through the most harrowing experience of our lifetime with the COVID-19 crisis and racial riots exploding in cities across our nation. Let's be honest; it is a very discouraging time.

Upon arriving home on Sunday evening with my wife from a magnificent citywide event in the Nashville, Tennessee area, I felt compelled to share this account, hoping it will inspire and bless multitudes across this land!

On Pentecost Sunday evening, over 30 churches came together to display the unity we share in Jesus Christ. Over 10,000 people were involved; over 150,000 participated via streaming, radio and Facebook. Even our governor, Bill Lee (who is a committed Christian), attended and prayed a fervent prayer for justice and peace by the power of our living God!

Just 24 hours before, there was a display in downtown Nashville of violence, rioting and racial discord over the recent tragedy in Minnesota. Yet here, just miles away, was a demonstration and celebration of authentic forgiveness, brotherhood, peace, justice, reconciliation and unity only possible when people have experienced the transformative power of the gospel.

On the first Pentecost, 49 days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, representatives from over 15 different ethnic groups came together, heard the gospel, repented, were converted and experienced a supernatural impartation of the power of God through His Holy Spirit. The significant component that has significance for all Christians today is the fact that they were all in a state of unity or in "one accord" (Acts 2 is the historical record of the full account).

Unity Is Essential

In John 17, Jesus prayed for Christians, underscoring the absolute importance of relational unity even though there can be doctrinal differences. He prayed “that they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You. May they also be one in Us, that the world may believe that You have sent Me” (John 17:21).

The late John Stott (who many consider would be honored as pope if non-Catholics had one) gave us this convicting statement to challenge Christians everywhere to honor relational unity: “If the world does not see the oneness in love among Christian brethren, then the world has the God-given right to question whether Jesus was sent from God and whether Christianity is true.”

So on Pentecost Sunday evening in an expansive field outside of Nashville, multitudes of Christians came together to offer praise and worship to Jesus Christ and to be challenged by exhortations to repent, pray, share the gospel, be ministers of reconciliation and break down barriers that hinder us from enjoying the resurrection power of Jesus to impact our world today.

Flyover of a Fantastic Time

In the Nashville area, we do our best to enjoy a “no competition zone.” We’re committed to be servant leaders cultivating a culture of honor amongst ourselves.

Pastor Steve Berger was a primary catalyst for our experience joined by at least 30 other leaders aligning themselves with a God-given vision for these turbulent times. “Papa” Don Finto, 92 years old, has been an inspiration to all of us since the days he opened doors for Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant and other musical artists during and after the Jesus Movement.

During our two-hour anointed experience, we heard exhortations

and prayers led by black brothers and sisters, Hispanics, Millennials and others representing the diversity of our Christian faith. We celebrated a parade of nations as flag holders moved through the grounds hoisting flags from the nations of the world who one day will bow before Jesus Christ our soon coming King!

Between segments, we prayed fervently for forgiveness and lifted up the name of Jesus to break down strongholds and the racial divide in our nation. We paused to silently lift up the names of lost loved ones. We acknowledged our need to obey the final command of Jesus before His departure to "wait" until we receive the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out our gospel mission.

We concluded with an offering to assist churches devastated by the COVID-19 virus. Then we received Communion with humble hearts before a closing song of worship and a blessing to carry out what God entrusted us to do at this critical time.