

Spirit of God Moves at Assemblies of God Outreach

When Pastor Mike Quinn and his wife, Teresa, first arrived at Newbreak Church (then known as La Jolla Assembly of God) 28 years ago with an attendance of 13 souls, it would have been difficult for them to imagine how the Holy Spirit would bless the church to the point that they would one day be baptizing more than a dozen times that number of people in a single baptismal service.

But on Friday, July 18, that's exactly what happened. Newbreak Church in San Diego and its five campuses around the county, came together and 164 people publicly proclaimed their faith in an outdoor baptismal service held at San Diego's Crown Point Park Mission Bay.

Quinn, who is also an AG Southern California District Executive Presbyterian and member of the AG Church Multiplication Network leadership team, explains that a majority of those being baptized are new converts, ranging from 8-year-olds to retirees.

"Everyone goes through baptism class a few weeks prior to the event," he says. "It's important for each person to really know what they're doing and why they're doing it."

Justin Romine with his wife, Katie, has been the life-groups pastor for the Newbreak campuses for the past 3 1/2 years. He organizes the annual event, which regularly sees approximately 150 people choose to follow the biblical instruction of being baptized through immersion in water.

"This year was really special for me," Romine states. "In addition to baptizing many others, I was privileged to baptize two complete families—father, mother and their children. It was fantastic to see a whole family make this public

proclamation of faith together.”

The event, simply by what it is, is a powerful outreach, Quinn says. “We encourage those being baptized to invite their families, friends, co-workers and to talk about it on social media.”

With the invitation going out to so many to attend the baptismal service—Newbreak, which also has East County, Ocean Beach, Pacific Beach and Scripps Mesa campuses—the event is also billed as an all-church barbecue picnic with the public invited.

“As people are being baptized, there are more than a thousand people along the shore cheering them,” says Quinn. “It’s remarkable and moving to see.”

Quinn and Romine agree that when people invite others to come to their baptism, in person or through social media, the event takes on an evangelistic flair. Many times others have no idea what being baptized means, which provides those being baptized an opportunity to explain about baptism and why they’re doing it.

The two ministers also affirm each other when it comes to experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit at the event.

“We have people who come to witness a family member or friend get baptized, and they just get saved,” Quinn says. “It’s simply an organic, Spirit-led salvation decision.”

Romine shares that last year, a young military man saw what was happening in the bay from the other side of the channel. He swam across the channel, because he wanted to be baptized as well. After speaking to leaders, who confirmed the young man’s understanding of what he was about to do, he was baptized.

Quinn recalls a father, watching his wife and daughter being

baptized, suddenly convicted by the Holy Spirit. The man expressed his desire to be baptized to Quinn. He directed the man to the on-site counseling session with other leaders, and not much later, the man joined his family in being baptized.

“The Spirit moves on people’s lives,” Quinn says. “It just happens—normal, natural ... and they get baptized.”

With some 1,500 church members and guests attending the baptism and barbecue, Romine has worked hard to create an event that not only honors and recognizes the significance of what is taking place in the water but also to make the “picnic” side of the event something to anticipate—and that will also draw the interest of the community and those who happen to pass by.

In addition to making enough pulled-pork sandwiches, hot dogs and quesadillas to feed a small army, Romine offers attendees a kid-zone area, adult recreation area and live music. However, there is still a time of reverence at the event. The baptismal service begins with Quinn presenting a brief message followed by worship music, as multiplied dozens are baptized in the calm, warm bay waters, often with their families looking on from the shore or even in the water with them.

Quinn points out that the baptism-and-barbecue event is not the only time the church holds baptismal services. At the conclusion of each quarterly life group, the church also prepares those interested for a baptismal service. So far this year, the church has seen 234 people baptized.

The combined average weekly attendance at Newbreak is about 3,000, but Quinn says the church is not an overnight success story—the first 14 years the church averaged fewer than 200 people. However, now the campuses do as many as 100 outreaches, which impact specific areas of their communities, with the baptism and barbecue picnic being by far the largest event.

“I think people are inspired by the humility and surrender that occurs in the midst of baptism,” Romine observes. “The Spirit of God moves in such a powerful way. It’s amazing to see this happen, and I have countless stories of this happening again and again. It is so awesome to see the Holy Spirit work.”