

World-Renowned Pentecostal Leader Honored for Her Almost 80 Years of Ministry

Verna Linzey (1919-2016), world-renowned Pentecostal leader, was recently honored by the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center in Springfield, Missouri.

The mention came in a press release dated Oct. 2, 2019, highlighting her ministry in crusade evangelism, television ministry and books promoting the classical Pentecostal doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, including her film and recording careers.

Darrin J. Rodgers, director of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, the largest archival center in the world for Pentecostal history, provided us with this statement for publication, accentuating Rev. Linzey's role as a world-class leader of the Pentecostal Movement. He said: "Verna Hall Linzey's ministry, whose remarkable life spanned the history of the Pentecostal movement, provides a poignant example of how God has worked through Pentecostal women.

"Linzey was a Pentecostal evangelist before she married; she continued in pastoral and evangelistic ministry alongside her husband even while raising 10 children; and in her later years, her ministry blossomed and she authored several books, spoke at conferences and crusades around the world and even appeared in a motion picture.

"During her almost 80 years in ministry, Linzey prayed with countless thousands of people to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and her writings and television programs faithfully shared classical Pentecostal beliefs. Linzey's life demonstrates what God can do through a person who seeks to be fully committed to Christ and His mission."

The fifth of six children, Verna was born on May 17, 1919, in her home in Coffeyville, Kansas. Her parents were Carey F. Hall and Alice M. Hall. Her uncle, William C. Hall, M.D., was one of the lead surgeons and a prominent businessman in Coffeyville and delivered Verna. He operated on the surviving Dalton boy, Emmett Dalton, who was shot 23 times during the failed bank robbery of the Condon National Bank in Coffeyville in 1892. Dr. Hall was on the board of directors of the bank at this time.

Verna's cousin, Carlton Hall, owned the Hall Guernsey Dairy, which provided milk for the city. Her parents founded the Hall Music Company in Coffeyville. Her father passed away before she was 2 years old. Six years later, her mother married Rev. Francis L. Doyle, who served in 1928 as pastor of the First Assembly of God of Coffeyville and was a personal friend of prominent Assemblies of God revivalist, educator and theologian Rev. P.C. Nelson. Rev. Nelson founded the Southwestern Bible School in Enid, Oklahoma, which Verna would later attend, and conducted revivals at the Assemblies of God church in Coffeyville.

The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center stated that the early Pentecostal movement, with its dual emphases on the Word of God and spiritual renewal, made a significant impact on young Verna. The center also stated that when Verna was a young girl, P.C. Nelson routinely stopped at her family's home with his ministry team when passing through Coffeyville after revival meetings on the way back to Enid, Oklahoma. Verna received permission from her mother to get out of bed and sit around the kitchen table to hear Rev. and Mrs. Nelson and some of their faculty members and senior students talk about Bible prophecy, salvations and fillings of the Holy Spirit at the meetings they had conducted that weekend.

According to the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, young Verna knew God was calling her to the ministry. Her dream was to eventually attend the Bible school Rev. Nelson founded. So

from 1937 to 1939, she matriculated at Southwestern Bible School, now Southwestern Assemblies of God University, where she mastered biblical languages. She participated in evangelism, pastoral ministry and crusades with her eldest brother, Franklin Hall, in the 1930s and early 1940s in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and California. She eventually conducted her own crusades and ministry.

Verna married Stanford E. Linzey, Jr., (1920-2010) in 1941. They became Assemblies of God ministers in 1945, and in 1946, they built and co-pastored El Cajon Evangelistic Tabernacle in El Cajon, California. Verna prayed for Stanford to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and influenced Stanford to likewise get his education and become a U.S. Navy chaplain. Consequently, he became the first active-duty Navy Assemblies of God chaplain and the first to attain the rank of captain.

During Stanford's ministry as a Navy chaplain from 1955 to 1974, Verna continued to preach and teach on the Holy Spirit in churches and at conferences, including for Women's Aglow. It is estimated that Verna and Stanford laid hands on and prayed for 20,000 people to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

In addition to her ministry, Verna had a very active family life. She and Stanford had 10 children—five boys and five girls.

Verna had a deep love for the Word of God. She audited and completed the coursework for the entire doctor of ministry program at Fuller Theological Seminary (1980). She received an honorary doctor of divinity from Kingsway University and Theological Seminary (2001). She served as chief editor of the New Tyndale Version Bible translation (2009) and as one of the translators of the Modern English Version Bible translation (2014).

Verna wrote extensively on the theology of the Holy Spirit,

including articles published in various religious periodicals. In 2004, she authored *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit*, for which she received the Best Nonfiction Book of the Year Award (2006) from the San Diego Christian Writers Guild.

In her book, Verna defines Spirit baptism as “the reception of the Holy Spirit as confirmed by speaking in tongues.” Her definition should be adopted by every Pentecostal denomination and every Pentecostal around the world.

Wonsuk Ma, Ph.D., who is the dean and distinguished professor of global Christianity at the College of Theology & Mission at Oral Roberts University and was Verna’s long-time friend, sent 3,000 copies to be used as a textbook in 100 Bible colleges around the world, namely in the Far East. James D. G. Dunn, Ph.D., emeritus professor of University of Durham in the United Kingdom, stated regarding Verna’s book: “Verna Linzey’s book is a restatement of classic Pentecostal convictions on baptism in the Spirit and speaking in tongues, with the same ingenuousness and fervor which lit the flame of Pentecostalism 100 years ago.”

The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center stated in its Oct. 2 press release: “Rev. Linzey gained worldwide prominence beginning on television in 2004, following the publication of her book. Her television ministry began when she preached on the baptism in the Holy Spirit on God’s Learning Channel, a satellite network founded by Al and Tommie Cooper. This paved the way for two television series which would later be filmed: *The Holy Spirit Today with Dr. Verna Linzey* and *The Word with Dr. Verna Linzey*. In 2007, Rev. Linzey wrote another book, *Spirit Baptism*, and recorded a set of teaching CDs and videos titled, *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit* and *The Light of the World*. She reached millions of people with the Pentecostal message.

Russell P. Spittler, Ph.D., the leading Assemblies of God academic and provost emeritus and senior professor of New

Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, in the foreword to *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit*, provides this definitive description of where Verna's legacy stands in the Pentecostal Movement—in the tradition of Frank Boyd, and P.C. Nelson who was Verna's former mentor, and Ernest S. Williams who was the longest serving general superintendent of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. This is very significant. On a personal level it is a complement to be considered on par with P.C. Nelson, to whom Verna listened around her own kitchen table as a girl in Coffeyville in the 1920s.

Steve Strang, founder of Charisma Media, which is the largest charismatic publishing company in the world with major magazines and the most widely read charismatic internet news outlet in the world, helped propel Rev. Linzey to further prominence as she conducted crusades of up to 80,000 people, to include Haiti and Singapore and invitations to West Africa, and conferences and conventions across the United States, to include speaking at Pat Robertson's Regent University.

Steve Strang published Rev. Linzey's book *Gifts of the Spirit*, the foreword of which was written by Vinson Synan, Ph.D., who is one of the world's leading historians of the Pentecostal movement, dean emeritus in the School of Divinity of Regent University, and former general secretary of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. Dr. Synan heads up the Ph.D. program in contextual theology at Oral Roberts University.

In November 2010, Verna had a role in a major feature movie, *Iniquity*, which is an updated version of the story of David and Bathsheba. She had the role of the lead juror. Also a professional recording artist with worldwide acclaim, Verna sang "The Rose" by Bette Midler for the soundtrack.

Verna was one of the keynote speakers for the 2011 Leadership Summit at the Heritage Foundation along with Speaker John Boehner, Ambassador Terry Miller, Congressman John Lewis and National Security Adviser of the United States John Bolton,

where she received the 2011 Leader of the Year Award. She also received the “National Bible Teacher of the Year Award” at Westminster Theological Seminary in California during National Bible Week in 2011. Her album “Oh Blessed Jesus” went gold for Best Vocals in Southern Gospel Music, featuring Grammy Award nominee Triumphant Quartet and the group Sisters as her backup vocals.

Rev. Linzey’s accomplishments demonstrate that not only did she reach the pinnacle of worldwide acclaim, but also that she remained there and continued to be an ever-rising star until the Lord took her home to heaven on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2016.

Rev. Linzey’s ministry and work significantly impacted the church and the Pentecostal movement in the 20th and early 21st centuries. She impacted millions of people through her television broadcasts, books, and crusades with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the classical Pentecostal message of the baptism in the Spirit. Rev. Linzey continues to make an impact through her legacy, work and especially her Bible translation work, which is in bookstores around the world. {eo}

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