

Let the Holy Spirit Be Your GPS!

Somewhere between Morristown and Bean Station, Tenn., my GPS started having a nervous breakdown. The disembodied voice within the box began frantically crying, "Recalculating! Recalculating! Please drive to highlighted route."

Now I had driven this way before but it had been some time ago. This day, as I drove from my son's house north of Atlanta to Knox County, Kentucky I punched in my friend's address just to be sure I did not miss a turn. I am, after all, 70 years old and memory is tricky now.

I whizzed up Route 25E through Morristown and felt the beauty and majesty of the mountains wash over me. I felt calm and sane. I was born and bred in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia and West Virginia and have seen other great mountain ranges: the Alps in my newly-purchased Amsterdam Austin, where my young sons stared in wonder at the small English car we were in and the huge mountains we must conquer whispering, "Mama, how are we going to get over these big mountains?" "One mountain at a time, son, one mountain at a time," I replied.

I've seen the Rockies and Pike's Peak, Mount Lebanon where a few great cedars still grow, Mount Nebo in Jordan where I could almost see to Jerusalem, Mount Calvary in Israel where our Lord bled and died. Nothing does for me what mountains do. Who can doubt that God is especially present in the mountains?

I drove as swiftly as the law allows having learned to drive in the mountains at just 16. I am no flatlander who fears tumbling down the mountain into the valley. The roads are curvy and narrow, but I know my car and it holds the road with a tight grip. And, I have driven these back roads for almost half a century preaching the gospel here.

I drive through Tazewell, Tenn. I listen for the disembodied voice to tell me where to turn. I roar into Kentucky, pass Lincoln University and wonder what events they will sponsor to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the War Between the States. Abraham Lincoln was, after all, born in Kentucky.

Between Morristown and Bean Station, the road had been altered since I last drove this way. Sides of the mountain had been bulldozed to remove some of the curves. Dirt had been pushed around to make wider lanes. New roadbeds had been built, new paths charted. But, the GPS kept me on the right road from Georgia to Kentucky.

I roar through the valley, on toward Knox County. I see landmarks that are familiar. Soon I turn up the branch, hope I do not meet anyone coming out of the holler and arrive at a large brick house on the right. I am at Charles and Shelia's house. They have been my friends for nearly 50 years and I know I am welcome here. Truly I am home.

All through this journey, the disembodied voice spoke—over rivers, through valleys, up mountains, through tunnels, towns and farmland, the voice has guided. From this I learn a valuable lesson.

My journey toward the Celestial City is long and arduous. Sometimes burdens are stacked and strapped on my spirit. Sometimes I travel in great light; sometimes I travel through dark tunnels. Through the long journey I hear a Voice—the Holy Spirit of God—that tells me where the true path is. He brings the word, the written instruction, to my memory and gently nudges me to the right way.

Many roads diverge off the route to my destination. I do not take them. The Voice speaks when I take a wrong turn, *Recalculating! Please take the highlighted route.* The Holy Spirit abides and I listen to His voice. I conquer all the tests and trials and keep to the straight and narrow.

God did not give the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church as a spiritual play toy. He gave the Holy Spirit so that like a heavenly GPS we could safely make the journey and keep on the right road as articulated in His Word.

The church seems to have forgotten that He abides. We have gone our own way, diverging where our impulses take us. He abides here to guide, empower and instruct the church. He is calling to the church, *Recalculating! Please take the highlighted route!*

It is time again to tarry for the Holy Ghost to reveal Himself in great power in our land. But He is also present to help me personally along the righteous road. And, I take it. He is present to help you as well.