

Verna Linzey: The Holy Spirit, Our Ally

Probably the most well-known name for the Holy Spirit is the *Paraclete*, often translated as the Counselor or Advocate. He is a personal helper. The Holy Spirit is the ever-present, ever-welcome, divine *Paraclete* (Comforter/Counselor).

No English word adequately translates the Greek word *parakletos*, according to A.L. Lastinger in "The *Parakletos*: Our Holy Ally," particularly in the Scripture where Jesus says, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another [*Parakletos*] Counselor/Comforter to be with you forever—the Spirit of Truth" (John 14:16). The two Greek words which combine to form the term, *para* meaning "beside" and *kaleo* meaning "to call," result in the meaning "to call beside," says Lastinger. William Barclay, in *The Gospel of John*, explains Lastinger, the word, though it was used in several ways, was always used of someone called in to help in time of trouble or need.

The context of the word indicates that Jesus was referencing Himself as being the prior Comforter/Counselor and the Holy Spirit as being another Comforter/Counselor. The adjective *allos* means "another of the same sort." So, "another Comforter" means one of the same kind as the disciples previously had in Jesus. In other words, the Holy Spirit was to be everything to believers that Jesus had been to the disciples, for He was a Comforter of the same sort.

Lastinger points out that the word *allos* is close to the origin of the English word "ally." And "an ally is one who certainly offers more than just moral support; he is willing to throw himself into the conflict and fight alongside his friend for the ultimate goal of victory. Your battle becomes his battle, your enemy, his enemy, and your need his need."

This is the kind of ally or Counselor Jesus left with us. Most of us realize that the Holy Spirit is a Comforter or Counselor or Advocate because of what Jesus said to the disciples: "When I go I will send another Comforter to you" (John 14:16).

How much else do we know about the Holy Spirit? We have heard Him called the third person of the Trinity, and He is. But so often the title Holy Spirit, or "Holy Ghost" as the King James Version translates, evokes in us images of ghost-likeness, mystery, unearthliness, or something intangible and out of the realm of real life. But if we look carefully at Scripture, we see that the Holy Spirit is not an "it" but a person. In fact He is just as much a person as are God the Father and God the Son.

He can be spoken against and sinned against (Matt. 12:31-32), He can be lied to (Acts 5:3), He can be provoked (Acts 5:9), He can be resisted (Acts 7:51), and He can be quenched (stifled) (1 Thess. 5:19). All of these are traits we would associate with a person. His ministries are those of a person too—He ministers love, joy, peace, and hope. He is the executive member of the Godhead, the one who performs the will of the Father.

The coming of the Holy Spirit was essentially the out-breathing of God's own life. According to John Lancaster, in "The Life-Style of the Spirit" (*Paraclete* 13, #2), this out-breathing of God took place after the resurrection of Christ. So, the breath or Spirit that Christ gave to the disciples was the breath of resurrection life. Resurrection life is divine life. It is victorious over sin. It is a life that has come into contact with sin and triumphed over it. Jesus "communicates this [resurrection] life to us when He breathes the Holy Spirit into us . . . And the essential nature of that life is victorious holiness."

Holiness is the Holy Spirit's essential nature. His name bears witness of that fact: *Holy Spirit*. We are bound to assume,

then, that the “church into which Christ has breathed His Holy Spirit will be outstanding for its holiness,” says Lancaster. It is not possible for the church to live in holiness without being baptized with the Holy Spirit. The early church demanded holiness, not only in actions but also in motives. Witness the case of Simon, the sorcerer, (Acts 8:19-23). It was not enough that he would seek for the supernatural experience the disciples had, but Peter demanded that his motives in seeking it should glorify God as well, says Lancaster.

How does the Holy Spirit relate to the human personality? The human intellect is available for the Holy Spirit to use. The greatest truth in the world—the knowledge of the Kingdom of God and of Jesus Himself—will never be known except by those who have the Holy Spirit within them (John 3:5), says Arthur H. Parsons, in “The Personality of the Holy Spirit” (*Paraclete* 15, #4).