

IN PART

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST COMMUNITY IN THE U.S.

Summer 2013

WESLEYANISM

**We
believe**
JESUS IS
TRANSFORMING US



+ PLUS

THE 2012
Year-in-
Review
FOR BIC U.S.

The article “Rising hope” by Deb Wiles was a powerful reminder of God’s healing work in our lives and through the faith community.

It was also another reminder to me that child abuse and neglect continue to be pervasive problems, even in the Church. As a lifelong BIC member, I invite our congregations to consider Dove’s Nest, an Anabaptist organization committed to “empowering and equipping faith communities to keep children and youth safe in their homes, churches, and communities.” Taking practical steps to make the faith community a safe place is something to which we are all called!

—Jon Stanton, Dove’s Nest (Lincoln, Neb.)

DOVESNEST.NET

THE VIEW FROM HERE

I have to admit that when I first began my research for this issue of *In Part*, some aspects of Wesleyanism and its history in our Church didn’t immediately resonate with me.

As Brethren in Christ, we first encountered Wesleyan theology in the 19th century, through a distinct branch known as the American Holiness Movement. Based upon my reading, I think it’s fair to say that this interaction resulted in a crisis. BIC historians used words like “wildfire” to describe how Wesleyan teachings swept our community, leading some BIC to fully embrace them, to the exclusion of our Anabaptist- and Pietist-inspired beliefs. At the same time, others fully rejected Wesleyanism, unsure of how to navigate the tensions it raised with those core traditions.

As I considered the excesses of Wesleyanism and the division it caused in our community, I struggled to feel appreciation for this aspect of our heritage.

But as I kept researching, I learned that something wonderful (miraculous, even) happened: God moved us toward a diverse unity. Through the 1900s, Brethren in Christ worked together—through pain, uncertainty, and even fervent disagreement—to love one another generously and to create a completely new form of Wesleyanism that actually *fortified* our shared beliefs and identity.

BIC theologian and historian Luke Keefer, Jr., described the process like this: “We talked until there was majority agreement, and those who dissented were not excommunicated. In fact, those who opposed Wesleyanism were used in the church as pastors, evangelists, teachers, and institutional administrators. [...] The type of Wesleyanism that emerged in the [BIC] was different from any other holiness group in North America.”*

As we listened to and loved each other, we came to a deeper, fuller understanding of what it means to worship a holy God.

And so, as you engage with this third installment of our “We believe” series, I hope you’ll find your heart “strangely warmed” by the enlivening flame of the Holy Spirit, as illuminated by our Wesleyan heritage.

In the glow of that light,

Kristine
Kristine N. Frey, editor

* “Three Streams of Our Heritage: Separate or Part of a Whole?” by Luke Keefer, Jr., reprinted in the August 2012 issue of *Brethren in Christ History and Life*.

Creative contributors



Cover art
by Andy Rash

ARTIST’S STATEMENT

To create this visual representation of our Wesleyan heritage, I drew in a variety of elements, each with symbolic meaning:

- The top **figure cutout** captures our posture as believers in the presence of God’s holiness and love.
- The **collage of homes and streets** represents “the world” and our call to respond to the holiness and love of God with an outpouring of love for God and neighbor.
- The **reflected figure** illustrates the relationship between worshipping God, pursuing holiness, and living out our faith in “the world.”
- The **flame cutouts** within the figures represent the Holy Spirit’s presence within us. The cutouts are encased in **vessels**, a reference to our being sanctified carriers of the good news of Christ’s love.
- The **prayer rail** pictured behind the top figure is from the Grantham (Pa.) Church and represents the Wesleyan teaching on the Holy Spirit’s role in empowering our prayer.
- The **orange-red glass** around the perimeter represents the outpouring of the Spirit, flowing into all people and inspiring our worship.



Andy Rash attends Harrisburg (Pa.) BIC with his wife, Jennifer, and stepson, Noah. For artistic inspiration, Andy often draws from his daily life. For example, he included a picture of his neighborhood in the collage above.



Bo Williams is a studio art major at Messiah College (Grantham, Pa.) and dreams of photographing the world and having his own studio and darkroom. His work appears on pages 10–11.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM BIC U.S.



In **February**, the 2012 General Conference confirmed Dr. Alan Robinson as national director of BIC U.S. Alan, who has served as senior pastor at Carlisle (Pa.) BIC Church since 1999, will begin his five-year term on August 1. Visit BIC-CHURCH.ORG to read more about this news!

IN PART™

Summer 2013

VOLUME 126 NUMBER 3

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST COMMUNITY IN THE U.S.

Now I know *in part*; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. *I Corinthians 13:12*

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH IN THE U.S.

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About “We believe”

“We believe” is a four-part series examining the theological streams that have shaped our identity and values as Brethren in Christ:

- Anabaptism—Winter 2012
- Pietism—Spring 2013
- Wesleyanism—Summer 2013
- Evangelicalism—Fall 2013

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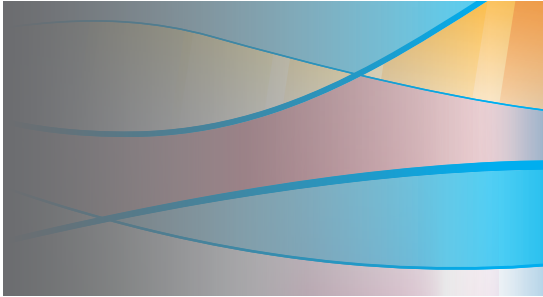
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BY PERRY ENGLE



IN MOTION

Ever wondered . . . what's Wesleyanism?

wes·ley·an·ism | 'wes-lē-ə-ni-zəm |

Origin: from the name of John Wesley (1703–1791)

NOUN: an 18th-century religious movement originating with British preacher John Wesley, who taught that a believer will grow in holiness through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (“sanctification”), bringing deliverance from sin (“entire sanctification”)

USED IN A SENTENCE: *Wesleyanism can also be traced back to John Wesley's brother Charles, who wrote the words to about 2,000 hymns, including “And can it be that I should gain?” and “Hark! The herald angels sing.”*

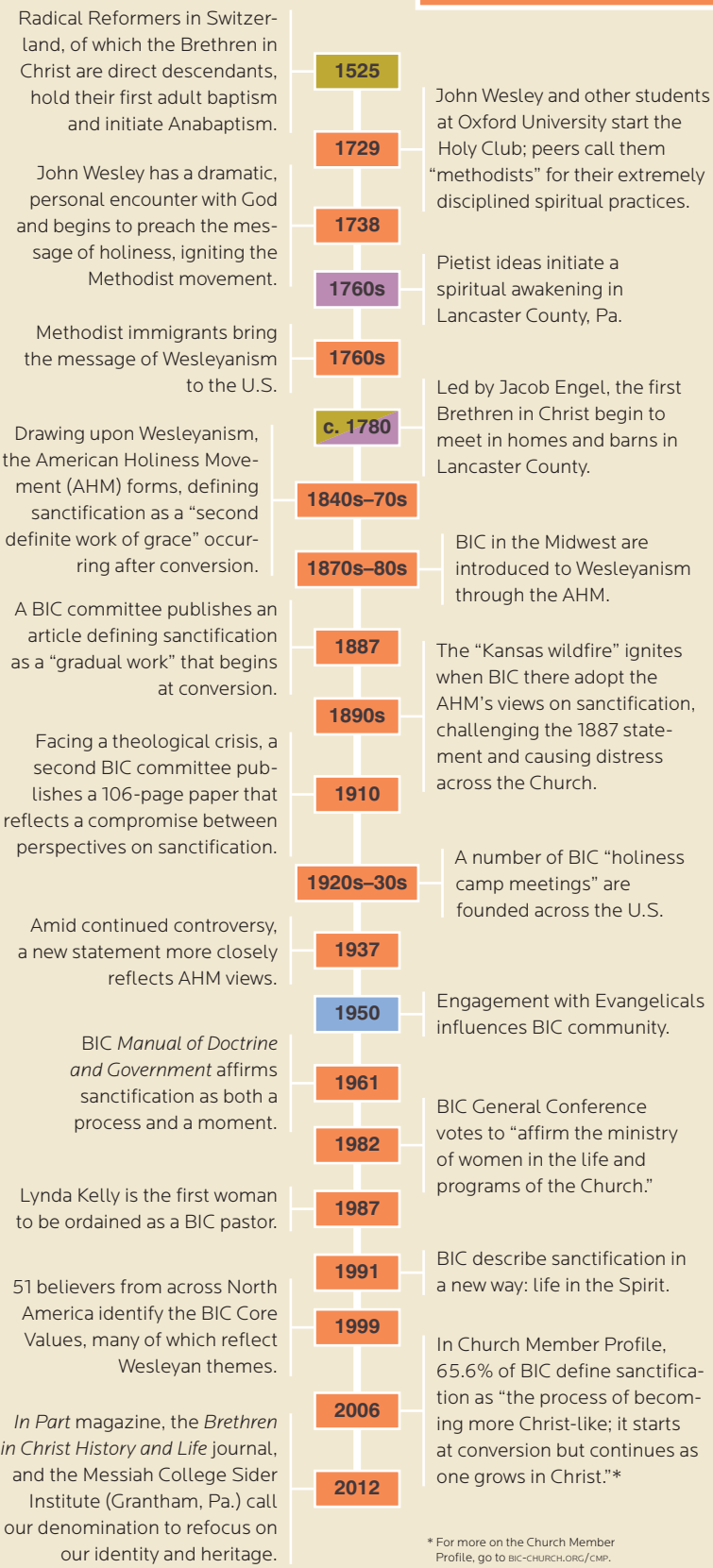
FOCUS Community art show offers visions of peace



This spring, artists in Ontario, Calif., submitted over 250 paintings, photographs, quilts, pottery, and other pieces related to the theme “Celebrate Peace” to the second annual Connect Art Show hosted by GracePoint Church. In addition to encouraging artistic expressions, Connect invited neighbors to discuss issues of peace as they perused the art. “This year’s theme was chosen soon after the school shootings in Newtown, Conn.,” explains Kaylene Jeffers, a GracePoint member who helped organize the show. “As a church, we really wanted to promote intentional dialogues about peace and unity, as well as to serve as a supportive part of the neighborhood.”

Tracing our history

Wesleyanism



TO OUR CORE

EXPLORING THE CENTRAL VALUES OF THE BIC CHURCH

CONTINUAL FULFILLMENT

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, one woman discovers her call to pastoral ministry

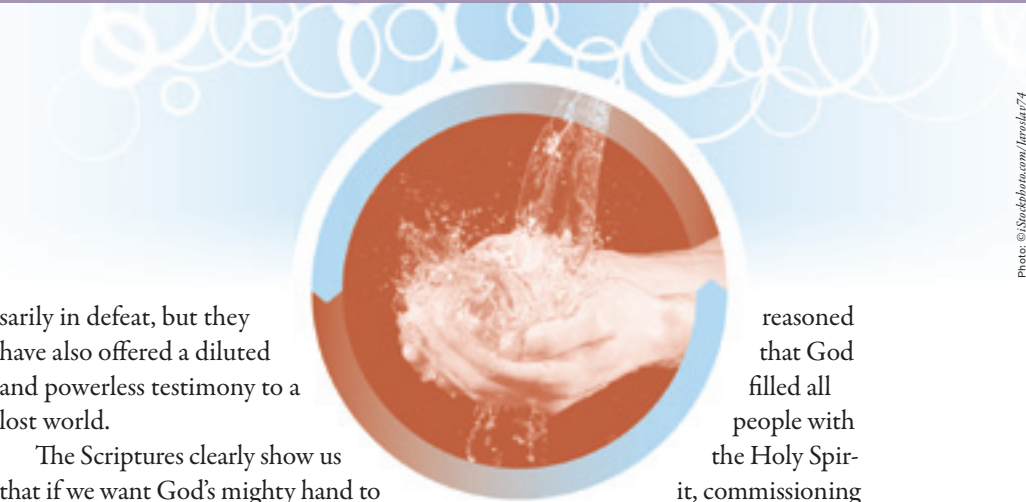
by MIRTA COLLOCA

When my husband, Roberto, and I got married, I was certain that he was the one called to ministry. I viewed myself as along for the ride, ready to support him in his work. After a few years, though, I began to feel a growing passion for the work of the Lord and realized that the call to pastoral ministry was not just for Roberto; it was also for me! I was surprised, challenged, and delighted by the possibility of worshipping God with my life in a new way.

Yet the biggest obstacle to becoming what God wanted me to be was myself. Swayed by my own insecurities and certain that the local church we’d been serving with was not ready for women in ministry, I hesitated. Despite this, doors that I did not even knock on began to open before me. As I stood at the threshold of these doors, I knew that the time had come for me to decide whether I was going to walk through them.

When I look back on this period of my life, I realize that I was struggling with something that many Christians encounter: taking hold of all that the Lord wants to give us through His Spirit. Many believers sustain the idea that coming to Christ and receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit once is enough for a lifetime—that there is nothing more to look for, expect, or desire, even though their lives reflect little of the power of the Spirit. The result? They rely heavily on their own wisdom and efforts. Not only have many Christians come to live unneces-

→ **WORSHIPPING GOD:** We value heartfelt worship that is God-honoring, Spirit-directed, and life-changing.



sarily in defeat, but they have also offered a diluted and powerless testimony to a lost world.


The Scriptures clearly show us that if we want God’s mighty hand to work in our lives, we cannot settle for an occasional encounter with the Spirit. We must yearn for and seek out the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit . . . not once, not twice, but over and over again!

Such was the conviction of John Wesley, who greatly influenced the Brethren in Christ through his teachings on the “empowerment of the Holy Spirit.” Passionate, charismatic, and determined, John Wesley broke with the traditions of his day by inviting lay people to serve as teachers and leaders in the Church. Stirred by the example of his own mother, Susanna, Wesley also began to advocate for women providing spiritual leadership. This went directly against the strict—and, according to Wesley, corrupt—regulations of the Church at the time. Yet Wesley

reasoned that God filled all people with the Holy Spirit, commissioning them to worship with

all their gifts through the Spirit’s continual strength and inspiration.

As I stood at the entrance of the doors that had opened to me as a woman in ministry, I was very much encouraged by Wesley’s vision. I realized that I needed to ask again for the Spirit to fill me. Once I’d done that, I found that I was able to focus on God’s call upon my life. Forty-two years later, I continue to seek this posture of worship, of fulfillment, of supernatural provision through the Spirit’s empowering presence in my life.

 **Mirta Colloca** and her husband copastor Vida Abundante (Hialeah, Fla.). Originally from Argentina, Mirta serves as chair of the BIC Board for World Missions and travels throughout Latin America to lead women’s conferences.

A SECOND AWAKENING

... TO THE SUBSTANCE AND BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

by Lynn Thrush

My Grandpa and Grandma Thrush were part of the first revivals held at Roxbury Holiness Camp, a Brethren in Christ camp in Orrstown, Pa. My dad told me the story of one camp meeting, when Grandpa, sensing a barrier in his relationship with the Lord, went to the front of the tabernacle to “pray through” it. He’d been at the altar for a while, when the Spirit came upon him. Suddenly, Grandpa lifted his clasped hands above his head. Then, he brought them down in a mighty karate chop and broke the bench! Later that day, my dad saw my grandfather embracing my grandmother on the porch of their home—my dad had never seen them show affection in that way before.

In many ways, both the split bench and my grandparents’ embrace were evidence of the Holy Spirit’s purifying work in my grandfather’s heart.

As Brethren in Christ, we acknowledge that the power of God’s Spirit is offered to all those who follow Christ. Shaped by the theological stream of Wesleyanism, the Brethren in

Christ call believers to holiness, to a life in the Spirit that enables us to love God supremely and live out that love in the world.

A heart strangely warmed

The witness of John Wesley, an Anglican priest from England, has profoundly shaped the Brethren in Christ understanding of what it means to be holy. Three centuries ago, Wesley encountered the Holy Spirit in his own life and set off what would become a worldwide holiness movement.

While studying at Oxford University, Wesley and a few of his classmates sought the holy life by forming the Holy Club. Though mocked by other students for their extremely methodical efforts, members of the club divided their day into segments for prayer, self-examination, Bible study, fellowship, and service. Yet Wesley sensed that these practices were somehow empty.

Years later, at the age of 32, Wesley took a ship bound for the American colonies, with the vision of being a missionary. During the journey across the Atlantic, he was astounded by the Moravian believers he met on board. The vitality of their faith was demonstrated as they humbled themselves to serve other passengers. At one point, a huge storm broke upon the ship during their worship service, yet the Moravians calmly sang on. When Wesley asked one of them later if he was afraid, he responded, “I thank God, no.” Wesley believed he was seeing holy living in action.

After two years, Wesley returned to England, still sensing an emptiness in his efforts. Then one evening, at a Moravian gathering, he experienced a dramatic awakening. In his journal, Wesley famously described the moment like this: “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in

Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.” Suddenly, Wesley realized that all his pious efforts were hollow if they weren’t empowered by the Holy Spirit.

This revelation enabled Wesley to recognize the Holy Spirit as the source of a holy life. Rather than a rigid set of rules to avoid sin, holiness invites believers to life in the Spirit. Within that life, sin becomes not a ball and chain dragging a Christian to discouragement and defeat, but an opportunity to experience freedom. In fact, Wesley taught that the Holy Spirit can work to remove the propensity to sin entirely. As Wesley’s brother Charles wrote in one of his hymns, “My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.”

These ideas swept across England, initiating a new denomination, the Methodist Church. As the Spirit worked in believers, they felt inspired to play active roles in social justice issues, such as advocating for prison reform and the abolition of slavery.

By the early 1800s, the teachings had made their way to America and contributed to the Second and Third Great Awakenings. At revival meetings, believers were challenged to encounter God, experience freedom from sin, and receive the power to live holy lives.

Wanting “something more”

Beginning in the mid-19th century, this fervor began to work in the minds and hearts of Brethren in Christ believers. I’m old enough to remember the perspective on holiness espoused by Owen Alderfer, a Brethren in Christ professor at Ashland (Ohio) Theological Seminary and a

WHEN WE *truly encounter*

the source of holiness—God’s love and glory—

WE WILL BE TRANSFORMED

MORE INTO THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST.

bishop in the Church. I heard him say once, when describing the Brethren in Christ receptivity to the message of holiness, “The Brethren in Christ always wanted something more.”

Influenced by Pietist revival movements in Germany, the Brethren in Christ emphasized warm, spiritual conversions. This was faith taken seriously. They were also attracted to the serious discipleship, the radical Christianity of the Anabaptists. Non-conformity to the world and pursuing peace were costly decisions. So, when the Brethren in Christ encountered the holiness movement, with its serious message for believers to be continually renewed by the Holy Spirit, it resonated deeply with them; they were hungry for a deeper, fuller faith—in Dr. Alderfer’s words, “something more.”

The first Brethren in Christ to embrace the message of Wesleyan holiness were those in Kansas, who came into contact with the American Holiness Movement in Iowa in the 1870s and ’80s. They later introduced its vision to Brethren in Christ living in the eastern United States.

Yet some aspects of the American Holiness Movement challenged the picture of holy living that Brethren in Christ had known for the last century. For example, the doctrine’s emphasis on freedom led some to stop wearing the plain clothes that were the norm in the community at the time. It inspired others toward more spontaneous expressions in corporate worship that disrupted the traditional orderly services.

Perhaps the most significant area of distress across the Church was felt as people grappled with a form of sanctification promoted by the American Holiness Movement. Prior to this, Brethren in Christ would have characterized sanctification as a process that began at conversion. However, the American Holiness Movement defined sanctification as a “second definite work of grace” occurring at a specific moment after conversion and leading one to attain perfection, or complete freedom from the sin nature.

Church historian and theologian Luke Keefer, Jr., has noted, “It is a credit to the Brethren in Christ Church that the Wesleyan doctrine [. . .] did not result in a church split, even though the tension was strong at points. Our Anabaptist sense of group held us together.”¹ Instead of allowing Wesleyan themes to dominate their theology and identity, these brothers and sisters worked together to create a Wesleyan perspective that was “domesticated to the Brethren in Christ mind.” They left room for a range of perspectives, while remaining “unified on essentials.” By the 1950s, Wesleyan teachings on life in the Spirit had become a foundational part of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Awakening continues

Today, powerful currents continue to draw Brethren in Christ believers to the substance and beauty of holiness. This is revealed in the optimistic way we describe the Holy Spirit’s presence as we witness to the world and worship God with the conviction of the following beliefs.

The Holy Spirit is offered to all who follow Christ.

Acts 2 describes how, beginning on the day of Pentecost, this ancient prophecy would be fulfilled: “In the last days, God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.’” Drawing upon this promise, Wesleyan holiness teaches that the Spirit and its gifts are offered to believers of all ages, genders, ethnicities, cultures, and generations. This is also the basis for why Brethren in Christ ordain both men and women to all levels of Church ministry.

The Holy Spirit brings a future of hope and redemption. The message of holiness insists that the Spirit brings what is dead to life. Rather than visions of a world descending into greater chaos and sin, Wesleyan holiness opens our eyes to a world being continually renewed and redeemed. This is experienced on both personal and communal levels. As the deepening river of Ezekiel 47 makes even the Dead Sea live, so the river of the Spirit brings life to all things: to hurting sinners, to broken marriages, to faltering businesses, to corrupt governments, to a threatened creation.

The Holy Spirit enables us to love God and others more fully. Sometimes, when people think about holiness, they imagine the Holy Club that John Wesley began in college. Yet, at its core, “holiness is both gift and a response.”² It is not something we can create or achieve, but something we receive from God. It’s not a self-serving pursuit but a humble posture that helps us connect more closely with

God and reach out to others with love. As articulated in *The Holiness Manifesto*, “We are made holy to effectively be co-workers in the reign of God. We are holy in order to be Jesus Christ’s agents of transformation in the world. We are holy so as to practice compassionate ministries and advocate for justice and peace.”³

When we truly encounter the source of holiness, God’s love and glory, we will be transformed more into the likeness of Christ. While the manifestations may vary—a willingness to serve humbly, a heart “strangely warmed,” an impetus to split a bench in two or tenderly embrace a spouse—the movement to change is rooted in our grateful response to God’s love without limit. This power and love can inspire spiritual awakening in a single believer or an entire denomination; indeed, such hope-filled holiness can bring renewal to a whole creation.



Lynn Thrush is pastor of Gateway Community Church (Chino, Calif.) and the BIC representative to the Wesleyan Holiness Consortium. He explores the hope that believers have as the Holy Spirit redeems the world in his new book, *Soaring Hope*. He and his wife, Carol, have four children and two grandchildren.

¹ “Three Streams of Our Heritage: Separate or Part of a Whole?” by Luke Keefer, Jr., reprinted in the August 2012 issue of *Brethren in Christ History and Life*.

^{2, 3} *The Holiness Manifesto*, ed. Kevin W. Mannoia and Don Thorsen, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008, page 20.

WILD FORMATION

One church planter's challenge to follow the (untameable and unpredictable) Holy Spirit

by Keith Miller

I love going to the park with my kids. One of my favorite things to attempt—and one of their favorite things to watch me attempt—is to stealthily sneak up on the animals that we spot along the way. Even though the creatures aren't that exotic—mostly turtles, squirrels, or geese—there's something exciting about being near an animal in “the wild.” The problem, however, lies in that I'm not satisfied with being close to the animals; I also feel this uncontrollable urge to see if I can touch them. I have grandiose visions of being the squirrel whisperer, of taming the turtle.

I've actually succeeded in my own little domestication of many animals. But not the goose. Trying to corner a goose has left me with a pretty strong fear of getting bitten, mostly because, well, I've gotten bitten.

The Celtic Christians had a symbol for the Holy Spirit; it was a wild goose. The Spirit of Jesus was unable to be tamed, moving this way and that, slightly unpredictable and, actually, a little dangerous to try to control.

Until recently, I hadn't spent much time trying to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in my life. But now, I feel like I'm learning to identify with the Celts on this one. I'm discovering that, rather than a passive or predictable force, the Holy Spirit is much more like a wild goose—surprising, free, and possessed with an astonishing sense of direction.

Confronting illusions of control

For much of my life, my theology of the Spirit has been fairly anemic. I believed that the Spirit of God was working in me, but it was more like a conscience, a Jiminy Cricket-type character, giving

me encouragement or telling me not to do bad things. That was about it. I never dabbled much with inviting the Spirit to play a larger role beyond the “still, small voice” in my life.

However, two years ago, these conceptions were challenged as I encountered the huge task of planting LifePath Church in Newark, Del. I realized that, deep down, I'm a control freak, especially as I seek to see people come into life with Jesus. It's easy for me to begin to think it all depends on me, and so I spend huge amounts of time and emotion, working hard to get someone to “progress” spiritually. And the harder I work, the more I rely on my own charisma and persuasion over the Spirit's role in drawing people to the love, grace, and way of Jesus. I'm learning that an ongoing journey with the Spirit often means following rather than leading, trusting rather than controlling.

I love how Paul explains it to the disciples at Corinth, saying that he came to them without persuasive words but with a “demonstration of the Spirit's power.” I'm not always sure what that means, but one thing seems clear: When we share the good news of Christ and follow Him with our lives, there's something going on beyond our control, and that's a good thing.

Glimpses of the Holy Spirit

Here at LifePath, we're seeing the Spirit moving in a number of ways.

Sometimes, the Holy Spirit seems to work outside of our efforts. A few months ago we had an experience with a guy who was on the fringes of connection to our church. We'd been praying for him, but he was actually walking away from the community at the time, not seeking after God. Then, late one night, he had an

inexplicable experience. My friend heard, in almost an audible voice, words of God's love and affirmation, overwhelming the guilt and heartache he felt for past mistakes. It was so crazy that he called a few of us up and said, “Come over now. I need you to explain what happened to me, and who this God is that loves me so much.” We shared the story of Jesus with him, and he realized that it was Jesus' voice that he'd heard. That moment was a turnaround for him. He rejoined our community, and now he's being discipled by a couple of guys, getting to know Jesus better. So we keep praying.

We also pray for “people of peace” (Luke 9–10, Matthew 10), trusting that the Holy Spirit is going ahead of us and preparing hearts of those that we'll come in contact with. We expect to run into people who are unnaturally open to us, to Jesus in us, and have a desire to serve.

So one morning, we randomly strike up a conversation with a young lady at the library, and several weeks later she attends one of our gatherings. We hear the story of how she and her family had been wondering if they'd made the wrong decision to move into the area, since they felt so alone. That was the morning she took her kids to the library, she told me with tears in her eyes. So we keep praying.

At other times, we are surprised by the miraculous ways the Spirit opens doors and provides leaders for our community. We often pray for God to bring workers into the field, like Jesus told us to in Luke 10. And He has. A couple on our leadership team shared about LifePath with their friends in Texas. This family felt stirred by the Spirit to move 1,500 miles to serve alongside us. Then, of course, a house next door to the couple became available, and the family was able to move right in! This kind of stuff happens. It's wild.

Rather than a passive or predictable force, the Holy Spirit is much more like a wild goose—surprising, free, and possessed with an astonishing sense of direction.

We've welcomed new families with pasts in full-time ministry who are now starting to use their gifts again. Families and individuals have joined us who are seeing themselves as missionaries to our neighborhoods, workplaces, and networks. Some had no connection with anyone in LifePath, and they just showed up at the door to a house one night. So we keep praying.

And we've seen the Spirit work through us in the long, trusting, patient relationships we seek to build with those around us. Neighbors who had no interest in “religion” are drawn by the Spirit's partnership with us through simple acts of love and begin to ask for prayer. People who were once completely against anything that reeked of faith or church, begin engaging in thought-provoking conversations. We're seeing that sometimes the Spirit works through us, and sometimes, the Spirit just works.

When the goose takes flight

As I reflect, I think my own increased openness to the Spirit stems from a very clear realization of all of my own inadequacies. To plant a new expression of God's kingdom in northern Delaware, with the approach that God has laid on our hearts, is way outside of my abilities, resources, and leadership. Most days, I pray out of sheer desperation. And maybe, that's the spot that I need to be in order to trust the Holy Spirit.

I am frequently reminded of the words in Psalm 127:1: “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.” If my plan was airtight, then there'd be no space for God to get in there and do His transforming work. I'm learning that God wants me to listen, to watch, and to trust a little better. Especially in the moments that I'm not sure where we're headed next. After all, when the wild goose takes flight, I don't want to miss the direction it's heading.



Keith Miller and his wife, Bethany, moved with their family to Newark, Del., to plant LifePath Church in 2011. Keith loves visiting parks where he can run around with his three kids, meet neighbors, and play disc golf. LIFEPATHCHURCH.ORG

A once-reluctant disciple journeys with the Spirit to make her heart a place . . .

WHERE CHRIST MAY DWELL

by Connie Hoffman

Throughout their lives, Connie Hoffman and her husband, Warren, have been open to the Holy Spirit's leading, deepening their relationship with the Lord and with each other.



Photo by Bo Williams

Growing up in the Brethren in Christ Church, I prayed to receive Christ at an early age. Although I remember hearing a lot about the “holy life”—using words like consecration, freedom from sin, transformation of character, the fruit of the Spirit—it seemed vague and unattainable. As a result, I had no personal sense of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in my life.

That began to change while my husband, Warren, and I were living in California, and friends invited us to their home for an evening of worship with others from our church. Warren and I saw these brothers and sisters opening themselves to the gifts of the Spirit, including prayer for healing and prophecy, which we had never before encountered. I can still picture it: people filling the living room and joining their voices—sometimes all at once—and hearts in worship. There seemed to be intimacy with God, with the Holy Spirit showing up.

Though we trusted our friends, we didn’t immediately know what to make of it. Looking back, I see how this worship encounter was God’s initial invitation for Warren and me to personally experience the reality of the Spirit’s presence in our lives. This life in the Spirit, as we were about to discover, is an ongoing journey, and we had just taken our first step.

Kneeling, to be filled

After moving to Oregon, we continued to hear about how the Holy Spirit was moving in Southern California. Again, we had the privilege of seeing this firsthand when my parents came to visit us. Barely having their feet on the ground, they began to tell us of the Holy Spirit’s work in their lives. We saw they were energized in their walk with God. We knew we needed more spiritual vitality; maybe this was the way.

But we had a lot of questions. How would this be different from the Christian life as we had experienced it up to now? What did we have to “do” to be filled with the Spirit? How would we know we were filled with the Spirit? Would there be visible indications?

My dad’s answers were biblical and reasonable. He explained that, when we ask, Jesus will baptize us with the Holy Spirit, saturating us with His presence. In the words of Ephesians 3:16–21, we invite the Spirit to strengthen our “inner being, so that Christ may dwell in [our] hearts through faith . . . to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.” As to visible manifestations, Dad said that our initial assurance of the Holy Spirit’s presence is by faith.

These answers made sense to us. So, kneeling by the old couch in our living room, with Dad and Mom on either side of us, we asked God to fill us with His Holy Spirit.

Of course, we wanted the Spirit on our terms, so what happened next came as a surprise.

Warren immediately felt an intimacy with God as “Abba, Father” that he had never known before and was moved to audibly confess and repent of sin. This caught me off-guard.

The days that followed were difficult for me for another reason: While Warren appeared to be enjoying close communion with God, I was not. As a result, I became increasingly angry and jealous.

Up to this point, we’d resisted expressions that would set us apart in ways that we felt were uncomfortable. We’d agreed that speaking in tongues, while okay for other people, was just not something for us. As I observed Warren in the days following our prayer, I thought, *Surely he isn’t praying in tongues*. But yes, he was!

I couldn’t let him “get ahead” of me, so even with this unholy motivation, I had the nerve to ask God for this gift, too. God graciously received my prayer, opened my heart, and with a language unknown to me, I experienced a new freedom in prayer and worship.

As I reflect, I am certain that the distresses that followed our prayer were not unusual. Luke 4:1–2 tells us that even Jesus was tested in this way! But the Lord redeemed our struggles, turning them into opportunities for us to deal with hidden impurities and

deepen our intimacy with Him, so we could be truly ready for what He had in store for us.

Awakening to joy

The new experiences continued. When we moved from Oregon to the high desert of New Mexico, our growth in the Spirit took shape in a desire for deeper communion with God through daily prayer and the reading of God’s word.

We now had children, so we were challenged to find time and space for this. We decided to dedicate the early hours of our days to prayer. Warren would leave the house before the sun rose to walk the unused airstrip, and I would go out when he returned. In the midst of the sand and sagebrush, we cried out to God and, to our joy, we began to hear His voice. As we opened up this space in our lives, we began to learn that the Holy Spirit is waiting to be active in personal, prophetic communication.

We also discovered a deepening awareness of the Bible as the enduring word of the Living Christ, speaking directly into our lives in vital ways.

We experienced this profoundly when, after four years of ministry in New Mexico, we were facing the question of what to do next. Following the wisdom of a church leader, we began to consider church planting. Late one night, after much prayer and conversation, we decided to accept the call to

plant a church in Oklahoma City. Unable to wait until morning, we read the next day’s devotional from the *Moravian Daily Texts*: “You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit . . .” (John 15:16). We immediately knew this was confirmation from the Lord that we were following Him in this decision.

An ongoing process, an enduring promise

Over the years, the Spirit has continued to convict us of sin and increase our peace and joy in who we are in Christ. He is motivating us to see others come to faith and share in His heart through intercessory prayer. He is blessing us with intimacy with Him in worship and an increasing awareness of His presence in the moment.

Recently, Warren and I were asked to sing at the memorial service for an aunt. Going about my day, I found myself humming a tune I hadn’t sung for decades. As I began to add the words to the melody, I realized that this was exactly the right selection for the service. It was exhilarating to have this song come from deep within and to know it was the Holy Spirit guiding me in even this seemingly small decision. Indeed, while God has used dramatic moments as turning points, Warren and I have found the Holy Spirit to be a constant companion, partnering with us through all of life.

Perhaps the most gratifying thing Warren and I have learned about holy living is that it is a lifelong endeavor. I am grateful that God has taken us on this journey—and that He is not finished with us yet.

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Connie (Engle) Hoffman and Warren, her husband, have been BIC church members in five states. They currently live in Elizabethtown, Pa., and have four adult daughters, 10 grandchildren, and one “grandrabbit.” Fun fact: Connie can trace her ancestry all the way back to Jacob Engel (Engle), the founder of the BIC Church!

LIFE in the Spirit

Here are some ways Scripture describes how the Spirit meets us in all aspects of life:

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| • Identity as God’s child
<i>Romans 8:15–16</i> | • Relational harmony
<i>Ephesians 2:13–22, 4:3–5</i> |
| • Strength through God’s power
<i>Ephesians 3:16</i> | • Peace and joy
<i>Isaiah 32:14–18</i>
<i>Romans 14:17</i> |
| • Freedom from sin
<i>Romans 8:12–14</i> | • Continuing conviction
<i>John 16:13</i> |
| • Testing
<i>Luke 4:1–2</i> | • Motivation to witness
<i>Acts 1:8</i> |
| • Spiritual formation
<i>John 14:26</i>
<i>Ephesians 3:16–19</i> | • Privilege of intercessory prayer
<i>Romans 8:26–27</i>
<i>Ephesians 6:18</i> |
| • Assurance of the Spirit’s presence through gifts
<i>Luke 11:11–13</i> | • Gifts for ministry
<i>Joel 2:28–29</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 12:1–11</i> |
| • Transformation
<i>Romans 8:1–11</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 3:14–18</i>
<i>Galatians 5:16–25</i> | • Intimacy in worship
<i>John 4:23–24</i> |

TO THE POINT

What are some unexpected ways you've seen the Holy Spirit lead people into worship?

Over the past year, I've been in conversation with Matt, a Christian serving in the U.S. armed forces. After reading a blog entry I wrote on nonviolence and enemy-love, Matt emailed me and said that he'd begun to question his involvement in the army after one of his friends commented, "I just can't picture Jesus picking up a gun and heading over to the Middle East and killing people."

Matt told me what followed his friend's comment: "Over the next weeks of leave, I woke up several times in the night. Every time I woke up, that phrase was playing in my mind. I couldn't get rid of it! It was at this point that I felt I should give a second look to the issue of nonviolence, that perhaps God was saying something to me."

I love how Matt's story demonstrates the work of the Holy Spirit, who continues to actively speak messages of peace and wisdom to believers today. I'm also moved by Matt's example of obedience, as he's courageously taken the step of registering as a conscientious objector, a huge risk for someone in the military.

—**Kurt Willems**, planting a BIC church in Seattle, Wash.

Our pastor, Woody Dalton, tells about a Sunday when he preached about the Holy Spirit. After the message, he invited people to come to the altar so he could pray for them to be filled with the Holy Spirit. "Don't be afraid of this idea of being filled with the Holy Spirit," he said. "People aren't going to start screaming and rolling on the floor."

So, people came. The first person Woody prayed for cried out and collapsed on the floor.

Woody says, "I decided I had better not try to tell God what to do."

—**John Hawbaker**, Harrisburg (Pa.) BIC

Last summer, I met a man at Roxbury Holiness Camp Meeting (Orrstown, Pa.). His marriage was over, and he was at the end of his rope. I offered to meet with him for counseling and, over the course of those sessions, I discovered that he had an abusive relationship with his wife and children. After many sessions and teaching on the need for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, this brother's life has radically changed. Through the glorious power of the Holy Spirit, he and his wife have even experienced a restored marriage. Praise God!

—**Larry Locke**, Chambersburg (Pa.) BIC

This past February, I was one of about 40 BIC pastors and leaders who took part in a theological conversation about how the Brethren in Christ interpret the Bible. Over those two days, the best of the BIC shone brightly. Everyone had a voice. Everyone's statements were thoughtfully considered. Disagreements were plentiful yet always handled with grace and charity. There was a real sense that none of us had the "right" position, but that the Spirit would speak through all of us.

When it was all over and I was heading home, I was positively encouraged. This is what it looks like for mortals to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

—**Brian Ross**, Koinos Church (Reading, Pa.)

For more on the Consultation on the Nature of Scripture, visit BIC-CHURCH.ORG/EQUIPPING/CONSULTATION.

PARTING WORDS

THE HOLINESS WORKOUT

A call to experience a higher quality of life

by PERRY ENGLE

Sophie took some daddy-daughter photos recently, with the best one destined for social media. Of course, she was blonde and gorgeous, and me—well, I looked like an out-of-shape 54-year-old duffer who spends too much time behind his computer.

I googled "fitness for older men" and wandered aimlessly through a mind-numbing website that encouraged me to immediately begin high-intensity interval training. I was to do occlusion warm-ups to prevent injury, while limiting my workouts to 60 minutes since "this is the point where the stress hormone cortisol peaks." The list of supplements needed to build my non-existent muscle would include creatine monohydrate, flaxseed oil, whey protein, and a growth-hormone secretagogue product. A personal trainer was suggested to get me started on my program.

Nothing comes easy when you're an old guy looking to become a massively chiseled specimen of manhood. I grabbed a bowl of ice cream and headed off to bed.

As if my sagging mid-section were my only problem, I'm finding I need a workout to improve my holiness as well.

Holiness essentially means to be "set apart" for the purposes of God. I tend to use terms like "counter-cultural" and "Christ-likeness" to describe what it means to attain to the fullness of Christ in our lives.

In our denominational past, the holiness movement tended to default to focusing on lists of forbidden activities: no drinking, no dancing, no immodest clothing, no bad language or bad thoughts. The teaching lent itself to promoting a "second work of grace" whereby people came to a point where they were "perfected" in their faith and claimed to no longer sin. This caused some who still wrestled with sin to view holiness as a mean-spirited, unattainable ideal that ordinary, struggling Christians could never hope to achieve.

Strangely, I have come to appreciate this part of our Church heritage as important for Christ-followers today. Not the part that emphasizes all of the prohibitions in the Christian life. But the positive aspects of the teaching that views God's injunction to "be holy because I am holy" as something that is God's will for me now and is attainable in my everyday life (1 Peter 1:15–16).

For me, a holiness regimen begins by recognizing that God has a higher quality of life for me than I would ever imagine for myself. It also requires that I admit my tendency to compare myself to others as opposed to focusing on becoming more and more conformed to the likeness of Christ. I must be prepared to be honest about my starting point—admit my struggles, temptations, and addictions—and place myself in the midst of a loving faith community



Holiness is God's will for me now and is attainable in my everyday life.

that openly embraces people who, like me, are "a work in progress." It's essential that I commit myself to a daily diet of Scripture and prayer, the protein shakes of the holy life. Finally, I must welcome dutiful instruction from the best personal trainer available—the Holy Spirit—who is relentless in helping me become all I was intended to be in Christ.

Paul reminds us in Philippians 3:12, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." Holy living, like physical fitness, is something we work at every day. It's for everyone who wants to become more and more like Jesus—for flabby, middle-aged men, and all.



Perry Engle has been referred to as the "Richard Simmons of holy living." Bishop of the Midwest and Pacific Regional Conferences of BIC U.S., he lives with his wife, Marta, and their family in Ontario, Calif.

CAMP MEETINGS

More than 75 years ago, Brethren in Christ began gathering at holiness camp meetings, weeklong events full of inspiring preaching, lively worship, and warm fellowship. Experience this aspect of our BIC heritage by attending a camp meeting this year!

MEMORIAL HOLINESS CAMP *est. 1944*

West Milton, Ohio
July 19–27, 2013
GREATLAKESCONFERENCEBIC.ORG/D9

ROXBURY HOLINESS CAMP *est. 1935*

Orrstown, Pa.
August 2–11, 2013
ROXBURYCAMP.COM

CAMP FREEDOM *est. 1953*

St. Petersburg, Fla.
Jan 24–Feb 2, 2014
CAMPFREEDOM.ORG

Wesleyanism + the BIC

The Brethren in Christ believe that Jesus is transforming His followers into His image through the work of the Holy Spirit. Within our “theological DNA,” the Wesleyan strain shows itself most prominently through our Core Values of:

- Worshipping God
- Experiencing God’s love and grace
- Following Jesus
- Witnessing to the world
- Serving compassionately
- Relying on God

To learn more about our Wesleyan values and how to put them into practice, check out these and other resources available at BIC-CHURCH.ORG:

BIC World Missions Partnership Handbook—Lists dozens of special projects to support around the world.

(BIC-CHURCH.ORG/WM/GIVE/PARTNERSHIP)

Women as pastors: The Brethren in Christ perspective—

A 12-week DVD and discussion-based series examining the biblical foundation for the BIC stance on women serving in pastoral ministry.

(BIC-CHURCH.ORG/RESOURCES/WOMENINMINISTRY)

Relying on God—A free five-session study guide for individual or small-group use, that invites participants to hear God’s voice through a series of practical exercises.

(BIC-CHURCH.ORG/RESOURCES/PRAYER/RESOURCES.ASP)

