

Year C*Pentecost*2010*Move!

I am awake to how mobile our God is,
how Jesus moves from death to resurrection to ascension and,
today how God the Spirit flows and flames and blows.

And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.¹

“Move!” is the title I gave this sermon.

God is on the move and so God’s people must be on the move.

Bill Wylie Kellermann, a preacher and social activist said;

The story in Acts 2 begins presumably in the upper room and ends in the streets of Jerusalem. How did they get there? Carried by the big wind? It’s as if the walls dissolve. Or in the reversal of the resurrected Christ’s passage into their midst, they pass through and out. The disciples take the resurrection to the streets. They go public.

Are we ready to go public with the resurrection?
Are we ready to take the love of God to the streets?
Ready to “Move out!”

One of my favorite shows growing up was *Combat* with Vic Morrow as Sargent Saunders. Sargent Saunders would cry “Move Out!” and all the soldiers would grumble and slowly get to their feet. But then the theme music would begin. . . and there would be a little spring in their steps and they would be on their way ready for action.

Ready or not the Spirit of God propels us forward into action,
into confidence, which means “acting with faith”,
acting in service,
acting in proclaiming the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I’m tired of my own brand of insecure Christianity.
I don’t mind critiquing our religion,
admitting our faults,
apologizing even for our sins.

All of that is absolutely necessary for healthy religion and healthy relationship.

A religion that cannot face up to it’s own dark side is religion that must deny reality and that is dangerous.

¹*The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version*. 1989 (Ac 2:2-3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

In Lent we freely acknowledge that we as a group sin when we pray in the Stations of the Cross. . .

Teach your Church, O Lord, to mourn the sins of which it is guilty, and to repent and forsake them; that, by your pardoning grace, the results of our iniquities may not be visited upon our children and our children's children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

But I'm tired of hesitant,
over-rationalized,
apologetic Christianity.

I want to trust something much greater and bigger and holier than me.
I want to be confident in God.
I'm ready for the Spirit to propel us out into Mission and Ministry. That's why I get excited about our work in Panama and India, at the Hospitality House and Heifer, our youth and the good work Katie and Alice are leading us in, our fledgling attempts to speak for and advocate for God's creation, and the many mission-minded and charitable outreaches you are involved in as individuals.

Anything that pushes us out past these walls and our beautiful liturgies is the Holy Spirit at work.

The Holy Spirit is all action, fire, movement, energy.
And the Holy Spirit is God.
I don't have the energy God does.
God gives the Holy spirit.

Left to my own devices I would endlessly circle from my study to the daily office, to the library, to the Eucharist, to evensong, and back to my study. Now there is nothing wrong with worship and prayer and study. They are the at the heart of our community life. But unless they issue in loving action they are all dead ends.

Thanks be to God that we are so committed to Outreach as a Community and exploring ways to increase that commitment.
Thanks be to God that we are involved in Mission and service locally and globally.
That saves me.

Thanks be to God that an African American priest from Panama can stand in this pulpit two weeks ago and greet us as her friend and co-worker in Mission.
Thanks be God for the more than \$100,000 this community raised to assist those in need locally and across the seas last year.

People in Haiti are eating because of you.

People in Panama are getting their education, even their college degrees because of you.
People in Watauga County have food and shelter because of you.
People all over the world receive income producing livestock because of you.

You are like the Apostles of Jesus speaking to the world in the real languages everybody understands;
something to eat,
something to drink,
food for the mind,
prayer for the spirit.

What a great word “mission” has become for me in this place. I’ve never seen anything like it.

All of this in the name of Jesus.
We serve the world;
not to salve our conscience,
not aggrandize our reputation,
or pat ourselves on the back.
We serve the world because a fire has been lit deep within us.
We have lived with,
walked with,
loved Jesus.
We have seen him cruelly executed,
gloriously risen,
exalted above all heavens to fill all things,
present and pushing us out by the power of the Spirit.

We serve because Jesus compels us to serve.
“Go” says the Risen Jesus.
Serve.
Act.
Move out.
In my name,
by my power.

I don’t have any power. . . but God does.
I don’t have any courage. . . but the Risen Christ does.
I don’t have any spirit. . . . but the Ascended Lord does.
My name means nothing.
The name of Jesus means everything.

It’s not easy to go forth in the name of Jesus. There is resistance to Mission. In his reflection Kellermann went on to say of the early Church’s enemies:
[To the authorities it must appear as political madness, an acute and hopefully isolated case of sanctified anarchism. Some people say they have had too much to drink. Granted](#)

this refers in part to the inspired and ecstatic utterances, but I wager even more so to their reckless courage. After what's been done to Jesus, you'd have to be either crazy or drunk to be shouting his name in the streets and pointing accusing fingers at the executioners.

Heretofore the disciples have beheld Christ; now they experience the concrete and practical freedom of the resurrection. No political authority any place or any time can shut that down.

(Bill Wylie Kellermann, *Seasons of Faith and Conscience*, p.200)

But for us the main resistance is not from governments it's from within us. Apathy, love of comfort, self-satisfaction, self-pre-occupation, fear, self-reliance. . . these are the real enemies of the our gospel mission.

The Risen Lord has dissolved these walls and placed us out on the streets,
to share his love,
to feed his people,
to protect his world,
to visit the prisoner,
to provide for his children,
to preach his gospel.

Don't let anything stop you.

Above all don't let ourselves stop us.

Let us step out in confidence.
Let us take the resurrection to the streets.
Let us go public with the love of Christ.
Let's move out!

Now let me say one word to our Seniors who are "moving out" in many important ways.
The Spirit of God is with you,
goes ahead of you,
surrounds and sustains you.

Some of you are leaving home,
all of you are leaving your childhood and entering young adulthood.
Take with you our prayers for your spiritual growth.
Take with you our gratitude for the life and love you have shared with us.
But more than anything else we want to give you an unfailing guide and companion for
your journey. . .
the Holy Spirit of God.

When you are lonely. . . God be with you.
When you fall. . . God to raise you up.
When you are discouraged. . . God to lighten your heart.
When you sin. . . God to forgive you.
When you succeed. . . God to open your heart.
When you return home. . . God to welcome you.

You have led us in worship,
served at the altar,
gone with us on mission,
taught us to laugh and sometimes cry,
embodied the hope of a new future,
been yourselves no matter what.

Now it's time to move out, in many cases literally. But don't go alone.
Move out in the power of the Spirit,
in the love of Christ,
to the glory of the Father.

Discover for yourselves that inner fountain of power and inspiration that will propel you
out to love, serve, and enjoy, God's good world.
Amen.