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EUROPE ALIVE!

Jorge Himitian

The Resurrection of God's People

In Ezekiel Chapter 37, the prophet speaks of his powerful experience with God, when the Spirit took him to that great valley of dry bones. First God commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to those bones, and when he did so, the bones came together and they were covered with tendons, flesh and skin. Then the Lord commanded that he prophesy to the breath: "Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live". And so it happened, and a vast army arose.

The prophet recounts the conclusion to this vision in verses 11 to 14:

Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'

The primary cause of the spiritual weakening of the Church over the centuries has been its distancing from the Holy Spirit. The Church was born thanks to a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and as it has gradually moved away from that source it has begun to dry up.

Church leaders have strengthened their intellectuality, their structure, their institutionalisation, their theology, their academicism but, unfortunately, not their spirituality. The simplicity of the beginning and, above all, reliance on the Holy Spirit were lost. This led to man's place in the Church increasing and God's place diminishing.

Every time there has been a revival in history, it has been due to new opportunities being opened up to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Protestant Reformation in the 16th century did not necessarily involve spiritual reawakening but rather theological reform. Even though there was strong action from the Spirit bringing light and revelation to the Word, spirituality was not the prevailing aspect; theological and doctrinal controversies were. The fights, even amongst the reformers themselves, are well known.

Despite all this, throughout history and before, during and after the Reformation, revivals took place in different regions and brought new currents of spirituality to the Church.

In the revival at the beginning of the 20th century, which gave rise to Pentecostalism, the emphasis was almost exclusively on the Holy Spirit and its charismas. Nothing important was dealt with in terms of theological reformation, and the same structures of the preceding centuries were maintained with regard to soteriology, ecclesiology and eschatology.

All of which shows us that a reformation without revival is not enough, nor is a revival without reformation. We need the Spirit and the Word or the Word and the Spirit.

However, the outpouring of Spirit that began during the 1970s and still continues today is simultaneously producing spiritual renewal and profound theological reformation. We believe that this reformation will continue until the church regains one hundred percent of its spirituality and one hundred percent of the revealed truth written on the pages of the New Testament.

The Church needs to return to Simplicity

The Church needs to rid itself of all the extra baggage it has picked up over the centuries and return to the foundations established by Christ and his Apostles. It has to return to the power and spirituality that characterised it at the beginning.

The Church needs to free itself from the philosophy with which it mixed in its first centuries and return to the Apostolic *Kerygma*—foolishness to the wise of this world, but God-given power to those who believe. It needs to return to the simplicity of Jesus' *Didache*, and believe that wisdom to transform the world lies within it.

The Church needs to shed the imperial structure it copied from the Roman Empire, drunk with power, ambitions, wealth, luxury, fame, pomp and vanity, and return to Christ's model, a model of service, humility and love. Being close to the poor, those who suffer, and to sinners, in order to fulfil its mission of redemption.

The Church needs to put aside lifeless rites and ceremonies. The structured liturgies. Return to simple prayers, free singing, spontaneous worship and the freedom of the Holy Spirit in its assemblies and meetings.

The Church needs to return to homes to live out the true *koinonia* and efficient pastoring. To cry with those who cry, to be able to serve each other and to break bread with heartfelt simplicity and joy.

The Church needs to free itself of the supremacy of reason, of sterile intellectualism, of moral relativism, of the poison of liberal theology, and return to the preponderance of the Spirit over reason and believe in the revealed truth as a child does.

And in these more recent times, the Church must guard itself against postmodern proposals, spiritualism without Christ, pragmatism that produces "results", moral relativism and amoral religiosity. We need to return to God's absolutes, to the centrality of Christ and to believing in the immutability of God's word. We need to return to the foundation and the source.

We are here; we have come from different continents, to join and cry out together and prophesy to the Spirit: COME, SPIRIT, FROM THE FOUR WINDS AND BREATHE OVER EUROPE.

There have been and there are revivals on almost all the continents. In the last 60 or 70 years the church has grown a great deal in almost all the countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia and even in countries as difficult as South Korea, China, Indonesia, India and some countries of the former Soviet Union. Let us cry out to God for Europe. The stars shine brightest in the darkest night. The drier the forest, the faster the fire spreads. The harder the miracle seems, the greater God's glory will be.

Let us all say it together: *Come, Spirit, from the four winds and breathe over Europe!*

THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

The recovery of our spirituality.

Jesus came into the world to rescue man from spiritual death due to his sins. This is why He spoke of a new birth. By being born again, man regains his spiritual power. Jesus said to Nicodemus: *"No one can SEE the kingdom of God unless they are born again"* (John 3:3). The kingdom of God belongs to the heavenly, spiritual realm, and he who has not been born again cannot see it, cannot perceive it. It is like asking someone without the sense of smell to smell a flower's perfume. It is like asking a deaf person to listen to a concert. It is like asking a blind person to gaze at a beautiful landscape.

It is necessary to be born of water and of the Spirit to be able to see the spiritual world. To repent, accept Jesus as Lord, be baptised and receive the Holy Spirit's baptism. The first manifestation is speaking in tongues, the beginning of a supernatural experience. Supernatural means beyond what is natural, physical and intellectual. The first two manifestations of this sphere are speaking in tongues and hearing God's voice in our spirit.

The Holy Spirit comes to introduce us to this spiritual dimension. He gives us a new Bible (even though it is the same one). He reveals the Word, inspires us, helps us to see what is written. He reveals Christ in the Word to us, leads us to communion with the Father, introduces us to the heavenly realm, inspires our worship, and gives us new songs for God.

The Spirit testifies to our spirit that we are sons of God. He talks to us, encourages us, consoles us, strengthens us. He gives us joy, peace, love, and words of encouragement for others. He gives us valour to be witnesses for Christ, anoints us and gives us authority to preach, and faith to cast out demons and heal the sick. He gives us power to live in holiness. And, day-by-day, He transforms us into the image of Jesus.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul mentions nine gifts when he is teaching about the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit: the message of wisdom, message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, different kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues. These are supernatural operations that come from the spiritual realm and produce an effect on the material and physical world as well as the spiritual dimension.

The Key that Unlocks our Spiritual Ability

We know how to use our mind. We know how to use our body and our five senses. But, how do we use our spirit? How can we use our spiritual ability? The key is faith.

- Faith is what activates our spiritual ability.
- Faith is not an ability of the mind but of the spirit. The Bible says: *"It is with your heart that you believe"* (Romans 10:10).
- Faith is a gift and a fruit of the Spirit. It is a gift from God.
- ¿How do we receive this gift? Through the Word. *"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ"* (Romans 10:17).
- Faith is a spiritual substance produced in us by the Holy Spirit when we hear the Word of God and receive it. The Word is the stimulus; faith is the answer to that stimulus.

- Hebrews 11:1 says: *"Now faith is confidence (hypostasis = substance) in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see"*.
- Faith is seeing the Invisible One. Faith is seeing the invisible. Faith is seeing God's glory in the firmament, in each flower, each tree, each creature that is born, in each chick that breaks the shell.

- Faith is seeing what the Word states as real events as being even more real than the material world our physical eyes perceive. Faith is seeing the kingdom of God, seeing his throne, seeing Him who is sitting on the throne.

- Faith is believing God. It is believing in what God says. It believes more in Him than in our five senses or our reason. Our senses can deceive us; so too can our reasoning. Our feelings even more so. but God, never.

- Faith is seeing with the spirit's eyes, seeing the old me crucified with Christ, seeing myself as a new creature, seeing myself with Christ, seated in heavenly places.

By putting intellectualism before faith, Europe dried up and died.

By placing understanding as a condition for belief, when the inverse is really true: one must believe in what God says to understand what God says. This is why most theologians are spiritually dead. Many who have the ministerial calling go to seminaries (more aptly named "graveyards") and there, their faith is killed with so much intellectualism.

GOD'S TESTIMONY

1 Corinthians 1:18

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:21-24

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached (kerygma) to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified (kerissein): a stumbling block to Jews (skándalo) and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching (kerygma) were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

During the unique event of Christ's death and resurrection, things happened in two dimensions: in the physical and visible dimension and in the spiritual and invisible dimension.

The physical event was seen and recounted by eyewitnesses, mainly written down in the Gospels. All those who witnessed Christ's crucifixion saw only the physical dimension: the cross, a nailed man, the blood. They heard his screams of agony. But none of them saw what was truly happening on the cross in the spiritual dimension.

What happened in the spiritual dimension when Jesus died?

There was only one witness who saw what happened on the spiritual plane: GOD.

This is why the apostle Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, says: "(...) as I proclaimed to you the **testimony about God**". This is precisely the kerygma: the testimony about God. God is the only one who saw the full extent of what happened on the cross and He revealed it to the apostles and prophets. And they revealed it to us.

1. He took away the sin of the world

Isaiah 53:5-6

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This is one of the strongest expressions in the Bible as it declares what happened on the cross. Jesus not only took all our sins on himself, but WAS MADE SIN FOR US!

The crucifixion signified the carrying out of divine justice on every one of us, save that it was carried out on the person of the Son of God. Because of this Paul says: "Who loved me and gave himself for me". (Galatians 2:20)

2. He triumphed completely over Satan, for us

Hebrews 2:14-15

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Here the word "break" is "katargese" in Greek, and literally means "render inoperative, reduce to complete ineffectiveness!"

How did He do it? The answer is in the following passage:

Colossians 2:13-15

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

It was my and your charge of legal indebtedness. There the long list of our sins and crimes was written, and the appropriate sentence. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT; DEATH. Satan, as accuser, used this legal instrument to condemn and dominate us. Jesus took our place on the cross and was executed. In this way, he paid the penalty with his death. He took all documentation, all cause for accusation and condemnation away from Satan. HALLELUJAH!

How do we know this? Because there was a witness who saw everything, and gives testimony. That witness is God. And we believe Him. And by believing Him we experience God's power and wisdom.

3. He crucified our old self

When Jesus was crucified, everyone present saw three crosses and three people crucified.

But the Father saw a very different scene. On the middle cross, together with Jesus, He saw millions upon millions of people being crucified. Jesus not only took our sins on himself, not only did He become sin, but He also bore us on that cross. His death was "all inclusive". He included us in His body. He included us in His death. We died with Him.

Romans 6:6

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. (The Greek says: he was co-crucified.)

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

All this happened 2,000 years ago on the cross. However, we do not receive it automatically but by means of the word of the cross, the kerygma. It pleased God to save those who believe through the foolishness of the kerygma (1 Corinthians 1:21).

4. He opened the way to the Most Holy Place

Matthew 27:50-51

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. (...)

Imagine the astonishment of the priests ministering in the Holy Place at seeing the veil, which had stood there for centuries, tear from top to bottom and leave the Most Holy Place completely open.

This was a representation of what had happened in the true sanctuary.

Hebrews 9:12

(...) [Christ] entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:24, 26

For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. (...) But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 10:19-22

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

5. He tore down the dividing wall of hostility between men

Ephesians 2: 14-16

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

What was Paul referring to when he said "the dividing wall of hostility"?

In the atrium of the temple in Jerusalem there was a wall that separated the gentiles' atrium from the Jews' atrium. On this wall was a door which bore the following inscription: **Any gentile who goes through this door must die by stoning.** God revealed to Paul that when Jesus died on the cross, not only was the temple veil torn, but that wall that divided the Jews from the gentiles was completely destroyed, spiritually. That is why he says: "*made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility*". Christ, through His death, achieved peace and put an end to all division. Now the Church are the people of God, and are one people. The unity of the Church was accomplished on the cross. All division amongst men ended with the cross. God has only one Church. Christ has only one body. The current division of the Church will come to an end, and that will happen when the mystery of Christ and His work on the cross is revealed to the Church by means of the kerygma, through the true apostles and prophets of the Lord.

What happened in the spiritual dimension when Jesus was resurrected?

Ephesians 1:19-23

And his incomparably great power (...) the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

What happened to us at Christ's resurrection?

Ephesians 2:4-7

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:29-30

*For those God **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he **predestined**, he also **called**; those he **called**, he also **justified**; those he **justified**, he also **glorified**.*

What do we do with this statement?

There are five verbs here: *foreknew, predestined, called, justified and glorified.*

And all five are in the past tense.

We have no issues with the first four verbs. But, what do we do with the last one: "(...) *he also glorified?*"

Who did He glorify? Well, those he justified.

When we analyse this with a rational mind, we are tempted to correct Paul and tell him: "Paul, you should have written: *'those he justified, he will also glorify'*" (in the future). But no, Paul proclaimed: he also glorified.

You and I have already been glorified. Not yet physically, but in our spirit. And we are seated next to Christ in the heavenly realm.

THE LIFE OF FAITH

To be able to understand and live this we must be filled with the Holy Spirit and walk in the Spirit and not the flesh. We must live by faith and not by our own reasoning or feelings.

The revealed truths can be neither captured nor experienced by studying the Bible with a rational mind. It was not born from an intellectual analysis of God's Word. Jesus said: *"The words I have spoken to you, they are full of the Spirit and life."*

When God baptised us with His Spirit, he took us to a new dimension. He connected us to a supernatural life, so that we could live it in a natural and everyday way. He shamed our reason by making us speak in tongues; He made us children again. We decided to believe just as his Word says. The skies opened, the light started to shine. The Bible seemed to be completely new. The passages were illuminated. The truth shone out.

If the Word says *"we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place"*, let us say amen. Let us believe it as a child does. And by faith let us enter the Most Holy Place and contemplate God seated on His throne. Let us stop our long-distance praying and confidently approach the throne of grace, kneel before His Majesty and praise him in spirit and in truth.

If God says that our old self is crucified together with Christ, let us believe it and consider ourselves dead to sin and alive for God. *"Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."* (Romans 8:12-13)

If He says that He resurrected us together with Him, and sat us in the heavenly realm with Jesus Christ, let us shout: *Hallelujah!* If He says: *"Those he justified, he also glorified"*, let us believe exactly what God says and live in the power of His resurrection.

If the Word declares that God *"blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ"*, let us embrace this truth, believing it as children do, and not ask God to bless us anymore but praise Him because He has already blessed us with all his spiritual blessing. However, let us ask for greater revelation so that we may know the inscrutable riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

If Christ says that he gave us the power to step on snakes and scorpions and on any force of evil, let us believe it! And resist, with His strength, the forces of the devil until we crush him under our feet.

Even though we suffer tribulations, persecutions, hunger, thirst or nakedness, let us believe with all our heart that for those who love God all these experiences are for good, and that in all of them we are more than victorious through Him who loved us. *Hallelujah!*

His Word declares that, resurrected, the Lord will raise apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors-teachers until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God; attaining to the whole measure of fullness of Christ. Let us believe that it will be

this way, because He is faithful and powerful to do what He promised far more abundantly than what we ask for or understand.

His Word also states that Jesus Christ will come in search of a single Church, holy, glorious and without blemish. And even though it might seem humanly impossible to overcome the current divisions and mediocrity of the Church, let us believe that nothing is impossible for God, and that what He resolved since before the foundation of the world He will accomplish in fullness here on Earth. The Church, before He returns, will be ONE, HOLY, GLORIOUS AND MULTITUDINOUS. Hallelujah!

CONCLUSION

Will we be capable of believing God for Europe?

The Lord gave Abraham *"the promise that he would be heir of the world"* (Romans 4:13). And Abraham believed him.

And the same chapter 4 of Romans, verses 17 to 21, says:

As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Will we be the generation that believes God? Are we capable of believing that God has the power to do all he has promised?

In the days of Moses, the generation that did not believe in God died in the desert without reaching what had been promised.

God asked Ezekiel: *"Son of man, can these bones live?"*

- Sovereign LORD, you alone know."

- Well you are right, I do know. Then "prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you and you will come to life.'"

To prophesy is to say what God tells us to say.

"So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, (...) and the bones came together, bone to bone."

Faced with the current situation of a divided and weakened Church in Europe with many blemishes and imperfections, faced with an institutionalised, and moribund Church, today the Lord asks us:

Son of man, can these bones live? Can the Church recover its glory and splendour? Can the Church reach unity in faith? Can it go back to being a single body in each city, each nation and the world? Can it be glorious and holy, without blemish or imperfection? Can it be the salt of the earth and the light of the world again? Can it be an element of social transformation amidst the nations once again?

Do you believe I have the power to do all that is prophesied and written in my Word?

God says to you:

If you believe, prophesy; proclaim with your mouth what I say in my Word.
If you believe in your heart, declare that it will happen, and what you believe and say, I will do.