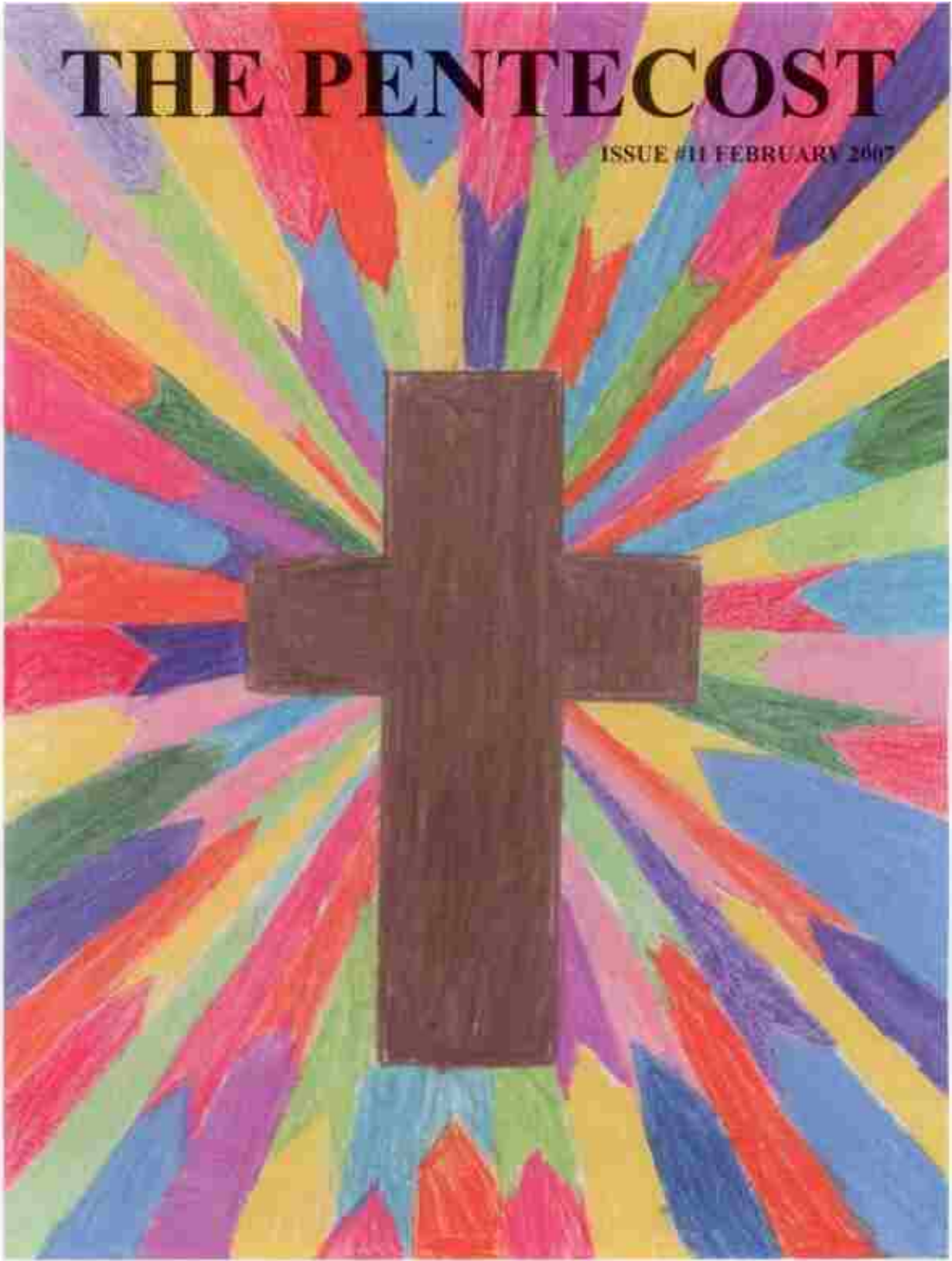


# THE PENTECOST

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# THE PENTECOST



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COVER: by Benjamin Budlong and Shawn Stevens

February's issue of *The Pentecost* will continue with the theme of spiritual hunger. I would also like to discuss the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. How I would love to play for you every all the songs that I include in these issues. I hope that the reading of these would all be profitable. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

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## AS THIRSTY AS A DEER

*As the deer pants for the water brooks,  
So pants my soul for You, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When shall I come and appear before God?*

Psalm 42:1-2

Friend, let us meditate on this scripture for a moment. The Psalmist thirsts for God as a deer would thirst for water on a hot day or after a long mountain climb. Can we relate to this feeling? Have we longed for, or do we long for, a revelation of God with a similar intensity as a deer would long for his daily water? Is God's presence as refreshing to us as a drink of cool water?

The Psalmist must have had enough exposure to God to know that a revelation of God can be as refreshing to the human soul as water is to the human body. He is specific in his words. He thirsts for the living God. The living God is greatly distinguished from the empty religions of this world and all of their traditions and forms. There is a living God Who is larger than our imagination of Him and Who reveals Himself to those who thirst after Him.

There is a yearning in the hearts of God's sons and daughters to experience more of Him. Not many would have chosen the wilderness life of missionary David Brainerd, and I am not saying that this is the only environment where God can be found. Finding God is related to your heart, not to your physical location. However, with a heart that was after God, and in the seclusion of eighteenth-century woodland America, Brainerd met with God.

On June 15, 1742, he wrote these thirsty words:

*Had the most ardent longings for God that ever I felt in my life. At noon in my secret retirement I could do nothing but tell the Lord, in a sweet calm, that He knew I longed for nothing but Himself, nothing but holiness; that he had given me these desires and He only could give me the thing desired. I never seemed to be so unhinged from myself and to be so wholly devoted to God. My heart was swallowed up in God most of the day.*

Brainerd's faith was not a mechanical performance of duties. His faith was simply an expression of what was happening inwardly. Inside there was a hunger. Inside there was a thirst. His reaching out to God was as natural as a deer lapping up water from a running brook. He wanted God's grandeur to be revealed to him in a fresh way. Concerning God, Isaac Watts once wrote:

*I'm pleased to meet him in his court,  
And taste his heavenly love,  
But still I think his visits short,  
Or I too soon remove.*

*He shines, and I am all delight,  
He hides, all is pain;  
When will he fix me in his sight,  
And never depart again?*

When God comes to us He comes with His truth. What is the result of this? His truth corrects, heals and feeds us when we understand it and yield to its working. We need the Lord's truth to penetrate deeper than our mental understanding, down into our hearts. Then, there is a real knowing of God and His ways. An encounter with God and His truth will leave us with an awareness of our need for revival. We will feel like saying: "Lord, turn our spiritual winter into spring."

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## THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

If you look up the word *priest* in a Webster's Dictionary, you will be given several definitions. One offered is: *in hierarchical Christian churches, a clergyman ranking next below a bishop and authorized to administer the sacraments and pronounce absolution.* Another definition that it offers is: *any clergyman; distinguished from layman.* Definitions such as these reflect how the word has come to be understood by many, and has been understood by many, for centuries. Very early in church history, *Priest* became a title which rigidly distinguished itself from the common believer. Although the Catholic Church acknowledged a *universal priesthood*, the *special priesthood* became an office that was entered through ordination and formally initiated through the ceremony of the *laying on of hands, prayer and the anointing with oil.* It was not long before the office assumed other distinctions such as *sacerdotal vestments*, at first worn only during official services but, later, in everyday life.

While the Catholic Church had, and has, its priests, so did the ancient Hebrew people who preceded them by centuries. The first Israelites to be formally identified as priests in the Scripture were Aaron and his sons. The priesthood soon spread beyond this with all of its members coming out of the Jewish tribe of Levi. As mentioned above, priests were a special group. They were to represent God to the people. They instructed God's people with God's laws. They were sometimes consulted in legal decisions. They were to pronounce God's blessing on people, judge ritual uncleanness and officiate in the offering of sacrifices.

Before we allow Webster's Dictionary, or even the Old Testament on its own apart from the rest of the Bible, to define our theology, we must come to the New Testament. Here, we find a new development in belief: every Christian is a priest.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Peter, we read:

*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby; if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light: (1 Peter 2:1-5, 9).*

Christians worldwide are being built up a *spiritual house, a holy priesthood.* This is without distinction, male and female, rich and poor, clergy and laity. In the Old Testament, the *temple* was a physical structure, a literal house where God's presence resided (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 5:13; 7:2-3) and which had priests inside of it. In the New Testament, Christians are temples (1 Cor. 6:19-20, 2 Cor. 6:16) and priests, all is one.

Every Christian is a temple and is set apart for God, sacred to Him and made for priestly service. It was God's grand design to create a spiritual people. Our 1<sup>st</sup>

Peter passage says that we are a holy priesthood "to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Where the Old Testament priests offered up animal sacrifices, in the New Testament, Christian priests are to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Such sacrifices include things such as love, service, praise and thanksgiving.

Where does this spiritual priesthood come from? It comes from Jesus Christ, Who is for every believer the great *High Priest* (Heb 8:1-6; 7:23-28). Jesus is the great High Priest Who will never be replaced. He is eternal in His office.

Creating a universal priesthood among believers is another way for the Bible to call all followers of Jesus Christ to a holy life. Priesthood is not an office that we are formally ordained to. It is something that, upon conversion, we become by nature. To be a priest by nature is to be a spiritual creature, a spiritual man, a spiritual woman. Just as in the Old Testament temple was the dwelling place for God, so now the Christian's heart is this holy dwelling place, more sacred than any

wood or brick structure. The Christian is a temple and a priest, all in one. He or she is now to carry God's presence and serve Him daily.

I am not saying to throw away your Webster's Dictionary, but I am saying that there are many more priests in this world than those who make up the clergy. The God of the New Testament is building a spiritual house or temple, complete with priests. Fellow Christians, the great High Priest, Jesus, has made us also priests.

Shawn Stevens

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## REVIVAL AT ROME

No, not Italy; Rome, New York. The time was 1825-1826, and the revivalist, Charles Grandison Finney, had been conducting revival meetings in several places, including the city of Western. A Rev. Moses Gillett from Rome, New York, came to Finney's meetings in Western and was deeply impressed with the work that God was doing. He invited Finney to come and speak at his church in Rome. Finney reluctantly agreed, not really wanting to leave the successful work at Western. He spoke at Gillett's church and, immediately, people came under conviction of sin. It was common for Finney to follow up a meeting such as this with another meeting that he called an *inquiry meeting*. Inquiry meetings were for those who, after being awakened to their sin, would like instruction on how to be saved. Gillett arranged for Finney to do an inquiry meeting at Rome. In this meeting, the strong conviction of sin, which was present in the previous meeting, was increased to a great extent. At this point, we'll let Finney pick up the story in his own words:

"Nothing had been said or done to create any excitement in the meeting. The feeling was all spontaneous. The work was with such power that only a few words of conversation would make the stoutest men writhe on their seats as if a sword had been thrust into their hearts. It would probably not be possible for one who had never witnessed such a scene to realize what the power of the truth sometimes is in the hands of the Holy Ghost. It was indeed a sword, and a two-edged sword. The pain that it produced when searchingly presented in a few words of conversation would create a distress that seemed unendurable. Mr. Gillett became very much agitated. He turned pale, and with a good deal of agitation he said, 'What shall we do? What shall we do?' I put my hand on his shoulder and said in a whisper, 'Keep quiet. Keep quiet, Mr. Gillett.' I then addressed them in as gentle but plain a manner as I could; calling their attention at once to their only remedy, and assuring them that it was a present and all-sufficient remedy. I

pointed them to Christ as the Savior of the world, and kept on in this strain as long as they could well endure it, which indeed was but a few moments. Brother Gillett became so agitated that I stepped up to him and taking him by the arm I said, 'Let us pray.' We knelt down in the middle of the room where we had been standing. I led in prayer in a low, unimpassioned voice, but interceded with the Savior to interpose His blood then and there, and to lead all these sinners to accept the salvation which He proffered and to believe to the saving of their souls. The agitation deepened every moment; and as I could hear their sobs, and breathing, and sighs, I closed my prayer and rose suddenly from my knees. They all arose, and I said: 'Now please go home without speaking a word to each other. Say nothing; try to keep silent, and do not break out into any boisterous manifestation of feeling; and as you cannot talk or speak to each other and still control your feelings, please to go without saying a word, to your rooms.'

"At this moment, a young man by the name of Wright, a clerk in Mr. Huntington's store, being one of the first young men in the place, so nearly fainted that he fell on some young men that stood near him; and they all of them partially swooned away, and fell together. This had well-nigh produced a loud shrieking, but I hushed them down, and said to the young men, 'Please set that door wide open, and go out; and let them all retire in silence.' They did as I requested. They did not shriek; but they went out sobbing and sighing, and their sobs and sighs could be heard till they got out into the street. This Mr. Wright to whom I have alluded, afterward told me that he was obliged to hold his mouth with the full strength of his arms till he got home, his distress was so great. He kept silence till he entered the door where he lived, but he could contain himself no longer. He shut the door, fell upon the floor, and burst out into a loud wailing in view of his awful condition. This brought the family around him very quick, and scattered conviction among the whole of them.

"I afterwards learned that similar scenes occurred in several families. Several, as it was afterwards ascertained, were converted at the meeting.

and went home so full of joy that they could hardly contain themselves.

"The next morning, as soon as it was fairly day, people began to call at Mr. Gillett's to have us go and visit their families, whom they represented as being under the greatest conviction. We took a hasty breakfast, and started out. As soon as we were in the streets, the people ran out from many houses and begged us to go into their houses. As we could visit but one place at a time, when we went into one house the neighbors would rush in and fill the largest room. We would stay and give them instruction for a short time, and then go to another house, and the people would follow us. We found a most extraordinary state of things. Convictions were so deep and universal that we would sometimes go into a house and find some in a kneeling posture, some prostrate on the carpet, some bathing the temples of their friends with camphor, and rubbing them to keep them from fainting, and as they feared from dying.

"We visited, and conversed, and prayed in this manner from house to house till noon. I then said to Mr. Gillett, 'This will never do; we must have a meeting of inquiry. We cannot go from house to house; and we are not meeting the wants of the people at all.' He agreed with me, but the question arose, where shall we have the meeting? A Mr. Flint, a religious man, at that time kept a hotel on the corner at the center of the town. He had a large, long dining room; and Mr. Gillett said, 'I will step in and see if I cannot be allowed to appoint the meeting of inquiry in his dining room; without difficulty he obtained consent, and then went immediately to the public schools and gave notice that at one o'clock there would be a meeting of inquiry at Mr. Flint's dining room. We went home and took a hasty dinner and started for the meeting. We saw people hurrying, and some of them actually running to the meeting. They were coming from every direction. By the time we were there, the room, though a large one, was crammed to its utmost capacity. Persons of both sexes and of all ages crowded the apartment. This meeting was very much like the one we had had the night before. The feeling was

overwhelming. The Word of God was truly the sword of the Spirit; and some men of the strongest nerves were so cut down by the remarks which were made that they were unable to help themselves and had to be taken home by their friends. This meeting lasted till nearly night. It resulted in a great number of hopeful conversions, and was the means of greatly extending the work on every side.

"I preached that evening, and Mr. Gillett appointed a meeting for inquiry the next morning in the court house. This was a much larger room than the dining hall, though it was not so central. However, at the hour the court house was crowded to its utmost capacity, and we spent a good part of the day in giving instructions. We adapted our instructions as much as possible to the state of the people and the work went on with wonderful power. I preached again in the evening, and Mr. Gillett appointed a meeting of inquiry the next morning at the church, as no other room in the village was then large enough to hold the inquirers. That evening, if I rightly remember the order of things, we undertook to hold a prayer and conference meeting in a large schoolhouse. But the meeting was hardly begun before the feeling deepened so much that, to prevent an undesirable outburst of overwhelming feeling, I proposed to Mr. Gillett that we should dismiss the meeting, and request the people to go in silence, and Christians to spend the evening in secret prayer, or in family prayer, as might seem most desirable. Sinners we exhorted not to sleep until they gave their hearts to God.

"After this the work became so general that I preached every night, I think, for twenty nights in succession, and twice on the Sabbath. Our prayer meetings during this time were held in the church. In the daytime the prayer meeting was held on one part of the day, and a meeting for inquiry, on another part of the day. Every day, if I remember aright, after the work had thus commenced, we held a prayer meeting and a meeting for inquiry, and preaching in the evening. There was a solemnity covering the whole place, an awe that made everybody feel that God was there. Ministers came in from neighboring towns, and expressed great astonishment at what they saw and heard, as well they might. Conversions multiplied so rapidly that we had no way of learning who they were."

*As Thirsty as a Deer...* continued from page 1

Peter had a hunger and a thirst for the Lord Jesus. On one occasion, Jesus performed the humble act of washing the feet of His disciples. He did this out of His love for them. Peter felt uncomfortable and said to Jesus, "... 'You shall never wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.'" (John 13:8). Upon hearing this, Peter said to Him, "... Lord, not my feet only, but also *my hands and my head!*" (verse 9). He knew what he needed. He wanted to have as much a part with Jesus as he possibly could. Let us pray for the same:

*Lord Jesus, wash us. Wash not only our feet but our hands, head and, most importantly, our heart. Awaken our hearts to love and adore You, to bow down before You, and to hunger and to thirst for a greater closeness with You. Forgive us for settling for so many other lesser things, empty things, things which perish. All the while You have been waiting to fill us with Your Spirit. You have more for us than our minds have perceived. Flood our path with light. Make haste to deliver us and revive us. Let us gaze into heaven. Open to our view and to our understanding the things of Your kingdom. Enlarge our souls to receive more from You. May our hearts be larger than our heads. Let us understand with our hearts the things that we read in Your word. May this understanding help us know and serve You in a fuller way. Awaken our hunger and, as You do, all of our ardent longings will be satisfied in You. We want the living God. You have given us this hunger and only You can satisfy it. We want to grow in grace and glow with Your love. We want to know You and even be swallowed up in You. Turn our winter into spring. Though our outer man perishes, let our inner spiritual man be renewed day by day. We are the deer now standing by the water brook. Amen.*

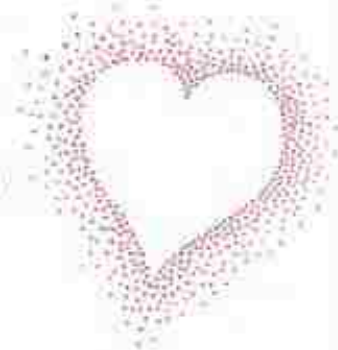
Shawn Stevens

<sup>1</sup> David Brund, *The Life and Olay of David Brundell*, III, Jonathan Edwards Press of Rapids (Baker Book House), 1985, 28

<sup>2</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, Vol. 4 (Hinghamton, Hindrickson Publishers, n.d.), 276

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## HEART OF GOD



Oh Lord, let the words of my mouth,  
Oh Lord, and the meditation of my heart  
Be acceptable in Your view.  
Create in me a heart that's faithful and true.

Oh Lord, a heart on purpose, on fire,  
Oh Lord, a heart raised out of the mire,  
One heart, wholly anew.  
Create in me a heart that's faithful and true.

One heart, set apart for Your plan,  
One heart, shaped by Your hand,  
Pose in spirit and thirsting for You.  
Create in me a heart that's faithful and true.

One heart, alive and aflame,  
One heart, that tells of Your name,  
One heart, contrite and pure.  
Create in me a heart that's faithful and true.

One heart, ablaze for Your name,  
One heart, that tells why You came,  
One heart, holy and true.  
Create in me a heart that's faithful and true.

One heart, fixed on the Cross,  
One heart, that's conformed the cost,  
One heart, that You can live through.  
Create in me a heart that's faithful and true.

One heart, that serves You alone,  
One heart, with Christ on the throne,  
One heart, undivided and true.  
Create in me a heart that's faithful and true.



Shawn Stevens



