

## **A RETURN TO PENTECOST**

By Barry L. Davis

Several years ago, I heard the story of Larry Walters, a 33-year-old man who decided he wanted to see his neighborhood from a new perspective. He went down to the local army surplus store one morning and bought forty-five used weather balloons. That afternoon he strapped himself into a lawn chair, to which several of his friends tied the now helium-filled balloons. He took along a six-pack of beer, a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich, and a BB gun, figuring he could shoot the balloons one at a time when he was ready to land.

Walters, who assumed the balloons would lift him about 100 feet in the air, was caught off guard when the chair soared more than 11,000 feet into the sky--smack into the middle of the air traffic pattern at Los Angeles International Airport. Too frightened to shoot any of the balloons, he stayed airborne for more than two hours, forcing the airport to shut down its runways for much of the afternoon, causing long delays in flights from across the country. Soon after he was safely grounded and cited by the police.

Poor Larry had a goal in mind, but he was ill-prepared to reach it. I find that something similar happening in our churches today. We talk about the need to reach the unchurched and bring them to salvation in Christ, but most of us are not prepared to see that take place.

I imagine most of us are familiar with the historical account of Pentecost Luke recorded for us in Acts 2. We marvel at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the early disciples. We read Peter's sermon and can feel the conviction of his words. We consider the results of his message and have to read the passage again to make sure it was really 3,000 people who responded to the invitation and repented and were baptized that day.

And we admire the beginnings of the Jerusalem church -- how they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, to prayer, and to a continual emphasis on the Lord's adding to their number daily those who were being saved.

Perhaps you join with me in a desire to see our churches return to the Day of Pentecost. We want to experience the excitement that the first church experienced. We want to be used by God to impact our world in the way the Jerusalem church was used to impact theirs. We want to be so in touch with the Holy Spirit that our message will bring conviction and repentance to those who are outside of Christ. And we don't doubt that these things are possible today, but we're not sure quite where to begin. Before we can see lasting results in our witness and ministry, we must be empowered from on high. We must experience a modern Pentecost in which the Holy Spirit energizes us for bold outreach.

There must come a point where we as individuals and collectively as churches desire and invite the Holy Spirit to rekindle the flame that has been put out. Now it is time to pray for more boldness, more holiness, more faith, and more results as we place our future in the hands of God. Where to begin? In your own heart! We could go over a 10-point plan, attend another seminar, or watch some more training videos, but that isn't what is really needed. What is needed most of all in this hour is for you and me to personally surrender ourselves to God's direction. When you do this, and I do this, it is only a matter of time before others join us. And in time, God will bless us with an outpouring of power like we've only dreamed of in the past. Join with me in inviting the fresh breeze of the Holy Spirit into our midst.