

Steady Saints in an Unsteady World

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Besides the normal dangers of cars, deer, and dogs dashing in front of me, what I watch out for most as I round the corners of Missouri's beautiful country roads on my Yamaha 650 is... *gravel*. One patch of that dreaded enemy, and I could be out of commission—for weeks, or for good. Like most people, I don't like to "feel the earth move under my feet."

After all, who does? Even those shouting hallelujah and singing "Victory in Jesus" all day long do not like to lose a job, see their investments go down the drain, receive a foreclosure notice, or face a mountain of medical bills incurred from catastrophic illness. No one relishes bad news about a friend or family member or welcomes that feeling of being utterly overwhelmed—regardless of the cause.

In this issue of *Encounter*, Dr. Johan Mostert examines that reality of destabilization—but describes what it looks like on a *global* level and how Pentecostals should respond. In his inaugural lecture, "The Psycho-Social Implications for the Pentecostal Academy in a Destabilized World," Mostert makes note of the unique opportunity the Pentecostal Academy has in finding itself at the "academic epicenter" of the "global Pentecostal explosion"—an explosion taking place in a

...seriously destabilized world context with increasing global economic

inequality, financial instability, political upheaval, rampant diseases, and the inexcusable marginalization of the poor, victims of war, and the disenfranchised.

As a South African who has witnessed some of the world's greatest suffering—whether from poverty, hunger, political unrest, or the AIDS pandemic—Mostert has good reason to call for a holistic approach to ministry. Such an approach not only embraces the power of God, transforms the soul, and helps disciple all nations in the ways of God but also embraces social justice for the widow, the orphan, and the poor—and soul care for those broken from things like war, abuse, or tattered relationships. As Byron Klaus puts it, we must foster a ministry approach that embraces "a compassion rooted in the gospel that transforms."

Faced with such destabilization on all fronts, how can we believers manage the day-to-day personal, community, and global tailspins in which we often find ourselves? The thread running through this issue of *Encounter* addresses that crucial question and provides solid words of wisdom and encouragement by *steady saints in an unsteady world*. Whether that unsteadiness results from personal crisis (Praschan, Jarrett), stress and burnout (Hadden, Nance, Davis), ministry issues (Willis, Caldwell, Cotton, Gannon), or global realities (Johnson, Brewer, Mittelstadt, Mostert), the timeless truths of Scripture still hold true

today: spiritual refreshing, fundamental trust in the face of pain and questioning, and simple faith that turns humble believers into obedient trailblazers for God (Saggio, Windsor, D. Olena).

At the heart of those truths is Spirit empowerment. AGTS graduate, John Johnson's award-winning article, "A Trinitarian View of the Cross," (*Ministry* magazine, Feb. 2009) speaks of the presence of the Spirit at one of the most destabilized points in human history—the Cross. According to Hebrews 9:14, Christ offered himself "*through the eternal Spirit* without blemish to God." That same Spirit empowerment available to the Son at the

point of His greatest suffering is still available to God's people today—an empowerment which, as Dr. DeLonn Rance points out in his third Hogan lecture in this issue, allows the believer to "fulfill the apostolic mandate in apostolic power" and be driven not by the wind and the waves but by the Holy Spirit.

King David knew the steadiness of heart that came only by setting the Lord continually before him: "Because He is at my right hand," David said, "I will not be shaken" (Ps. 16:8). Saints with steady hearts will be the ones who—in spite of the situation around them—can minister grace in an unsteady world.