

Celebrating 30 years of latter rain in Papua New Guinea

DIVINE HEALING • WATER BAPTISM • SPEAKING IN OTHER TONGUES • SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

Here is the story and how it began

THE ORIGINAL CHURCH

The Christian church began over 2,000 years ago when, as told in the Bible, the apostles were gathered together waiting and praying for what Jesus had called, “the promise of the Father”. Moments later they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues. This experience is known as the “Pentecostal experience” that first occurred on the “Day of Pentecost” – a Jewish festival day. The Bible gives many other examples of people receiving the Holy Spirit in exactly the same way demonstrating that this experience was normal in the early Christian Church.

Three hundred and sixty years after Pentecost, Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople wrote, “whoever was baptised in Apostolic days he straightaway spoke in tongues for since on their coming over from idols without any clear knowledge or training in the scriptures, they at once received the Spirit for He is invisible, but God’s grace bestowed some sensible proof of His energy.” Miracles, healings, signs and wonders were an integral part of the church life for several centuries.

REVIVAL POWER LOST

The year AD312 saw the Roman Emperor, Constantine make Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. But as Christian principles were mixed with pagan ritual and idol worship, many fundamentals of the Christian faith including this Pentecostal experiences were lost. The churches quickly became lifeless and powerless. No healings, no miracles and no clear evidence of the Holy Spirit in the church. Church heads became less concerned with the original salvation message and became political. They controlled governments and empires, ordered massacres and quickly rid themselves of dissenters. Right down through the ages however ordinary people continued to experience this infilling of the Holy Spirit with the bible evidence of speaking in other tongues. Many were persecuted and even martyred for their faith.

THE GREAT REFORMERS

Martin Luther, great reformer of the 16th Century was known to have had the Pentecostal experience. He challenged the church leaders of the day on many issues. But at the centre was the issue of personal salvation itself. According to Sover, writer of the history of the Christian Church, “Dr Martin was a prophet, evangelist, speaker in tongues and interpreter in one person endowed with all the gifts of the Spirit.”

Similar experiences occurred amongst the Quakers, Pilgrims of Britain and other lesser known Christian groups. Wesley and other great men of God spoke of such things. Whilst many of the great revivalists enjoyed the Pentecostal experience, few of their followers have not done nor seen the necessity for it.

THIS CENTURY

The early 1900s saw another great Christian revival. Thousands of men and women world-wide started receiving the Holy Spirit with the manifestation of speaking in other tongues. Many drew away from or were put out of their mainline churches and began what we now call ‘Pentecostal Churches’ in which the infilling of the Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues was common. Tens of millions of people world-wide enjoy this experience today.

REVIVAL CENTRES FELLOWSHIP ORIGINS

A major Pentecostal movement began in Australia just after the Second World War with a number of new churches emerging. These churches drew large numbers of people from a wide cross section of the community – some being from other churches and many with no church background at all. From these beginnings – Assemblies in Victoria and South Australia aligned themselves in their common experiences and doctrine and the church grew throughout the country. Today there are over 90 assemblies throughout Australia and overseas including New Zealand, Great Britain, Europe, America, South Africa, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

REVIVAL CENTRES OF PNG

In Acts 3:22 “For Moses said, the Lord your God will send you a Prophet just as he sent me and he will be one of your own People. You are to obey everything that he will tell you to do.”

A native of Papua New Guinea, Pastor Godfrey Onpaye Wippon was among the first batch of young vibrant correspondents working for Radio Australia PNG Service in Melbourne just after independence.

While serving there for three years he fell ill and began suffering from lobar pneumonia (collapsed lung) in August of 1980. The collapsed lung diagnosed by his doctors in Melbourne as severe with no cure through medication except its removal through an operation wasn't what Pastor Godfrey could wish for. His doctors told him he had only two years to live.

“Nothing was helping me. No medicine was doing me good. I went to see the priest. I went to see the priest of the Catholic Church I attended and he only sent me to go to the doctor. I thought he would pray for me so that the God he believed in would heal me”. Pastor Godfrey said.

“I was searching for an alternate therapy in both Australia and Papua New Guinea”.

His search for a cure and healing brought him to someone who told him to turn to God. Though a devoted Catholic – his eventual turn to search for God landed him an invitation to attend a Revival Centres Fellowship in Melbourne on the 31st of May 1981. This first meeting convinced Pastor Godfrey that there was more to believing the Word of God and actually being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues and receiving healing as promised in God's Word.

Being a sick man – the first thing Pastor Godfrey wanted to do was to be obedient to the Word of God and he took that step by being baptized and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Little did he know that the decision he made would change every aspect of the life he knew and everything he grew up with, his family, his entire village, its customs and his traditions and most importantly his faith.

The good news of being born of the water and the Holy Spirit brought about a huge change in his life – a change that gave him a standing ovation of something he never dreamt of. It was a driving call to preach the Gospel to the lost and to the people

who never heard the true Gospel salvation message of being born of the water and the Spirit.

Pastor Godfrey was healed by God and subsequently left Australia with his then wife (Helen) who was also baptised and received the Holy Spirit and his children and returned to his homeland.

He worked as a press publicity officer with the OK Tedi gold mine for a while then he heard of his mother's illness

He travelled to his village of Karaite in Lumi of Sandaun Province at the end of August 1982 after thirteen (13) years away to see his mother and eventually to bring back with him that ray of light and ray of hope that also changed the lives of his people.

Pastor Godfrey prayed over his mother who had been in a coma for a few days after suffering from cerebral malaria. The next morning she was completely healed. She woke up and went downhill to a water hole to collect water to do her washing – it was obvious God had healed her and she lived for another ten (10) years.

Upon witnessing and hearing of the miracle and following the Good news of being baptised by full immersion and receiving the Holy Spirit – many came to hear the Word of God.

On the first of September, 1982 – the first nine people, eight male and one female courageously stepped out of a strong hold Catholic territory and declared their new found faith by being baptised and received the Holy Spirit.

Their lives were changed and they began a new walk as the Word of God had promised. The nine (9), one female and eight males from the village of Karaite, Kumnate, and Eritei No.1, were Edward Ripos Onpaye, Peter Arman Telpeki, Fabian Ramaka Telpeki, Matthew Meindo Telpeki, Daniel Tainkel Seiwo, Thaddeus Aitu, Alois Yalu, Carl Kaniombo and the only female Angela Waminan (nee Weiki Kati).

These first nine people laid the foundation of the now Pentecostal Revival Movement through-out Papua New Guinea and the inception of powerful ministry with signs, wonders and miracles following.

Within just three months news of the healing power of God spread like fire. Hundreds flocked in, the sick and the lame seeking answers to their

predicament though the power of the good news of God and 128 others also received the Holy Spirit.

What a Revival – as what former parliamentarian, Gabriel Ramoi termed it, “There is certain revolution in the Revival Centres. It is a spiritual and social revolution. Let’s pray that no human interference will disturb this great move of the Lord”.

The Revival Centres of Papua New Guinea which was known as the Niugini Revival in the early days was established on the September 1982 in Karaité. From then on it was no turning back for the now ever populous growing church made famous by its countless healings of disease and illnesses medicine holds no cure to.

The church began to spread out to other provinces. Poro in Aitape was the first village to establish a church in 1984 outside of Lumi and then 1986 to 1987, it moved to Wewak, Lae, Onamuga in the Eastern Highlands Province, Mount Hagen and Vanimo.

With severe persecutions from the main line churches after its inception with power in September of 1982, nothing could stop the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as it spread throughout the country.

Pastor Godfrey’s stand against persecutions and sheer determination to preach the word of God boldly within the last 30 years certainly paid off.

Revival is now booming in this country as we continue to see more than 150 people from all the provinces being converted weekly. It is spreading because it offers both physical and spiritual healing and there is now a real commitment to improvement and to family life. The Fellowship now is in all the 22 provinces even in the remotest parts of the country with 900 assembly’s altogether. There are about 900 officers and their assistants administering the churches in each province. The success of the Revival Centres of Papua New Guinea would be attributed largely to the signs, wonders and miracles among the people, and changes in the lives of the people. A lot of people have been healed of various illnesses since the beginning including ulcers, cancers, HIV/AIDS, leprosy. The lame walk, the blind see, and deaf hear and many others. The people testify of themselves.

Since the church’s inception in 1982 Pastor Godfrey has since been a real workaholic. He has worked tirelessly for the church to be where it is today. His vision for Papua New Guineans to be

filled with the Holy Spirit was the fruits of his dedication and commitment for the last 30 years.

Pastor Godfrey recalls other church groups ordering him to stop preaching in their territories. And he usually replies, “If what I am preaching comes from man then it will fade and die away but if it comes from God no man will ever stop it and it will continue to grow like wild fire.” (Acts 5:38-39).

True to his words, the church continues to grow in great numbers with Port Moresby as the largest assembly in Papua New Guinea and in the Revival Fellowship world-wide with over 3,000 people every Sunday meeting.

Despite the many occasions – when he was threatened, laughed and mocked at, called a con man, a false prophet and all sorts of names – he never gave up hope in the true God he believes in. He always puts on a brave face coupled with his trademark smile.

Pastor Godfrey vividly recalls two of the most memorable events that he will never forget and that he saw the Lord really take charge of the situation.

The first one was in 1983 .During one of their normal visits to help Pastor Godfrey with the growing church in the early days, three Australian Pastors were ordered to leave and never to return to Papua New Guinea by government immigration officers and police in Lumi.

They claimed the Revival Fellowship was causing divisions among families in the Lumi and Aitape villages. Actually their aim was to stop the church from growing completely. Government officials acted upon complaints from already existing churches within the areas.

It was a heart-breaking moment for Pastor Godfrey and the newly established church when he said good-bye to the pastors at the Jacksons airport. That was to be the last and the PNG Fellowship was never to see and hear from Australia again.

Pastor Godfrey went back to his people very sad but deep inside he knew that what he started was never his – it was God’s and that He will never let His people down – God was going to make things right.

But after only three years Australians were given the green light to continue their work with the church in PNG. And since then Australians have been attending PNG rallies, crusades and camps every year in great numbers continuously granting their support.

The Revival Centres of Papua New Guinea is affiliated to the Australian Revival Fellowship. The Revival Fellowship has immensely supported Revival Centres of Papua New Guinea through its 30 years of existence in both cash and kind and it is through the extension of its faith as well that the Papua New Guinea Fellowship continues to soar.

According to the Chairman of the Revival Fellowship worldwide and Senior Pastor of the Adelaide Revival Fellowship, Pastor John Kuhlmann – The revival that followed Pastor Godfrey’s conversion in Melbourne in 1981 paved the way for the spiritual transformation of many individuals.

Pastor John said the positive impact on the local communities was very impressive. Man and woman worked together to improve living conditions, hygiene and health in the villages.

Pastor John had the privilege of making twelve trips to Papua New Guinea as guest of the Revival Fellowship Centres of PNG. His first visit was to Lumi in 1987 where a strong revival church was already flourishing.

“I met many wonderful people whose lives had been transformed by the power of God. Many testified of miraculous healings and lives being changed after being baptised by full immersion and receiving the Holy Spirit with the Bible evidence of speaking in other tongues – Acts 2:4,” He said.

Pastor John added that Australia and other parts of the world are inspired by the testimonies and faithfulness of our brethren in Papua New Guinea.

Another incident was in 1986: Pastor Godfrey and some of his leaders and brethren walked two nights to the Sepik River to baptise a group of people at Makleri village but were threatened and turned away by Yakeltem villagers who belonged to the CBC church. The group had to retreat to Karaite.

This did not stop the power of God from moving. Some months later the people themselves came out to Wewak and got baptised and received the Holy Spirit and went back to their village and established the church. Now it is all Revival.

Pastor Godfrey himself since the beginning has been conducting trainings in various provinces for young men, leaders, and pastors to keep up with the rapid growth of the church.

The task was tough for one man to oversee a church that grew so rapidly in the last 30 years – but for Pastor Godfrey – it has been the love, wisdom

and humbleness of the Lord that gave him the strength and courage to fulfil the great work that the Lord bestowed upon him.

This September will see the Revival Centres of Papua New Guinea celebrate 30 years anniversary of active and powerful ministry in PNG.

It marks a milestone in the history of the Fellowship in the country and that God is pouring out His Holy Spirit until the return of the Lord Jesus as He promised and His Church will continue to grow no matter what.

Pastor Godfrey said he only preaches the Word of God and it is up to the people to choose where they want to be as he always says in one of his famous sayings, “Heaven or Hell – to live forever or to die forever, the choice is yours, no pressure.”

From the very beginning, he had only one vision and that was for Papua New Guinea to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That is one precious thing he holds at heart.

Today more than 90,000 people throughout Papua New Guinea are enjoying the benefits of paying attention to the salvation message of God and taking that step to repent, be baptised and be filled with the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38.

What started in a small village high up on the mountains and among a people who know little about civilisation has definitely been a powerful ministry with signs, wonders and miracles following confirming **“THE GREATEST REVIVAL OF ALL TIME... PRAISE THE LORD!”**

Pastor Godfrey Wippon has given us permission to circulate this article that was printed just before the 2012 Rally in Wewak in the 3 PNG newspapers: National, Post Courier and Sunday Chronicle. There were 933 baptisms at the Rally and more over the following days! In 2012, there was 5,833 baptisms recorded, plus others in remote areas which are unable to make regular reports.