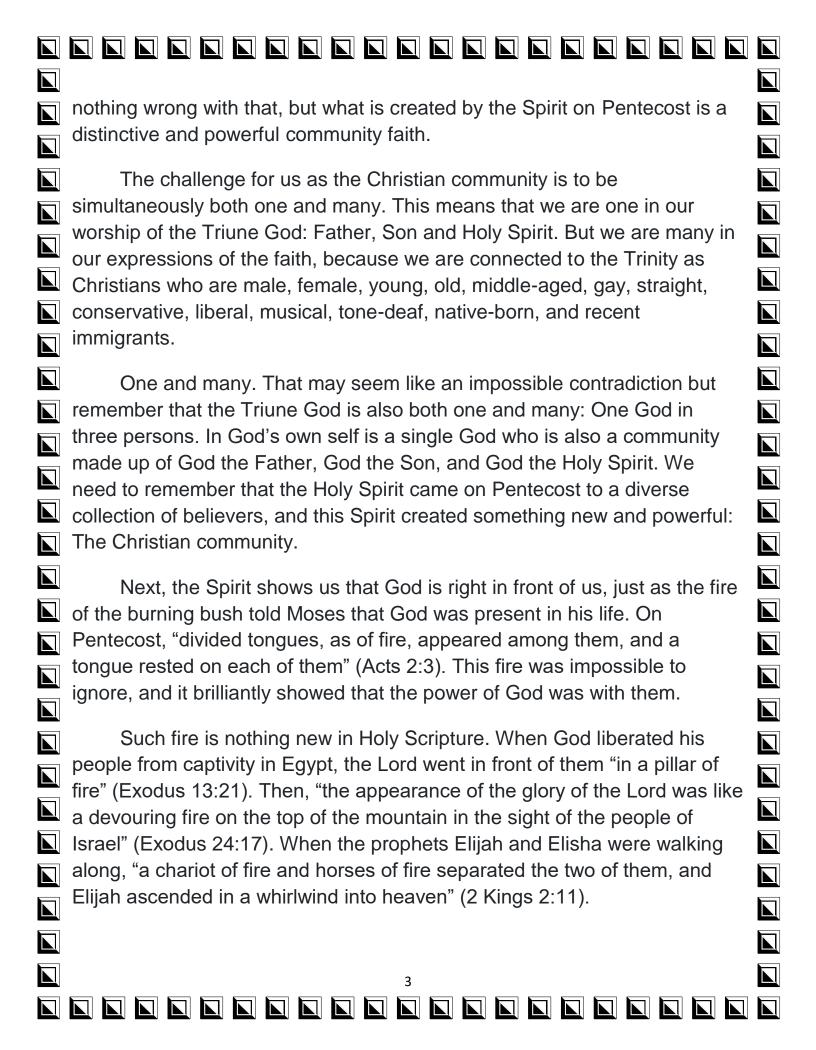
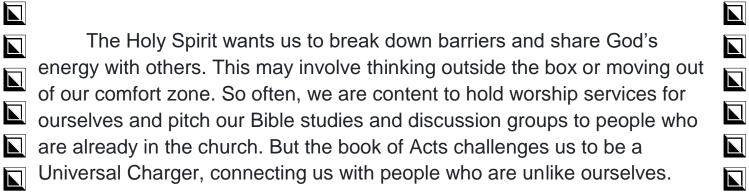


Suddenly from heaven "there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (vv. 2-4). God was determined to fill them with power. The Holy Spirit came with the rush of a violent wind, like the wind from God that "swept over the face of the waters" on the first day of creation (Genesis 1:2). The Spirit danced with divided tongues, as of fire, like the burning bush that revealed God to Moses — a bush that "was blazing, yet it was not consumed" (Exodus 3:2). The Galilean disciples began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability, making it possible for them to communicate with devout Jews from every nation. The Holy Spirit was a Universal Charger. This same Spirit is available to us today, and it is charging us in the same way that it charged the first followers of Jesus. Our challenge is to receive what the Spirit wants to offer us, and then to share that divine energy with others. We are being given a Holy Spirit Charger that puts its charge into just the right spot. First, the Spirit is a creative force in our lives, just as the wind of God was a creative power in the making of the heavens and the earth. In Acts, the Spirit creates the Christian community, which is why Pentecost is sometimes called the "birthday" of the church. Notice that God's Spirit is poured out on a collection of believers. "The Holy Spirit is not a 'personal' gift from God that each believer privatizes," says biblical professor Robert Wall. The fact that the Spirit appeared to a group is "the distinguishing mark of a people belonging to God." We tend to have an individualistic view of faith in Canada, and many people talk about having a personal relationship with Jesus. There is



The Lord "will come in fire," promises the prophet Isaiah, "and his chariots like the whirlwind" (Isaiah 66:15). And in a vision in the book of Revelation, John says that the eyes of Christ will be "like a flame of fire" (Revelation 1:14). Pillar of fire. Devouring fire. A chariot of fire. A flame of fire. What unites these blazing sights? All are signs of the presence and power of God. Again and again, God comes into the middle of human life and appears to us. Sometimes these appearances are brilliant, like tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost. Sometimes they are more subtle, like the squeeze of a hand, an encouraging word, an expression of forgiveness, a statement of love. But whether God comes in blazing fire or in warm words, God is present and powerful. The promise of Pentecost is that God is with us, always with us. It echoes the promise made when Jesus was given the name Emmanuel, which means "God is with us" (Matthew 1:23). God is our Universal Charger, giving us the healing and help we need, in every time and place and situation. Finally, the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to communicate with people of every race and culture, just as it enabled the first followers of Jesus to connect with the diverse Jews of Jerusalem. The apostle Peter guickly discovered that the gift of the Spirit was not a private gift to him. It was given to him so that he could share God's deeds of power with others. Taking a bold stand, Peter announced to the people of Jerusalem, "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:17). Yes, the Spirit was coming to fill not just Peter and the other followers of Jesus, but a diverse group of sons and daughters, young people, and old people, and even people who were slaves. All the cultural barriers that had previously existed were breaking down, and now, said Peter, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (v. 21).



The Holy Spirit remains a creative force in the world, one that is continuing to form the Christian community. The flame of God's presence is always with us, working powerfully in our lives. And the Spirit pushes us to reach outward to every race and nationality, sharing divine energy with others. That's a Hi-Charge Holy Spirit, one that fills us, and others, with the power of God

Deacon Gerry

