

God Turned the Spirit Loose in Wind



This hymn recounts several of the ways that the Holy Spirit is most evident in scripture. The first stanza celebrates the Spirit's role in the Genesis account of creation, "the Spirit hovered over the waters." Rather than simply recount the episode, the hymn's powerful, poetic language invites us to experience the Spirit's work in a fresh way. The Spirit was 'turned loose' and 'danced across the universe'.

This same kind of poetic imagination is evident throughout the hymn. Stanza two pictures the scene of Jesus' baptism, when the Spirit descended like a dove. The third stanza takes us to Pentecost in Acts 2 when the Spirit appeared as tongues of flame and the fourth highlights the Spirit's role in the inspiration of all of scripture.

Each stanza in the hymn ends with a prayer that the Spirit may do the same work in us today. So the creating Spirit is asked to "set the church in motion;" the descending Spirit is asked to come and strengthen us; the fiery Spirit is asked to stir the passion of our gifts again; the inspiring Spirit is asked to speak again 'in laugh and deepest sigh,' perhaps recalling the work of the Spirit in Romans 8, taking our prayers to God when we do not know how to pray.

The fifth stanza extends the prayer for the Spirit's work in our lives today. It is a prayer that calls on the living Spirit to come fresh again to 'reconsecrate this place.' This prayer is recognition that the presence of the Spirit in our midst when we are apart and when we are gathered for worship transforms mundane things into holy things.
By the Spirit,

an individual Christian is a saint;

bread and wine are made holy and baptismal waters are sanctified;

a gathered congregation is a church;

a building becomes a sanctuary;

a hymn becomes a window to the presence of God.

all things are possible.

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