PENTECOSTAL COVENANT CHURCH

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PCC Scroll

Spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and equipping the People of God through the written word.

Editor's Corner—Expanding your territory

Sister LaTonja Brown

The theme of this issue's newsletter, "Multiplying what you have: Expanding your territory," is problematic for me. The reason? I suffer from what I like to call "chronic dissatisfaction." I am not sure what is "missing," but I have a desire for more. I sometimes feel like this desire interferes with truly enjoying the here and now. However, I am in a season where I am trying to remain more grounded, aware of and grateful for what I **do** have: the little and the big.

In general, we live in a society that seems to scream and crave more, more, more. And the more, more, more is wanted **now**. Unfortunately, the more, more, more often doesn't have to do with multiplying or expanding on a spiritual level. It seems to be about multiplying and expanding on a natural level. A bigger house. A bigger car. A bigger television. A bigger phone. A bigger paycheck.

Still, in the essence of the theme, there is more I desire from God, myself and my life. I do want God to multiply what I have and expand my territory and influence in both the natural and spiritual. My challenge is living in and being grateful for the here and now while working to multiply and expand where I am.

In the natural sense, one way I am trying to expand my territory is by education and training. At work, I am learning new programs like Tableau. The area of data science has expanded a lot since my early days as a market research analyst. Now, we have programs like Tableau and Power BI that have stronger capabilities than basic Excel. The programs have streamlined some processes and added efficiencies, which leads to the question of what else can I do with the time that has been saved. I also try to take classes after work to expand knowledge or for pleasure. Seattle Central and the University of Washington both have extensive programs and classes geared toward working adults.

Luke 6:38 tells us, "*Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again*." This points us to the concept of sowing and reaping. One way to multiply what you have is to invest and sow into what you are looking to reap. This is true in both the natural and the spiritual.

In the Parable of the Talents, we see the good servants multiply their talents by investing them. Action was required of them. There must be action and investment on our part to expand our gifts and talents. If we sit on our talents and don't invest in them, we will not see the multiplication or expansion we seek.

John 10:10 is a scripture that I like keeping close to my heart. Jesus came that we might have life, abundant life. But not for nothing. I remember when I first started investing in my retirement. I was shown all kinds of diagrams and graphs about how much money I could accumulate if I invested different amounts at different points in my life. The bottom line was the sooner I started, the more long-term earning potential I would have. Along the same lines, if you want to multiple and expand, start right now. The sooner you start, the more you can expand and multiply.

Matthew 6:33 says, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*." As we keep our focus on God and seek His direction and will for our lives, the hope is that God's plan for expansion and growth will naturally come as a result.

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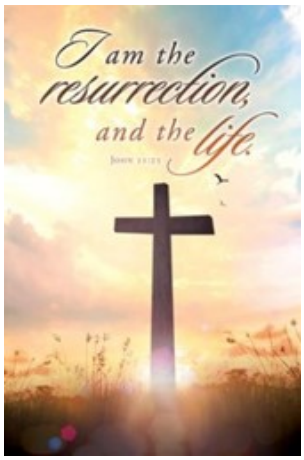

Recommended Reading:

- **1 Chronicles 4**
- **Numbers 27**

Word of the Quarter—Expanding your territory

Editing Team

In this issue of the *PCC Scroll*, we continue the overarching theme of "Being a good steward: Working what's in your hands." The overarching focus started in the fall issue with the subject of "Recognizing what is in your hand: What are you steward over?" followed by "Exploring creative ideas: How else can you use your gifts" in the winter issue. In this issue, the overarching thought continues with the topic, "Multiplying what you have: Expanding your territory."

Webster has several definitions for the word *territory*, including "*a geographic area belonging to or under the jurisdiction of a governmental authority,*" "*a field of knowledge or interest*" and "*an assigned area*."

One of the most well-known verses about enlarging territory is found in 1 Chronicles 4 where Jabez, who is featured in "Men of the Bible," prayed that God would enlarge his territory. In "Women of the Bible," we see five sisters, known as the Daughters of Zelophehad, claiming the portion of the promised land that would have gone to their deceased father. This promised territory came from an oath that God made years before. It is referenced in Deuteronomy 19:8, "*And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers*."

God was constantly expanding Israel's physical territory. In Isaiah 54:2-3, God tells Israel, "*Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited*."

What is your territory or areas that you have influence in? Are you on the usher board, praise team, hospitality team, a minister, a deacon, a writer, a teacher, etc.? How can you expand your territory? What more can you do to serve your church and your community? Whatever you are doing is part of a greater purpose. Imagine the impact we would have if we all expanded together?

Do you have goals, dreams and desires or areas that you want God to expand? Pray about them and work toward them. Maybe there is a gift you have that you'll want to take professional classes on to expand your knowledge, skills and opportunities. Maybe there's a successful program/ministry you've designed that you can build up as a model for expansion to other sites and cities with a similar demographic and need. Maybe it is investing in leadership development by empowering others in the work that you do so that a job, program or system is not solely dependent on you.

Do you have a vision for how you want to expand? There are doors and opportunities God wants to open for us, and we must be prepared. Look for these opportunities and new doors to open and look for areas where you can increase your influence.

In all aspects of your life – be it church, work or personal – we invite you to expand your territory.

Testimony—Let this mind be in you

Sister Angela Davis

In the Bible, there is a scripture that says, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*," Philippians 2:5. What does this mean in the world today? What kind of mind would continue to replay past hurts and scars and continue to be comfortable in a confused state of traumatized normalcy?

I believe our minds have the ability to go beyond what state we currently find ourselves in. That capability occurs if we desire to be released from the binding agents that have been sent to minimize the vastness of God's love, mercy and grace.

The mind is complex and full of contradictions. We can think we are the best thing since the world was formed yet belittle the existence of another person. We can create a masterpiece yet cut someone down with merely ignoring their existence.

I have entertained many thoughts in my mind, but mostly I ponder why so many people are unkind. The question I contemplate isn't deep or profound. I have been told numerous times, "Hurting people hurt people." Even when we try our best, we stumble, fall, doubt and get upset. That's when we realize we are limited. We are supposed to laugh, cry, hurt and question unclear thoughts in our minds. It is during prayer and deep communication with God that we acquire clarity and checks and balances of our thoughts and actions, which result in focused outcomes.

We have the ability to choose what we store in our minds. In my case, I could not accept that I had the power and option to choose what I entertained in my mind about who I am and what I can do. I have gone on a journey and realized the significance of my life and how my hurt, pain and trauma was part of the design for the call that God placed on my life.

We are part of an integrated existence in the mind, body and spirit realms. To exclude that notion denies the who, what, where, why and how of our very essence and purpose. Negating the concept says we are denying the fact that we inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. We have to be aware of what directly affects our mental, physical and spiritual functioning. Otherwise, this is precisely why hurting people hurt people, and I am not exempt from any statements or ideas in this writing.

I have entertained many thoughts in my mind, but mostly I ponder why so many people are unkind.

In a society full of distractions and a decreasing desire for natural human interaction, there seems to be louder cries for connectedness with one another. Unfortunately, those cries are often unhealthily manifested in gun violence, suicide, abuse, domestic violence, etc.

The mind can bring positive and negative concepts that can both be true, but they do not have to apply to the entire functioning of thought, which ultimately results in internal and external consequences. There is a plethora of religious books that have wise sayings similar to the concept of letting this mind be in you, but they are minus the Christ Jesus. I contend that without the Spirit of God in the triune being, emptiness will not cease.

I have and will continue to be on a healing journey. I have learned I will never be what mankind wants me to be. This includes looks, thoughts, talk and the way I pursue the call that I have finally accepted. I am learning to be okay with this. People will be, do and say what they want. I am who God says I am. Because of this, I pray every day that I mature in the mind of Christ, knowing that until we reign with Him, I will not completely obtain my goal. The goal: I want to love like Christ.

In my life, I have seen and experienced many horrific things. But despite all those things, I can still say that God has been good to me. I am able to have a sound mind and express myself in a creative manner.

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Spiritual Assortment—Whose report do you believe?

Sister Angela Davis

Many times, we hear and accept stories or narratives. A prime example is the systemic oppression we see play out every day. Narratives have a way of oversimplifying a beginning, middle and end of a life and social identification, which in turn sets up a predicted outcome. Strategist of economic studies and many institutions have been very crafty in defining narratives that determine the outcomes for many lives today. Some positive; some not so positive. But the best news I heard was the Biblical narrative of eternal life.

I am glad to know that God has more for us than we can even begin to comprehend.

Because of the Biblical narrative for our lives, we can know that no matter what things look like, God has a way of shifting the outcomes this earthly world would spin for us.

I believed many deceptive narratives framed for my life before Christ. As time wore on, I grew in my understanding of God's love, purpose and discourse for the life He has blessed me with. Because of this understanding, I accept many things I must relinquish in order to be free for God's purpose. These things are not necessarily bad things, but they are not beneficial for advancing God's Kingdom.

I am glad to know that God has more for us than we can even begin to comprehend. Because of His vast grace, mercy and love, my ever-shifting narrative includes less of me and more of Him. As more of Christ becomes my desire, passion and focus, so does the need to be a willing vessel for His glory and purpose.

The weight of the deceptive narratives of this world has not hindered my resolve to do what I must do for Christ. In my messy healing process, God still chooses to use me. I in turn stretch my heart toward His will, ways and Word.

Stepping outside of the predetermined narrative has some surprising perks, including freedom in Christ! It also includes releasing burdens that were not meant for me to bear. I gained the ability to recognize what is important for life and Godliness in a way that had not been clear in the past. This clarity is continually fine-tuned by the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Requests:

- ♥ Pastor and Minister Jo Ann
- ♥ Sis. Rachel Jackson (in Botswana)
- ♥ National and local leaders
- ♥ Military and their families and veterans
- ♥ Youth, families, singles, and marriages

Fit for the Kingdom —What else can I do?

Brother Titus Robinson

What else can you do to continue your journey to being healthy you ask? Let's take a look at being flexible or stretching.

Over my years of fitness training, I've had two major surgeries on both shoulders involving my rotator cuffs. I missed 15 weeks of work for both surgeries. During discussions with my doctors, I discovered I had hereditary issues. It is possible that these issues could have been resolved or reduced had I worked on being more flexible or added a stretching routine to my exercise program.

Flexibility, for the most part, is greatly overlooked by most people. From my experience, it can be a major part of injury prevention. I strongly believe stretching should be added to your daily or weekly exercise program.

Let's take a closer look at the benefits of being more flexible or stretching. Stretching is an awesome stress reliever. It can relieve pain and tension in your muscles and joints. It has the ability to lower your blood pressure as well! Stretching is a great way to increase your cardiovascular ability, and it is a nice way to start your day off. It is also a great way to relax, and if done before bedtime, can lead to a great night of sleep.

You should never start any exercise program without warming up. Light stretches to get the muscles warmed up is a great way to start off. Since my injuries, I also stretch after my exercise routine to continue my injury prevention. So, I would recommend you begin and end your exercise program with stretching.

As with any exercise program, always check with your doctor to make sure you don't overdo it. Start off slowly so you don't injure yourself while stretching. As always, have fun, enjoy and see you next time.

As with any exercise program, always check with your doctor to make sure you don't overdo it.

PCC Scroll Editorial Policies

- Members of PCC are encouraged to submit Testimonies, Book Reviews, Creative Expressions, and Healthy Recipes.
- Please limit your submissions to original work.
- Please submit your material electronically. The preferred format is a Word document.
- Please limit your word count to 600 words or less.
- All submissions will be edited by the PCC Editing Team.

If you would like to receive an electronic version of the newsletter, please send your request to latonjab@hotmail.com.

Women of the Bible—Daughters of Zelophehad

Sister LaTonja Brown

Names/Meanings: *Hoglah – a partridge or a boxer; Mahlah – sickness or disease; Milcah – queen or counsel; Noah – rest or comfort; Tirzah – pleasantness*
Their Character: *The sisters had the assertiveness and tenacity to declare and fight for their inheritance.*
Their Sorrow: *Their father passed away.*
Their Triumph: *They were able to win a legal battle that granted them their deceased father's share of the promised land.*
Key Scriptures: *Numbers 26:33; 27:1-11; 36:1-12; Joshua 17:3*

Once upon a time, women had no property rights. If a man died without sons, his daughters did not inherit his property. The property would be passed to the nearest male relative, leaving the unmarried daughters without an inheritance.

Once upon a time, five women fought for their rights after their father died. These five women were Hoglah, Mahlah, Milcah, Noah and Tirzah, and they were the daughters of Zelophehad.

The sisters lived at the end of the exodus from Egypt as the Israelites prepared to enter the promised land. Their father was a descendent of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Maker, son of Manasseh, son of Joseph. They presented a petition to Moses, Elezar the priest, tribal leaders and the community at the entrance of the Tabernacle.

Their father had died in the wilderness. The sisters pointed out that their father had not rebelled against God or leadership with Korah. Because his death was natural and did not involve any actions that would nullify his inheritance, they argued they were entitled to his share. They contended his name and family line should not disappear from his clan because he had no sons.

Moses sought God, and God said that their claim was legitimate. Because there were no male heirs, the sisters were granted the land that would have gone to their father. Furthermore, the people of Israel were given instructions. If a man died without a son to inherit, the inheritance would go to his daughters. If he had no children, the inheritance would be transferred to his brothers. If he had no brothers, the property would go to his father's brothers. If his father had no brothers, it would go to the nearest male relative. The judgement became law among the tribes of Israel.

The decision didn't come without some complications. Male family members came to Moses and the family members of Israel. They were concerned that if the daughters of Zelophehad married men from other tribes, the land would go to their husbands' tribe causing the land to be lost to the ancestral tribe. This would reduce the land of the Tribe of Manasseh.

They fought for it, and their fight helped not only themselves but other women who would find themselves in similar situations.

Moses ruled that land could not pass from tribe to tribe. The daughters could marry anyone they liked with the caveat that they must be from their territorial tribe. Each sister ended up marrying a cousin from their father's side, so the land stayed within their tribe.

What a group of exceptional women. They are the first recorded women to declare for their rights, and their case is one of the earliest reported lawsuits on record. They did not sit back and let their inheritance slip from their fingers because of tradition. They fought for it, and their fight helped not only themselves but other women who would find themselves in similar situations. The decision of their case is still upheld by legal courts of law, and it is said to be one of the oldest decided cases that is cited as an authority.

Although we don't know much about the sisters individually, we can assume that their parents raised them to be assertive. Under Jewish oral law, the sisters are referred to as wise, righteous, and students of the Torah.

Once upon a time, five remarkable women stood up to injustice and slew their dragon.

Men of the Bible—Jabez

Sister LaTonja Brown

Name: *Jabez*
Meaning: *He makes sorrowful*
His Character: *Jabez was a pious man who tried to live righteously.*
His Sorrow: *His birth caused his mother pain, and she gave him a name that means sorrowful.*
His Triumph: *He prayed for God to bless him and enlarge him, and God honored his petition.*
Key Scriptures: *1 Chronicles 4:9-10*

Jabez was a descendant of Judah. It is believed that he lived after the conquest of Canaan during the time of the judges. Jabez is mentioned during a genealogy of Judah in 1 Chronicles. The author interrupts the genealogy to briefly tell us about him, which is a reason to take note. We learn that he was named Jabez by his mother because his birth was exceptionally painful. The Bible refers to him as more pious than his brothers.

Jabez is remembered for his prayer request that is found in 1 Chronicles 4:10. The prayer is, "*And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me*!"

In his prayer, he asked for four things. He asked for God to bless him. He asked for God to enlarge his coast. He asked for God to keep His hand on him. He asked for God to keep him from evil.

In Jabez, we see a person who defied the label placed on him.

The first thing Jabez prayed was, "*Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed*." Jabez recognized God as the source of all blessings. In his request, he was asking God for supernatural favor. He did not say what he wanted those blessings to be. He trusted God for the results.

The second thing Jabez prayed was, "*enlarge my coast*." The word *coast* can be replaced with the word *territory*. When Jabez says this, he is not just referring to physical land, wealth and prosperity, though I am sure that was part of his request. He was also referring to his relationship with God and his spiritual impact on those around him. He was referring to expanding his influence.

The third thing Jabez prayed was, "*that thine hand might be with me*." Jabez wanted God to protect him and lead him in all that he did, every moment of his life. He wanted God with him through all trials and circumstances that came to him.

The fourth thing Jabez prayed was, "*that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me*." Jabez's name means sorrow. He was praying to be protected from the meaning of his name.

I am not sure what caused Jabez to pray those words. As mentioned, his mother named him sorrowful. Names were very important during Biblical times. A name was a wish and a prophecy for that child. People often ended up living out the meaning of their name, which is a reason for the names changes in the Bible. Jabez did not want his name to define his future or anything to do with its meaning. Perhaps he prayed to cancel that label and that his life would not be sorrowful.

His life certainly ended up far from the meaning of his name. He prayed, and God heeded his prayer. In Jabez, we see a person who defied the label placed on him. He believed in the power of God and prayed that power into his life.

Today, the Prayer of Jabez has been marketed as a book (part of the prosperity movement) and turned into a song. But I think the lesson of Jabez's story is his faith and belief in God. God answered his words and his prayer. When praying to God, it is perfectly suitable to pray using scripture. It is also okay to pray for blessings. Just remember you are blessed to bless others. At the end of the day, God knows your voice and your needs. Like Jabez, call on Him.

Your Money Matters —Multiplying what you have

Sister LaTonja Brown

When it comes to retirement, investing is the way to multiply your money and build your retirement savings. There are different ways you can invest.

As part of their benefits package, many employers began offering 401s as a supplement (and in most cases nowadays as a replacement) to pensions around 1978. 401s are retirement plans sponsored by your employer that offer a mix of mutual funds composed of stocks, bonds and money market investments. Most are target-dated, so your portfolio should become more conservative as you near retirement age. Many employers will match up to a certain dollar amount so be sure to take advantage of that. Most programs automatically deduct the amount from your paycheck and there is a legal allowable amount you can invest each year.

With 401s, employees save and invest money from their paychecks before taxes are taken out, known as salary deferral contributions. The money earned is placed in the plan and saved for retirement. Inside the plan, the money can grow tax-deferred. Normally, income taxes would have been withheld off of the money earned. But with 401s, you don't pay income tax in the current year. Taxes won't be paid until money is withdrawn from the account during retirement. Please note that there is a penalty fee if you withdraw funds before a certain age, normally 59 and a half. You also must begin withdrawing money out by a certain age or face a penalty.

You can invest into an individual retirement account (IRA). IRAs are individual accounts, so you can't share one with your spouse. There are two types: traditional IRA and ROTH IRA. You can have money automatically deducted from your bank account into your IRA account(s) and there is a maximum amount you can contribute toward both IRAs each year. Traditional IRAs are tax deferred like 401s. You won't pay taxes until you begin withdrawing money. When you begin withdrawing money, it will be taxed as part of your regular income. With a ROTH IRA, the money you contribute has already been taxed. When you begin withdrawing money, taxes would have already been paid. Like 401s, you will pay a penalty if you take money out before you reach a certain age.

If you are confident in your investment skills, you can invest on your own. Be sure to do your research and pay attention to when it is time to buy and sell. You can also invest with a financial planner who can help manage your portfolio based on your risk tolerance. If you go the advisor route, be sure to understand the fee structure.

You can invest in real estate. For example, you could own a rental home. The caveat is to remember to have money set aside for when your rental property is vacant. Be sure to have money set aside for planned and unplanned maintenance as well and be aware of rising property taxes. People also invest in commercial real estate like apartment buildings. Some people flip homes. This is normally done in "hot" markets but be aware that markets can cool off very quickly.

Another small way to invest could be opening an interest-bearing checking account. Please note that they normally require a high balance to open and maintain.

Don't forget to set a goal to be debt free. The money you were using for credit card and other debt could then go toward investing in your future. In addition, taking a side job can give you extra money to either pay off debt or invest in your future.

The money you were using for credit card and other debt could then go toward investing in your future.

The most important thing is to remember to have your money work for you. You want to be able to retire one day and in comfort.

Happenings and Events

Bible Study—Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. preceded by prayer at 6:30 p.m.

Spiritual Steps (Leadership Training)—2nd and 4th Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Family Prayer—Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.

Women's Ministry—3rd Fridays at 7:00 p.m.

Remember our ongoing food drive!