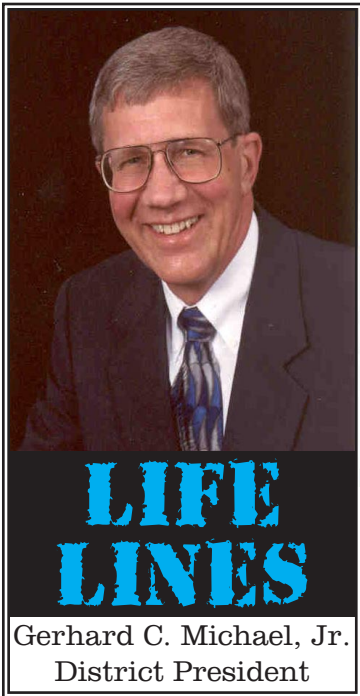


FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Power Dressing” for Job No. 1



Gerhard C. Michael, Jr.
District President

The *Orlando Sentinel* article began with this question, “How savvy are you about power dressing for a job interview or other important business occasion?” (“Best Foot Forward,” April 20, 2007, E1,3) Jean Patterson reported on the visit image consultant Lisa Maile made to the University of Central Florida to

them how to dress and carry themselves that their clothing would enhance and not prevent them from interviewing positively in their search for employment.

As the people of God, you and I have a far more significant purpose for being “dressed properly” than securing our first jobs, as important as that is. God has already called us into his company and recruited us to witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s Job No. 1 for us!



Our role as his witnesses is crucial, for as hymn-writer Charles Jeffries has written,

“The secrets of the atoms, the universe of light, all wonders of creation proclaim thy boundless might, but only through the witness from man to man passed on, dost thou reveal in fullness the Gospel of thy Son.” (*Worship Supplement*, 760, vs. 2) People do not figure out the

hear. The witness of the church to Jesus Christ is indispensable.

The good news I share with you is that we have just the clothing to enable us to do a good job! In Luke 24:49, before ascending to heaven, Jesus instructed his first disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the “promise of his Father,” when they would be “clothed with power from on high.”

Jesus’ reference is clearly to the Holy Spirit. In the beginning of his second volume, Luke links the “promise of the Father” with being “baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:4,5) The Holy Spirit is the heavenly power which dresses us for our witnessing.



Most likely we do not think of clothing as empowering us for work, unless in a protective sense. As illustration, I remember in the early 1960s, when I was doing seminary field work in the inner city — in days when the clerical collar was still widely respected — that we students wore our clergy shirts and collars for safety’s sake. Similarly, the astronaut wears a space suit when working on the space station or repairing a Hubble telescope. These are examples, though, where the clothing is more protective than empowering.

A better example which can help you sense the power of clothing was given in an article by a first-year student at the Harvard Medical School. Writing in the *Harvard Magazine* about 15 years ago, she told of her experiences as a beginning student. She had taken her first courses, had been able to shadow medical personnel on the hospital floor, but still had no actual “hands-on” experience. Nevertheless, because of the white coat she was wearing, she reported how a 70-something year old man very docilely, without any objection, allowed her to do a digital rectal examination. He did not know that she had never done it before, but because of the authority her clothing conveyed, he willingly submitted. She was amazed at “the power of her white coat.”

When the Holy Spirit clothes, then we indeed do have the power needed to witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. On the mount of Ascension, Jesus told his disciples, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses.” (Acts 1:8)

The history of the church is the record of the Holy Spirit empowering people to testify to Jesus Christ. Read over the Acts of the Apostles, and you will quickly sense how the Holy Spirit emboldened the disciples to witness. On the day of Pentecost, Peter spoke without hesitation. In the aftermath of healing the lame man outside the temple gates, Peter and John were not intimidated by the threat of the authorities, but boldly spoke of

Jesus — by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8) When the church gathered together after their release, it too was “filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.” (4:31)

Stephen, too, was “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit,” and people “could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with

(vv. 19f)



Last month I sought to encourage you to witness to your fellow Christians because we all need to be built up in our faith by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The celebration of Pentecost

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which he was speaking.” (Acts 6:5,10) Philip’s witness to the Ethiopian eunuch was inspired by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:29) When Saul was converted, Ananias baptized him that he might “be filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 9:17) And we know what a Spirit empowered witness the converted Saul gave throughout his ministry!



The point is that you and I have been clothed with the same Spirit in our baptism. Jesus himself talks about this when he emphasized the necessity of “being born of water and the Spirit.” (John 3:5) Paul writes to Titus about our being saved by God’s mercy, “through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.” (3:5) When Peter urged the crowds on Pentecost to repent and be baptized, he coupled his admonition with the promise, “and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)

As the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in his baptism, so has he descended on us in our baptisms. Thereby we have been clothed with “power from on high.” We are dressed for our witnessing assignment. We can carry it out effectively!

The Holy Spirit produces the fruit in our lives which makes us be people to whom others will want to listen. People who are loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled (Galatians 5:22f) are those who are hard to turn away from. Their lives beckon others to listen!

Further the Holy Spirit has as his supreme mission pointing us to Jesus. Our Lord himself clarified this in the upper room with his disciples: the Holy Spirit will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. He will bear witness about me. He will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, guiding us into all truth as it is embodied in me. (Compare John 14:26f; 15:26; 16:7-15)

As Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 10, we do not have to be afraid “how we are to speak or what we are to say, for what you are to say will be given you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of my Father speaking through you.”

teaches us that in the “power dressing” of the Holy Spirit we have the right attitude, the right confidence and the right words to witness boldly also to those who do not yet know the Lord Jesus.

Given the power which we have which far transcends that of the “white coat,” we can take on this assignment with confidence and hope, because we know that we are not alone as we witness to our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is working through us to get his words about the living, loving Lord Jesus into the hearts and minds of others, that they too might confess and own him as their Savior.

May the “power dressing” of the Holy Spirit clothe us with love and boldness to reach out to others and clearly testify to all that “Jesus is Lord.” That’s our Job No. 1.

-gcm

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brief graduating students how to prepare for successful job interviews.

According to the article, the first impression one makes has more to do with one’s appearance than the words that come out of one’s mouth. The clothing we wear has power to create a positive or a negative image.

Consultant Maile’s purpose in meeting with the graduating seniors at UCF was to coach

way of salvation by meditating on the created order; that’s an impossibility. Our fallenness blocks that from happening, since we people were born in sin and are by nature alienated from God, until he brings us to faith. (cf. Ephesians 2:1-3.) We are unable to discover the way of salvation on our own. Rather, the Spirit uses the words that point to Christ to create saving faith in the hearts of those who



Every congregation is a church in mission, and every member is a missionary; with all of us working together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, empowered by His Gospel to share His love.

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Assisting,
Encouraging
Congregations in Ministry*

A Word of Thanks ...

In response to the outpouring of notes, cards, calls and words of encouragement in recent days and the many prayers offered for healing for me, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your support. It’s difficult to thank you adequately for your love, but be assured that it is a source of strength for me as I prepare to resume my responsibilities.

The Lord has been kind to me. Under his blessing, an excellent medical team, I am happy to report that my surgery for prostate cancer April 9 went well. The pathology reports indicate that the cancer was contained within the gland for which we are most grateful.

Joan’s been a wonderful nurse. Healing is taking place; my strength is returning, and as I am able, I am hoping to ease back into my work routine. Your ongoing prayers and support are welcomed as together we pursue the mission God has entrusted to us.

Gerhard C. Michael, Jr.
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