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NORTH AMERICAN REGION NEWS

The Sword
of the Spirit



Photo: Dave and Jane Hughes hiking in Zion National Park in Utah.

Interview: Dave Hughes North American Region President

Dave Hughes began serving as regional president in October 2016. In this interview, Dave lays out his vision and priorities for the region.

Question: For the benefit of those who don't know you well, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Answer: First, let me tell you about my family. My wife Jane and I have been married for 35 years. Jane is a wonderful wife and support for me and whenever we can, we try to serve together. We have five children, four of whom are now married and have produced nine wonderful

grandchildren. Family is a great joy for us and we look forward to spending time with all our family.

Both Jane and I got involved in the charismatic renewal and covenant community in the 1970's and have been active ever since. I have been involved in leadership in various capacities since the 1990's. Most recently I served as the Senior Coordinator for Word of Life in Ann Arbor. I

have also filled various service roles in our region and internationally in the Sword of the Spirit for the past ten years or so.

Jane and I are members of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We find a great fit between Reformed theology, the working of the Holy Spirit, and living out covenant commitments with believers from many traditions. We are confirmed ecumenists!

I am an engineer by training and recently retired from an executive level position at General Motors in order to serve the Lord in a more full-time, volunteer capacity. I also tend to accumulate hobbies—we have a large garden and orchard, I raise bees, love to sail, golf poorly, etc.

Question: What does a Regional President do?

Answer: That is a good question and on one level I'm still discovering the role. Simply stated, the role of regional president is to ensure that the region moves forward in unity, finding effective ways for the communities in the region to support one another as well as to support and further our common outreaches—things like our regional youth work, Kairos, and building new communities. We have a pretty collegial working structure in the Sword of the Spirit so most of the role involves leading a collegial, team approach to what we do. We have various councils and committees to get this all to work well, so a lot of what I do is to make

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Youth Presentations to Syriac Orthodox



Photos. Top: Ed Moccia, His Eminence Mor Dionysius John Kawak, and James Munk. Middle: conference participants. Bottom: James Munk addressing the conference.

From December 14 through 16, NAR Kairos Director, James Munk, and SPO New Jersey Mission Director, Ed Moccia, joined the clergy of the Syriac Orthodox Church Eastern US Archdiocese for a conference focused on improving youth work in the Archdiocese. The retreat took place at the Mor Aphrem Center in New Jersey.

The Syriac Orthodox Church traces its beginnings to the earliest years of the Christian era. It has churches throughout the Middle East, Iraq, and India. As a result of immigration, the Syriac Orthodox Church now has churches in Europe, the Americas, and Australia as well. Our Sword of the Spirit Community, People of God, in Beirut, Lebanon, has a strong connection with the church and suggested James and Ed as a resource. Archbishop Mor Dionysius John Kawak acted on that suggestion and invited James and Ed to address this conference of priests from his Archdiocese.

James and Ed made six, one-hour presentations to the 18 priests and the Archbishop. These presentations outlined the Sword of the Spirit's approach to working with youth.

- Understanding Youth Culture
- The Postmodern Mind
- SOS Theory of Youth Work
- Raising Up Young Leaders
- Working with Transitional Adults
- Improving Your Parish Youth Work

James and Ed stressed the importance of engaging the youth themselves in Christian mission, a key element of creating radical disciples. They suggested that the Archdiocese bring together some of their more committed young members to develop a strategy for engaging young people in the church.

Plans have already been made for subsequent connections. One of the priests from New Jersey will be visiting the Saint Paul's Outreach chapter at Seaton Hall, especially to observe the men's household environment there. Another priest from Michigan plans to attend the Kairos YES! Retreat—he may even bring along some youth from his parish. There are many opportunities for joint action in the future.

James and Ed found great inspiration among the Syriac clergy. "I was having lunch with one of the priests," Ed said, "he shared with me how he had to flee Mosul, Iraq, when ISIS invaded 18 months previously and had recently immigrated to the United States." "The men we met with," said James, "clearly love the Lord and want to do the best they can for their young people. Hopefully, we can support them in this endeavor!"

Growing Community Unity

by Paul Dinolfo

When the first Christians were baptized in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost they experienced an internal change and a new power for mission. They also experienced an unexpected fruit as they were drawn into a unity expressed in Christian community. In time this unity was extended beyond the Jewish believers. Samaritans and Gentiles gave their lives to Jesus, were filled with the Holy Spirit and brought into the Christian community.

Our experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit parallels that of the early church. At first the main fruit we recognized was a deeper spiritual life, worship, spiritual gifts, love for Scripture, and power for mission. But, we also experienced an unexpected fruit as we were drawn by the Holy Spirit into unity with Christians from other church traditions: Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox. And, like the early Christians we were also drawn into Christian community.

From 1967 to 1975 a number of charismatic, covenant communities were formed. Some were Catholic, but many were ecumenical. In 1976, several covenant communities in the USA gathered together for a “community of communities” conference. It was at this conference that many of us heard the Bulwark prophecy, which called us to come together as communities—to extend our covenant love and commitment beyond our local communities. This resulted in the formation of the Association of Communities.

Over the next several years, leaders of communities that comprised the Association met regularly to work out how we would come together on a practical level. Not surprisingly, there were different views among us. Some wanted a high degree of structural unity, while others wanted a

somewhat loose relationship.

This disagreement led to the dissolution of the Association in 1981. Over the next few years the communities that were part of the Association developed into three networks of covenant communities: The Sword of the Spirit, the Catholic Fraternity, and the People of Praise.

Unfortunately, there were some hard feelings among some over the dissolution of the Association. In time there was some reconciliation between the leaders involved in the dissolution, but for the most part the three networks went their separate ways and had little to do with each other. Some individuals and local communities continued to have regular contact, but these interactions were relatively rare.

When we were making plans for the 2012 International Coordinators Meeting in New Jersey, the International Executive Council decided to extend an invitation to communities in the Catholic Fraternity. Alleluia Community (Augusta, Georgia) and City of the Lord (Tempe, Arizona) sent some of their coordinators. Since then leaders of those communities, as well as the Community of God’s Delight (Dallas, Texas), and Mother of God (Gaithersburg, Maryland) have regularly sent leaders to our international and regional leaders conferences.

When Alleluia Community received our invitation to attend the 2012 ICM, Bob Garrett (their senior coordinator) invited me to attend the Charismatic Leaders Fellowship (CLF) meeting. CLF began in the 1970’s. Its purpose is to bring together leaders within the charismatic movement to build relationships and discuss issues of common concern. The CLF was behind the 1976 Kansas City conference. SOS

leaders had at one time been very involved in CLF, but we had not been invited for many years.

I have since attended the CLF meetings. My wife, Marcia, usually attends with me. Dave Hughes has also attended. One of the main benefits of CLF is that it has provided “neutral ground” for relationship building with Catholic Fraternity and People of Praise leaders. This year the covenant community leaders added an extra day to meet together. Marcia and I attended, along with leaders from three the Catholic Fraternity communities. The People of Praise leaders were unable to attend, but we hope they will attend in the future. We used the time for relationship building and to discuss ways we could support each other as communities.

In 2015, the Catholic Fraternity invited me to attend their North American council meeting. At the meeting, I shared ways we might develop a more active friendship. Since then, St Paul’s Outreach (SPO), Kairios/SOS, and City of the Lord formed an alliance to work together building covenant community among young people in the Tempe, AZ, area. In 2016, the Catholic Fraternity invited Mike Shaughnessy and Dave Hughes to their North American council meeting. Mike shared our vision for working with youth, the community youth bridge, which was very well received.

I am encouraged by the growing friendship between the SOS and the Catholic Fraternity in North America. I believe it has already been beneficial to both the SOS and to the Catholic Fraternity. More importantly, I believe it is an expression of unity that pleases God and is a fruit of our common baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Paul Dinolfo is the senior coordinator of the Work of Christ Community in Lansing, MI. He is a former president of the North American Region.

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sure this all works together peacefully and in unity. I get to work with some great brothers and sisters.

Question: What is your sense for what the Lord is doing among us and in our Region?

Answer: To begin with we need to see that God is always doing a lot and we are always in the position of trying to discern what he is already doing. We need to then go do that too. We are meant to follow in mission, not lead.

Having said that, I think we live in interesting times. We live in a season of mission and open doors. Yes, times are dark but that is a good time to be a light. I see a lot of opportunity for mission and clearly that is something the Lord is always doing. The Lord is always on mission and we need to be as well.

At the same time, a core part of our call and charism is to find effective ways to love and support one another in our modern setting. We never outgrow our need to attend to the basics of loving one another. As a senior coordinator I learned that in any body of believers at any given time there will always be some who are hurting, who need special care, who are in a season of trial. We need always to be ready to walk alongside and pastor these brothers and sisters in our midst.

I often picture the scene from Nehemiah of the workers with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other. They are doing two things at the same time. I picture that for us as well: we do mission (the sword) and we build our common life (the trowel). And there's no inherent conflict in these two things—we can do both things well and in harmony.

Question: What priorities do you see for the region?

Answer: It's dangerous to ask an engineer that question—I always have a long list of priorities.

At our most recent council meeting last October we looked at a

set of new initiatives and then did a prioritizing exercise to sort out what we collectively thought were the right next steps. A couple of things came out of that exercise. Generally they fit into 2 'buckets'—things we can do to improve our support for local communities and things we can do for mission.

In the first bucket, supporting local communities, we want to try some new ways to foster communication and sharing amongst leaders on critical topics facing all of us. We have some ideas on how to do this in a low resource way via video conferencing between leaders to avoid the cost and time of travel. We also are looking to strengthen and improve some of the existing ways we support one another—things like visitations and the outside coordinator role.

In the mission bucket, we have some exciting efforts underway to strengthen and expand our work by building new communities in places where we have university outreaches. There are some promising efforts already well underway—places like Grand Rapids, Kansas City, Columbus, Tallahassee—and we think the Lord has much more labor for us in these fields. So we have a team working on this. We are also looking at some new ideas for developing and distributing our worship music as a form of mission. I'm personally pretty excited about this opportunity and we are gathering ideas and interest from many young people around the region on how best to do it.

Of course, these are just some of the new initiatives. There is also all the excellent work being done by our existing outreaches and teams—for example the community building team in our region involves dozens of men and women leaders, working with 21 communities in various cities.

Kairos continues to do a great job of serving our youth. University Christian Outreach (UCO), St. Paul's Outreach (SPO) and the Brotherhood of

Hope (BOH) are all doing great work on college campuses and expanding their impact.

I am optimistic that the Lord has much for us to do—to do more of what we are already doing and add some new things. All of it of course needs to be discerned and submitted to the Lord's direction.

So, a lot of priorities...

Question: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Answer: Please pray for the leaders in the region. They all work very hard and we need to appreciate their service. Pray for the brothers and sisters who serve us in the regional office.

Pray for wisdom for me as well.

Finally, let's pray that the Lord would send us all out into the harvest. Let us go do mission and may God be with us.



The Sword of the Spirit is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and strengthening Christian people (Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox) through active evangelization and by forming Christian communities.

In our youth outreach and community building work, we encourage men and women to give their lives fully to Jesus Christ, practice daily Christian discipleship, and to zealously proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to others.

The Sword of the Spirit is supported by charitable contributions. Your support is welcome! Contributions to The Sword of the Spirit are tax deductible in the United States.

Jerry Munk, Newsletter Editor

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