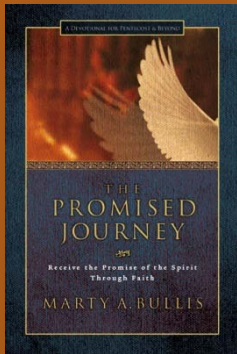


# The Promised Journey

A Devotional for Pentecost and Beyond



Easter is not merely a sentimental sunrise, soaring Sunday service, or sumptuous lunch. The Jesus resurrection launches us on a Spirit-sustained life that has everything to do with daily details, both the messy and the majestic. Reflecting deeply and wryly, Marty Bullis charms us into a pilgrimage rooted in the real life that God graciously grants, where the Spirit meets us in offbeat ways.

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## “Receive the Promise of the Spirit through Faith”

Eastertide is a season in which Christians around the world celebrate the Easter morning resurrection of Christ and remember his gift of the Holy Spirit given at the church’s first Pentecost.

The “Great 50 Days” as some traditions refer to our modern celebration of this time between Easter and Pentecost provides a season to reflect on the resurrection of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

The early disciples walked with the resurrected Christ during this period, watched him ascend to heaven, then waited for the Holy Spirit to come in power at Pentecost as Christ had commanded them. This same Spirit was promised to all Christians. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Galatians, said “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the

Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Galatians 3:14, NRSV).

*The Promised Journey* explores the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, preparing the world for Christ’s redemptive work. The book follows the work of the Spirit in Christ’s ministry, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and its work in the early church.

## About the Author

**Marty A. Bullis** is a fresh voice in Christian literature and the author of *The Passionate Journey*, *The Miraculous Journey*, and *Three Friends and the Magic Tree Wand*. His writing is pastoral and critical, revealing a duality within himself. As an analytic philosopher he is a deft critic of modern society’s ills—razor sharp in assessing where the culture needs correction. But as a former minister, at home within parish life, he gently delivers messages for healthy living vital to congregational life and Christian spiritual formation.

A graduate of Milligan College (B.A., 1985, Biblical Studies) and Claremont Graduate University (Ph.D., 2002, Philosophy), Marty has taught philosophy and religion at a number of colleges, including Azusa Pacific University, James Madison University and Juniata College. He is currently the chaplain at Windy Hill Village, a Presbyterian skilled-care nursing facility. Marty and his wife, the Reverend Tracie Bullis, reside in central Pennsylvania with their two children.

## About the Book

*The Promised Journey: A Devotional for Pentecost and Beyond* by Marty A. Bullis. Published by Marty A. Bullis & Booksurge Publishing. March 2009. Paperback, 240 pages. \$14.99. ISBN 31-4392-2964-3. 5.25 x 7.25.

## Jacket Description

On the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of truth,” fulfilled Jesus’ words by bursting on the scene with a mighty wind and fire—*one moment in time that changed the course of all time*. On that day, the Church was formed, and the 120 Jesus followers upon whom the Spirit fell were catalyzed to blaze a worldwide movement proclaiming the good news of God’s salvation offered to all people. Through Jesus, we have that same catalyzing Spirit as our constant companion. This is a promise that will never be broken. Every day the Spirit sustains us, corrects us, lifts us, teaches us, gives us joy and enables us to live in the light rather than darkness. If we seem to lose our way, it is the Spirit that guides, comforts, heals, defends and shows us the path again. In *The Promised Journey*, fellow traveler Marty Bullis has written 50 reflections on Pentecost—built

around key Scripture passages from both the Old and New Testaments—that are rich with metaphorical truths about our God-companion. Each day’s reading will not only hone your understanding of the Spirit’s work but will also ignite in you an ever-increasing desire to blaze with a “God-fired life.”

## Features

Reading, reflection, prayer, and daily spiritual projects—*The Promised Journey’s* fourfold daily pattern—develop within the participant the ability to listen to the call of the Holy Spirit in their life. Scripture readings focusing on the work of the Holy Spirit alternate between the Old and New Testaments for the fifty day period, providing the reader with a broad picture of the Spirit’s role in God’s economy. Short reflections by the author sharpen the reader’s understanding of the scriptures and help point to the Spirit’s work in contemporary society. Meditative prayers, readings, and daily spiritual projects help the reader enter into and respond to the work of the Spirit.

The book’s focus is ideal for use in the fifty-day Easter season, leading to the Pentecost celebration of the Spirit’s arrival in the early church; however, the book will be beneficial for Christians to use during any 50 day period of reflection. Daily scripture excerpts are taken from the *NRSV* and *The Message*.

*The Promised Journey* also contains a litany sheet to assist small groups using the material. The litany guides groups through Psalmody, silence, and discussion.

## Motivation for the Book

*The Promised Journey* is a book about relational intimacy that is founded in the person of God. It is a book written for the contemporary era, in which deep friendship is endangered by two messages—messages that seem at odds with one another but which actually work together, eliminating the possibility of intimacy.

One message beckons persons to strive for self-fulfillment and personal happiness. The other message calls for people to despair at the chaos and destruction which daily surrounds them. Each message is destructive of our mental capacities for intimacy. Each message sets our minds against true relationship. Each is a lie offered by the powers of destruction at work in the world.

Our society is bursting with the problems resulting from people listening to these messages. Failed marriages brought on by people wanting personal “happiness,” wars fought by people seeking power and prestige, hatred expressed by persons who have chosen to feed on despair.

Christians feel these forces as they are exposed to advertising and news industry messages, as they struggle to connect with others in the frenetic life of

modern America where work-weeks and commutes are longer, where leisure must be planned and guarded, where frustration seems always under the surface.

*The Promised Journey* identifies how the spirit of God can work, and *is* at work in this cultural setting. *The Promised Journey* tunes the attention of its readers, allowing them to attend to God's work.

## Interview Questions

1. What is this third person of the Trinity like and how do we experience it working in our lives?
2. Why was it important for Christ to promise the coming of the Holy Spirit before his death?
3. We often hear people speak about the Spirit's "empowering Christians." Is power its primary characteristic?
4. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the modern world?
5. Why does it often seem that the Spirit is absent from our lives?
6. What does it mean to be filled with God's Spirit?
7. The Old and New Testaments offer stories about the Spirit working in very difficult situations—in what some might call "ungodly" situations (cf. Samson & Jephthah). How are we to understand such narratives?
8. In our scientific and rational-leaning world we often are uneasy talking about spirits. Can we talk reasonably about God's Spirit amidst all the skepticism or must talk about God's Spirit be irrational?
9. Christ told his disciples before his ascension, "remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20, *NRSV*). How does God's Spirit allow Christ to be present with us?
10. The Spirit was present at creation and is present in Revelation in the new heaven and earth. How will our lives be shaped and influenced by the Spirit in heaven?

