

## **Pastoral Encouragement**

**8** *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* John 3:8 (ESV)

As I set out to write the pastoral encouragement, I thought “*What could be more encouraging than sharing some exciting stats from this week’s VBS?*”:

- We set a new record for attendance averaging 122 students per day.
- The children gave over \$1600 for children’s books to be translated into Polish and printed.
- Around 20 Berean teens successfully served the younger children during the day, while studying theological topics during the evenings.

By God’s grace, these were great achievements. Of course, the most important thing about this week was the Gospel being proclaimed to the children and teens. While we will probably see the tangible fruit from the offering very soon (books in the hands of Polish children via our missionary Ben Layer), the fruit of gospel proclamation during VBS *might* be seen immediately or it could come later through additional teaching and preaching God will provide. In any event, the work of the Holy Spirit (was) will be necessary if any of our young people are to be saved.

The Spirit is like the wind. He acts independently, irresistibly, and incomprehensibly. He moves in the hearts of God’s elect in exactly the right way and the right time giving them new birth. **(1)**

So, having been made new creations in Christ by the Spirit and having experienced the forgiveness of God that comes through faith in the Son, please join me in praying out of gratitude that the Holy Spirit would work savingly in the hearts of those who sat under the teaching of God’s Word this week.

In Christ,  
Pastor Rich

1. “[*There are three points of comparison between the wind and the Spirit in the work of regeneration: 1) the freedom and independence: ὅπου θέλοι πνεῖ; 2) the irresistible effect: τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκούεις; 3) the incomprehensibility: οὐκ οἶδας, both as to origin (πόθεν) and termination (ποῦ ὑπάγει).* To these might be added a fourth analogy, which, however, is not stated in the text, viz., the different degrees of power; the Holy Spirit acts now like the gentle breeze upon minds as tenderly constituted as John, Melancthon, Zinzendorf, now like a sweeping storm or whirlwind upon characters as strong as Paul, Luther, Calvin, Knox. Hence the presumption and folly to make our own experience the measure and rule for all others. We should rather adore the wisdom and goodness of God in the variety of His operation.—P. S.]”

John Peter Lange and Philip Schaff, [\*A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John\*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 129.