

...FOR THOSE SEEKING THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE *Holy Spirit*

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UNDER THE SURFACE

By Dan Siemens

Denise and I have a favorite walking trail near our home that runs along the Mississippi River. Of course, during the winter months, even though there is a strong current underneath and the river is about 100 yards wide, a crust of ice many feet thick forms over the surface each year.

One day in late winter, we witnessed an amazing sight as we strolled along its banks. We had been having very unseasonably warm weather that year. Although the normal temperature usually yields a daytime high of 34 degrees, our temps had been pushing up into the 50s and even the upper 60s.

As we walked along enjoying the rare sunshine, we glanced out over the frozen surface that covered the river from shore to shore. It was then that we thought we saw something move. As we stopped to check it out, we were amazed to discover that the ice on the river's surface that was frozen solid just hours before was now at this moment beginning to separate and split up before our very eyes. With tremendous sounds of cracking and rumbling filling the air, gigantic sheets of thick ice began to shift and jockey for position. Suddenly, the whole field of white expanse began to lurch forward and parade downstream.

Having found ourselves with front seats to this natural spectacle, we immediately sat down on the bank to watch. For the next hour we witnessed the transformation of the mighty Mississippi River from frozen, wintry stillness into a chaotic boil of jumbled ice floes and rising meltwater.

The power of the river's current was astonishing. Large enclaves of the frozen surface, which stubbornly tried to cling to the banks, were repeatedly assaulted as tons of iceberg debris and massive free-floating sheets of ice glaciers rammed against them and shattered their grip. Sometimes the impact of these collisions, like a huge multi-car pileup, was so severe that mountain



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ridges of buckled slabs abruptly rose midstream—their peaks towering ten feet high over the surface of the floe.

After observing this for a period of time, we realized that even though the jumbled ice blocks repeatedly threatened, as if engaged in a gigantic tug of war, to block the current's flow, the outcome was inevitable. The river was going to win. The current was just too strong to be withstood, even by tons of ice jamming together in resistance. Amazingly, when we returned the very next day, there was little evidence of any ice at all. The river ran free.

As I reflected on this natural wonder on the Mississippi, I was reminded of the River of the Holy Spirit. He is the power of God who is released in an incontestable way as we combine prayer with our daily labors within the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes there will be seasons when our prayers and efforts seem impotent in making any headway against the frozen wasteland of our situation. Sometimes when we pray for breakthrough, we can be discouraged about what appears to be only empty barrenness within our field of vision.

In order to persevere, we must remind ourselves that just under the deathly still, comparatively thin skin of hardened ice runs an incredibly potent mass of water that simply cannot be stopped or hindered once it starts flowing. It will blast through anything that stands in its way. In those times when we cannot actually see it flowing, we need the eyes of faith to persist, knowing that the Lord is orchestrating the right moment when, according to His unlimited, creative will, things finally break loose.

As the Spirit hovered over the waters in the Beginning, He still hovers over (and under!) the frozen waters of ice and snow—over the world's cultures and even over human hearts. He softens their resistance into melting alignment by the mere warmth of His Breath. And the result is movement and flow, and, of course, new life. *"For where the River flows, everything will live."* (Ezekiel 47:9).



Dan Siemens, along with his wife Denise, is on the staff at Lutheran Renewal.

(This is a revised version of an article that first appeared in the North Heights Lutheran "InMotion" magazine.)

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For more information, please contact Alicia via e-mail at adavis316@hotmail.com, or phone: 651-245-3173.

Hosted by **Communitas**, a young adult community of Lutheran Renewal