

Dear Friend,

On behalf of everyone here at Times Square Church in New York City, I'd like to wish you a very merry Christmas. It is true that we are living in tumultuous times. It seems as though society all around us is in upheaval. Many people are complaining about the authorities over us. Some are worried about increased taxation when they can hardly make ends meet as it is. Families are struggling to cope, as kindness and generosity seems to be in ever decreasing supply.

A little over 2,000 years ago, people were going through a time scarily similar to ours. It was at this time, however, that the heavens literally burst open with the good news that God had come to offer peace and goodwill to all people. It was the first Christmas—a time when God, through His Son Jesus, came to reclaim us and give us a chance to come back to a secure and blessed place where we will live with Him forever!

Sometimes it takes a dark day for us to again appreciate the appearing of the sun. So, too, it is in our time that you and I find again the joy of knowing that the Son of God comes to remind us that eternal joy is still among us. Lift your voice this Christmas to once again thank God for the goodness of sending His Son to you and me.

May this be your best Christmas ever!

Yours, in Christ,

Pastor Carter Conlon

## WILDERNESS SHAKERS

by Carter Conlon

*"Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is over many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty."*

*"The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, yes, the Lord splinters the cedars of Lebanon. He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everyone says, 'Glory!' The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood, and the Lord sits as King forever. The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace" (Psalm 29:1–11).*

How incredible is the voice of the Lord! If you go back to the very beginning of the Bible, it says that everything that exists in this world began with the Spirit of God moving and God speaking. Darkness turned to light; confusion suddenly yielded to divine order; and ultimately even dust produced life when God spoke to it.

We know that in the beginning, God also created man and

woman—Adam and Eve. Created in His image, they were given the power of speech. Picture Adam and Eve walking through the Garden of Eden, tending to this world that God had created, speaking in the capacity God had given to them to work in unison with Him in His creation. Everything they spoke would have been in accord with the heart and mind of God. And because of it, everything carried on in divine order as it was meant to...until sin entered the human race.

With Satan's influence, Adam and Eve began to believe that they could be godly apart from God. They decided they could judge what is good and what is evil. And so through sin, human speech became corrupt, and human ears began to be closed to the voice of God.

That is why, when the Pharisees came to John the Baptist's baptism, he said to them, *"Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"* (Matthew 3:7). In other words, "The seed of the serpent is in you, and a snake has no ears. And since a snake cannot hear, it is guided by its tongue. Likewise, you cannot hear the voice of God anymore; you are being guided by your own speech."

Does that not describe our generation today? Once we no longer hear from God and our

speech is not in accordance with His Word, we succeed in turning light to darkness. We turn divine order into confusion—much like the state of the Earth in the beginning when it “*was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep*” (Genesis 1:2). Dominated by emptiness, it lacked purpose and meaning. The original translation says it was “confused.” There was no meaning to it until the Spirit of God moved and God began to speak.

***The voice of God is above all those places of confusion—everything that has tried to attach itself to you.***

Although humanity, in a sense, devolved back to the beginning through sin, when you came to Christ, God spoke into your darkness. You did not find God, He found you! He whispered to you; He moved upon the person who invited you to church. He revealed Himself to you and started speaking to you in your darkness, calling you something phenomenal. He said, “If My Spirit is in you, you become a new creation—no longer part of the old order of death and confusion. The old things in your life have passed away, and all things have become new.”

Remember, this does not happen by human effort. Only the Spirit of God can bring us back to life again. As we open His Word, God speaks and the Spirit moves again in His new creation—just as He did in the very beginning.

■ **THE VOICE OF THE LORD**

Let’s return to Psalm 29 and take a more detailed look at what else happens at the voice of the Lord.

*“The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is over many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty”* (29:3–4). In other words, the voice of God is above all those places of confusion—everything that has tried to attach itself to you. He is above your self-view and all the words that others have spoken over you. He is even above all the doomsayers of our present day.

*“The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, yes, the Lord splinters the cedars of Lebanon”* (Psalm 29:5). In other words, certain patterns in our lives may be deeply rooted. The thing about cedars is that they seem to last forever. I used to be a farmer, so I know that if you put any kind of post other than cedar in the ground, it will literally rot and break off in about three years or less. But if you build a fence with cedar posts, it will probably last so long that when your son or daughter takes over your farm, it will still be there.

***The voice of God opens a door through every impossible way before us.***

God uses this illustration to remind us that His voice can break even those things that seem to be entrenched in our lives. In fact, He not only breaks them, He splinters them—dissolving them like fluff on a dandelion. And out of that, He says He makes them “*skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox*” (Psalm 29:6). He breaks these old strongholds and brings new life.

*“The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire”* (Psalm 29:7)—those places that stand before all of us as a prohibitive sign of darkness.

The enemy says, “You cannot go through here, you are going to get burned.” But the voice of God opens a door through every impossible way before us. Everything that we think we cannot do, God addresses: “Now, hear My voice and let My Spirit lead you. Watch where I will take you.”

*“The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare”* (Psalm 29:8–9). As co-laborers now with Christ, we are called to speak for Him. God does not need us, but He has chosen to use us. He could have angels floating through the air preaching the gospel in America. He could have cats preaching on the street corners. He could do whatever He wants to do, but He has chosen to speak through us. We are His Body and He has chosen to call us to speak again to this barren, lifeless wilderness called planet Earth. Our part is to speak and believe; His part is to cause new birth to come. He strips bare those things that try to hide people from His presence.

■ **GOD’S VOICE THROUGH HIS PEOPLE**

We are called to speak to this world, not just about God, but actually with the voice of God speaking through us. Consider Acts 2 where we see a hundred and twenty weak believers who were failures. They made promises they could not keep and spoke of a love and loyalty that failed them when Christ needed them most. Yet they gathered in an upper room, having received a word from God: “Wait, and the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you will be given power” (see Acts 1:4–8). The Spirit of God and the Word of God began moving together once again, just as in the beginning.

“And suddenly as they prayed, the sound of a rushing mighty wind filled the room. And cloven

tongues of fire sat upon each of them” (see Acts 2:2). Suddenly, by the Spirit of God, they stepped out of that place of hiding and stood in the open marketplace, speaking about the power of God available to every man and woman. They were speaking with an enablement of God that was obvious, for people from other countries heard them speak these mysteries in languages they knew these Jewish people had never learned. There was not only a declaration but a demonstration in their lives of the power of God.

***This generation needs to hear the voice of God through a people who are walking in unison with Him.***

What an amazing thought! Five thousand people on their way home from the temple, a place of hearing thoughts about God, suddenly confronted by people through whom God is actually speaking. This is what we need again in our generation. As wonderful as thoughts about God are, they are not going to win the moment. This generation needs to hear the voice of God through a people who are walking in unison with Him, empowered by His Spirit.

This is a whole realm of God that you cannot reach unless you are willing to be the person God is calling you to be. You cannot drag your wagon of sin with you. You must be willing to say, “God, I need You. I need Your Spirit, and I need Your Word to govern me. I need this new life. I want You to speak through me to this generation.”

The only thing that will turn this generation is a Spirit-led, Spirit-filled, Word-centered Church of Jesus Christ, speaking what God speaks and bringing forth new life. And what do the people say in response? *“And in His temple everyone says, ‘Glory!’”* (Psalm 29:9).

#### ■ NO RESISTANCE

When people get to know the glory of God, a cry comes into their hearts: “Oh, God, use my life for Your glory. Let me discover Your voice, and may there be no resistance in me.”

I believe this is the key: May there be no resistance in us. In Genesis 1, there was nothing that could resist God. There was nobody in this purposeless world that had the power to say “no.” When there was no resistance, God said to the seas, “This is where your borders are,” and that is where the borders were established. When He told the birds to fly, they just flew. None of them asked, “How do we do this? Are You sure this is going to work?” They simply did what they were told to do. When the Lord commanded the sun to shine, it shone. When He commanded light to permeate the darkness, it blazed forth. Everything that God said happened.

***When the Lord finds a heart that will not resist Him, there is no limit to what He can do.***

Then humankind came on the scene. Of course, God knew when He created man in His image that He was creating beings

with free will. Suddenly somebody in creation said “no” to God, and everything that was being created started going backwards, in a sense. But as we saw in Acts 2, there was a Genesis 1 moment again. In that Upper Room no resistance to the Word and the Spirit of God existed, which is why those one hundred twenty people were able to step out in power, and eventually even Rome was brought to her knees.

When the Lord finds a heart that will not resist Him; when He finds a mind that does not have to reason everything out before undertaking the journey; when He finds one He can speak through and His Spirit can move upon, there is no limit to what God can do. Remember, *“The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness”* (Psalm 29:8). I don’t know about you, but I want to be a wilderness shaker for the rest of my days. Yes, we are living in the wilderness now. But what an incredible opportunity to see the kingdom of God advance with great glory!

Carter Conlon  
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## MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE CONLONS!

One of the blessings of this time of year is the chance it gives us to connect with our family and with friends through this newsletter.

This summer, our two oldest grandchildren traveled with Pastor Carter on a ministry trip to Ireland, and they all loved it! This year saw other “grans” joining baseball teams, hockey teams and gymnastic clubs. Blake, 5, started school, Sophia, 3, loves giant bows in her hair, and Jackson, 10, keeps getting taller! Luke, 3, successfully came through major surgery, and we are so incredibly grateful for all those who prayed for him.

At Summit this year, things are going amazingly well, and so many students have been greatly touched of the Lord as 2019 draws to a close. At Times Square Church, we are continuing to experience the presence of the Lord week after week, even as Pastor Carter keeps up a demanding speaking schedule in many parts of the world.

For all the dog people out there, between our three children and their families, we now have five dogs in the family! An English bulldog, a boston terrier, a dalmatian, an Australian shepherd mix, and the newest addition to my son’s family—a French bulldog puppy! With eight grandchildren and five dogs running around, Christmas is never quiet at our place!

We truly hope you have a special Christmas this year. Let us all take our time to savor this beautiful and magical time of year. Joy to the world—our Savior is born!

This season, no matter how busy or quiet it is for you, comes with a very special Christmas wish that the Lord’s Spirit bless and touch you in a special way.

Our love and prayers,  
Pastor Carter and Teresa Conlon



### CARTER CONLON

Carter Conlon is senior pastor of Times Square Church, where he has been on the pastoral staff since 1994.

### TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of “The Cross and the Switchblade.” It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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### WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

- Sunday 10AM | 1PM | 3PM | 6PM
- Tuesday 7PM | Worldwide Prayer Meeting
- Friday 7PM | Young Adults Connect
  - Emer ge Event (18–35)
  - Teens Night (1st Friday)
  - Small Groups
  - Special Events

**Live Webcast:**  
All our Sunday and Tuesday services can be watched live and replayed for seven days on our website.

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