The apostles were also the right ***size***. The apostles were small personalities. They were not the bigshots of religion or politics. They were not people who made an impression on others with their insights or influence. In fact, when the apostles began to speak in other languages, the God-fearing Jews from other nations were utterly amazed. They asked, “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?” (v. 7). Galilee was the backcountry. The boondocks. The sticks. No one expected a group from Galilee to master all the languages of the world. They were not multilingual, until the day of Pentecost when the Spirit gave them the ability.

The apostles were also in the right ***location***: Jerusalem. They gathered for a religious festival, which was a good place to be as they showed their devotion to God. Being in Jerusalem gave them access to God-fearing people from every nation. They did not hesitate to declare the wonders of God in a variety of languages. Peter did not hesitate to address the crowd, saying, “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say” (v. 14). On Pentecost, the apostles discovered the secret to spiritual power meant having the right numbers, size, and location. We can employ these same tools to harness the Spirit’s power for our mission.

**We benefit from NUMBERS***.* We need to be in community with one another if our faith and Christian commitment is going to grow. This means we gather for worship and Bible study, and to work together in ministry and mission. The first mention of the Greek word *ekklesia* (“church”) is found in the gospel of Matthew (16:18). The word literally means “gathering,” and it comes from the ancient Greek assembly of citizens in a city-state. An ekklesia is a group of people gathered in common cause or belief or purpose. The word appears again in Acts, when “Barnabas and Saul met with the church” in Antioch. It was there the disciples were first called “Christians” (11:26), a gathering of Christ’s followers.

We need to gather in numbers to be the church. Jesus is with us when we are together in community, just as he promised us in Matthew, saying, “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (18:20). Assembling for community worship and Bible study gives us the most inspiration, insight, and guidance. When we stop gathering, our faith tends to cool. If the isolation of the pandemic taught us anything, it is that gathering is a critical factor in the vitality of the church.

Numbers are also needed for effective ministry and mission. Individuals can have brilliant and creative ideas, but implementation requires a team. Far too often, individuals pursue ministry ideas on their own, only to become frustrated when they cannot achieve their dreams. Industry studies show that for any effort to be successful, at least five passionate people must commit themselves to its success. Ministry and mission require numbers.

**As Christians, we also need to be the right SIZE***.* This has nothing to do with the height or weight, nor does it align with the number of people in a congregation. Instead, Christians need to be small enough to individually catch the wind of the Holy Spirit and then collectively act boldly in the world. This is like the Windcatcher system, in which small turbines spin quickly in high wind, collectively generating energy for mission.

Look at the apostle Peter. He did not see himself as a bigshot or a spiritual superstar. In fact, he denied Jesus three times just a few months earlier. Peter had no special status in the religious, political, or financial communities of Jerusalem. He was a fisherman from a poor back region, but he was exactly the right size to be a disciple of Jesus.

Although he was small in the eyes of the world, he was big enough to speak the truth. “These men are not drunk, as you suppose,” he said to the crowd. They had assumed that the words of the apostles were the babblings of people feeling tipsy. “No,” said Peter, “this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people’” (2:15-17). Peter was just the right size to do what God wanted him to do: Connect the gift of the Holy Spirit to the prophecy of Joel, and to share this news with the people of Jerusalem. He concluded by assuring them that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (v. 21).

Our challenge is to make sure that we are the right size for ministry and mission. You may be an officer in the military, but you can be the right size for serving a meal. You may be an influential attorney, but you can be the right size for teaching a Bible study. You may be a trained professional in a specific field, but you are still the right size to mentor a student. You may be an elementary school student, but you can be the right size to create greeting cards for at-home members. All that matters is that you be “right-sized” for discipleship.

**The final secret to spiritual power is LOCATION***.* This means being in the right place at the right time, just as the apostles were in the right place (Jerusalem), at the right time (Pentecost). For many of us, there will be places that are the right spot for us: Home, school, work, neighborhood, gym, church. But like the Windcatcher, we need to position ourselves correctly to catch the wind God’s sends. Sometimes we need to leave the comfort of familiar places to accomplish God’s purposes.

William Kamkwamba was born in Malawi in 1987. At the age of 13 he dropped out of school because a famine forced his subsistence-farming family into poverty. They could no longer afford to pay his school tuition. William spent time in the local public library instead. After reading a book called Using Energy, he created a makeshift wind turbine using blue gum trees, and a tractor fan, a shock absorber, and an old bicycle frame scavenged from a scrapyard. He made the windmill’s blades by melting pieces of PVC pipe. For a dynamo he used an old bicycle generator.

William’s primitive device worked: he powered a few small electrical appliances in his family’s house. That was only the beginning. He built another wind turbine to pump water for irrigation. Local farmers took notice; and when journalists learned of his accomplishment, William became an international celebrity, a symbol of grit and inventiveness. In 2013, TIME magazine named William one of “30 People Under 30 Changing the World.” In 2014, William graduated from Dartmouth College, his education supported entirely by scholarships. The award-winning 2019 film, “The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind,” tells his story.

William went on to build a solar-powered water pump which supplied the first drinking water in his village, and two other wind turbines, the tallest standing at 39 feet. He is planning two more, including one in Lilongwe, the political capital of Malawi. William was one small boy who harnessed a dream to serve his village. He was the right number, the right size, and in the right place to make things happen with God’s help.

On Pentecost, the apostles caught the wind of God’s Spirit as it blew powerfully among them. They harnessed that power into the greatest movement for good the world ever witnessed. The apostles declared the wonders of God. They spoke the truth about Jesus. They drew on the Holy Spirit’s power to accomplish their mission. The wind of God is still blowing strong. Let’s catch it and share God’s power with the world.

Prayer: Holy One, breath of the big bang, idea of creation, you who make spring come forth, who make life out of nothing, breathe yourself into me. Create me. You are the flame, I am your light. You are the nerve, I am your muscle. You are the Word, I am the story. You are the song, I am the singing. I am one with you and one with all Creation. One Spirit, one flesh, many forms. In your Spirit I am we. Holy One, live in me; I am your body. I remember, and I live. Amen.

**Sources**

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**Windcatcher**

Sunday, May 28, 2023 [Acts 2:1-21](https://biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3a1-21&language=en&version=NRSVUE)

Federated Church, Fergus Falls, MN

Imagine 126 turbines spinning in an enormous grid. The structure will be as tall as the Eiffel Tower and as wide as a cruise ship is long. It will float on a platform, anchored to the ocean floor. A Norwegian company is developing this new system to generate electricity from wind power. When it becomes operational, “it could deliver five times the annual energy of the world’s largest single turbine... because the system is three times taller than the average turbine, exposing the blades to higher wind speeds.”

Called “Windcatcher,” the blades will be smaller than those on a typical windmill, which will enable them to spin faster. The position of the grid in deep water will enable it to catch the strongest of winds. Windcatcher is designed to maximize three things: numbers, size, and location. Put these elements together, and you have a single structure that will generate enough electricity to run 80,000 homes. That is a lot of power.

On the day of Pentecost, the apostles maximized their numbers, size, and location. They gathered in Jerusalem for a harvest festival called Pentecost, meaning “50th day”; the 50th day after Passover. Jews from around the Mediterranean region gathered to celebrate this festival, including “Parthians, Medes and Elamites,” along with residents of a dozen other regions mentioned in the book of Acts (2:9-11).

The apostles met in in Jerusalem, feeling uncertain and powerless. The resurrection of Jesus inspired and energized them, but his time among them ended when Jesus “was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight” (1:9). Now, what were they supposed to do? “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting” (2:2). This wind was as fast as the air that rushes at high altitudes, and as strong as the breeze that blows over deep waters. But this was not a hurricane or freak storm. This power came from God. “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (v. 4).

The apostles became Windcatchers, powered by the Holy Spirit. They would be effective because of their numbers, their size, and their location. The apostles ***numbered*** 12, not just one. God’s previous power-people – Moses, David, the prophets, John the Baptist, Mary, Jesus – big personalities who often worked as individuals. They were all big turbines. Now God chose to work through a community, just like the Windcatcher employs an array of turbines, working to harness the Spirit’s power to create energy around the Gospel.