

1st Scott

Dear P. Scott,

I am grateful for you. Our friendship is a testimony of the creative work of our Heavenly Father, the merciful grace of Jesus Christ, and the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

I see you as a gift of Providence, a reminder God has special plans for our community, with ample evidence of his guidance. We can be confident he will continue to make known what he's already revealed, for he is faithful, ever resourceful as he cares for us.

Together, we are two Southern California pastors in need of God's provision as we enter Gospel partnership, bringing our churches together, giving us renewed hope for future ministry.

In his wisdom, you were born in Seoul, South Korea and I was born here—just down the street in Whittier. I grew up in this culture, a ninth-generation, English-language-only, white American. You came here as a 13-year-old immigrant, learning a new language and culture—all at a tenuous age. Despite the challenges, you've excelled. You are bright, yet humble.

From my perspective, I see how the circumstances of your life have prepared you for this specific time and place in God's salvation plan. Thirty-one years ago, he used our young family to plant a new church in the city of Brea. We spoke the language of the Gospel to other brand-new families looking a lot like us. As we've aged, our family has changed and so has our neighborhood. Today, our community is looking a lot like your family.

I trust you know I *really love* what's happening where we live. Our God of infinite creativity is making our region look like the world he "*so loves*," a gathering of "*every nation, tribe, people and language*." They are finding Southern California, making it home. This shift does not look like the California I knew as a child, yet I know God is orchestrating this out of his missionary heart, for he is bringing the world to us. Because of this we rejoice, for we are gifted a glimpse of his worldwide kingdom.

Can you see how God has choreographed this moment in time for you to accomplish “*his good, pleasing, and perfect will?*” Can you find your confident voice, surrounded by those who need to hear your story, your unique testimony of Jesus? Will you embrace how God has placed your younger, Korean American congregation in our city, according to his wisdom?

We pastor two very different churches; we’re two very different pastors. Nonetheless, we hold on to this promise: God has the power to make us one! The same God who brought Jews and Gentiles to a table of unity knows how to bring two churches together as well. It’s what he does; it’s who he is.

It’s the miracle of marriage. If he can take a man and a woman—in all their vast differences—and make them one flesh, he can bring us together, too.

Remember how God moved his people from their homeland to be immigrants in the land of Egypt. Remember how he placed Joseph as an immigrant in Egypt so he would save them from famine. Nothing was easy about Joseph’s path to be in the right place at the right time to be an instrument of God’s eternal plan.

God is working, for you’re *right where* God will accomplish his good through you.

Just like all the other rapid changes, the spiritual climate has also shifted. In the same way the Apostle Paul preached about the Lord in godless ancient cities, you will boldly proclaim our Savior to *our distracted* audience. After all, we live down the street from the best of human entertainment.

So, in the daily temptation to emulate the bells and whistles of Hollywood and Disney, you must remember you have what they do not, for we gather in the presence of the triune God. Weekly worship matters! There is no substitute for this. What we experience in his presence cannot be humanly manufactured. When you preach Jesus crucified and risen—defeating death, sin, and hell—you invite the force of grace and mercy into the gathering.

Scott, always operate in the authority of Jesus’ broken body and shed blood. Because of his work, he saves and heals lives. Proclaim our King is coming soon, and while we wait, proclaim our King is still in charge!

You will say things differently than me, but in ways our future neighbors will indigenously understand and receive. Find your authority in him. Let him give you your voice. Not only will it not be my voice—effective for my tenure, my generation—it *will not* be the voice of your parent’s generation either. Honor the sacrifices they made for you. Always understand how hard it was for them to leave their world behind and start here anew. They did it for you.

Honor them but be committed to a future where your words will resonate with your generation. You will explain scripture with insights that’ll move your peers toward making Jesus Christ their Savior and Lord. In the same way David could not wear Saul’s armor, you will go out to the battlefield differently. You will move forward “*in the name of the Lord Almighty.*” Jesus will provide you new ideas for fresh ministry.

So, what about my older, ethnically different generation? Honor us for decades of obedient sacrifice, for you will inherit a foundation of community kindness and integrity. Make the most of endowed assets for the sake of Christ. Be grateful, not beholden for those gifts. Make what is given yours, using all of it for the glory of Christ as a beacon of Gospel light.

Scott, you like to work hard and be prepared for each challenge, but all your cumulative work is nothing compared to what God can do, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in a moment. You will need his wisdom. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God came upon ordinary people, and they did extraordinary acts. It’s the same story of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. Now, he is using you, giving you boldness to lift up the Name of Jesus.

Good news! California has been a favored geography of the Holy Spirit. When God chooses to use our state, it’s never been contingent on our spiritual worthiness, but according to his grace and wisdom. He knows our international influence.

In 1906, a turbulent time, the humble Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles experienced unfathomable grace all day and night for three years straight. Just like the New Testament church, those who came to experience God left embracing the missionary call “*to the ends of the earth.*” Today, over six-hundred-million believers worldwide trace their roots to this preordained move of God on California soil!

It was a miraculous moment in history, for the Holy Spirit healed broken people in the name of Jesus. He also reconciled racial division, for during that season, they believed the color line was washed away in the blood of Jesus. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the Name of Jesus, he can also unify our differences, *“for he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.”*

In 1969, yet another turbulent time, the Jesus People Movement started here in Orange County, forever changing the modern church. Its impetus was an older minister (about my age) making space for a new and different generation of converts. Once again, this supernatural renewal had worldwide impact.

The moves of God in California have been Holy Spirit-driven, where miraculous manifestations lead to increased evangelism as he provides the strength and boldness for witness.

I love how you are part of a generation not afraid of signs and wonders. Expect the Holy Spirit to speak, for like the Father and the Son, he is revelatory, too. Follow his voice, allowing him to lead you down an unprecedented path.

Our city will not be transformed by the Gospel *without* the might of the Holy Spirit. This first-century promise of power is still our promise today. He provides his gifts to those who'll receive them. When he moves in our favor, we have hope—even in a culture moving further and further away from the things of God. He's proven he can do it here, right where we live. What is not possible in our human strength is possible in his.

Scott, spend your days *receiving all* the Holy Spirit gives you.

So, praise to the Father, who provides the confidence through him to make something out of nothing; praise to His Son, who will build his Church using us; and praise to the Holy Spirit, who brings uncomprehensible power to make it all happen.

To our Triune God, we will give *our all* so he can receive *all the glory!*

You are loved,

P. Doug