

Is There an Interpreter in the House?
Finding and Following the Flow of the Spirit in Your Service
Lesson 2: Staying in the Middle of the Road

TEXT: Even so, if unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your church meeting and hear everyone speaking in an unknown language, they will think you are crazy. (1Co 14:23 NLT)

From the beginning of the 20th Century in Kansas, through Azusa Street, into the Charismatic Renewal, and in our current era, the flow of the Spirit has taken a winding road. We have gone from a little fringe group to being part of the fastest growing religious movement in the world. Unfortunately, in many places the manifestation of the Spirit has come and gone, and is now an unwelcome, or at least unfamiliar phenomenon.

- I. Some of the problems we have faced and are facing
 - A. Many so called “Word” churches became dead churches. Six songs, a sermon, and the obligatory prayer line. **Patterns but no substance.** 1 Cor 4:19-20
 - B. Many charismatic churches became experience seekers with no real doctrinal base. “We don’t believe in doctrine.” This is obviously quite dangerous and leads to all kinds of difficulties as subjectivism rules the day. 2 Peter 1:16-21
 - C. Charismatic Christianity is as prone as any other kind to “spectator” mentality. We develop a class of spiritual superstars who we gather to watch. We become Holy Ghost rubber-neckers. 1 Cor 14:26
 - D. Many have opted to “sanitize” their services so as not to offend anyone. This also usually goes along with the notion of providing entertaining “ministry” to appeal to the “unchurched.”
- II. This is not a new pattern.
 - A. In every move of God we have fresh excess. A move of God starts and people are blessed. Then the problems begin
 - B. Some try to imitate it and force their church to have exactly what they saw at Campmeeting.
 1. Pastor goes to a special meeting and has gifts imparted or sees things done a particular way.
 2. He comes home and his people are blessed for a service or two.
 3. They teach people what they are expected to do if they are really spiritual - laugh, dance, fall, etc. then they lay hands on them and see if they perform.

- C. Some establish it as a third work of grace –
 - 1. Demon-chasing, laughing, groaning, weeping and shaking, dancing... The truly spiritual will surely “receive.”
 - 2. We call in a plethora of special speakers to try and bring it. “We have a little buzz, we do well for a while then it sort of fizzles.”
- D. Seeing the excess, some decry the whole thing as being of the devil. Instead of going to their brothers and trying to help or at least to understand, they write articles for Christian magazines condemning the nonsense.
- E. Most of us just smile, try to walk in love, and secretly wonder if any of this is God. (We don’t want to appear unspiritual or critical)
- F. Some determine that we have to hide the fanaticism so sinners will not be offended, and in the process they offend the Holy Spirit. He won’t bother those who don’t want to be bothered!
- G. A few brave souls find the string of the Spirit in the midst of the storm and forge on, being blessed by what’s real, loving those who get over-excited, and **steering a stable course for those who are adrift.**

III. Steering a steady course

- A. In our travels and talks with many pastors, we found that many of them were uncomfortable with the move of God. This caused one of two reactions:
 - 1. They avoided it completely. Avoid periods of silence, don’t teach on it. Don’t encourage it, and if something happens squelch it. Don’t allow any manifestation by anyone other than the platform.
 - 2. They let anything happen for fear of being judged unspiritual. Slowly but surely, the service becomes a side show, with individuals repeating behaviors that were a blessing the first time, but have now become a spiritual sideshow designed to draw attention to themselves.
- B. In my Bible school experience, we watched others be used in the gifts of the Spirit, but there was never any real instruction in such things, and no opportunity for the vast majority to experience being in charge of a service where the Holy Spirit was free to manifest Himself.
 - 1. Most of us were woefully unprepared to be in charge of a service of any kind, much less one where we experience the reality of, “It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. (1Co 12:11 NLT)”

2. Education in doctrine may come in Bible school, but training for leadership in spiritual things comes in the local fellowship under the loving care of a Pastor.
 3. People need somewhere to step out without being terrified or vilified.
 4. There is a learning curve to the things of the Spirit, and someone must guide the assembly in the process of growth and development.
 5. Who is that one who God has set to help the Church maneuver through the flow of the river of God?
- C. **My conclusion:** The problem in most churches is the lack of the gift of interpretation