

Gifts of the Spirit

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First let me thank those of you who have responded with comments on my previous two postings regarding the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Gift of Tongues. I appreciate your response, and taking time to read my postings. They are going primarily to CEC bishops and priests for whom I have email addresses. I am also sharing these postings with several brothers of other churches who are my friends.

In 1969 when I received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit there was not much teaching material available for mainline clergy. Pentecostals such as Kenneth Hagin and Derek Prince had tapes one could hear but you had to be careful and avoid some of the doctrinal emphasis such as Prince's insistence that immersion was the only valid form of water baptism. I phoned Dennis Bennett to learn about the errors he made so as to not make the same myself. I would make my own (and new) mistakes (smile)!

We began a home Tuesday night study that was announced to the whole church inviting anyone interested in learning about the manifestations (gifts) of the Holy Spirit in First Corinthians 12. A dozen or plus people met each Tuesday night. To them I distributed what pamphlets, books and reading material I could find asking them to read and give input when we met to study. I taught from the scriptures. I took the Greek word for each gift and compared to other places in scripture where the same word was used hoping to draw a conclusion as to what was meant by this gift. We wanted to learn the difference between acquired knowledge and "word of knowledge" or how the Holy Spirit gave peculiar "wisdom" that might be different from ordinary "common sense". We were like the blind leading the blind but some how the Holy Spirit helped us to learn.

One night one of the men asked for prayer because he had lost a set of keys and if they were not found he would need to change locks on the doors of his house. We prayed because we had just discussed "word of knowledge" and had learned that God knows where all things are. One of the women told him to look under his car seat to which he said he had but would look again. The next Tuesday night we studied another "gift" and every one wanted to ask about the keys but afraid. At the end of the meeting he asked if we were interested, to which we all said we were. Sure enough, the keys were under

the seat of his car. He had looked previously but not far enough back and when he looked further there they were. Coincidence? We were beginning to become believers.

As we studied we began to sense that some members were especially "tuned" in to the Holy Spirit in special "gifts." I learned that some had a unique ability to hear the Holy Spirit regarding a word of knowledge or discerning of spirits or a word of wisdom. My counseling time was cut drastically because I would phone several and ask them to pray, giving them only a first name. They would call back and give "words" received in prayer and I would ask the person what those words meant. They were like a sharp knife cutting through hot butter.

My Bishop had assigned me to be in charge of and put together a group to go throughout the diocese to teach about the charismatic dimension, healing services, prayer groups. One afternoon he phoned and asked my Commission to host a woman who was available to the diocese from England. He expected me to arrange for her speaking in different churches in the diocese. I had a "check" (*uncomfortable feeling*) in my spirit and asked if I might pray about it and get back to him later. I don't think he was very pleased with my delay, but he consented and I phoned nine people in the church asking them to pray about my Commission hosting a lady from England to speak throughout the diocese. No additional information was available to me to tell them. Within an hour each phoned back saying "NO!" Four gave scriptures supporting their disapproval. The next day I phoned the bishop and told him what I had done. I don't think he was happy about my not wishing to host this woman. He gave her to another bishop. A month later he called me. "Philip, remember that English woman I asked you to host? I am glad you prayed. I gave her to Bishop xxx and she tore his diocese apart. She was a witch." Sure enough, she was involved in witch craft in her native England.

I believe the Holy Spirit wants to renew Jesus' Church and again work through believing Christians for the "gifts of the Spirit" to operate in ministry. We would be spared a host of problems in the church if we were to rely more on the Holy Spirit to guide us, giving "wisdom", "knowledge", "discernment" rather than trying to function out of a seminary classroom recall or a theological text book.

The Charismatic Episcopal Church has been raised up by God to "fill the

void" and one void in the mainline church has been the emptiness that can be filled only through our people becoming acquainted with the Holy Spirit and experiencing His infilling. I am reminded of a minister who stood on Aldersgate Street in London where a plaque marks the location of John Wesley's "heart warming experience" when he attended a meeting when a commentary by Martin Luther was shared. Standing there in tears this minister prayed "Lord, do it again; do it again."

The Holy Spirit has laid on my heart a burden for our Church in this year of 2010 an emphasis where our people become increasingly aware of the "charismatic" stream and all the Holy Spirit will do in the lives of Jesus People. As our Patriarch said we are "openly charismatic and not ashamed of being charismatic". I believe that such an emphasis will once again prepare us to be the Body of Christ to whom the Holy Spirit will bring people for ministry and renewed life. He is the one who will "grow" our Communion. I pray you also will be given this burden.