

Feedback October 2005

My Turn

Charisma's 30th anniversary issue, ("Who Is the Holy Spirit?" August) was awesome! To be connected with the body of Christ through such a common denominator is truly amazing. Specifically, the article "Holy Spirit, Make Me Bold" by Wayde I. Goodall summed it all up because it took us from the early church experience to the filling of the Spirit—a gift that the article clearly states is available to us today.

What could we possibly accomplish that would benefit the kingdom of God, as well as our brothers and sisters, without the unction of the Holy Spirit? How effective would a car be if its navigation system didn't work properly? The driver would be lost.

So it is with believers and the Holy Spirit. He is our resident guide. The entire magazine made it clear just how much we Christians need the Holy Spirit to fulfill our purpose so we can enjoy life the way God intended.

Leonie Chandersingh
Orlando, Florida

New Look, Same Message

Thank you for devoting so much of the redesigned August issue to God's empowering Holy Spirit. It is His Spirit who can transform a Christian into a powerful servant of God. It is also the Spirit who gives us the peace that surpasses all understanding. That's why He is called the Comforter.

Larry Higgins
Denver, Indiana

Although your 30th anniversary issue is much glossier, I have

two concerns that surfaced after seeing it. Now that it is being sold on mainstream newsstands, will this limit the topics that need to be addressed? Second, will your editors be tempted to water down things that need to be said to the body of Christ but are not appropriate now that so many others are looking over your shoulder?

I have appreciated your integrity and passion in the past. But I fear this new paying audience will compromise your editor and other writers.

Rev. Rosie Farnsworth
Kingston, Washington

More and more Christian publications are looking like the celebrity tabloids we see in the grocery store checkout line. The photos and content all are focused on personalities, with just a few articles of real substance.

In these last days, much is at stake in the lives of your readers. Please don't offer them just articles about personalities. We are drowning in personalities—even if they are "Spirit-filled"!

This is happening everywhere we turn, even in the church. We are drowning out the melody and watering down the new wine.

Dennis Wood
Palmyra, Pennsylvania

No More Pope Bashing

Your article about Pope John Paul II was a powerful witness to the things God can do with a surrendered heart and an openness to the Holy Spirit ("Vicar of the Spirit" by Stephen Mansfield, June). What puzzled me were the letters to the editor sent to discredit the pope. Is it so hard to believe that God will pour out His Spirit on all who call on Him, including Catholics?

Marianne Kluesener
Cincinnati, Ohio

I did not appreciate the anti-Catholic letters you published from readers. To give a platform for people to spread lies and misunderstandings about the Catholic Church serves no good purpose. Archbishop Fulton Sheen hit the nail on the head when he said: "There are not a hundred people in America that hate the Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they think is the Catholic Church."

Kim Parnis

Livonia, Michigan

I am responding to the letters from readers who accused Roman Catholics of being pagans, cultists and practitioners of witchcraft. It's ironic that some Christians say the same thing about charismatics!

Regarding the question of whether the pope is born again, consider the fact that his daily devotion included the Apostle's Creed. We could all benefit from daily declaration that Jesus Christ is Lord through His virgin birth, crucifixion, death, resurrection and imminent return.

There are many expressions of the Christian faith. But the universal church agrees on the foundational revelation that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. There are traditions even in independent charismatic churches that have no root in Scripture. But I will not judge them as unsaved simply because I disagree with their fringe beliefs.

Teri Hamrick

Marietta, Georgia

I was appalled by some of the readers' responses about the Catholic Church. In some of their letters they described Catholics as pagans, witches and cult members. Give me a break!

The way you learn things is basically from other people. This includes religion. I appreciate your special June issue on the pope.

Tracy Kern
Cumming, Georgia

I have been impressed with the open-mindedness and acceptance that Charisma shows—especially with your issue about Pope John Paul II. Unfortunately when I received your anniversary issue—with many letters criticizing Catholics—I felt compelled not to read your magazine again.

Then I realized that if I stopped reading Charisma that would make me just like the judgmental readers who wrote to you to criticize the pope. So rather than debate the misrepresentation of the Catholic Church (in letters full of idiocy, inaccuracy and close-mindedness) I will suggest that your critics read the New Testament.

Jesus would not spew the hate that oozed from those letters in the August issue. Those who wrote those letters have a translation of Jesus' message that is both frightening and sad.

Michelle M. Mead
Wappingers Falls, New York

Thumbs Down on Hollywood

In response to Leigh DeVore's review of the movie Cinderella Man: Shame on Charisma for using space and ink to support Hollywood by suggesting that readers waste money on this film.

This film has violence and cursing. Why are we supporting Hollywood in the first place? And since when did Hollywood ever care about Christians?

Charisma ought to get a backbone and recommend to its readers that they should not be seeking entertainment from Hollywood unless another Chariots of Fire or The Passion of the Christ comes along.

Curt Vieselmeier
Boise, Idaho

Thumbs Down on Book Reviews

I was extremely disappointed in Eric Wilbank's review of Francis Frangipane's new book *This Day We Fight* (Vibes, August). I couldn't help but wonder if he actually read the book or perhaps just skimmed it.

In this age of terrorism, drugs, war and immorality, it is sometimes easy to become complacent in prayer. The needs of the world can seem overwhelming. But this book shows that we can make a difference.

This book is about fighting and not giving up. It's a wake-up call. But it's also about perfecting our faith and developing the character of Christ so we can move in supernatural power and do what otherwise would be impossible.

Terri Rowray
Robins, Iowa

Lost Integrity

Kudos to editor J. Lee Grady for addressing greed among ministers ("Charismatic Idols," June). Has Charisma ever written about The Salvation Army? You'll never find their ordained ministers wearing Rolexes or driving luxury cars. You'll find them in inner cities across the nation dealing with people few others care about.

Shane Gilmore
via e-mail

Thank you for addressing the issue of greed and lack of accountability in our churches. I was in a church in California for 23 years where the pastor treated his congregation like children. He stopped having business meetings, and the deacons had no say about anything. This man was given a \$1,500 monthly housing allowance, a credit card from the church and a \$12,000 anniversary gift each year.

Churches are being ripped off. These types of leaders do not

believe they will be punished.

name withheld

Fordyce, Arkansas

Lee Grady recently wrote about a Florida minister who is divorcing his wife and fighting with her over money. His article lacked the balance most reasonable Christians know is necessary in dealing with personal finance and accountability. It is embarrassing to your magazine that Grady has painted ministers with such a broad brush—as if to suggest that people in ministry should not be prosperous in everyday life.

Stephen Spillers

Atlanta, Georgia

Lee Grady declared the charismatic movement over in his August column. I agree that some charismatics have refused to mature and that some groups are approaching apostasy.

Charisma magazine should highlight some of the formerly independent charismatic groups that have adopted in recent years a more sound, biblical understanding. They still teach about the gifts of the Holy Spirit but they have embraced reformed theology.

Dan Becker

Alpharetta, Georgia

For and Against the War

We are losing the war in Iraq because some of God's people are complaining about our president and the ongoing conflict. First Timothy 2:1-2 says prayer and intercession and giving thanks should be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

All I hear on the news is bad-mouthing against God's elect. Let's pray instead of complaining!

C.F. Polston

Darby, Montana

Tell me again how the Iraq war has made us safer from terrorism. Point out for me again how we've suffered no terrorist attacks since the day George W. Bush took the fight to the enemy.

You'll have to speak up, though. It's going to be hard to hear you over the explosions, sirens and wails of the maimed in London. Sooner or later it will be us again.

Leonard Pitts Jr.

via e-mail

Corrections:

In a July news story about Israel donating 35 acres to a group of evangelical leaders, Benjamin Netanyahu should have been identified as former prime minister. A caption in an August news story about Christian persecution in Sri Lanka misidentified pastor Shawn Turing as pastor Jebamoney Ratnam. Both men have endured attacks by Buddhist mobs. Charisma regrets the errors.