

Florida Music Minister Fired For Charismatic Beliefs

In 1974, during the height of the Jesus Movement, Tim Wilson received the baptism of the Holy Spirit while attending Ozark Bible College in Joplin, Mo. The music major soon found himself in the midst of a dorm revival that impacted several students.

But the jubilant time came to a halt when administrators at the college—part of the Independent Christian Church (ICC) denomination, which preaches against speaking in tongues—reprimanded Wilson and the others and told them to stop. Although he had grown up in the ICC, Wilson left and started attending a charismatic church.

Fast forward to 2001, and Wilson, now 49, finds himself at the center of a similar controversy. Northeast Christian Church in Kissimmee, Fla., recently asked him to step down as music minister when they discovered he practices speaking in tongues.

Wilson joined the church staff in June 2000 after he felt a calling to pursue full-time music ministry. He interviewed mostly with ICC churches because he holds credentials with the denomination and has experienced rejection by some charismatic churches because of his past divorce.

“They [ICC churches] would all just love me,” Wilson said, “until I brought up the issue of the Holy Spirit.” He then interviewed with the pastor at Northeast, who was very open to

all the gifts of the Spirit.

“He said the congregation was not at a point yet where everyone would accept tongues in a worship service,” Wilson said, “but he hoped one day they would.”

Wilson moved his wife and four children from Missouri to Florida and introduced contemporary worship to the church. “As far as I could tell, most of them liked it.” He added that the church picked up about 100 new members.

Wilson never spoke in tongues during worship but would raise his hands, which troubled some. “The funny thing is that everyone was so thrilled with the anointing—but they didn’t associate it with tongues. When it finally dawned on some people what I was all about, they said, ‘No, we can’t have that.’”

During a meeting with the church board, Wilson was terminated, and he and his family now attend a nearby Assemblies of God church. The pastor at Northeast Christian Church declined Charisma’s request for an interview.