

Church of God Overseer: It's Time for a Fresh Pentecostal Experience

Editor's note: The Church of God is hosting its General Assembly in Orlando this week.

Welcome to Orlando and the 77th International General Assembly of the Church of God.

Without a doubt, the Church of God has been empowered by the Spirit to help *finish* the Great Commission. I believe when Jesus gave the mandate of the Great Commission, He intended there would also be a great completion. And we can only accomplish this through the power He has imparted through us as He promised in Acts 1:8a (KJV), "Ye shall be witnesses ... after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you."

This passage reminds me that none of us were filled with the Holy Spirit only for our enjoyment, but more so, for our employment.

In these first two years I have been privileged to serve as general overseer of this great church, I have been inspired by the hunger and thirst for a fresh Pentecostal experience in our movement. There is indeed a Pentecostal revival going on across the globe. In my travels, I have witnessed this hunger like I have never seen before. There is a reawakening and a new embracing of the Spirit-empowered life.

In this day of political correctness, many churches have felt compelled to suppress the signs of Pentecostal fervor, including the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. But our belief in the experience described in Acts 2 remains a compelling reality, and we must never inadvertently—or purposely—try to keep its witness out of our worship and our

churches.

Although we live in a world of crisis, I have been longing to see an Acts 2 Holy Spirit outpouring repeated all over again in the church today. I want to hear the *sounds* of Pentecost. It is described in Acts as “the sound ... of a rushing, mighty wind” (v. 2). I long for the day when congregations all over the world hear the sounds that reflect a Pentecostal experience in their worship, praying, praising and proclamation of the Word.

We also need to see the *sights* of Pentecost. We need what I call an “obvious,” visible manifestation of Pentecost. I’m not talking questionable or unbiblical extremism; I’m talking about the sights found in Mark 16 where Jesus stated that “In my name they shall cast out devils ... [in my name] they shall speak with new tongues ... [in my name] they shall lay hands on the sick” (vv. 17, 18). We need the sights of Pentecost in the Church of God today! We need to reclaim what we may have hidden in years past and boldly proclaim our Spirit-filled heritage.

Next, we need the *speech* of Pentecost. The Scripture says, “They began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). My prayer is that such revival fire would burn again in the Church of God that the spiritual gift of tongues and praying in the Spirit would be frequently witnessed in our services. Holy Spirit speech is not something reserved for our grandparents, but a glorious experience to pass along to the next generations.

Finally, what is most important is the *significance* of Pentecost. Ever since that initial 1896 Holy Spirit outpouring at the Shearer Schoolhouse, followed by a tent revival in Cleveland where G.B. Cashwell brought the Azusa Street experience to the Church of God a dozen years later, we have been a movement grounded in the gifts of the Spirit.

It is my desire and prayer that we never grow weary of defending our birthright, but that we renew our commitment to manifesting and embracing the significance of our Spirit-filled experience.

The sounds of Pentecost; the sights of Pentecost; the speech of Pentecost and the significance of Pentecost—they are all still relevant today. So, may this International General Assembly be the launching point of moving the Church of God onward to “*Finish* in the Spirit and power of Pentecost!” {eo}

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