

John MacArthur, You Are Fighting Against God

Dear John MacArthur,

As the guy who created the **supernatural**-centric films *Finger of God*, *Furious Love* and *Father of Lights*, I realize that I may very well be near the top of your list of “least saved” people, as my movies have reached millions of people around the world with the message that **God** is active and alive today and is doing all sorts of amazing, outrageous and (gulp) strange miracles and that it is the primary mission of the worldwide church to love radically while utilizing the gifts of the Holy Spirit both freely and abundantly.

I’m also making a new movie called *Holy Ghost*, which I’m pretty sure you won’t like at all. So I think it’s safe to say that you and I could probably not be further apart regarding the **gifts of the Spirit** and our dedication to advancing what we think is right throughout the world. We’re both trying to change the temperature of the worldwide **church**, but the problem is, we’re pushing the dial in opposite directions. That being said, I wanted to write you to let you know that I agree with you ... sort of.

I have to admit, when I first read about and then followed along with your conference, it both frustrated and angered me. Not so much because you were calling people like me a liar or a charlatan or even Satan’s puppet. No, I was frustrated because I know, wholeheartedly, that you are wrong on this issue. You are leading the charge in a cause that, I assure you, is doomed to fail. You are essentially fighting against God on this one, and it saddens me that you want to take the hands of others and lead them down this road. You have decided to turn your back on a large portion of your family because you don’t think they are your family.

You have led a crusade against a vast tribe of Christianity that I used to think were completely insane. I used to be very much like you regarding these things. The **charismatic movement** made me uncomfortable because they seemed so free, so bold and so weird. I, like you, wasn't sure this was entirely from God—but that observation came from someone sitting on the sidelines, watching these strange family members acting like weirdos. I hid behind the idea that their behavior defined their **theology**, and therefore they could never really be taken seriously. I heard the outrageous claims some of them made and rolled my eyes. I saw many of them focus on the gifts more than the giver of the gifts.

But then God called me (through a **supernatural** event, no less) to make movies about Him and to write books about Him, and my whole world got turned upside down. I began to realize that the God of the **Bible** is far bigger, more gracious, patient and powerful than I ever thought. I was thrown into the very **charismatic** world that you now demonize. I was no longer on the sidelines but smack-dab in the thick of it. And along the way, I saw a lot of good and a lot of bad.

Over the last seven years, I've traveled the world searching for the "more" of God. I have seen some of the best that **charismatic** Christianity has to offer as well as some of the worst. Much has already been written about your overgeneralizations and straw man arguments you make against the **charismatic movement**, but I wanted to say something to this regard that might shock you.

You're right. There are many people, many **charismatics** and **Pentecostals** who are about as whacky and goofy as you have described them. People who "toke the Holy Ghost"? Friends of mine. People who "shake and laugh uncontrollably"? Family members. People who "**speak in tongues**"? Nearly everyone I know. I have sat with leaders of enormous charismatic ministries as they've sniped at their spouses. I have seen meetings turn into train wrecks because a speaker or a portion

of the audience went overboard in their fleshly exuberance. I have watched leaders stretch the truth from the stage to the point where I was certain it would snap. I've seen it all, Mr. MacArthur, the whole messy, ugly, unbiblical underbelly of the **charismatic movement**.

And guess what? I'm still here.

Because that isn't all I have seen. I have seen those same ministers caring for orphans and widows. I have seen them kiss the hands of lepers. I have sat with them in the backs of vans and trains and planes as they've poured out their hearts to me and explained why they do what they do—how Jesus touched them in such a radical way that they can never go back; they can never be the same again. I have looked into their eyes and have seen the love of Christ pouring out.

I have three young children, and each one is unique, but they all have one thing in common. One minute they can be beautiful and loving and tender to one another, and the next they can be perfect little monsters. As their father, I see the best and the worst they have to offer, yet still I love them. And every day I go to work trying to move their love needle a little closer to heaven. Their journey toward perfect love, as with all of us, will take a lifetime, and sometimes even that isn't long enough. But I will never disown them because of their stupidity or their ignorance.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that while you have discounted an entire **move of God** because you have seen some of the worst it has to offer, there is so much more that you haven't seen that completely overshadows and outshines even the craziest charismaniac out there. We are members of one family, Mr. MacArthur, and I don't know about yours, but my family is messy and complicated and beautiful and strange all at the same time.

I'm not angry at you for your conference or your book. In

fact, if you'll let me, I'd love to sit next to you at the banqueting table in heaven and we can make a toast to the King together. I know you don't think I'll actually *get* to heaven, but that's fine. I'll see you there anyway. Because after all, families have to stick together no matter what.

Darren Wilson *is the founder of Wanderlust Productions and the creator of various films, including Finger of God, Furious Love, and Father of Lights. Darren's new book, Finding God in the Bible, is available in stores everywhere. Visit his website at .*