

The Modern Church Must Have a New Pentecost

This Sunday is “Pentecost Sunday” when Christians celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. Pentecost reminds us of our absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit if we are to be the church of Jesus Christ.

Our programs, choirs, songs and sermons are worthless if not empowered by the Holy Spirit. This was highlighted to Sue and I in a most unusual encounter.

We Meet Adele

It was the strangest introduction. After two weeks in our new home, Sue and I came face to face with our next-door neighbor, who was a tough looking woman in her mid-50s. We shook her hand and told her our names. With a cigarette dangling from her mouth she replied, “My name’s Adele. I’m a backslidden pastor from Brooklyn, New York.”

It was obvious to us that Adele had been through some deep and painful experiences with church. We were mature enough to know that a superficial Christian cliché or a chick tract would do nothing for her, except probably make her angry. We, therefore, made no attempt to connect except to offer a friendly wave if we saw her in her yard.

The Holy Spirit Will Do What We Cannot

The Holy Spirit, however, knows how to reach the most difficult cases and He will move through us in ways we could never have planned or imagined. He moved powerfully and unexpectedly for Adele one day as Sue and I were about to back out of our driveway.

Sue who was driving, suddenly began experiencing a deep compassion flowing out to Adele who was working in her yard. After sitting quietly for a moment, she rolled down her window and called out, "Adele!" Adele came striding over with the perennial cigarette dangling from her mouth.

When she reached the window, Sue suddenly began speaking to her in tongues. I was sitting in the passenger seat and had the interpretation, which was a prophetic word for Adele. I knew that I should look her in the face and so I leaned across Sue in the driver's seat, looked Adele in the face, and said, "Adele, God is saying to you, 'My daughter, you are precious in my sight.'"

Adele burst into tears and then broke out praying in tongues and we had revival there in our driveway. God bonded our hearts together. She later came to our home and shared how she had grown up in an Italian, Catholic, mafia family in Brooklyn, NY, and as an adult had herself joined the mafia. One of her uncles and his wife had come to Christ and had invited her to church. She went and had a glorious encounter with the Lord.

She was on fire for the Lord and opened a storefront church in Brooklyn where she was reaching many of the homeless, drug addicts and what someone described as "the hard cases." However, opposition from Christians to her pastoring as a woman and an ill-advised marriage to a husband who turned on her, brought her to despair.

She gave up on church, but she did not give up on Jesus. That day in our driveway a tremendous work of the Holy Spirit occurred and her faith and hope were renewed.

About two months after this encounter, Adele and her husband (since deceased) moved to Florida. We stayed in touch and several months later I received an email from Adele saying:

"I am putting a check in the mail. I want you and Sue to come

to Florida for about three days, and you can stay with us. I will have about 40 people over. Most of them are not Christians. Do whatever God tells you to do.”

The Holy Spirit Falls on Members of the Mafia

We arrived at Adele’s home in Port St. Lucie, Florida and later that evening the people she had invited began to arrive. As starting time neared, the living room and kitchen were filled with people and it seemed that everyone was smoking. Clouds of smoke hung heavy in the atmosphere.

Many of the people were members of the mafia or former members. Some of the people had been members of Adele’s church in Brooklyn, and when she “backslid” they all backslid with her. One woman sitting across the kitchen table from Sue and I had been a part of Adele’s congregation in Brooklyn. As smoke billowed around us, she said to me, “We’re all backslid.” I thought, “Well, at least, they are not trying to convince us of how spiritual they are.”

Starting time arrived and I picked up my guitar intending to lead them in praise and worship. It soon became obvious, however, that I was the only one singing. Everyone seemed to just stare at me as they puffed on their cigarettes.

Realizing this was going nowhere, I put my guitar aside and picked up my Bible. God had given me a message about His unconditional love, and as I shared this message, I sensed a change in the atmosphere. At some point, I noticed that everyone had put out their cigarettes and the smoke had dissipated. As I completed my message, a sense of solemnness and the fear of the Lord seemed to fill the atmosphere.

I then invited anyone who wanted prayer to come forward to receive prayer from Sue and I. The first person to come up was Isabelle who was from Brooklyn and part of a mafia family. She was in deep depression for her husband and two sons had been murdered by a rival mafia family and her daughter was a drug

addict, living on the street.

As we laid our hands on Isabelle and prayed, she began to sob and then fell to floor. We had no catchers, but no one was concerned, as their minds were taken up with God. Another person then came up for prayer, and she too fell to the floor.

At this point, the Holy Spirit “fell” on the people just like in the book of Acts. Suddenly, everyone was on their knees or laying on the floor, weeping and calling out to God at the top of their voices. It was a surreal moment when God came down and did a mighty work beyond anything we could have ever imagined or planned.

What an incredible time! Later, that evening there was a release of joy such as I have never seen. Our hearts were further bonded with Adele, and we have been back several times for meetings with her and those we call our mafia friends.

We Must Have a New Pentecost

Interestingly, before we met Adele she had visited charismatic churches in the area without finding the help she needed. Let us, therefore, remember that all our church programs and activities are worthless if we do not have that empowerment of the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, and poured out on the Day of Pentecost.

Pentecost was not an end; it was a beginning and pattern for the church of all ages. Let us, therefore, admit our human inadequacy and confess to God how much we need the promised baptism in the Holy Spirit. Let us pray for a new Pentecost at this critical time in America, the church and the world.

Dr. Eddie Hyatt *has taught on the Holy Spirit throughout the world, including Oxford University. His book, “2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity,” published by Charisma House, is used as textbook in many colleges and seminaries around the world. He has also produced “Revival History,” a Manual and*

Study Guide to go with the book, which contains 20 outlined lessons, pictures, reflection questions and essays. These are available from Amazon and his website at .

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