

What Some Christians Totally Misunderstand About Spiritual Gifts

To hear some Christians talk about spiritual gifts, it evokes the opening crawl of a *Star Wars* movie: “A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away ...” They reminisce about some wonderful camp meeting back in 1947, when there was “a mighty move of God.” They describe in glowing terms what they saw in an Oral Roberts or Kathryn Kuhlman healing crusade. They hark back to the Azusa Street awakening in Los Angeles (1906-09) and how, in spite of the prevailing Jim Crow laws and attitudes, the Holy Spirit brought whites, blacks, Hispanics and Asians together in a great flow of spiritual renewal.

Somehow I hear the voice of Gideon in the background, who said to the angel, ““O my lord, if the Lord is with us, then why has all this happened to us? Where are all His miracles that our fathers told us about? They said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt?’” (Judg. 6:13b). He yearned to see God in action now, not just a hundred or two hundred years previous.

I echo the earnest plea of the prophet Habakkuk: “O Lord, I have heard the report of You, and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of these years make them known; in wrath remember mercy” (Hab. 3:2).

And I’m coming to believe that the Spirit *is* more active than we sometimes recognize here in our time and setting. The more true, credible, authentic accounts I’ve uncovered in developing my new book *Miracle Invasion*, the more I’ve come to believe that healings, miracles, deliverances and revelations of critical information—and even bodily resurrections—are happening today. This is not just our legacy; this is our reality.

When a grandmother in Sarnia, Ontario, who's been legally blind for months due to diabetes suddenly regains her vision in a 2016 Sunday night church service—and it's all caught on video—the gracious hand of the Lord is undeniable.

When a Houston woman expecting twins is told by her OB/GYN to abort them because the blood flow in her uterus is massively overloading one baby's heart while starving the other, giving them no hope of survival, she and her husband opt to disobey, trusting the Lord. In time, two healthy boys are delivered; today, they are energetic, athletic teenagers.

When a skeptical businessman in Upper Michigan decides to check out the Pentecostal church his wife has been visiting, even challenging God on the drive, "Look, if this tongues thing is for real, let it happen today"—and in fact it happens, accompanied by interpretation, his prejudices are rocked. In the following months, he surrenders to Christ, and the couple begins holding Bible studies in their home. Water baptism soon follows. His wife's unchurched parents come to the Lord as well—all because a church was willing to welcome the twin gifts of tongues and interpretation, on a Sunday morning no less.

When gunfire breaks out at the entrance of a large church in a tough neighborhood, and one of the young shooters suddenly collapses on the sidewalk, unconscious ... but the EMTs who transport him to the nearest hospital as well as the ER staff there can find no cause, they are mystified. They can find no bullet wounds on his body. The police check the church's surveillance video, and yes, that's him walking up with a drawn gun in his hand. But then he collapses—why?

The medical chart finally ends with this conclusion: "An unexplained illness that caused a temporary comatose state." The pastor, on the other hand, gives a different explanation, from Psalm 27:2-3: "When the wicked came against me to eat my flesh—my enemies and my foes—they stumbled and fell. Though an

army should encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.”

The Holy Spirit’s interventions are not fading away. They’re still alive and well, flourishing wherever they are welcomed by God’s people. They are not the private domain of any one denomination or network. The wind of the Spirit still blows, and as vigorously today as ever. It is limited only by our hesitations. {eo}

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