

# Signs of a Fresh Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

*We are about to experience a new move of His Spirit. As we welcome it, let's protect the church from abuse and misuse of His gifts.*

During the past few months I have prayed for many people to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It has reminded me of the mid-1970s, when Baptists, Episcopalians, Catholics, Lutherans and Methodists were discovering the power of the Spirit in small prayer groups, renegade Bible studies and gatherings in hotel ballrooms.

Back then people seemed especially hungry for a deeper experience with God. Hollywood actor Pat Boone wrote a book called *A New Song* to testify how he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett led thousands into the experience after he was dismissed from his staid, traditional church in California because he admitted speaking in tongues. And Presbyterian novelist Catherine Marshall wrote *Something More* to describe her encounter with the Baptizer.

**"Often, those who received the fullness of the Spirit claimed superiority—not realizing that as soon as they began boasting, they lost the anointing!"**

I discovered “something more” in the summer of 1976 when I was preparing for my first semester in college. I learned that the woman teaching my Southern Baptist Sunday school class in Atlanta was a charismatic. (I didn’t know what that term meant; I thought it sounded like some kind of back problem!)

I asked this lady to explain to me what it meant to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and she invited me to her home for a two-hour conversation. She loaded me down with books, including one titled *Why Should I Speak in Tongues?*—a book that I later learned was written by a former Southern Baptist.

After reading the books and several Bible passages, I discovered that many people in the book of Acts were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues—even the apostle Paul. And he boasted to the Corinthians: “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you” (1 Cor. 14:18, NIV).

After I was convinced that this was a biblical experience, I went outside my church, sat on the volleyball court and looked up at the night sky. I prayed a simple prayer: “Lord, I’m Yours, and I want all you have for me. Fill me with Your Spirit.”

I didn’t hear the sound of a rushing wind. There were no claps of thunder and no flames of Pentecostal fire. But the next day when I was in my room praying, I could tell that a heavenly language was bubbling up inside me. I opened my mouth and the words spilled out.

I had no clue what I was saying. It sounded like gibberish. Yet when I prayed in tongues I felt close to God. And when I read about the phenomenon of “praying in the spirit” in the New Testament, I learned that it is a precious spiritual gift that edifies the believer.

My relationship with God was energized, and I’ve been praying in tongues ever since. And I’ve met hundreds of people who pray in the Spirit every day, including hair stylists,

politicians, Hispanic immigrants, doctors, lawyers, waitresses, professors, pro athletes, celebrity musicians and wealthy businesspeople.

I am not afraid to admit to anyone that I have this gift. You can call me a fanatic or a weirdo, but if you do you will have to put the same label on the apostle Paul and all the early disciples who followed Christ.

I believe we are poised for yet another wave of Pentecostal renewal. Everywhere I go I sense fresh hunger is rising in God's people. We are not satisfied with shallow Christianity; we want to swim in deeper waters. But as this fresh anointing is poured out, I pray we will be mindful of the signposts that we sometimes ignored in the previous charismatic movement.

✘ **1. Yield to the Word of God.** The Lord calls us to walk in the Word and the Spirit. If we only emphasize the Bible and ignore the Holy Spirit we will dry up. But if we have only the Spirit and not enough of the Word we will blow up! We must hold these two in tension. And we must realize that the Holy Spirit never dishonors or violates the Word of God.

✘ **2. Learn to discern.** God is supernatural, and the gifts of the spirit operate on a supernatural plane that human intellect cannot understand. This is why He also gives us the gift of discernment—to tell the difference between legitimate supernatural experiences and demonic influences. Some churches in the previous move of God drifted into serious error because they did not embrace godly discernment.

✘ **3. Stop all spiritual pride.** The gifts of the Holy Spirit have been a source of division and controversy in the body of Christ. Often, those who received the fullness of the Spirit claimed superiority—not realizing that as soon as they began boasting, they lost the anointing! The Spirit only works in an environment of Christ-like humility. Never allow your giftedness to pull you into pride.

✖ **4. Stay on the main road.** We receive the Holy Spirit's power to do the work of evangelism and to fulfill the Great Commission. He does not anoint us to take side trips into strange territory, even if you hear familiar Christian buzzwords such as "prophetic," "dreams," "visions," "prosperity," "end times," or "angels." Beware of any ministry that majors on minors, and does not emphasize biblical salvation, a love for lost souls and a passion to win the world for Christ.

J. Lee Grady was editor of *Charisma* for 11 years and is now serving as contributing editor. You can find him on Twitter at leegrady. His latest book, *The Holy Spirit Is Not for Sale*, is now in stores. If you would like to know more about how to be filled with the Holy Spirit, [click here](#).