

When Authentic Fire Goes Viral

I was surprised by the furor over John MacArthur's *Strange Fire* book and conference not because he railed against charismatic theology, but because this is nothing new. Certain segments of the church have called the Pentecostal movement heresy ever since the Azusa Street revival. Back then, British evangelist and Bible scholar G. Campbell Morgan described Azusa's Pentecostal experiences as the "last vomit from hell."

Lines were drawn then and it's no different today. In 1993, MacArthur wrote in *Charismatic Chaos* that the movement was filled with "confusion and mushy thinking."

Yes, excesses exist in the movement and must be addressed. But it's wrong to lump all those who believe in the Holy Spirit's power with some of the high-profile ministers who've gone bad or who preach heresy, just as it's wrong to lump all Baptists with Westboro Baptist Church (that pickets gay events) or all Presbyterians with Paul Hill, the Presbyterian minister who killed an abortion doctor in 1994 claiming God had told him to do it.

MacArthur's new book or conference probably won't change many minds; he's preaching to his own choir. But he has made some leaders in our movement speak up and address the issues he's addressing. If you didn't see the commentaries we ran by George O. Wood, Lee Grady, Samuel Rodriguez, Mark Rutland, Ron Phillips and others on our websites, you can find them by going to [this link](#). In addition, Charisma House is releasing a major book by R. T. Kendall (like MacArthur, a self-described Calvinist), who deals with many of the issues surrounding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our day, even though it doesn't specifically name or directly address MacArthur.

Kendall's book is called *Holy Fire* and will be out in January.

Among those who specifically answered MacArthur was prolific author Michael Brown. He addressed abuses within our movement, but also showed how some of us have been highlighting these very issues for decades. There was such a demand for what he wrote—and he had such a burning desire to see it in book form—that he is expanding it into a book releasing about the time you read this called *Authentic Fire: A Response to John MacArthur's Strange Fire*. In it, Brown will:

- Respond to MacArthur's claims that the charismatic movement has made no positive contribution to theology, biblical interpretation, worship or social and humanitarian work;
- Show that the origins of the modern Pentecostal-charismatic movement are by no means flawed and that the sword of criticism MacArthur uses works against his own theology;
- Make a clear biblical case for the continuing nature of the gifts and power of the Spirit;
- Apply the same criteria MacArthur uses to test the fruit of the modern charismatic movement and prove that his data and conclusions are flawed;
- And feature chapters from other scholars and colleagues, including professors Craig Keener, Jon Ruthven and Bob Gladstone.

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This technology is also available to you. And it allows me to publicly announce our company's new addition, Excel

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Steve Strang is the founder and publisher of Charisma. Follow him on Twitter @sstrang or Facebook (stephenestrang).