

Will the Real Holy Ghost Please Stand Up?

"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:4-5, MEV).

"Share the things that you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses with faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

There are real demonstrations of the Spirit and then there are demonstrations of the flesh. The body of Christ has to learn the difference. There will be a move of the Spirit that will be lost to this present generation if it is not passed on through precept and example by those who know something about it.

One time a young believer prophesied: "Don't be scared my children, but if you are scared, that's okay, because I get scared sometimes myself."

Now that prophecy is easy to judge, isn't it? It would be funny if it wasn't so pathetic.

Here is an excerpt of another prophecy that someone once gave: "I have no other church like this church. And I've put you on a pedestal for the world to see how great you are."

That one is also easy to judge. A true prophecy will never exalt a church or a man like that to where they think so highly of themselves. And not all prophecy is from heaven to Earth, or "thus saith the Lord" utterances. Much of prophecy is from Earth to heaven.

For example, speaking or singing in psalms, hymns and

spiritual songs by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost is prophecy. This is something every believer should be doing in their prayer life. Also, preaching by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost has an element of prophecy in it. I've preached nearly entire messages that were by the spirit of prophecy.

There is more error in the utterance gifts—divers tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy—because we initiate those gifts. They are supposed to be initiated by the unction of the Holy Ghost, but many do not know the difference between the anointing and their own emotions or mind.

Many of today's prophecies draw attention to the greatness of a man. We don't see that in the New Testament. Go through the book of Acts and tell me where you find that. True prophecy will edify, exhort and comfort us and glorify God, not glorify man. There is no reverence for God in a word that magnifies and draws attention to man.

Lack of true reverence for God is one of the problems in the church today. There is a lightness and a casualness in many of our gatherings. People come in late. They move around or leave casually during the meeting. There have been times over the years when I've been preaching or prophesying under the anointing of the Spirit and people get distracted or restless and start moving around. Even as a former Catholic I had more reverence for God than that.

A hip-hip hooray, clap-happy attitude is dissipating the presence and power of God from our midst.

It's difficult sometimes to impart that understanding to people. The old-time Pentecostals knew something about the deeper move of the Spirit. This new generation of Pentecostals and modern Charismatics know almost nothing about the real depth of the move of God's Spirit. Instead of cooperating with the Spirit of God, people often hinder Him. We need to be sensitive.

Years ago I was visiting my parents' church one Sunday and while sitting in the congregation the Spirit of God came on me to dance. I don't usually dance unless I'm really prompted to by the Spirit. The seats were close together so I stepped out in the aisle and began to dance. A person sitting behind me got up and tapped me on my shoulder and told me he couldn't see the words of the song on the screen because I was blocking his view. As soon as he did that the Spirit of God just flew away like a bird and I lost the unction to dance. If that person was sensitive, he would've been dancing himself.

Dancing in the Spirit brings God's presence and a refreshing to a congregation. It is not only the person dancing that gets blessed but those in the meeting who are in the Spirit also get blessed. There's a heavenly fragrance that goes out over the whole crowd sometimes. When there's liberty like that in a meeting, great things can happen.

I remember several years ago when I was preaching in another nation, there was an outbreak of joy and liberty in the Holy Ghost and people were healed without anyone touching them or praying for them. There was a young demon-possessed man outside the meeting venue that was arrested by the power of God and couldn't move. He was stuck to the ground. Eventually he came loose and some ushers brought him into the meeting and he was set free, born again and Spirit filled.

When there is too much formality and ritualism in a meeting, it kills the liberty of the Spirit and brings a heaviness.

In some of our meetings, my wife will often take the microphone and begin praying or singing in the Spirit. As she does, the atmosphere at times becomes impregnated with the presence of God. When that happens I usually can't start the meeting the way I intended to. Preliminaries are scratched out as we move together in another direction. A greater liberty comes and it changes the entire meeting. Every praise and worship leader ought to move in that operation to prepare the

way for the Spirit of God and His ministry gifts (Eph. 4:11).

Praise and worship in the Spirit will give birth to manifestations and the opposite is also true. Manifestations of the Spirit like a tongue and interpretation, a prophecy, a revelation or a healing will also give birth to high praise and worship in the Spirit. Often dancing and rejoicing in the Spirit breaks out. The after effects of meetings like that bring a believer closer to the Lord and can carry them for weeks or until they learn to get filled up themselves. This is true edification and what the Lord wants for His people.

I've been in gatherings when people have just danced to put on something, or just danced to the music. That's just fleshly dancing. Now godly music helps to enhance the anointing, but you don't even need music to dance in the Spirit. There are now churches that conduct dance classes to teach people how to dance. You can't teach people to dance in the Spirit. Dancing is a result of being filled with the Spirit.

There is also laughter in the Spirit. Many refer to it as holy laughter. Others don't understand it because they've never been in the Spirit. At times I laugh in my own personal prayer time. I've had belly laughs and begged the Lord to stop because my stomach was hurting. People are often healed and set free from bondage or oppression from laughing.

You see, because people are negative by nature, they tend to criticize what they don't understand or have never experienced. That is how it is with the things of the Spirit. Even reputable men in the body of Christ have criticized the move of the Spirit because of all the excesses and extremes they've seen. Some have even denied the entire thing and call the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement a fraud. And some of these are leading men who lead entire denominations and congregations of people. How sad and how grievous it is to deceive and divide the body of Christ like that! May God have

mercy on such ignorance.

One of the drawbacks I see an increase in today is people doing things without the anointing. Recently I went to a minister's prayer meeting and one young minister prophesied over me for about five minutes. None of it was right. I did not bear witness to any of his words. He went on about how he saw this and he saw that, and it was just all his imagination. He substituted imagination for true revelation. A person can close his eyes or keep them open and see anything he wants. Many claim to have visions but many times they are mind visions, not spiritual visions. A person can visualize anything they imagine. And yet I absolutely believe in visions and revelation and seeing and knowing things by the Spirit of God.

The plan of God in the New Testament is for every believer to be filled with the Spirit and to maintain that infilling. The older and more experienced ministers have got to teach, demonstrate, and lead people into these things. When they don't then people will try and substitute other things for it. There will be fakery, hype and superficiality as people try and fill that void and barrenness, or they will continue on in their traditions and unbelief and have deadness and dryness.

Oh, but when the real move of the Spirit of God is in manifestation in our midst and we flow with Him, that river will get deeper and wider, and we will enjoy His presence and the needs of the people will be met.

Praise God!