

Convergence Ecclesiology
Addendum 2: The Move of the Spirit in the Life of the Parish
ICCEC U.S. Theological Commission
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Throughout our short history as a communion, clergy and lay people alike have expressed the desire that the *charismatic* in the name, Charismatic Episcopal Church, never be diminished, neglected, or forgotten. The same question has been asked many times, “How should celebrants encourage the freedom of the Spirit during the Sunday liturgy?” A liturgy can become increasingly planned, routine, and controlled. We need to faithfully consider, “How can our Eucharistic services reflect the Spirit’s outpouring on the day of Pentecost that came ‘suddenly’ and ‘powerfully’ (Acts 2:2)?” How do we encourage our congregations to participate in the vocal and healing gifts of the Spirit? What does it mean to fulfill the command of the Apostle Paul, “Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy (1 Cor. 14:1). Are we as a communion ready for sweet moves of God, spontaneous manifestations of the gifts, and a proliferation of miracles in our services? Do we truly want to see the Father glorified in our services, the Son exalted by our praise, and the Holy Spirit released in and among the people of God.

Most importantly, we need to be *intentional* in seeking the Spirit’s work and power. Clergy and laity should expect the Holy Spirit to honor the prayer that bids the Spirit to come and make the person and work of Christ known to the people of God (Luke 11:13). We ought to encourage celebrants to allot time in every service for the Holy Spirit to manifest and “work the works of God” (John 6:28). During the sacrament of preaching, praise and worship segment, or reception of bread and wine, all congregants should seek the Holy Spirit, asking him to strengthen, encourage, and comfort the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 14:3). Practical things can be done to encourage the showing, or manifestation, of the Spirit in our parishes (1 Cor. 12:7), we are listing a few for consideration.

First, we need to teach about the person and work of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26; 16:13). Many of us came to Christ out the Jesus Movement in the early seventies, or during the Evangelical Third Wave renewal of the eighties. We saw hardened sinners and confused, bedraggled hippies renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit. We experienced fresh and deep experiences of Jesus’s love and mercy. We observed fellow believers and non-Christians healed definitively and powerfully. We beheld corporate worship experiences that witnessed eternity. Many of us encountered a genuine move of the Holy Spirit in our lives, our churches, and ministries. Our spiritual lives were forever changed as we learned to walk in the spiritual gifts especially those vocal and power gifts mentioned in First Corinthians twelve (v. 4-11). Today’s millennials have not experienced those same powerful encounters that we found so deeply meaningful. We cannot assume that our parishioners, especially those thirty years old and younger, understand the categories and language that we use in the regard to the Spirit’s work, gifts, and power. Defining, explaining, modeling, and living the *charismata*, the spiritual gifts, are necessary for the younger generation to grasp the beauty of a life that, “keeps in step with Spirit” (Gal. 5:25).

Second, create room in the Eucharistic service for altar calls and personal ministry. Traditional liturgies from *the Book of Common Prayer* do not provide space for personal ministry and

spiritual gift manifestation. Scripture teaches that our worship gatherings should be participatory (1 Cor. 14:26, Eph. 5:19-20). Our congregants should not be passive observers, but active participants in the ministry of the Spirit. Scripture instructs believers to attend worship ready to personally minister in the corporate worship setting one to another. The gift of prophecy, words of knowledge, and the healing gifts are especially powerful and God-glorifying when imparted in a worship gathering (1 Cor. 14:3, 25).

Three, pastors should provide home ministry groups where parishioners can operate in the Holy Spirit's gifts. Small groups provide a safe place for those new to experiencing the gifts they can operate without fear of failure, or ridicule. Larger congregational settings can intimidate quieter, more reserved personalities. In smaller settings, people can be encouraged to step out and learn from one another, mentoring and modeling the *charismata* to the whole group (Matt. 18:19-20).

Four, we should offer evening workshops and weekend seminars to train each parish in giving prophetic words, praying for healing, developing discernment, and the laying on of hands (Acts 13:1-3; Eph. 4:11-14). Many of our clergy struggle with allowing the gifts to operate for fear that a few fanatics, who with an inflated sense of self-importance, might dominate a service and confuse the sheep. In an effort to protect the sheep from weirdness, often celebrants go to the other extreme and limit the move of the Spirit.

The genuine power of God will flow sweetly in our services, if we teach the congregation the difference between authentic anointing, mature ministry, and attention-getting. Clergy need to trust in the gift of distinguishing of spirits which will work in and amongst the congregation (1 Cor. 12: 10). The church gathered naturally walks in the “spirit of discernment,” the congregants tend to know intuitively when a prophetic word is “off,” or word of knowledge is “made-up.” We need not fear (1 Cor. 14:29).

Five, rectors need to be sensitive to *teaching moments* in order to explain the gifts of the Spirit and their operation in personal ministry and corporate worship. As teaching clergy, we should be thoroughly saturated in the texts of First Corinthians twelve to fourteen. We suggest Gordon Fee's *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT) or D. A. Carson's *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12–14* with practical insights from Jack Deere's *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* or John Wimber's *Power Healing* as commentary aids in knowing and understand the richness of these texts. As clergy, we should know these chapters well, so that when an issue manifests, we can explain God's Word, and give Biblical insights into the proper working of the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14:39-40).

Six, we should expose our parishes to healthy ministers and ministries that flow in the anointing of the Holy Spirit, ones which operate Biblically and faithfully in the gifts of the Spirit. Admittedly, we have seen few ministries that are Biblically sound in the proper use of prophetic gifts and the ministry of divine healing. Many charismatic speakers look and sound good, but teach the Bible poorly and mislead young believers by relying heavily on personal visions and spiritual experiences. However, John Wimber modeled the best in charismatic ministry, many teachers from his ministry tree, like Randy Clark, provide strong examples of mature ministry and loving outreach (Heb. 2:4).

Seven, celebrants need to provide time in the celebration of the liturgy for testimonies and stories of God's supernatural power. Nothing encourages the faith of a congregation more than a parishioner's testimony of a supernatural, intimate experience of God's faithfulness to answered prayer (Mark 1:27-28). If an individual was restored to health in your parish, let him or her share God's goodness to the whole group. If a man, or woman, was healed from chronic pain, let them tell about the God miracle working power. Stories of supernatural encounters release a holy gratitude in everyone—and God receives the glory. Signs and wonders stir the hearts of the faithful to believe God for more of Jesus' works (Rom. 15:17-19).

Last, we need to preach the preciousness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (John 15:26; 16:13). J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, was touring Canada speaking and sharing on union and communion with Christ as taught in the Song of Songs. An attendee asked Taylor why he was not speaking on missions and attempting to recruit missionaries for China. Taylor's answer was somewhat surprising, "Preach Christ and the people will fall in the love with their precious Savior, and after they fall in love with him, they will want to become missionaries." Preach Jesus and our parishioners will love Jesus more, then they will spontaneously share their experiences, and be witnesses of his grace to the wider world.

In the same manner, we should preach Christ not revival. When our parishes *see* Jesus in all his glory and splendor (Heb. 12:2), their hearts will be renewed and revived. Then, the overflow of Jesus in their lives will enliven our churches and dioceses. Teach about the gifts, but don't preach the gifts, *preach* Jesus. When our congregations truly encounter the Savior who has "the Spirit without limit" (John 3:34), they will understand that the same Jesus who walked this earth in the Gospels is the same Jesus who lives in them by the Holy Spirit. As Oswald Chambers wrote:

The Holy Spirit is not a substitute for Jesus, the Holy Spirit is all that Jesus was, and all that Jesus did, made real in personal experience now. The Holy Spirit alone makes Jesus real, the Holy Spirit alone expounds His Cross, the Holy Spirit alone convicts of sin; the Holy Spirit alone does in us what Jesus did for us.¹

As Jesus is magnified, our members will desperately want Jesus to live his words and do his works through them. Our parishes will hunger and thirst for the Person who is the power to set the captives set free.² It's all about Jesus, and it's the Holy Spirit's ministry to magnify and elevate Jesus above all (Rom. 8:9-10).

In conclusion, we must remember that every spiritual gift displays the power of Jesus, every fruit of Spirit reveals the character of Jesus, every sign and wonder magnifies the love of Jesus, every tongue praises Jesus, every prophecy points to his greatness (Rev. 19:10), every work of knowledge displays Jesus' love, and every act of love makes known the sacrifice of Jesus: every work of the Holy Spirit is about Jesus Christ.

¹ Oswald Chambers, *Biblical Ethics* [Logos Bible Software] (Hants UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1947).

² J. Lee Grady, "Don't Hide the Holy Spirit in a Seeker-Friendly Box," *Charisma*, June 5, 2014.