
Subject: "he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. 11.4) Thoughts From HEF - Part 3
Posted by [unclebob_5](#) on Wed, 24 Jan 2007 19:59:22 GMT
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"God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. 11.4) Thoughts From HEF (Part 3)

I have recently been (re-)reading HEF's book, "Deeper Life In The Spirit"; this was a book that has always blessed me, so I thought I would just excerpt from it a bit for the benefit of those who have never (or recently) read it - starting at the beginning...Here is part 3 (from pp. 9-12 of the book; emphasis in bold is mine; my thoughts follow the excerpt). Read his teaching, meditate, and be blessed!

Deeper Life in the Spirit

Chapter 1

Preparation for the Deeper Life

There is a great moving of the Spirit of God today among the denominations that is unlike anything in the history of the Christian church. It has been described by writers and religious leaders as the "Charismatic Revival," "Glossolalia," "Revival of the Holy Spirit," "Spiritual Renewal," "The Latter Rain," and so on, which are attempts to define the present-day, world-wide outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. A spiritual revolution is taking place in the world today which is bringing about dramatic changes in our Christian experience so profound that we find ourselves reliving the Book of Acts!

The Biblical basis and explanation for what is taking place is to be found in a little prophetic book in the Old Testament, for in Joel 2:28-32, God predicts that just such a phenomenon as we are experiencing will surely occur in the latter days. Peter quoted this prophecy on the Day of Pentecost, saying,

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.... For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

â€“ Acts 2:17, 39

Countless thousands of Christians in all denominations are finding that Pentecost is not a denomination, but a present-day experience for all who will believe it and ask for the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). This is no longer just some dubious experience about which the Pentecostals speak; but the Holy Spirit is being poured out among the Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Catholics, Nazarenes, Brethren, Methodistsâ€”in fact upon all denominations. In the historic churches, pastors, teachers, missionaries, laymen, college and seminary students, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, the educated and uneducated, the young and old, are receiving the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit identical with that described in Acts 2, with the evidence of speaking supernaturally in a new language as the Spirit gives utterance.

For many years multitudes of Christians have been experiencing a spiritual void which the churches have been unable to fill. As a pastor and former seminary teacher, I was among them. I became increasingly concerned because I recognized that there was a "missing element" in contemporary Christianity. Preaching lacked the power to accomplish the results that Christ said would follow the proclamation of His Word. Missionaries were laboring for years to make a handful of dubious converts, which was so unlike the Book of Acts. Our witness was largely ineffective in our denominational churches. Christians were losing interest and had to be constantly "pumped up" with a new program to arouse their attention, and new methods and techniques were incessantly sought to make the Christian message relevant to the needs of today's society. The youth were looking for spiritual reality, and the church could offer little more than religious entertainment and church activities as an inadequate substitute. I saw that the church desperately needed new life, inspiration, and power.

What is the cause of this situation? It is the sin of neglecting the Holy Spirit! The church has made the baptism of the Holy Spirit a doctrine to be discussed by the theologians, instead of a personal experience for every believer. Without the life and power of the Holy Spirit, the church today is like a body without the spiritâ€”a corpse without life. Without the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the church cannot effectively fulfill the commission as Christ gave it; namely, preaching the Word with the signs following to confirm it. When the church lost the power of the Holy Spirit, it was compelled to dissect the commission; but in severing the supernatural signs, given to confirm the Word (Mark 16:15-18), from the preaching of the Word, the Word no longer convicted and convinced the lost. Without the empowering by the Spirit, the church was left with only the "dead letter," and as a result has largely failed in its commission.

The church today may be weak because of unbelief, but Christ is not weak! The church may be spiritually poor, living below its privileges, yet Christ is not poor! Nor does He intend for His people to remain weak and poverty stricken, impotent in mind, body, and spirit. This is the significance of the present-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. When Christ returns for His Bride she will be like her Head: strong and victorious, filled with His Spirit and power!

Although the present world-wide move of the Holy Spirit is among all denominations, it is, nevertheless, essentially outside the denominational, institutional church for the precise reason

that our organized religious systems would try to institutionalize the work of the Holy Spirit! We would make it a Baptist outpouring, a Presbyterian work of the Spirit, an Episcopalian experience, or a Catholic movement. But Joel 2:28-29 is not a denomination, it is a personal experience. Could this be one of the reasons the "pentecostal" outpouring at the turn of the century diminished in power: the fact that it became a denomination, an institutional system of doctrine and organization under the control of men?

God is moving today outside the confines of institutional Christianity because He well knows that He could never break through the ecclesiastical barriers of established religion. Organized, institutional religion rarely recognizes or accepts any purely spiritual work or move of God that is not in line with what it has already established and systematically defined as correct doctrine and practice. This is why Israel rejected the prophets; it is why established religion in Jesus' day rejected His message; and it is also the reason that the institutional church today would reject the fulfillment of Joel 2 through its ranks, for this is precisely what it did at the turn of the century, in the early outpouring in America.

By necessity, therefore, God is moving by His Spirit outside the established hierarchyâ€”in order to move inside and reach those who are hungering and thirsting for a deeper experience with Him. This is why the great outpouring today is essentially a "laymen's movement." It was and is among business and professional men, home prayer groups, house churches, laymen, and independent groups. It is not so strange that God has chosen to entrust these with the propagation of this great blessing, when one carefully notes God's promise in Joel. It was not to the ecclesiastical system with its professional "prophets" and organized "priesthood" that the promise was made, but God said,

I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out of my spirit.

â€” Joel 2:28-29

My thoughts (see text in bold)--

--One vital point (among many) that Br. Freeman makes here is that there is a "missing element" in contemporary Christianity. Hardly news to most folks on this forum perhaps, but one thing that truth implies is that for Spirit-Filled believers our mission field is - at least partially - to the Church! Everywhere, we see Christians struggling, struggling, because they lack the power of the Spirit. I hear the voice of Br. Freeman saying to me: "Pray for them! Speak to them! Open and share the Word of God with them!" How many of us, for example, regularly pray for Christians we know of who are a part of churches with a cessationist theology? How about visiting Internet sites/forums where we can interact with them? Sure, many (most?) may reject what we share, but some might be reached.

--Another tremendous truth HEF gives us here: The Church has "dissected the Commission" - separated the preaching of the Word from the signs which are intended to confirm the Word that is preached. Lots of preaching - little results. The need is not necessarily more preaching, but a return to completeness/wholeness - to allow again the signs to flow along with the proclamation. Could this perhaps explain why, outside of the West, Christian faith is growing by leaps and bounds, Africa being an example that comes to mind - where there has been much less resistance to the work of the Holy Spirit? Just a thought...

--Dr. Freeman also brings out in this section the truth that this work of God was largely outside of the organized denominations. This got me to thinking...I can remember, during the early days of the Charismatic Renewal, that there were many Believers who were a part of established denominations, who opted to "work within" their denomination. I know of several "Renewal" groups formed - a kind of an association - for Charismatic believers in those churches. I don't seem to hear much about them nowadays...Would it be fair to say that these people don't have much of a voice, and little impact, on their churches? If so, why? Could part of the problem be that they have tried to "accomodate" the Holy Spirit to their denomination and it's structures and beliefs? Might these denominational "Renewal" groups go the way that the Pentecostal groups of the 1900's did? Hmm...

"He being dead...YET SPEAKETH!"
Your thoughts?

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Just a P.S. -- will be away from the forum for a couple of days, but will be back soon...I am enjoying immensely your comments/insights...keep 'em coming!