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The Spirit-Filled Church

In Christianity, all believers are part of one body, the body of Jesus Christ. However, it is clear that distinctions do exist. One of the most obvious distinctions is that between charismatic and non-charismatic churches. What perspective does God want us to have about these differences?

In this next article, we will look at this important issue.



The Spirit-Filled Church

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Introduction

The charismatic movement is widespread throughout the United States and the world. God has done many wonderful things through this movement. There have been countless numbers of people who have been won to Christ and built up in Christ in charismatic churches.

I have often been asked if my church is “Spirit-filled.” What the person usually is asking is whether my church belongs to this movement of churches characterized as charismatic. My answer is, “Yes, my church is Spirit-filled—but perhaps in a different way than you mean.” This would then lead to the question, “What do you think of the charismatic movement?” After assuring them that I love and value all members of the body of Christ, I go on to describe our movement of churches as neither charismatic nor “charis-phobic.” Our vision as a movement is that of glorifying Jesus Christ as we pursue the mission of making disciples of all the nations by planting Great Commission churches throughout the world. Even though we, as a movement, have some different teachings and practices than the typical charismatic church, I would still describe GCC as a fellowship of churches which is friendly towards our charismatic brothers and sisters.

Having made this introduction, I would like to turn now to the purpose of this paper. My goal is to give a perspective of the charismatic movement by giving attention to the following:

1. My personal journey as to the charismatic movement.
2. What we can learn from the charismatic movement.
3. Pitfalls to avoid when considering the charismatic movement.
4. A biblical outline for a Spirit-filled church.

My Personal Journey

I was saved and discipled in a non-charismatic church. The GCC church that began in 1973 in Columbus, Ohio was considered by some outsiders to be a charismatic church because of its enthusiastic spirit and its non-traditional format. However, the teaching of the church was clearly contrary to the charismatic movement on such issues as tongues and the sign gifts.

In 1994, I began to do a more serious study of the charismatic movement. I was intrigued by the claims of miraculous healing in some of the charismatic churches. In addition, I was aware that the Vineyard churches had adopted an evangelical position on the “Baptism of the Spirit,” which is that the bap-

“No matter what a man does, no matter how successful he seems to be in any field, if the Holy Spirit is not the chief energizer of his activity, it will all fall apart when he dies.”

-A.W. Tozer

tism of the Spirit occurs at salvation rather than at another time in a person's life. It seemed to me that many of these charismatic churches were similar to those in GCC in many ways, but held to clear differences in relation to the sign gifts. This, coupled with the fact that I and others in Great Commission had developed friendships with brothers and sisters in Christ who were part of charismatic churches, made me eager to learn more about this movement.

Over the next year I read many books by and about charismatics. I attended some charismatic meetings and was involved in some personal interactions with charismatic pastors. At the end of this time, I came to the following conclusions:

1. Fruit in charismatic churches is attributed to biblical obedience.

It became evident to me that the reason that many charismatic churches were growing is that they were simply being obedient to sound biblical commands and practices. For example, John Wimber, the founder of the Vineyard movement, had practical experience in how to lead a church into growth. He was the founder of the Fuller Institute for Church Growth. As Christian Schwarz has noted in his study on Natural Church Development, there are eight principles for church growth that are universal throughout the world:

- Passionate spirituality (Loving God wholeheartedly – Matthew 22:37)
- Loving relationships (Loving one another – John 13:34)
- Inspiring worship service (Weekly worship, teaching the Word – Acts 2:42)
- Holistic small groups (Meeting to fellowship in small groups – Acts 2:42)
- Gift-oriented ministry (Using spiritual gifts for serving the church – 1 Peter 4:11, 12)
- Need-focused evangelism (Reaching out with the gospel – Matthew 28:19, 20)
- Empowering leadership (Multiplying leadership – 2 Timothy 2:2)
- Functional structures (i.e., no sacred cow organizational structure – Mark 2:27)

It has been apparent to me that churches—charismatic or non-charismatic—will be healthy if they simply follow these biblical guidelines.

2. There seemed to be little difference between the frequency and nature of miracles, healings, and signs occurring in Spirit-filled charismatic churches compared to Spirit-filled non-charismatic churches.

I do believe that God can and will heal people and do miracles today. And there are some seemingly reliable reports of supernatural healings, particularly in third world countries where the gospel is on the frontier. The question I had was this: Is God doing supernatural healings and wonders today in a way (and frequency) similar to what is described in the Book of Acts?

It is not my purpose here to give a theological answer to these questions. I only wish to share my personal observations. Churches that pray for the sick and pray in faith for God to demonstrate His power

“If the Holy Spirit guides us, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.”

- George Muller

“Spirit filled souls are ablaze for God. They love with a love that glows. They serve with a faith that kindles. They serve with a devotion that consumes. They hate sin with fierceness that burns. They rejoice with a joy that radiates. Love is perfected in the fire of God.”

- Samuel Chadwick

have seen God work, whether those churches are charismatic or non-charismatic. In my (admittedly unscientific) survey of pastors and churches in the United States, I came to the opinion that there was little difference between the frequency and nature of miracles, healings, and signs occurring in charismatic churches compared to non-charismatic churches. Although some charismatic churches put more emphasis on this aspect of the Christian life, it does not appear to me that this emphasis has led to more spectacular and more frequent miracles than those that occur in churches without this emphasis. (Again, I am not presenting this as a proof for any doctrinal position. I am only sharing my personal observations.)

3. It is important to recognize that some of the distinctives are merely cultural.

Each church, or group of churches, has its own culture and language. There is a certain lingo and practice that charismatic churches have—cultural distinctives which create a differentiation between charismatics and non-charismatics. For example, someone in a charismatic church who believes that God has a message for his friend in the church might approach that person with the statement, “I have a word of knowledge for you.” In a Great Commission church, the same person might simply say, “I felt that the Lord wanted me to mention this to you.” In both cases, the listener might be astounded by what the speaker was saying, and would be convinced that something supernatural had just occurred. In this example, it is not that the charismatic church member had a special measure of grace from God, but he was simply expressing himself in a way that was peculiar to his culture. It seems to me that the charismatic churches do not have special gifts and blessings from God dif-

ferent than other believing churches. Rather, their gifts are the same given to non-charismatic church members, but expressed by those non-charismatic church members in a way consistent with their church culture.

4. There are many wonderful lessons to learn from the charismatic movement.

God has raised up many strong leaders in this movement. William MacDonald once said, “There is not a believer in the world who cannot teach me something.” Lutherans, Baptists, Nazarenes, charismatics—whatever the segment of the body of Christ, God has some lessons to teach each one of us. We are all one body and we all need one another (1 Corinthians 12). I have identified seven lessons we can learn that have proven to be beneficial to me.

Seven Lessons from the Charismatic Movement

1. A strong emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit

Someone once commented, “If you emphasize the Word of God without the Spirit of God, you will ‘dry up.’ If you emphasize the Spirit of God without the Word of God, you will ‘blow up.’ If you emphasize the Word of God and the Spirit of God you will ‘grow up.’” Well said!

I grew up in a church that had a strong emphasis on the Word of God. I am so grateful for this training. The Word of God is the foundation for knowing the mind of God. Having said this, what has

been refreshing to me about the charismatic movement has been the emphasis on the ministry of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is talked about often, and He is frequently referred to in casual conversation. There seems to be a greater consciousness of His presence and His ministry. Henry Blackaby's book, *Experiencing God*, also has this effect. I appreciate Blackaby's statement: "God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways" (Blackaby, 77). What is so encouraging about this definition is that Blackaby is focusing on the person of the Holy Spirit with an emphasis similar to what I see in the Scriptures. Sometimes evangelicals are reluctant to talk about the Holy Spirit. What a tragedy! The Holy Spirit—the third Person of the Trinity—has been given to us by God. Let's be conscious of His ministry in our lives, and let's allow Him to personally lead us into the life God intended us to have.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

I have noticed a phenomenon among evangelical Christians who have grown up with an emphasis on the Scriptures. As they continue to follow the Lord, God will impress upon them the personal and special relationship that they have with God, the Spirit. They will become more conscious of His prompting and ministry. This was what happened to Campus Crusade several decades ago. As a ministry that was devoted to the Scriptures, Crusade was moved by God to focus more upon the Holy Spirit and His work in the lives of their staff.

I believe that we can learn from charismatics in their continued emphasis on the Holy Spirit and His ministry in our lives. The Holy Spirit is not just for charismatics. He is for all believers in Jesus Christ.

2. Enthusiasm

Jesus said, "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind*" (Matthew 22:37, NIV). We are to be enthusiastic about God and the things of God! Often-times in churches we are more emotionally stirred up over a football team or a political election than about God and His Kingdom. In this regard, I have appreciated the emotional enthusiasm exhibited by many charismatic churches in their pursuit of God. Certainly we do not want to define Christianity as simply "emotionalism." On the other hand, if we really do love God with "all our soul," we will be emotional in our devotion to God.

3. Expression in worship

One of the greatest contributions by the charismatic movement to the body of Christ has been the standard of worship set in these churches. Like David who worshipped with all his might in the bringing of the Ark into Jerusalem, there is an expression of excitement about God in worship that is truly pleasing to God (2 Samuel 6:12- 23). The songs of worship that have been written in charismatic churches have been blessings to the entire body of Christ. In particular, I have appreciated those that are "love songs to God"—music that is sung directly to the Lord in expression of our delight in Him. Coupled with this is the freedom of expression, such as lifting hands in worship, which was originally associated with charismatic churches. Now it is a common occurrence to see hands raised even in non-charismatic churches. This is not a new idea that charismatics invented. Lifting holy hands to the Lord is a biblical practice (see Psalm 28:2, 63:4, Psalm 143:6, 1 Timothy 2:8). It seems to me that this

practice was more widespread in charismatic churches simply because they were uninhibited enough to follow the Scriptures.

4. A belief in the miracle-working God

How easy it is to put God in a box. We can so easily walk by sight rather than by faith, looking at the natural and thereby missing the supernatural working of God. Although I do have serious questions about the validity of claims made by some charismatics as to the miracles God has allegedly performed, I nonetheless do appreciate the child-like faith exhibited by these same people in the greatness of God. God is a wonder-working God. He does answer prayers. Jesus Christ does work miracles in the lives of people everyday—and these miracles are due to nothing less than the supernatural initiatives of God. God forbid that we would ever get cynical about God's power simply because there is an exaggeration made about someone being healed!

5. Expression in fellowship

One practice that is associated with the charismatic movement is the physical expression of warmth and brotherly affection toward fellow Christians. I appreciate the family-like spirit that is demonstrated when brothers in Christ hug one another when they greet. Similarly, several years ago in GCC, there began to be a more common practice of laying hands on those we were praying for. Again, this is not an original idea with charismatics—this is a biblical practice (see Acts 6:6; 9:17; Mark 5:23; 1 Timothy 4:14). Expressing in an uninhibited way our devotion to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ is very pleasing to the Lord.

6. An emphasis on our unity with the body of Christ

Many Christians have advocated a greater unity in the body of Christ. I have appreciated the steps that leaders like Bill Bright and Paul Cedar have taken to promote unity. My personal experience (and again this may be unique to me) is that there has been a greater enthusiasm among charismatic churches to accomplish this goal. In particular, I recall the support offered by charismatic pastors at various times in my ministry with GCC. When criticisms have been made in the past about our movement, it seems to me that we received more support from charismatic pastors than fundamentalist and evangelical pastors. I think that this is a wonderful attitude to have—to accept and support other churches and Christians, as fellow believers who are united under Christ's headship to advance His Kingdom.

7. General ministry contributions by charismatic churches

God has given each part of the body of Christ some special gifts. Many unique ministries that began in charismatic churches have benefited the entire Church worldwide. One that comes to my mind is the wonderful example of servant evangelism set by the Vineyard church in Cincinnati, led by Steve Sjogren. Believers in that church offer practical service in the name of Christ, such as cleaning public restrooms and offering coffee free of charge in public places. This example has been an inspiration to

“A church in the land without the Spirit is rather a curse than a blessing. If you have not the Spirit of God, Christian worker, remember that you stand in somebody else's way; you are a fruitless tree standing where a fruitful tree might grow.”

- C. H. Spurgeon

churches everywhere. May more churches follow their example in demonstrating the love of Christ to this lost world!

Pitfalls to Avoid When Considering the Charismatic Movement

God desires unity with all believers, charismatic and non-charismatic. God also desires us to learn from all believers, charismatic and non-charismatic. At the same time, each of us must individually develop our own convictions on various issues. In addition, God desires us to pursue a unity of mind on these issues, particularly with the leaders in our church with whom we are teamed for the sake of the gospel.

This next section is in no way meant to be a criticism of the charismatic movement. The cautions that are expressed relate equally to non-charismatic churches, as well as charismatic churches. We are told in Romans 12:3 to exercise “*sound judgment*” in our Christian walk. When considering the charismatic movement, or any group of Christians or churches for that matter, here are some pitfalls that came to my mind that I personally purpose to avoid:

1. Enthusiasm without love for mankind

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:13-14:

“For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us...”

This verse shows Paul’s example—that of loving God enthusiastically, but in a way that relates to mankind. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul likewise urges the church to refrain from speaking in tongues without an interpreter because unbelievers would see it as weird (1 Corinthians 14:23).

1 Corinthians 13 and 14 are tremendous chapters to show that enthusiasm for God that is not worked out in a love for mankind is worthless. Therefore, as we seek to express our love for God—both privately and corporately as a church—a key question to always ask is this: Is my behavior loving towards mankind, effective at reaching people to be won and built up in Christ?

To illustrate, several years ago I was interacting with a charismatic pastor who had changed his ministry style towards being more “visitor friendly.” He commented that many of the cultural practices of his church—done out of enthusiasm for God—were hindrances towards reaching people in his community.

I recognize that there will be differences in our ministry to non-believers versus believers. I also recognize that a believer’s service will be very different than a seeker event. My only point is that when we are considering “how to do church,” it is important that our enthusiasm and love for God be combined with a love and sensitivity to people, believer and non-believer.

“As the sun can be seen only by its own light, so Christ can be known only by His own Spirit.”

- Robert Leighton

“More than ever today we need the unction of the Holy Spirit...When the Holy Spirit takes control of a church, there will be blessing and unity and power. Souls will be saved and the gospel will go out.”

- Oswald J. Smith

2. Being overly impressed with that which is “emotionally exciting”

We all love emotional “highs.” However, the Christian life has a lot of “down” times. It is a life of suffering—not only physically, but also emotionally. In this regard, I appreciate George MacDonald’s quote: “That man is perfect in faith who can come to God in the utter dearth of his feelings, under the weight of failure, low thoughts and wandering forgetfulness and say to God, ‘Thou art My refuge.’” On a similar note, A.W. Tozer once said, “What our will is set to do is what really matters at last. Feeling is the play of emotion over the will, a kind of musical accompaniment in the business of living; and while it is indeed most enjoyable to have the band play as we ‘march to Zion,’ it is by no means indispensable. We can work and walk without music and if we have true faith, we can walk with God without feeling.”

So what is my point? Simply this: While we certainly desire to demonstrate our emotions and excitement toward God, we must recognize that the priority is living a life of faith and obedience even when the emotion is not there. We all love the mountaintop experiences (such as a conference or a short term mission trip). However, as someone has pointed out, most crops grow better in valleys than on mountaintops! The fruit that God grows in us in the mountaintop experience is great. But so is the fruit born through persevering through the valleys and trials in our lives.

We wait for a day when all suffering will cease—and although we do experience a foretaste of Heaven in this life, the perfection of Heaven has not yet come to this earth.

The more I walk with the Lord, I have become more impressed with the believers and churches that are quietly, faithfully, and humbly following Christ and less impressed with those who “make a big splash” at the outset, but have not demonstrated the character of perseverance. Let me hasten to say that I believe that this issue of emotionalism versus faithful obedience is a problem that relates to all churches—charismatic and non-charismatic. Also, it seems to me that the more youth oriented the ministry, the more this issue needs to be addressed. I only want to make the point that churches—charismatic and non-charismatic—which have been so effective at capturing people’s emotions need to be especially careful at emphasizing these other aspects of our Christian walk.

3. Evaluating a leader on his charisma rather than his character.

When studying the Scriptures on the subjects of leadership and spiritual maturity, I have noticed the following:

- The qualification for spiritual leadership is character (1 Timothy 3:1-7).
- The greatest quality to have is not oratorical skills or charisma, but Christ-like love (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).
- The emphasis in the church is to have a plurality of leaders of character, rather than one “superstar” leader (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5).

We all know the tragedies that have occurred when a church puts more emphasis on the charisma of one leader than on faithfulness and godly character. The stereotypical story is too often repeated; that of the preacher who can dazzle the crowd and fill the pews, but who then commits adultery with the church secretary. Again, non-charismatic churches are just as prone to falling into this pit as charis-

matic churches. But I wanted to mention this in context of this paper on charismatics that we're careful not to put too much emphasis on the charisma of one individual.

In this regard, I have noticed certain leaders with charisma have done very well in GCC when one condition exists: That individual is living in accountability with a plurality of leaders. This plurality structure is what allows such a gifted individual to flourish and to be a blessing to the church for a lifetime of ministry.

"God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves."

- Dwight L. Moody

4. A preoccupation with (rather than an appreciation for) "signs" and "supernatural confirmations" from God.

Let's look again at Henry Blackaby's quote, "God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways." God does indeed reveal Himself by the Holy Spirit in the four ways Blackaby describes. The question is: How much emphasis should be placed on circumstances in general and upon "signs" and "supernatural confirmations" in general?

It is noteworthy that signs were given to confirm the Word:

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His will" (Hebrews 2:3-4).

Also, it is interesting that Peter, when talking about the Transfiguration of Christ (see Matthew 17) states that the effect of this majestic event was to make *"the prophetic word more sure"* (2 Peter 1:19). The point is this: God's Word is the basis of our beliefs. Yes, God does work through circumstances and in extraordinary ways in our lives. But the whole aim is to make us have a greater confidence in His Word.

In 1995, my wife Sandy discovered that she had kidney cancer. She went on to have successful surgery and her health is fine today. However, at that time, it was, needless to say, a major test for our faith. We discovered that she had cancer on a Friday and spent the weekend seeking the Lord, waiting to see a medical specialist on Monday. God did comfort me through the Scriptures over the weekend, but my stomach was still tied up in knots.

On Saturday night, a brother in the church (who did not know that Sandy had cancer) had a dream. In that dream, he saw someone lying on an operating table with a "dark spot" in the right side of that person's midsection (the tumor that Sandy had was in her right kidney). In the dream, he prayed for the person and the "dark spot" went away. Amazingly, the next morning he went to church and heard the pastor announce that Sandy had cancer in her right kidney. On Tuesday, he called me on the phone and told me about the dream. Later that day, Sandy and I met with him for a time of prayer.

What perspective are we to have about such incidents? Here are my thoughts:

- *Did God speak through the dream?* I don't know for sure. But, I tend to think that this was from God for this reason: From the time I talked to this brother until Sandy's surgery was declared to be a success, my anxious thoughts about the surgery ceased. I had an experiential peace and confidence that "God was here." As one brother said to me, he saw this as the "comforting work of the Holy Spirit." I am not as confident that God was speaking through this dream as I am about Christ's deity or that He rose again from the dead. And when I go to Heaven, if God tells me that He was not speaking through the dream it would not be upsetting to me. But I tend to think that this was the Holy Spirit's work.
- *Should this dream have been a basis for my decision making?* Absolutely not! God speaks through His Word and in obedience to His Word. For example, Proverbs 24:6 states that "*in abundance of counselors there is victory.*" For that reason, we received counsel from friends and medical specialists on the best action to take. Some might have interpreted this dream as a directive from God to "trust Him for healing" and to not get surgery. How foolish! No, we trusted in God for His leading through the sound counsel we received and we had the life-saving surgery done. While we appreciated the ministry we experienced through the brother who had the dream, we did not see this dream as a "sign" as to whether or not we should proceed with the surgery.
- *Should I expect God to speak through dreams and other similar ways on a regular basis?* My personal opinion is, "No." My wife's cancer was a unique trial in our lives—and therefore it is understandable that God might take some added and extraordinary steps to communicate His love and grace to us. On a similar note, it is striking to me that in Matthew 1 and 2, God spoke to Joseph in dreams when some crises threatened God's purposes and plans for the Messiah. One has to wonder if God normally spoke to Joseph in dreams after these crises were over.
- *Did having this dream show that we and the brother with the dream are "especially spiritual?"* I don't think so. It is altogether possible that unusual confirmations and signs from God may actually be an indication that we have some immaturity. I once read that Hudson Taylor had more "supernatural coincidences" as a younger Christian than as an older Christian. He reasoned that as he matured, God did not need to "hit him over the head" with a "sign" in order to get his attention.

"Be assured, if you walk with Him, and look to Him, and expect help from Him, He will never fail you."

- George Muller

I greatly appreciate what God did through this brother and the dream. I believe that God used it as a ministry in my life. At the same time, I have not made this exciting incident a foundation for my Christian walk. Rather Jesus Christ and His gospel is my foundation. The truth that Jesus is the Christ, that He died and rose again, that He is seated today in authority over the whole universe, calling all mankind to Himself— now there is an exciting story! And there is no doubt about the certainty and truth of that story! So let's appreciate the "supernatural workings" of God in our lives. At the same time, let's be careful to not *define* our lives by the "supernatural coincidences" that occur, or do not occur, day to day. If God makes these kinds of things happen, great! If not, realize that true spirituality has much more substance than whether or not such events occur—which leads us to our concluding section.

What is True Spirituality?

What does it mean to be a spiritual Christian? And what does a truly spiritual church look like? The Scriptures have the answer in Ephesians 5:18-21:

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

In this passage, I see seven indications of a Spirit-filled church:

1. Not out of control

The Spirit-filled church is not “drunken” and “dissipated.” A Spirit-filled church is a church that is orderly and in control.

2. Filled with God

The Spirit-filled church is filled up with God. The Spirit is God and to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with God. And how does a church become filled with God? In Ephesians 3:19, Paul says that when a church knows “*the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge*” that church will be “*filled up to all the fullness of God.*” Therefore, a church that is captivated by the love and grace of God in Christ Jesus will be a Spirit-filled church.

3. Speaking the Word of God

If you are filled with God, God will “spill out” in your words. In the Book of Acts, it is noteworthy that when someone was described as being filled with the Spirit, that person began speaking the Word about Christ. In Colossians 3:16 (the related passage to Ephesians 5:18-21), Paul says “*Let the word of Christ richly dwell in you...*” Therefore, the Spirit-filled church will overflow in speaking the Word of Christ to mankind.

4. Worship

The Spirit-filled church will be a church that is passionate in its worship of God. Just as King David sang love songs to His God, the Holy Spirit will also move the church into a heart-felt worship of God.

5. Faith expressed in thanksgiving

The Spirit-filled church will not be discontent, but thankful and appreciative of the good gifts received from the hand of God. Even in trying circumstances, the church will see that God is on the throne, providing graciously to His children, resulting in an overflow of thanksgiving by that church to our heavenly Father.

“You might as well try to hear without ears or breathe without lungs, as to try to live a Christian life without the Spirit of God in your heart.”

- D.L. Moody

"I used to ask God to help me. Then I asked if I might help Him. I ended up by asking Him to do his work through me."

- James Hudson Taylor

6. Humility towards brothers and sisters in Christ

The Spirit-filled church will be marked by true practical humility. The members will not merely be serving each other—they will be subject to each other as bondservants. This requires a powerful humility—the type exhibited by Jesus Christ when He died on the cross. This sort of humility results in a church that has a supernatural unity that only the Spirit can create (Philippians 2:1-8).

7. Recognizing the Lordship and presence of Jesus Christ

The Spirit-filled church lives in the “fear” or “reverence” of Christ. Jesus Christ is the Lord. He is present when two or three gather in His name. He is building His Church. And the Spirit is here for the express purpose that Jesus Christ be honored and revered in all of our thoughts, words, and deeds.

May every church—in GCC and every church that names the Name of Jesus Christ—be marked by these qualities! May every church truly be a Spirit-filled church!

Works Cited

Blackaby, Henry. *Experiencing God*. Lifeway Press. Nashville, Tennessee, 1996.

Schwarz, Christian. *Natural Church Development*. Church Smart Resources. Carol Stream, Illinois, 1999.



THE SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH

Exercise

1. What was the main lesson you learned from this reading?

2. In this article, John Hopley tells of his personal experiences in studying the charismatic movement. Compare and his experiences to yours. How are they the same? How are they different?

3. In what ways do you think that your church can learn from the charismatic movement?



THE SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH

Exercise

4. Evaluate your corporate worship times as a church. What do you like about those times? How can they be improved?

5. What pitfalls listed in this article do you think that your church must be careful to avoid? How can these pitfalls be avoided?
