



Manifestations of the Spirit at women's events

November, 2007

I rejoice over the testimonies I have received concerning how the Lord touched many ladies at our 2007 Eastern Region Women's Conference. He is so faithful.

I am also aware that, this year, the Holy Spirit manifested Himself in ways not always common to our conferences and that causes me to share a word of explanation and instruction about how we cooperate with the Holy Spirit. We are a Spirit-filled movement and long to know and experience everything that the Spirit desires to do.

Here is what Randall and I have experienced as we lead regional events. Some people tend to label anything beyond their personal comfort zone or experience as out of order (1 Corinthians 14:40). They may feel we have allowed fleshly excess and let things get carried away. And there may be other people in the same meeting who feel we did not give enough room for or encourage the movement of the Holy Spirit, perhaps even quenched the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). All of these people sincerely seek God and desire Him to have His way, but have different perspectives.

Randall and I made a commitment when we came to Eastern Region that we would always pursue all that God wants, turn away from anything that is not authentic, and be careful about placing Him inside a box that is most comfortable for those least comfortable with manifestations. Randall and I am both conservative in that we do not try to push anything that Randall refers to as, "Simon says" worship, where everyone is supposed to speak, jump, fall, or do anything just because others do that. We will not manipulate. Neither are we willing to tell people they cannot fall or jump just because others do not respond to the Holy Spirit in the same way, as long as we believe what they do is not out of order, disruptive, or appearing to be for the purpose of drawing attention to self instead of Jesus. We do not carry around some kind of meter to monitor and break records of spiritual manifestations. We believe in freedom that glorifies the Lord, does not get ahead by trying to make things happen for Him in the flesh, or behind Him while criticizing others because of their hunger for the Holy Spirit. No two gatherings or services may be alike. Randall expresses it this way. "We want to open the doors and windows so that the wind of the Spirit can flow through the house while we put on the screen to keep out the flies of cold judgment and fleshly excess."

We understand that not everyone will interpret manifestations in the same way, so we will do our best to lead as God has called us. Here is what we ask you to understand:

1. No two churches are alike, even among Eastern Region Open Bible churches. Some churches are very expressive in worship while others are more subdued. Some churches are accustomed to prophetic-like utterances while others are not. Whatever the pattern, people become comfortable with it and consider that as what should be normative. They are part of that church because it is a fit for them. So when churches gather together, whose norm is correct? *Please allow room for someone who loves the Lord just as much as you, to respond to the Holy Spirit differently than you.* Instead of judging, give others to the Lord! He is able! Please withhold judgment and focus on Him instead of what is not to your liking or preference or interpretation of a favorite verse. And, importantly, will you also help someone else who might struggle because of fear or lack of experience in witnessing how the Spirit can move?
2. When the Holy Spirit moves, people respond to Him in varying ways, according to their experience with Him, personality, background, and teaching. Sometimes, people may respond to the Spirit in the flesh. However, *it would be wrong for us to then reject everything in that service as not of the Spirit because someone was in the flesh.*
3. The Holy Spirit is a Gentleman and does not force Himself on people. He will not force you, for example, to fall down (what has traditionally been referred to as "Slain in the Spirit"). But, someone else may be ready, for whatever combination of reasons, to fall in ecstasy, in response to the power of the Spirit. Falling down is not a measurement of spirituality; it is one of any number of responses to the power of the Spirit. Neither is pushing someone down a measurement of Spirit-led leadership. *Please remember that we individually respond to the Holy Spirit. Paul admonished us against measuring the experiences of others against our experience (2 Corinthians 10:12).*

Those of us in leadership are responsible to be prepared to assist people as they respond to the Holy Spirit. For example, at our 2007 Women's Conference, we may not have been as prepared with proper space as we should have been to assist those ladies who fell in response to the power of the Spirit. Failure to do so could mean that we fall short on doing things decently and in order. That does not mean the Holy Spirit was not moving on ladies!

Finally, here is the discernment that I felt concerning ministry time with Cathy Aubuchon. I worked closely with Cathy at our conference, enough to sense her spirit before, during, and after ministry time. (She led a session for us, as a ministry team, prior to the event. Everything taught was decent and in order.) I felt comfortable with her heart and spirit. Cathy was accountable to me. She was motivated to draw attention to the Lord, not self. She was very respectful and loving as she prayed for people, never pushing or manipulating women to fall down. The Holy Spirit gave her discernment and words of knowledge that I felt were in order. Thank you for trusting that discernment.

Will people fall down in future women's conferences? I do not know; I do not arrange for that. Will there be prophetic proclamations? I do not know; I do not arrange for that. Will there be opportunity for the Holy Spirit to move? As much as it is within my power to help arrange our conference to give Him that freedom, I will. Will care be given to protecting women from excess? With God's leading and help I intend for us to do that.

Thank you for hungering with me for more of Him and for the deeper work that the Holy Spirit desires to do in and through us.

Barbara

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