

New Roots Review

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"I'll Have Some of What They're Having."

by Fred Wilgenburg



**NEW ROOTS
MINISTRY**

A favorite part of my work with New Roots Ministry is worshipping among a diversity of believers who have come from around the world.

Some are Orthodox, some are Catholic, some are traditional in worship, and many are Pentecostal. Though the worship within most of the churches of recent immigrants and former refugees is still in the native languages of the people, which I don't understand, I can join in quite well. Sometimes this is because an English translator is available, but usually it's because our heart-language is the same; we love and worship the same Savior.

Recently, I worshipped with the Eritrean Orthodox congregation in Sioux Falls. (*Eritrea is a small country in Africa, north of Ethiopia.*) They are liturgical, ritualistic, and their church facility has many icons, including pictures of Jesus, the virgin Mary, and holy church fathers. What was most striking, however, was their humbleness and sincerity before God, especially in prayer.



They go down on their knees, placing their forehead on the floor, and their backside in the air. Their manner of prayer, along with nearly everyone wearing white, and the women wearing white head coverings, could cause one to think he is in a Muslim mosque, if it wasn't for their clear worship of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



As I noted above, many, if not most, of the churches of recent immigrants and former refugees in Sioux Falls, are Pentecostal, where strong emphasis is placed on one's experience of the Holy Spirit. Needless to say, they are emotionally-engaged in the worship. Personally, as one who has worshipped mostly with fellow ethnically-European believers, in traditional worship settings, I find worship and prayer with Pentecostal believers to be refreshing. Maybe it's me, who would feel awkward to display much emotion during worship within the churches I have mostly attended, but it feels great to be in uninhibited worship with my Pentecostal friends—hands raised, singing out, praying out, emotionally-engaged.



For many of us who are more ethnically-European, and used to traditional worship, and perhaps also, Reformed believers like me, often we know our faith, and theology, well, in our brains, but do we also sense—taste, feel, smell—God and His goodness as much as possible? —>



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Pentecostal believers get emotionally-engaged in worship and pray; sometimes they even exhibit the unique spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. I am not an expert on the spiritual gifts as described in the Bible (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:1-8, Acts 2:1-21, Acts 10:44-46), but I suppose certain spiritual gifts, including speaking in tongues, can more readily come upon a believer as he is emotionally-engaged during worship and prayer.

Sometimes, in conversation about worship among fellow believers who are more like me as

described above, we downplay the gift of speaking in tongues, and other spiritual gifts which are exhibited as one is more emotionally-engaged. We highlight that in 1 Corinthians 14, the apostle Paul seems to lift up the gift of prophecy, which edifies the whole Church, over speaking in tongues, which mostly edifies the individual. We speak of the importance of having good head-knowledge belief, versus having subjective, emotional, heart-knowledge belief, which is described as the kind that ebbs-and-flows, or more easily wanes. Well, I haven't seen that in my Pentecostal friends, and often, having a special personal, individual experience can create enthusiasm to learn more about theology and to serve one's Savior within His Church.

I have been blessed, as many of you have been, to gain a good understanding of faith over many years. Most of the students in New Roots Ministry's Timothy Leadership Training classes—from Bhutan, Nepal, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, and El Salvador—are quite new believers, and hungry for the knowledge that you and I might have. But, they do offer a certain maturity as believers in



Jesus, in their ability at emotionally- and sensory-engaged, uninhibited worship and prayer, about which I enjoy learning and experiencing. Let's be happy for each other; let's be open to each other; let's learn from each other; as "one part suffers, every part suffers with it, (and as) one part is honored, every part rejoices with it," all for "the common good" of the Church and to the glory of our God (1 Corinthians 12:7, 26).

What is New Roots Ministry?

It's "a springboard for immigrants & their churches." This is done through workplace chaplaincy (both as Fred is chaplain for 17 hours/week at Smithfield Foods & as we are training & placing bilingual chaplains on commercial farms), through Timothy Leadership Training, through hosting special educational events, through empowering refugee/immigrant pastors, leaders, and their churches in various ways, through offering unique Service Opportunities—serve in a store owned by refugees or immigrants, then hear their stories, and through helping individuals to specially strategically plan how to achieve their goals, including higher education, if needed.