

New Roots Review

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What Stokes Your Spiritual Fire?

by Fred Wilgenburg

I recently attended a Dunamis conference, put on by Presbyterian Reformed Ministries International (www.PRMI.org). “Dunamis” is a Greek word which means power, and especially, potential power and ability. 2 Timothy 1:7 reads: “for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” To me, PRMI and its Dunamis events could be described as a Pentecostal vein within Reformed tradition.

The four-day conference was done well—Bible-based, organized well, times of worship, time for fellowship, good food, and boy, did it get me out of my comfort zone. While studying about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and those spiritual gifts that go with that (tongues, healing, prophecy, miracles, faith), we also were encouraged to get out of our chairs and practice what we were learning (*good references are Matthew 3:11-12, Acts 10:44-46, & Acts 11:15-18*). I also appreciated that a couple of my Reformed pastor colleagues were two of the main teachers.

But why did I go? For a few reasons: Personally, spiritually, I need to mix things up a bit, to stoke my spiritual fire, my life-journey with God. For that reason, my wife and I go to different churches than ours at times, including churches which have more contemporary, and sometimes more charismatic worship, and I sometimes read spiritual teachings from Christian writers who come from much different traditions than mine, and I seek to be acquainted with people who are quite different from me. So, in part, for personal, spiritual reasons, I went to the Dunamis conference to stoke up my spiritual fire, my passion for God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as to be in an atmosphere conducive to letting my heavy hands at my sides be lifted up in unrestrained praise of our amazing God. Professionally, spiritually, I

need to be aware of knowledge that I have been missing, and the experiences that can go with that. I am amazed how unaware I have been of the Holy Spirit not only **coming within us continually** and helping grow our character and fruits (Galatians 5:22-23)—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control, as well as gifts (Romans 12:7-8) like serving, teaching, being generous, and leading, BUT **ALSO coming upon us occasionally** with manifestation gifts like tongues, prophecy and discernment, healing and miracles. The majority of the 55 new-American churches in Sioux Falls with whom I network, coach, and fellow-



Zerhun, originally of Ethiopia, has joined our chaplaincy services for Smithfield Foods. Zerhun covers about 13 hours of 2nd-shift, every other week, freeing me up to better administer our growing programs.

ship, on behalf of New Roots Ministry, are Pentecostal, so, it’s important for me to understand why they worship how they do. That, along with my Dunamis experience, is not to say our Pentecostal siblings have things more right. Interestingly, many of the 40 people at the Dunamis conference were non-Reformed, like Baptists, Evangelical Free(s), and several were Pentecostal, and they told me they appreciated the Bible-based teachings for the manifestation gifts which were being taught by the Reformed pastor teachers, and which they said they have lacked in the past. —> —>



NEW ROOTS MINISTRY



Driver training for new American adults is becoming a popular program. It meets an important need, and often forms friendships, as for Saumya, originally of India, and her trainer, Marlys.



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about those things of which we feel most passionate. When my spiritual fire dims, I will not speak of the Gospel as often and as authentically and naturally as when I am excited and on fire. That also is partly why I went to the Dunamis conference and why I seek other special experiences in the Lord.

Is Dunamis for you? Well, if you are like me, then I think so, but be-ware. Sorry, I mean be-aware of what it might be like.



I have had other spiritual experiences which are quite different from my religious tradition as a Jesus-follower, but which have been special experiences, in part to stoke my spiritual embers. Several years ago I was baptized in a lake with some friends. The situation was that one of them had asked me if I would baptize him as he was a new believer. I personally felt that I should be immersed first, so I was baptized prior to baptizing him. I had been baptized as a baby, I appreciate that, and I baptize babies. But, I believe that going through the powerful spiritual experience of being baptized as a believer, which I don't think undermined my baby baptism in any way, was good for my journey and more meaningful as I baptized the other guys. It was. I wonder if some of you Baptists are wondering, "What's the big deal?" Respectfully, for some it is.



We are a Gospel bearing ministry, so this moment of having Nepali believers of a local church share the Gospel and pray with me over my friend, Dhan, the first Jesus-follower in his family, was very special.

Continued...

As some of you know, I am studying toward my DMin degree, seeking to answer the following research question— "As studies (Pew Research) show that the influence of the Gospel is steadily declining in the US, what are the motivating factors for people, both believers and non-believers, to dialogue more at a spiritual level, including about the Gospel, and which need to be understood by Christian leaders to effectively encourage the common occurrence of Gospel conversations, therefore being cause for the Gospel to become increasingly influential?"

Well, we typically dialogue most

What is New Roots Ministry?

It's "a springboard for new Americans & their churches." This is done through workplace chaplaincy (we provide chaplaincy at Smithfield Foods & we train & place bi-lingual chaplains on commercial farms), through Timothy Leadership Training, through hosting special educational events, through empowering new American pastors, leaders, and their churches, through offering unique Service Opportunities—serve in, or visit, stores owned by new Americans, then hear their stories, through helping people navigate the American system and achieve their goals, like education, and through driver training for new Americans.



A few months ago, we hosted an Afghan refugee event. Jason Lief, a professor at Northwestern College, as well as an immigration policy & advocacy expert, taught us much, and he interviewed some people originally from Afghanistan.

Other spiritual experiences that have been impactful for me have been attending Sioux Falls Healing Rooms, hearing stories of amazing spiritual occurrences by friends in Jesus who have seemed more inclined for those things, and doing door-to-door evangelism.

Admittedly, I often choose to lean toward curiosity, maybe even some intentional naivety, if that's a thing. It's for personal growth, to the glory of God, and I pray that it ultimately helps others.