

Articles and Sermons :: Are Charismatics Doing Enough to Correct Abuses? - Michael Brown

Are Charismatics Doing Enough to Correct Abuses? - Michael Brown - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2013/12/28 16:31

Are We Charismatics Doing Enough to Correct Abuses in Our Midst?

Michael Brown

Weâ€™ve heard this charge many times in the last six months: â€œIf you charismatics did a better job of cleaning up y our own act, there wouldnâ€™t be a need for a Strange Fire conference and book.â€

Is this true?

Before leaving the subject of Strange Fire vs. Authentic Fire (which I plan to do for now with this article, turning my focus to the issue of Hyper-Grace next week), I feel it is important to respond to this charge clearly and directly, summarizing h ere what I detailed in more than 20 pages of citations in my Authentic Fire book.

To begin with, let me state plainly that there is absolutely no excuse for the many abuses that do exist in the charismatic movement, both doctrinal and moral, and if some of the worst charismatic TV preachers were true representatives of our movement, I would never call myself a charismatic.

On the flip side, with more than half-a-billion charismatic adherents worldwide, it is ludicrous to think that there is a homo genous â€œcharismatic movementâ€ and that, if a few more leaders spoke out clearly, the abuses and errors would go away.

Pastor John MacArthur has now written three books against the charismatic movement, and with all his influence (and th e influence of his last, large conference), he has hardly stemmed the tide of the abuses that do exist. (To be clear, many of his charges are greatly exaggerated, but even where he is accurate and even where I say â€œAmenâ€ to his criticis ms, his efforts have not changed the movement he critiques.)

In fact, one of the real problems in the body today is the lack of true accountability for many leaders and churches (chari smatic and non-charismatic alike), making it very difficult to bring correction and discipline when it is needed. (To be perf ectly candid though, there were errors that existed in New Testament times and in the succeeding centuries; the church has always had to confront error and heresy.)

That being said, and as I document in Authentic Fire, Pentecostal and charismatic leaders have been addressing errors and abuses for decades now, and we continue to do so to this very day.

As noted by Reformed pastor John Carpenter, â€œthe suggestion that â€œcharismaticsâ€™ simply never police their ow n is false. David Wilkerson was outspoken and just as severe in his appraisal of the prosperity â€œgospelâ€™ as is John MacArthur. â€œThe Assemblies of God famously tried to discipline Jimmy Swaggart and eventually defrocked him when he wouldnâ€™t submit. Yes, there should be more of such correction but people are only responsible to discipline what i s under their authority. Should we hold all Baptists responsible for the Westboro Baptists? Should we accuse everyone who believes in the inspiration of Scripture (like me) for being as irrational as the King James Onlyists?â€

I could easily cite here statements by charismatic leaders like John Wimber and Derek Prince, who raised concerns abo ut certain types of healing and revival services, or of David Wilkerson, who lifted his voice against a â€œChristless Pent ecostâ€ (also using profound quotes from Frank Bartleman, a Pentecostal pioneer involved in the Azusa Street revival), or Prof. Gordon Fee, who wrote about The Disease of the Health and Wealth Gospels, or of Lee Grady, who has penne d many columns on these very Charisma pages exposing a wide variety of uniquely charismatic sins.

And I could easily cite the life messages of charismatic leaders like Jack Hayford and Jim Cymbala (among many others) who have avoided the extremes by aiming for the middleâ€meaning the most central issues of the gospel and of life in the Spirit.

In my own ministry (not to pat myself on the back but simply to respond to the endless stream of questions that has com

e my way), in 1989, my book *The End of the American Gospel Enterprise* focused largely on the compromised state of many of our American charismatic churches (since these were the circles I primarily traveled in) while my 1990 book *How Saved Are We?* contained an entire chapter renouncing the carnal prosperity message along with another chapter focused on carnal fundraising techniques. (For the record, these abusive techniquesâ€˜honed to a science today on Christian TV by men like Mike Murdoch and Steve Munseyâ€˜have only become more pervasive since 1990.)

In 1991, my next book was published, entitled *Whatever Happened to the Power of God: Is the Charismatic Church Slain in the Spirit or Down for the Count?* (I trust the title and subtitle were clear enough), while in 1993, *Itâ€™s Time to Rock the Boat: A Call to Godâ€™s People to Rise Up and Preach a Confrontational Gospel*, addressed more issues of gospel compromise, many of which pertained to charismatics. Then, in 1995, in *From Holy Laughter to Holy Fire: America on the Edge of Revival*, I spoke of the need to go beyond the â€œrefreshingâ€ movements that were current in that day and to seek God for a repentance-based, outpouring of the Spirit.

During my years serving as a leader in the Brownsville Revival (1996-2000), I brought messages calling believers and leaders deeper, and right through 2013, I have been addressing my charismatic brothers and sisters. For example, one of the most widely read articles we posted in 2013 was â€œSex Symbols Who Speak in Tongues,â€ largely a critique of our contemporary, charismatic gospel message (as opposed to being a critique of the sex symbols, whose names I didnâ€™t even mention).

Even the *Hyper-Grace* book, which is about to be released, focuses on abuses of the grace message occurring primarily within the charismatic movement. And bear in mind that I am just one leader among many addressing abuses and errors within our movement and, again, I only share these things to respond to valid questions; and even so, I do so with hesitation, lest I be misunderstood. (Of course, when praying and preaching and writing, I always point the finger first and foremost at myself.)

When you read the citations within *Authentic Fire*, I believe youâ€™ll be shocked to see how many Pentecostal and charismatic leaders have been addressing issues within our movement for decades now, dating back more than 100 years. At the same time, I believe we need to do much better, working harder to deal with the theological sloppiness, the moral looseness, and the personality cults that are found all too often in our midst.

If only leaders like John MacArthur could recognize the marvelous contribution being made to the gospel today by countless tens of millions of faithful charismatics worldwide, we could work hand in hand to correct the very real problems that do exist. And perhaps we charismatics could help our cessationist brothers and sisters address the problems that exist in their own house as well.

As I wrote in *Authentic Fire*, embracing the true fire is just as important as rejecting the false fire. May God help all of us to do both.

Re: Are Charismatics Doing Enough to Correct Abuses? - Michael Brown - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2013/12/28 20:10

God is not the God of charismatics or calvinists. He is the God of the Church all those bought by His blood.

Re: offspring - posted by savannah, on: 2013/12/28 22:49

"God is not the God of charismatics or calvinists. He is the God of the Church all those bought by His blood."

A true statement Greg!

For so says the Scripture,

"Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has placed you to take the oversight for Him and act as shepherds to the Church of God, which He has bought with His own blood." Acts 20:28

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirits, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:19-20

Re: Are Charismatics Doing Enough to Correct Abuses? - Michael Brown - posted by Lysa (), on: 2013/12/29 7:25

Quote:

-----from the article:

If only leaders like John MacArthur could recognize the marvelous contribution being made to the gospel today by countless tens of millions of faithful charismatics worldwide

They will never recognize any good contribution by any charismatic because to do so would mean they would have to admit several things...

1. That it is a God-given gift in use today.
2. In order to admit #1, they will have to admit that that gift is for THEM as well.
3. In order to admit #1, they will have to allow the gift in operation in their church.
4. In order to admit #2, they will have to explain why they don't want a gift from the very heart of God.

To even admit one truth (any good contribution) like this would bring down the whole house of cards they have built in opposition to it.

Men like MacArthur have built a kingdom out of their opposition to this one gift and that means they would have to give up their kingdom. Will they or won't they?? Only God knows.

Re: , on: 2013/12/29 9:56

"Men like MacArthur have built a kingdom out of their opposition to this one gift and that means they would have to give up their kingdom. Will they or won't they?? Only God knows."

This statement is as inaccurate as they come. John MacArthur in no way built his kingdom on the charismatic movement. He has countless and countless sermons available for free for the listening. I would bet to say he has spoke about charismatic movements a small percentage when you look at the huge volume of sermons and articles on his website.

In my opinion has he down more for the body of Christ in his expository preaching and training men and woman to be exegetical preachers and teachers from Masters Seminary.

When we begin to criticize a ministry and man who stands for verse by verse, scripture to interpret scripture teaching and study...something is sadly lacking in the body.

I don't hear of charismatics speaking out against some the heretical statements and actions others have made. From my understanding John MacArthur is speaking out against these extreme teachings and ministries.

When one emphasizes the signs and wonders more than scripture, they have built themselves on sand and not solid rock

Re: , on: 2013/12/29 16:08

Sooo why will John MacArthur not dialog with Michael Brown on the doctrine of cessation? Is it because J. MacArthur knows that the New Testament does not support the cessation of the sign gifts? That he would be hard pressed to find scriptural warrant for such a position?

As of yet I have not seen anyone set forth a case for the cessation of spiritual gifts in this forum. Though I have invited such on threads I have opened up.

Questions are respectfully asked. Though expect no answers.

Bearmaster.

Re: , on: 2013/12/29 18:02

Quote:

-----"Men like MacArthur have built a kingdom out of their opposition to this one gift and that means they would have to give up their kingdom. Will they or won't they?? Only God knows." This statement is as inaccurate as they come. John Macarthur in no way built his kingdom on the charismatic movement.

Lysa makes some excellent points. I agree that MacArthur hasn't built his ministry on opposing just the charismatic movement but if you follow his ministry, much of what he is known for is opposing what He considers is error (bringing correction). For the most part I agree with much of what he says but he is flat out wrong on the issue of cessationism and THAT is what Lysa is clearly trying to point out.