

RESTORING THE CENTRALITY OF THE SPIRIT'S EMPOWERMENT FOR CARRYING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION: A COURSE TO EQUIP CHRISTIANS AT JOURNEY CHURCH IN THE PROCESS OF EVANGELISM

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The Church in America has declined for many years in size and effectiveness. The Pentecostal Church was the bright spot in the Church landscape until the last decade, but it has followed the way of its predecessors with a similar decline in the rate of church growth.¹ Though several factors have contributed to this decline, the decreasing priority of an effective communication of the gospel is the specific problem this project addresses.

Though, according to Acts 1:8, empowerment to tell others about Jesus is the primary purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, with all other purposes becoming secondary, a brief historical study of the Pentecostal church's popular theology reveals a shift away from its early twentieth-century pneumatology of personal empowerment for witness to an emphasis on personal enrichment and church vitality. A New Testament assessment of disciple making and the term *preach* shows the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues as the *incarnational gift* to the believer.

This project presents an eight-week Bible study, entitled "Simple Witnessing," that seeks to motivate and disciple Christians to obediently and effectively communicate the gospel with a dependence on Spirit empowerment. An evaluation process to help track the involvement of participants in the study, along with their daily participation in effective evangelism, accompanies the Bible study.

¹"Index to 2006 AG Statistical Reports," General Council of the Assemblies of God, http://ag.org/top/About/Statistics/Statistical_Report_2006.pdf (accessed November 10, 2009).