

# CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

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## What is the nature of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?

BY CHARLES WHITEHEAD

*This paper is an edited version of a talk given to over 700 leaders in the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal, on September 19th 2003, at the Focolare Centre, Castelgandolfo in Italy. I was asked to address the question "What is the nature of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal?" It's a very important question, because as time passes it's all too easy for the original vision to be lost, and for ideas and practices to creep in which have little or no connection with the reason for this out-pouring of the Holy Spirit which we have called the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. We must always be watchful so that we do not distort or misinterpret what God is doing.*

Most of the views that follow will not be new to those in leadership in the Charismatic Renewal, but you may not agree with all of them. Some of the questions may be of little importance in certain countries or situations, and I may miss out things you consider very important. Why is this likely to happen? Because the truth is that whilst we are all members of the one Catholic Church, there are cultural and historical differences among us.

These differences may be evident in small ways and big ways, and the same truths can have a variety of expressions. What is done in one

country may not be appropriate in another, and the way we experience the Church is often different. The styles and structures of leadership in the Charismatic Renewal vary from one country to another, and our relationships with each other and with the hierarchy may be formalised and structured, or very open and informal.

I am not suggesting that one way is right and another is wrong - it is often the case that they are different simply because our circumstances are not the same. Everything I say comes out of my own understanding and experience of this amazing and wonderful gift of God over a period of almost thirty years. As I write about the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, I am aware that I am dealing with something very precious and very near to God's heart. I am walking on holy ground and I do so with reverence.

Sometimes I will refer to "The Catholic Charismatic Renewal", and sometimes in order to shorten it I will refer to "The Charismatic Renewal" or to "The Renewal". In the context of this paper all these expressions mean the same thing. I'm going to try to answer ten questions which are frequently asked about the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and I want to begin with the most basic ones.

### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "RENEWAL"?

Under the word "renewal" in the Oxford English Dictionary we find this definition: "Among charismatic Christians, the state or process of being renewed in the Holy Spirit". Renewal is a process, which usually begins with an event. God is always doing new things in our lives, and every Christian needs this on-going renewal. As you think about my first question please look at your own life, and if you are experiencing the renewing work of the Spirit, try to answer the following:

- What is the new thing the Lord is doing in my life?
- What was I like before I began to experience renewal in the Holy Spirit?
- What has happened to me?

So how does renewal in the Holy Spirit happen? Is it because we attend a conference, or a special course, or programme? Of course the Lord uses conferences, courses, and programmes, but no-one is "renewed" except by a sovereign act of God, who touches our lives by the power of his Holy Spirit and changes us. It really is both a state and a process. This transforming and powerful activity of the Holy Spirit is what we mean when we speak about "Renewal".

So my second question is:

## WHAT IS THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL?

It's a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit among Catholic Christians - not something we own or control - through which we are asked to hand our lives over to God and to give the power back to him. In a clear and deliberate act of surrender, we invite the Holy Spirit to take control of our lives. We allow God to be God, and to work in us through his Holy Spirit. So to think that the Renewal is ours to control is to risk falling into the same sin as Adam and Eve - to want to be like gods (Genesis 3:5). The Charismatic Renewal is a work of God, not of man.

Let's look into this question in more detail. When I became President of ICCRS (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services) in 1990, one of the first challenges was to work with others in formulating our Statutes. As part of this process we had to explain the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and we chose the following descriptions, beginning with what it is not.

- The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is not a single unified worldwide movement like others are.
- It does not have a founder or group of founders as other movements do - its a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit.
- It has no formal courses of initiation or membership lists. Having said what it is not, we then tried to say what it is.
- It's a highly diverse collection of individuals, groups, ministries and activities, often quite independent of one another, in different stages and modes of development, and with differing emphases. One of the characteristics of the Charismatic Renewal is the enormous variety of expressions and ministries, all inspired by the Holy Spirit and carried out in his power, which have a home under its umbrella.
- Whilst we major on relationships and networks rather than on structures, we nevertheless all share the same fundamental experience of the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, and we all have the same general goals. Our patterns of informal

relationships are to be found at local, diocesan, national, and international levels. These relationships are very often characterised by free association, dialogue, and collaboration.

- In my experience, many groups feel they are part of a big charismatic family. By their very nature they are related to each other, but they do not see the need to be integrated into an ordered charismatic structure locally or nationally - they know they are already fully part of the Church and that's enough.

This brings us to a very important part of the answer to our question about the nature of the Renewal.

*The Catholic Charismatic Renewal does not exist to create more and bigger groups, nor to build up a big organisation. No, our simple desire is to help others to have their Christian lives renewed in the same way that ours have been renewed. Some organisation may be necessary to facilitate the working of the Spirit - but it should be kept to a minimum.*

This simple desire to see lives renewed is reflected in our approach to leadership. The nature of leadership in the Renewal is to offer service, not to demand obedience and conformity. Leaders are recognised by Gods gifting, and through a variety of different procedures, are asked to serve. For leaders in the Renewal there are no special qualifications required in order to gain advancement or promotion. Leadership is seen as a gift as well as a skill. Some are simply invited to take up leadership, others are elected or appointed to do so. Some are self-appointed because they have the vision and commitment to start a new group or ministry. There is no single, correct procedure, and usually no formal hierarchy. The Renewal is always under the pastoral care of the local Bishop. The lack of a formal structure can sometimes lead to disagreements and problems, and a local bishop may decide to lay down particular procedures if difficulties arise. When requested, Statutes may be granted, thereby giving the group, the community, or service committee, a juridical status which specifies their structure, officers, and mission in accordance with Canon Law.

All of these diverse characteristics in expressions and in leadership are the experience in most countries, and they mark out the Catholic Charismatic Renewal as different from other ecclesial movements. This can be both a strength and a weakness, but it does draw attention to the fact that the Renewal is not man-made and humanly ordered. It comes directly and sovereignly from God. It also highlights the fact that the working of the Holy Spirit can sometimes seem to us to be untidy. But we must resist the temptation to tidy it up, even though our very informal and loose structures often make it difficult for other ecclesial bodies to relate to us - particularly as we do not speak with one voice on all matters.

*But untidy as it may be, no grass-roots initiative of God in the Church has ever travelled as far, as fast, or as powerfully as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. This is because it's a direct work of the Holy Spirit, not of man. The lives of millions have been changed, bringing new faith and vision, and setting them on fire with a love and a zeal to serve the Lord and his people. Today there are estimated to be 120 million people who will testify to a life-changing experience of the Holy Spirit through their contact with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Pope Paul VI famously referred to the Renewal as "a chance for the Church and for the world". It's exactly that, but sadly it's a chance too few people have accepted.*

In order to further develop the answer to what the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is, let me put the question another way.

## HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THIS RENEWAL?

Let's again begin by looking at what it is not:-

- It's not a movement in the sense of a structured organisation like others within the Church.
- It has no rule of life or written constitution.
- It is not a special devotion to the Holy Spirit.
- It is not just a network of prayer groups or communities.

- It is not a strange new spirituality which is only suitable for some particular (some will say "peculiar") people. Raising our hands in praise is not a required liturgical gesture - it occurs spontaneously because of what God has done in our hearts.
- It is not something you decide to join, like a club.

## SO HOW CAN WE DESCRIBE WHAT IT IS?

*It's a personal experience of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who brings alive in new ways the graces of our baptism. The Holy Spirit not only sets on fire all that we have already received, but comes again in power to equip us with his gifts for service and mission.*

There are no special, superior people in the Church called "charismatics" - but there are millions of ordinary men and women whose lives have been renewed "charismatically", in other words by an action of the Holy Spirit. Cardinal Suenens reminded us that charismatic Christianity is normal Christianity, because the Church herself is charismatic, and we were never supposed to live a Christian life without the full presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Sadly many Christians still attempt to do this. So the aim of the Renewal is to bring the life of the Holy Spirit into every part of the Church by bringing it into the life of every Christian man and woman.

*The Renewal exists to help people live a new life in the power of Spirit - not to bring them into something called The Catholic Charismatic Renewal. We are renewed when we open ourselves to God and accept what he is offering us - the fullness of His Holy Spirit, there is no other way. This is God's work, not ours and it is his to control and direct. This means that by our very nature we are different from other ecclesial movements.*

In 1996 Cardinal Suenens wrote: *"To interpret the Renewal as a 'movement' among other movements is to misunderstand its nature; it is a movement of the Spirit offered to the entire Church and destined to rejuvenate every part of the Church's life".*

Of course there is a way in which the

Catholic Charismatic Renewal takes on certain outward appearances of a movement - for example Diocesan and National Service Committees, Regional and National Co-ordinators, and particular groups serving and assisting the Renewal. But such structures only exist to facilitate the work of the Holy Spirit, and are not there to follow their own ideas or build their own kingdoms.

Renewal is firstly about me and God - I must make a conscious decision to accept what He offers to me. The result? My faith comes alive. It has nothing to do with my plans, my ideas, or my merits. It has everything to do with the love, the mercy, and the power of God. The gift is God himself- given to us in a fuller and more wonderful way. Through the grace of Renewal, a sub-normal or inherited Christianity is changed into a full and active life of faith lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. We enter into a living relationship with Jesus, and we place this relationship under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**This grace of Renewal has been described in a number of different ways:**

- The Baptism in the Holy Spirit
- The release of the Holy Spirit
- The out-pouring or "effusion" of the Holy Spirit.

In the Creed we proclaim that "we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life." The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a way of receiving that life - it's a channel of grace available to all of us. What we call it is not the most important thing - what is important is that we believe in it and receive it.

**Now some words of caution.** The Catholic Charismatic Renewal does not have a monopoly of this grace, it does not belong to us. It is God's to bestow as he chooses. We all need filling and re-filling with the Holy Spirit, and Paul writing to the Ephesians in chapter 5 verse 18 expresses this truth in the words "Be filled with the Spirit....". This literally means that we must keep on being filled. The Charismatic Renewal is an effective channel for this grace, but the Lord meets the need for empowerment and refreshment through other channels as well. So if we in the

Renewal begin to think that in some way we are superior to other Christians because we have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, and we are therefore the only ones through whom this grace can be channelled, we are wrong. We have failed to understand the nature of God - he bestows this grace inside and outside the Charismatic Renewal, and however surprised we may be by some of the channels he chooses, we should be delighted and rejoice in his goodness.

We must also be on our guard against giving any impression of elitism - that there are first and second-class Christians, those who are baptised in the Spirit and those who are not. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is offered to everyone, and it is not given to make us superior Christians - it's given to make us useful.

This brings us to my fourth question:-

## WHEN WE SAY THAT THE RENEWAL IS A GRACE FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH, WHAT DO WE MEAN?

It's a grace that is freely available to everyone, and the Renewal must never become identified with any particular grouping in the Church - traditional, progressive, liberal, or conservative. The grace is for everyone, and cannot be limited by association with one particular group. We must also be careful not to be seen sitting in judgement on others, telling them what they should be doing and telling the Church how she should be acting. Of course we are called to be prophetic when we proclaim the truths of the Gospel, and give witness to the life-changing work of the Holy Spirit, but we must not try to use the Renewal to judge other or to support our own views. We must learn to follow the Spirit in everything we do and say.

The Charismatic Renewal is not like other groups or movements which give much of their time to their own growth and success. It's not for us to worry about whether the Catholic Charismatic Renewal succeeds or fails, provided we are obedient and faithful to what God is asking of us. We do not own the Baptism in the Holy Spirit - it's God's gift to his Church. So our focus is to be on God's will for

his Church and for us - for you and for me. We are here to do his will, not ours, and we don't have to understand everything he's doing. We are called to be faithful, not necessarily successful in the eyes of the world.

So when we say that the Charismatic Renewal is for the whole Church, we mean it's for clergy, religious and laity. It must not be dominated by the laity, thus preventing the clergy from exercising their proper ministry as spiritual fathers and pastors. Nor must it be controlled by the clergy, so that the laity cannot exercise their God-given gifts and charisms in service of God and each other. We should all be giving time and using our gifts to help one another grow spiritually. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is clearly a gift to the whole Church.

Everyone needs the power of the Spirit and we can help others receive it because we know from experience how much the Father wants to pour out his Holy Spirit. As Jesus puts it: *"How much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"* (Luke 11:9-15).

We are called to point to these neglected spiritual resources which are available to all of us, and which need to be appropriated so that people can grow in confidence, and be equipped to do things with and for God and his people.

So my fifth question is:

## WHAT ABOUT THE GOALS OR AIMS OF THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL?

The goals of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal are the same as the goals and objectives of the Church herself, and are very well described in the preamble to the Statutes of ICCRS. The Renewal seeks the conversion, salvation and sanctification of all people, and their unification into an effective assembly of God's people (taken from another ICCRS statement). The Catholic Charismatic Renewal wants to see every work in the Church based on a discernment of God's purposes and plans, and not on our own ideas. I have already said that we want to see lives transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, but whilst the Renewal places a special emphasis on the role of the

Spirit, it is also centred on God our Father, and on Jesus his Son, our Lord and Saviour. It's a *Trinitarian Renewal*.

For this reason it's also about the essential things in the Christian life."

- The need to know God as a loving and forgiving Father (Romans 8:14-16).
- The need for a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Saviour (1 Cor. 12:3).
- The need for the empowering and in-dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5 and 8).
- The importance of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and the Sacraments (Catechism sections 1131-1134).
- The call to prayer, and to the praise and worship of God (Acts 2:42-47).
- The importance of the charisms, or gifts of the Holy Spirit, to help us serve the Church (1 Cor. 12:4-11).
- The need to build Community (Acts 2:42-47).
- The commission to evangelise and to be witnesses (Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:19-20).

We need to be sure we are concentrating on these essential things, the basics of our faith, and not becoming focused on new or particular devotional practices. Good as they may be, our private devotions are a personal choice and should not be promoted as part of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. This can cause confusion, and it distracts us from offering our primary gift to the Church. It may cause us to be identified with other groups with different aims and purposes. Particular devotional practices will not normally be part of our charismatic prayer meetings, but they are perfectly proper in other situations.

## SO WHAT DISTINGUISHES THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL FROM OTHER GROUPS IN THE CHURCH?

The distinguishing characteristic of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is our understanding that the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church has not changed since the first centuries. Today we can experience his outpouring, his power, and his gifts in the very same way they were experienced by the first Christians. This experience should

be normative for the Church today. *The proof of the authenticity of the experience does not depend primarily on an analysis of the experience itself, but rather on a study of its effects in the lives of individuals. In many statements on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal the Church has commented on the good fruit she has found. Fruit speaks loudly!*

So our seventh question must be:-

## WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WE DO? WHAT ARE OUR GIFTS TO THE CHURCH?

I am convinced that by far our most important gift to the Church is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. As Cardinal Suenens wrote in 1996: *"The soul of Renewal - Baptism in the Spirit - is a grace of Pentecostal refreshment offered to all Christians"*. This grace will lead us into a personal, living relationship with God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - and will help us to seek holiness. With the Baptism in the Holy Spirit come the spiritual gifts or charisms, which the second Vatican Council reminds us are "fitting and useful for the needs of the Church" (Lumen Gentium 12).

- Among the other gifts we have to offer are prayer, praise and worship, empowered by the gift of tongues.
- Equally important is our expectant faith - we are confident that God is going to act. Sadly this expectancy is often missing in the Church - many have a creedal faith but no expectation that the Lord will ever do anything.
- The Renewal has restored to the Church the conviction that the Lord heals and works miracles through ordinary people, and we have seen many healings through prayer and the laying-on of hands. But we must also admit that there have been many more occasions when people have not been healed. We do not know why the Lord heals one and not another, but we do know that we must persist in prayer for those who are sick.
- Other gifts we bring to the Church are a sense of joy and celebration - it's exciting to be a Christian today!
- We have a desire to be witnesses, secure in the knowledge that we are empowered for the New Evangelisation and for service - we have received all

that we need to proclaim Christ.

- The Charismatic Renewal has helped to bring alive one of the theological virtues - hope. Millions of people now know they can trust in God's promises - he is faithful.
- Another important gift we bring is our prophetic voice in the Church and in the world. The charismatic gift of prophecy is one of the ways God speaks to us, and in our materialistic and selfish society, we desperately need to hear his voice. We are called both to speak and to act in a prophetic way.
- Because the Spirit is very much alive in us, we are also aware of the need for intercession and spiritual warfare. Through the Holy Spirit we understand that there is a spiritual battle going on and we are part of it - we recognise the presence of evil spirits as well as the Holy Spirit. We therefore have a role and a task to defend the Church against the power of the evil one, which those who are not aware of the spiritual battle cannot do.
- Finally, but by no means of the least importance, the Spirit has given us a concern for justice, peace, and social issues. These things are important, and we are called to bring them to greater prominence. We know we must be practical as well as spiritual.

## SO WHAT CHALLENGES LIE AHEAD?

### **The Danger of Compromise**

There is always the temptation to try to make ourselves more acceptable to others by speaking less about those things they find uncomfortable. What things do I mean? Baptism in the Spirit, Tongues, Prophecy, Healing, Evangelisation. We must never give in to this temptation - we are called to be prophetic, and the life of a prophet is not easy. We are called to serve the Church, and the charisms we have received are authentically Catholic, so whilst we must be sensitive to others we have no excuses for compromise. We must not turn back to the safety of the old ways, or we may risk hearing similar words to those of Paul to the Galatians: "You foolish charismatics! Was it because you practised the law that you received the Spirit, or because you believed what was preached to you? Are you foolish enough to end in outward observances what you began in the Spirit?"

### **Institution and Charism**

Then we must be sure that we have a healthy balance and tension between the charismatic and the institutional dimensions of the life of the Church. The Magisterium is there to guide us - we are to be faithful to the Church. We are Catholic first, and charismatic second. There is no competition between the institutional and the charismatic dimensions in the life of the Church - they are co-essential. We need formation by the Church, and must avoid the danger of being guided only by personal, supernatural revelations. We must be careful not to become narrow-minded and inward-looking; let's lift our eyes and see the bigger picture in the Church and in the world. Without the institution there would be a lack of good order and things would be chaotic, but without the charismatic dimension there would be very little life in the Church. We need both.

### **The Ecumenical Journey**

We know that the Church is committed to the ecumenical journey, and Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II have both emphasised the importance of our contribution to ecumenism. Because we share the experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with Protestant, Pentecostal, and Non-denominational Christians, we have a special part to play in building strong ecumenical friendships. But to do this, we must first be sure of our Catholic identity. We are Catholic first and ecumenical second.

### **Competition and Division**

There must be no competition among us, or with other groups in the Church. In many countries our history is not something of which we can be proud, but for which we must repent. There are still too many divisions in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal - it undermines our witness to the Church. We must deal with our divisions.

### **The Sin of Pride**

Finally we must always be on our guard against pride. God has poured his gifts upon us not because we deserve them, but because they are needed for the service of others. We are to accept them with humility, and use them as he directs. We must never forget that to be baptised in the Spirit

is to realise that in everything we are to live, not by ourselves and our own efforts, but out of God's provision of life and power in Christ, available to us through the Holy Spirit.

## SO WHERE ARE WE NOW AFTER 36 YEARS?

Today we stand humbly at the heart of the life of the Church - we are accepted as members of the family. We are not para-church somewhere on the fringes - we are at the beating heart of the Church. If we ever doubt this, we have only to read what Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II have said about the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (see "Then Peter Stood Up" published by ICCRS).

ICCRS (International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services) is recognised by the Holy See as a body for the promotion of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal with a juridical personality in accordance with Canon 116. Most Conferences of Bishops have recognised the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in one way or another, and some National Service Committees and Communities have asked for and been granted Statutes. So we have passed through childhood and adolescence into the maturity of the middle years - we are now 36 years old. We have not lost our youthful zeal - we remain enthusiastic and committed - but we are less superficial and less innocent. We have been called by Pope John Paul II to "ecclesial maturity", which means playing our full part in the life of the Church. We have faced disappointments, and many of our hopes remain unrealised. We now know that most people are not prepared to risk embracing the fullness of life in the Spirit, no matter what we may say or do. We must persevere in prayer and accept that only God can change them.

We have experienced the presence and supernatural power of the Holy Spirit working in us and through us - we know who we are in Christ and what he has done for us. We have some great testimonies to give. We have seen amazing things happen around us - people healed, lives changed, the spiritually dead coming alive, and the most difficult people becoming the

most wonderful. We have made many mistakes, but we are wiser and we have learned from them.

We understand the importance of good teaching and formation to equip us to play an even fuller part in the life of the Church. We know very well that our special calling is to teach and minister the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is our primary gift to the Church - it is the particular grace given to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. We also know that in the mind of Pope John Paul II we are in the front line, proclaiming the Gospel with our brothers and sisters in the new ecclesial movements and communities. On the eve of Pentecost in 1998, outside St. Peter's, he gave us a mission :

*"Today from this square Christ repeats to each one of you: Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). He is counting on each one of you, the Church is counting on each one of you. The Lord assures us: 'Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). Amen!"*

Let's embrace that mission in unity with all the ecclesial movements and new communities, but let's make sure that in doing so we remain both prophetic and charismatic. *What use is a Charismatic Renewal without the charisms? It would be like salt that has lost its taste - "good for nothing and can only be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Matthew 5:13).*

So we have arrived at my final question. As one of the leaders in this great work of God, it's a question I have asked myself many times:

## **IS MY LEADERSHIP IN THE CHARISMATIC RENEWAL SOMETHING I CAN LAY DOWN WHEN I FEEL I'VE HAD ENOUGH?**

I do not believe that the call of God is something we can take up or lay down as we choose. It is not for us to try to give back to God his anointing. There's no such thing as 'retirement' for a Christian. Of course from time to time we will move on from one position of responsibility to another - perhaps at a lower level. One day God may ask us to withdraw from leadership - but

that's for him to decide, not us. But it is our task to train up new leaders, and to give them positions of responsibility so that the work will go on. We have been entrusted with something truly remarkable. It's God's gift to us - it's not ours to control or do with as we choose, or to give back to him. When we get tired, let's remember these encouraging words from the prophet Isaiah:

*"The Lord gives strength to the wearied, he strengthens the powerless. Young men may grow tired and weary, youths may stumble, but those who put their hope in the Lord renew their strength. They run and do not grow weary, walk and never tire" (Isaiah 40:28-31).*

Our responsibility is to live this grace of the Charismatic Renewal as fully as we can, trusting in the Lord, and sharing it with everyone we meet. As St. Paul wrote to Timothy *"Fan into a flame the gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you"* (2 Tim. 1:6). When we walk in the will of God we are at peace. Christ died to give us freedom - let's accept his gift afresh every day, and let's continue to walk with him in the power and the freedom of his Holy Spirit.

- To do this means turning from self to God, from works to faith, and from law to Spirit.
- It means listening every day to the voice and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- It means doing everything in his strength, not in our own, and doing it all for the glory of God.
- It means giving the power, the control, back to God.

As Zechariah reminds us: *"Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord."* (Zechariah 4:6).

To walk in the Spirit is to walk in the love, the freedom, and the power of God, not of man. God willing I hope to do that for the rest of my life, and I hope that you in your own countries all over the world will continue to do it too, until one day I hope we will all hear those wonderful words: *"Well done, good and faithful servant.....come and join in your master's happiness"* (Matthew 25:21).

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