



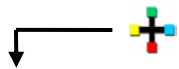
A Review of "The Spirit bade me go," by David J. du Plessis. (Published by the author, 3742 Linwood Avenue, Oakland, California. 1963.)

1964

J.E. Lesslie Newbigin

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David du Plessis is a South African who now has his home in the United States. He tells us that he was converted at an early age and later received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He was responsible for organizing the periodical Pentecostal World Conference for many years, and is still carrying out a remarkable ministry of interpretation between the Pentecostal churches and the churches which belong to the World Council of Churches. His ministry has had at least three elements: within the Pentecostal movement he has worked for worldwide fellowship and mutual understanding; between this movement and the World Council of Churches he has been an indefatigable apostle of understanding, and within the 'main line' Protestant and Anglican churches he has played a notable part in fostering the Pentecostal experience.

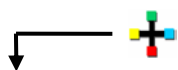
This book is a collection of addresses and tracts which enable the reader to understand the writer's many-sided ministry. Some of them are addressed to members of the 'historic' churches, interpreting the Pentecostal movement to them. The author defines this movement as including 'all those societies and movements or missions which teach ... that all Christians should receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit as they did on the day of Pentecost according to Acts ii:4, with the evidence of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance'. The heart of the Pentecostal experience is seen as the manifestation of the Spirit in power-power to witness, to prophesy, to heal the sick: but the manifestation of the Spirit in 'tongues' is also of fundamental importance.

'Tongues are not for public ministry but for private devotions at home and in the church.' Tongues are not to be sought as a 'gift'. 'It is not a matter of seeking for gifts, but rather a matter of receiving the Giver of these gifts.' Always, in du Plessis's writing, the central matter is total surrender to Christ Himself.

Other papers in the book are addressed directly to those within the Pentecostal movement. Here there is much detailed discussion and exegesis-not all of which the present reviewer can accept. Of deep interest is the discussion concerning the development of Pentecostal bodies

towards more staid and sober forms of worship. How does one distinguish the signs of maturity from the less desirable features of middle-age? 'Let me say right here that I consider it heresy to speak of shaking, trembling, falling, dancing, clapping, shouting and such actions as manifestations of the Holy Spirit. These are purely human reactions to the power of the Holy Spirit'-and frequently more a hindrance than a help. But on the other hand he reproves pastors who forbid these things. 'What are we doing to our spiritual babies? Where do we train them? In the basement? Will they ever learn that they belong to the family?' But again there are churches which want to remain permanently at the nursery stage. 'It looks bad when adults act like children.' 'I have seen too many shouting Christians who go to sleep when the Word is preached.'

David du Plessis has had to pay the price which an ecumenical pioneer must expect to pay. It is the more important that this testimony should be heeded. It is a truncated picture of the ecumenical movement which does not take seriously what is happening in the name of Pentecostal revival. The Pentecostal churches are almost certainly the fastest growing Christian communities in the world. Their witness is beginning to penetrate the 'historic' Protestant churches, and to do so in a way which is constructive and not schismatic. In spite of the success story which they can tell, there is evidence of openness and readiness to listen to other Christians. Here also, as



on the other wing of the ecumenical movement, we must seek genuine dialogue. The most searching question which the Pentecostals will bring to that dialogue will be the question about our personal experience of the power of Christ. This book is primarily the author's testimony to his fellow Pentecostals about what God is doing outside their ranks; the question it puts to the non-Pentecostal reader is all the more searching for being oblique.

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