

Not Laughing Now

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by Phil Johnson

Rodney Howard-Browne, self-styled “Holy Ghost Bartender,” has taken notice of the [Strange Fire conference sponsored by Grace to You \(October 16-18, 2013\)](#). He seems unnerved by the prospect that twenty-first-century charismatic phenomena are going to be examined in light of Scripture. Howard-Browne’s trademark giddiness has gone missing. Recently, he wrote this stream-of-consciousness rant [on his Facebook page](#):

There is coming a massive attack on the Pentecostal/ Charismatic movement by a group of individuals that don’t believe in the power of the Holy Spirit today - these men do not believe in speaking in tongues or the gifts of the spirit - they think that because of excesses in the church that they have a right to write off the fastest growing sector of Christianity - over 800 million in the earth today - that would be as bad as writing Jesus off because of one of the 12 was Judas Iscariot - if these individuals just adopted Gamaliel’s advice of Acts 5:38-39 that would be fine however they have no fear of God and are in grave danger of blaspheming the Holy Ghost - they think that because the movement has had scandals that have been publicised that this gives them leeway to do what they are doing - however the only reason why it gets the attention is because these individuals are on TV - everywhere I travel I hear of scandals outside of the Pentecostal charismatic realm but these are never publicised because no one knows them - they are calling their exposé strange fire however you better have the alternative if you are going to criticise something as counterfeit you have to produce the real - or else you had better shut up! The only ones who have the right to bring correction are the ones inside the camp not outside!

All the standard charismatic arguments are summarized there: He says critics of modern charismatic claims are unspiritual people motivated only by rank unbelief. He insists the weight of sheer numbers validates the modern charismatic movement (yet the high percentage of scandalous frauds, philanderers, and false teachers spawned by the movement means nothing). He emphatically declares that those outside the movement are not entitled to criticize charismatic abuses. And of course he includes the killer argument: The critics are people who *“have no fear of God and are in grave danger of blaspheming the Holy Ghost.”*

In reality, those who tout false prophecies, obscene bodily gyrations, and drunken behavior as gifts of the Holy Spirit are the ones blaspheming Him. In fact, no one is more notorious for that than Rodney Howard-Browne himself. For him to decry blasphemy and pretend to know anything about the fear of God is the very height of arrogant irony.

If you think that sounds unduly harsh, watch this video of a typical Rodney Howard-Browne “ministry” binge:

Strange Fire, indeed.

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