

*Come Holy Spirit
Heal the brokenhearted
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

I made an announcement at our weekday church service that at 7:00 I'd be going to an interdenominational prayer group.

Fortunately, two others wanted to join me that night so immediately after the service we went.

It was a small intimate setting at this church. There must have been about 75 of us. I hate to even mention the numbers, but I think this was part of my own personal heart stretch. Seventy of the ladies were black and five were white. Truly, I don't think it was the black-white situation where I found any discomfort. I have only experienced brotherly love and hospitality each time I've worshipped in a black church. The joyful music has always lifted me and been a blessing and drawn me closer to the Lord. The heartfelt preaching and teaching has always lifted me and been a blessing and drawn me closer to the Lord. I'm an honorary member of the True Divine Baptist Church Choir and my few visits have always lifted me and been a blessing and drawn me closer to the Lord.

No, it wasn't that, but I must admit the photographer who was constantly circling the sanctuary and flashing during the service made me a bit uncomfortable. I must admit that I prayed, "Lord, please let me not be on the front page of the newspaper for some people might not understand."

Another heart stretch opportunity occurred. "OK, Lucy, you're willing to go out, just as long as no one knows. Oh, sure, that

sounds like a disciple, an apostle, a follower of Christ.” With this internal humbling conversation, I settled back down and was able to once again be blessed by the service.

The only other constriction of the heart that I’d like to confess is that the service ended with an alter call. All went up front. We held hands. You could hear some singing, some praying, and some speaking in tongues. This part of the service took on a whole different feeling. I would have to say it was like a big wave coming to shore. It would begin calmly, slowly and then the energy would build as if it were a musical crescendo. Individuals were being prayed over. All of a sudden there was one who started jerking in an uncontrollable motion. I had never seen such. A group of ladies encircled her, laid hands on her. I remember one lady kept coaxing her with “Just say Jesus, baby. Just say Jesus.” She couldn’t. It was some weird gloppy incomprehensible words coming out of her mouth. They kept praying and finally there was a calm, a peace and the girl could say “Jesus” and then “I love you, Jesus.”

Spontaneous praise broke out by the individual and then by all. I believe with all my heart it was real and it wasn’t staged or preplanned. It was a teenage girl whose mother was one of the worship leaders. She had been standing next to me, holding my hand earlier in the service. There was true rejoicing by the mother, the daughter, the whole congregation when she found peace.

This experience was also a heart-stretching one. The internal talk went like this: “OK, Lucy, you feel uncomfortable. Do you think these experiences are of the Holy Spirit? If you’re uncomfortable with

witnessing His power, do you then in essence want to limit it?" We are commanded in the Bible, "Do not quench the Spirit." How would you have felt on Pentecost in that upper room, Lucy? Would you have run? Would you have stood in the corner and watched and said no way, Jose? I don't want this wind and fire and speaking funny stuff. I like order. I like predictability! I like controllability!"

"Whose, Lucy?" Lord, forgive.

I now realize some of my traditions of worship and the importance I've placed on those traditions have caused me to form invisible barrier walls. I've unknowingly been doing my own little separating and dividing dance with the universal church. Lord, forgive.

Enlarge the place of your tent,

Stretch your tent curtains wide,

Do not hold back.

Lengthen your cords,

Strengthen your stakes,

For you will spread out to the right and to the left.

Your descendants will dispossess nations

And settle in the desolate cities

Oh, your sons will be taught by the Lord

And great will be your children's peace.

How are your tents, Pilgrim? How are those sides?

God bless. Let's do some stretching.

Lucy