

## arts&amp;culture &gt; filet of soul

## Hard core

## Church of Jesus Christ Spirit Filled

By D. Brian Burghart

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I'm often struck by the nuances among churches or spiritual philosophies. For example, there are more ways to worship under the umbrella "Christian" than I could possibly catalogue. True, too, I've been to a multitude of Buddhist practices: Korean, Japanese, Tibetan and others.

Between my high school graduation and April 2007, I can count on two hands the times I attended formal church services. Since I started this column, I have been to around 90 different churches or spiritual practices.

I've learned that all religions and spiritual practices—except for nuance—teach the same things: Meditate/pray; take care of the less fortunate; be aware of a creative, universal force; be useful to humanity; maintain moral behavior; accept that there are some things over which humans are powerless (God's will).

Only three times in all those experiences have I heard "This practice/method/religion is the only way to eternal bliss." Twice it was in Buddhist practice, the third time was this week at the Church of Jesus Christ Spirit Filled.

And you know what? I wasn't offended at all by the idea. I mean, if you truly believe that your way is the only way to save an eternal soul, wouldn't it be your responsibility to say so? This is Christian fundamentalism at its densest, and I know that many Christians who experience the fiery oratory of Pastor Roger Canary will find it's a message that speaks powerfully to them.

This is not a mega-church by any means. I believe the congregation landed in this beautiful building on Goldy Way in Sparks in 2005, but by design, it doesn't have a lot of the ancillary stuff a lot of modern churches have. For example, I don't recall seeing a coffee kiosk. But the congregation and pastor manage what it does have very well. The music, which had a New Orleans-style jazzy flair, was provided by a 17-member choir with backing piano, keyboards, percussionist, drummer and sax player, lead and backup singers for a total of about 30 people onstage. The band and choir were so good, pre-recorded music sounded tinny by comparison. I'd guess the sanctuary would hold about 300 people, and it was a well-attended service despite the snow flurries, with about 200 people rockin' 'n' holy rollin'. Roy Chacon, whom I believe was visiting from Bishop, Calif., performed two songs for the offertory, playing saxophone and singing with a certain Louis Armstrong timbre to his voice.

But Senior Pastor Roger Canary is certainly the leader of this congregation. While I've heard a good many top-notch speakers in my time doing this column, I don't believe I've heard anyone like him. He interjects humor unexpectedly, appears to speak almost entirely extemporaneously—although the themes are plainly thought out beforehand—and varies his rolling bass voice in pitch and tempo in a way that's almost hypnotic. You can hear his sermon "Jesus in the Last Days" on a podcast at [Spiritfilledchurch.org](http://Spiritfilledchurch.org).

He spoke that morning on Jude 1:4: "For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."

Pastor Canary focuses on these times as the end times, and as far as he's concerned, there's only one way to survive the coming apocalypse: Jesus Christ.

"I'm telling you: If you don't think we're living in the last days; if you don't think these godless men have worked their way into the body of Christ to deceive and tear down everything that God died for on the cross, then you are dead, dead, dead!"

I think there are a good many people in Northern Nevada who could find a home in this old school Christian church.

## MUSIC

none  
mellow  
traditional  
rockin'



Senior Pastor Roger Canary leads the Church of Jesus Christ Spirit Filled in Sparks. He's a fiery orator. PHOTO BY LAUREN RANDOLPH

Church of Jesus Christ Spirit Filled, 3175 Goldy Way, Sparks, has regular services at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays, but there are a variety of other studies and ministries. Check out [www.spiritfilledchurch.org](http://www.spiritfilledchurch.org) or call 358-2842.

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