

**PCOG:
THE
PERSON, WORK AND MINISTRY
OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT**

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ADOPTED BY THE SESSION
JUNE 10, 2008

The Person, Work and Ministry of the Holy Spirit

A statement by the PCOG elders, June 2008

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Dear Reader:

Throughout this paper we have sprinkled both footnotes and endnotes. Footnotes, designated by superscript numbers, include the NIV translation of scriptures referred to in the body of the paper as well as the references for the quotes used in the paper. Endnotes, marked by superscript letters, provide deeper background, extended quotes and helpful insights that supplement the body of the paper.

The footnotes begin on page 13 and the endnotes appear in the Appendix of Extended Notes listed above in the Table of Contents, page 19.

INTRODUCTION

This paper lays the biblical and theological foundation for PCOG as we seek the Holy Spirit's power for ministry in Jesus' name. In addition to the many Scriptures listed throughout this paper and footnoted conveniently beginning on page 13, we have drawn on a number of other sources which address this important topic and its impact on the church today. These are listed under "Works Cited" and "Selected Bibliography." We also included an "Appendix of Extended Notes," which provides commentary from a number of the works cited. All of these additional citations and references serve to form the necessary foundation for our consideration of the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives together at PCOG, both as individual believers and as a community of believers.

As we studied the issues circulating around the Holy Spirit, His ministry, power and gifts, we recognize that it is easy to get sidetracked (as the Corinthians did) and forget God's aim which is clearly articulated in Acts 1:8: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* The Spirit and all the manifestations He brings are given to the church so that we have power to witness to Jesus. Therefore ministry of or manifestation of the Holy Spirit that does not ultimately lead to witness and the advancement of God's kingdom is in the end a misuse of the Spirit and His gifts.

Additionally, the New Testament is quite clear that the Spirit will lead the church to be healthy and mature (read Ephesians 4 and 1Cor 12-14). As we press into the Holy Spirit we find the following two questions helpful in keeping us on track with God and God's goals and desires rather than straying into areas that lead to little or no kingdom benefit.

QUESTION ONE: Is God's kingdom advancing?

If we have prophetic words every other day; but these words do not result in the kingdom of darkness being beaten back and people coming to faith in Jesus then so what? The same is true for administration; if PCOG has the best organization, well oiled and smoothly functioning church, but the kingdom of darkness isn't being beaten back and people aren't coming to faith in Jesus so what? At the risk of being redundant, if we are flush with cash because we have Romans 12 people with the gift of giving pouring millions of dollars into PCOG but the kingdom of darkness isn't being beaten back and people aren't coming to faith in Jesus then so what? We would be willing to repeat this refrain with any spiritual gift listed in the biblical text. The Church is about lifting up the name of Jesus Christ, reaching people for Jesus Christ and building people up in Jesus Christ. Anything short of this means we have somehow perverted the things of God through our human sinfulness. And when this is the case and we are missing God's mark then leadership must step in and correct our perversions so that God's kingdom is advanced!

QUESTION TWO: Is the health of the body growing?

A good measure of growing healthier is found in Ephesians 4:13. Is the body of Christ being built up, *reach(ing) unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and becom(ing) mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ?* If operating in Holy Spirit gifts¹ is not helping us develop unity then something is wrong; the gifts aren't wrong, nor is using the gifts wrong, but something is obviously wrong² since God's clearly stated outcome is not being realized. Again leadership needs to step forward and lead by discerning what correctives are necessary and implement those correctives so unity will be attained. And if as a church we operate in the gifts and the body isn't growing into a fuller knowledge of the Son of God, then again, something is wrong and leadership needs to step up and lead.

With regard to the concerns about unity, the insight of Craig Keener³ is helpful in its simplicity and succinctness:

As long as a congregation acknowledges that spiritual gifts may continue today and does not despise those who exercise or fail to exercise particular gifts, spiritual gifts need never be a divisive issue.

Joan Gray, moderator of the 217 General Assembly of the PC (USA) accurately observed, *“Power is what is sadly lacking in many of our churches today, spiritual power that transforms lives and has a major impact on communities and the wider world. When you really think about it,”* Gray continues, *“this dunamis [power] of the Spirit is the only thing the early church had going for it. It had no buildings, no budget, no paid staff, and very few members. However, the power of the Risen Christ that was poured out on all believers at Pentecost blew them out of Jerusalem to transform the world.”^{4 A}*

As we read the New Testament and particularly Acts, we see the Spirit constantly empowering Christ-followers to share Jesus through word and demonstration. These words and demonstrations were not merely show; rather they were God’s gateway to transforming lives and redeeming men and women from lives of sin and rebellion against God. We seek the same power with accompanying words and demonstrations that characterized the first believers. And it is to this end that we present this paper to the PCOG Family.

Your Session:

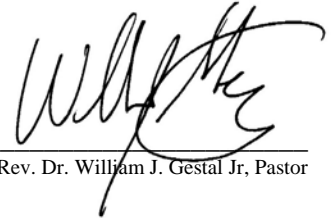
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Walter Baker, clerk
William Gestal, Pastor

Signed on behalf of the session above, June 10, 2008:



Walter Baker, clerk of Session



Rev. Dr. William J. Gestal Jr, Pastor

SUMMARY OF BELIEFS REGARDING THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe and affirm with the Church universal the essential teachings of the person and work of the Holy Spirit (page 4).

We believe that upon conversion God indwells each believer with the Holy Spirit. And since the Holy Spirit is a person, not a force, when one receives the Holy Spirit one receives all of the Holy Spirit (page 4).

We believe the New Testament witnesses to a variety of discernable manifestation or life change experiences when the Holy Spirit comes into someone's life. (page 5).

We believe that the gifts and ministries of the Spirit mentioned in the New Testament are all operative today (page 6).

We believe no spiritual gift is more important than another, and that all spiritual gifts are given for the common good. (page 6).

We believe character counts, therefore as Christ-followers we are being transformed into the likeness of our Lord and savior Jesus. Bearing the fruit of the Spirit is not optional; it is essential for disciples of Jesus (page 7).

We believe the New Testament teaches Christ-followers to constantly seek the presence and fullness of the Spirit and to not be satisfied or smug about a Holy Spirit moment in the past (page 8).

We believe Christ-followers must show Christian liberty and charity to fellow believers who hold a different theology regarding the Holy Spirit (page 9).

We believe love is God's most excellent way as we grow in the things of the Spirit (page 10).

We believe God is calling PCOG to move out into life and ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit (page 12).

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe and affirm with the Church universal essential teachings of the person and work of the Holy Spirit.^B

Namely we believe that:

- The Holy Spirit together with the Father and the Son form the Trinity: one God yet three persons. The Christian Church is a Trinitarian Church (Mt. 28:19⁵).
- The Holy Spirit regenerates a person so that he or she can receive and believe in Jesus (Titus 3:4-5⁶).
- The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin (John 16:8⁷).
- The Holy Spirit testifies to Jesus Christ and leads us into all truth (John 14:6, 15:26, 16:13-14, Acts 5:32⁸).
- The Holy Spirit seals our salvation and guarantees it (Eph 1:13-14⁹).
- Through the Holy Spirit believers can cry, “Abba, Father” testifying that they are God’s children, heirs of God and co-heirs with Jesus (Romans 8:15-17, Galatians 4:6-7¹⁰).
- The Spirit gives power to the Church to bear witness to Jesus (Acts 1:8¹¹).
- Christ-followers are called/commanded to be ‘filled with the Spirit’ and this is not a one-time or once in a while command but one all Christ-followers are to take up continuously (Eph 5:18¹²).

We believe that upon conversion^{13C} God indwells each believer with the Holy Spirit.^D And since the Holy Spirit is a person, not a force, when one receives the Holy Spirit one receives all of the Holy Spirit.

Two scripture passages anchor this belief are Acts 2:38-39 and Ephesians 1:13-14.

- Acts 2:38-39 comes at the conclusion of Peter’s Pentecost Day sermon. In verse 37 Peter’s audience interrupted asking, *Brothers, what shall we do?* To which *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call”* (vv 38-39, bold ours). Receiving the Holy Spirit is a promise with no conditions attached; the Holy Spirit is promised to everyone who repents and is baptized in Jesus name. This is not only for Peter’s day it is a forever deal offered to his hearer’s children... all whom the Lord will call. Peter places no additional requirements or stipulations that must be fulfilled on the receiving of the Holy Spirit beyond putting your faith in Jesus evidenced by repentance and baptism in Jesus’ name.

Admittedly the future tense, “will receive,” allows for the receiving of the Holy Spirit at a later time, but it neither requires a time interval nor, more importantly, does it place the receiving of the Holy Spirit contingent on some other human activity. The force of the sentence indicates that the receiving of the Holy Spirit goes along with believing in Jesus. Time lag or not, the receiving of the Holy Spirit is guaranteed once one puts her/his faith in Jesus.

- Ephesians 1:13-14: *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.* If anything the

linkage between faith in Jesus and the Holy Spirit is stronger in these verses than in Peter's Pentecost witness. Writing to the Ephesians, and this will be important when we discuss filling with the Holy Spirit and Ephesians 5:18 (see below page 12ff), Paul forges an inseparable chain: the word of truth (the gospel) is preached... these Ephesians believed... God sealed them with a stamp of authenticity, which is none other than the Holy Spirit... the Spirit then guarantees their inheritance until the time of redemption. Again believing in Jesus (Eph 2:1-10, esp. 8¹⁴) sets in motion God's giving of the Holy Spirit with no conditions and no further requirements; the Spirit is simply more grace from God's hand. A believer without the Holy Spirit is not found in the New Testament (Rom 8:2, 1Cor 3:16, Gal 3:2¹⁵).

The fact that both Peter and Paul preach this same message and that we find no scripture presenting a contrary view solidifies our belief that the Holy Spirit is given to all who put their faith in Jesus.

We realize, too, that there are wide variations of teaching within the capital "C" Church on "the baptism in/by the Holy Spirit" and how/when the Holy Spirit comes into a believer's life. In a broad-brush manner, Craig Keener provides a helpful summary of this debate:

Not everyone agrees that the expression "baptism in the Holy Spirit" applies to such a post conversion experience of God's Spirit. Many believe it applies only to conversion itself.

Thus most evangelical Christians today think of baptism in the Spirit in one of two ways: either Christians receiving the Spirit at conversion (the typical Reformed position) or Christians receiving a special empowerment after conversion (the usual Holiness and Pentecostal position). Those who emphasize the Bible's theological statements (such as Paul's comments) rather than narrative examples (such as stories in Acts) usually identify Spirit baptism with conversion to faith in Christ. Those who emphasize Acts over against Paul usually believe that Spirit baptism can occur after conversion.^{16 E}

In addition to outlining the two primary, contrasting positions, Keener points out that how one balances the narrative and didactic portions of the Bible will likely impact on which side you will land. This observation is helpful because it reminds us that brothers and sisters from various positions build their case from Scripture; and their differing landing place often stems from how much weight they place on particular verses as opposed to other verses.

We believe the New Testament witnesses to a variety of discernable manifestation or life change experiences when the Holy Spirit comes into someone's life.

It is clear from the Bible that upon conversion, believers are changed by the coming of the Holy Spirit into their lives, some in miraculous ways and some in more subtle, but equally profound ways. In Galatians 3:1-5¹⁷ Paul argues the fact that there is a discernable life difference once the Spirit entered their lives. Further evidence of the life change occurs in Gal 5 and stark contrast between "fruit of the Spirit" life and the acts of "sinful nature" (see character counts discussion below).

From the New Testament, we see that it is only by the Holy Spirit that a person may declare 'Jesus is Lord.' This is a key manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence in one's life. In addition to the declaration of 'Jesus as Lord,' we observe in the New Testament a variety of additional manifestation or life changes that accompany the Holy Spirit's presence in a believer's

life, such as speaking in tongues, or a healing, or a new found joy that results in the praising of God or something else. We leave it up to the Lord to decide what manifestation or life change beyond the declaration of 'Jesus as Lord' the Spirit's presence might produce in each believer.

- 1Cor. 12:3¹⁸, declaring 'Jesus is Lord'
- Acts 2: 1-4¹⁹, Pentecost: a violent blowing sound, tongues of fire resting above each believer and tongues, which in this case tongues is speaking in foreign earthly languages.
- Acts 8:14-19²⁰, Samaria: nothing specific is named, although it is clear that something observable happened when Peter and John laid hands on people and they received the Spirit because Simon wanted to buy that power.
- Acts 9:17-18²¹, Paul's conversion: healing and scales falling from his eyes.
- Acts 10:44-48²², Cornelius' house; speaking in tongues and praising God.
- Acts 19:1-6²³, Ephesus; spoke in tongues and prophesied.

While some believers may not immediately notice a change in their lives upon conversion, this does not mean that the Holy Spirit has not started a transformation. After all, the Spirit already changed us, enabling us to accept God's love and confess 'Jesus is Lord.'

We believe that the gifts and ministries of the Spirit mentioned in the New Testament are all operative today.

This single sentence is the core of our belief on the workings of the Holy Spirit today.

This means we believe that the gifts talked about in Romans 12: 6-8²⁴, 1Corinthians 12: 7-11²⁵, 1Corinthians 12:27-30²⁶, Ephesians 4: 11-13²⁷ and 1Peter 4:10-11²⁸, including the "more controversial" gifts (such as tongues and interpretation of tongues, prophecy and miracles) are manifest by the Holy Spirit today. We concur with the United Presbyterian Report of the Special Committee on the Work of the Holy Spirit (pp 7-8), which reads:

We cannot, however, follow the view of some theologians that the purely supernatural gifts ceased with the death of the apostles. There seems no exegetical warrant for this assumption. Rather we are to "test the spirits to see whether they are of God," since each one of the charismatic gifts has its counterfeits and frauds.

Regarding spiritual gifts listed in Scripture, we understand each of the various gift-lists to be 'ad hoc.' This means they were a list of gifts pertinent to the point of the particular letter. We also believe that none of the lists, nor all of the lists combined, are exhaustive of all the gifts that the Spirit gives.

We believe no spiritual gift is more important than another, and that all spiritual gifts are given for the common good.

Regarding the workings of the Spirit and spiritual gifts within the body, a few teachings of scripture are clear and important:

- The Holy Spirit gives power to the church to witness to Jesus. The Spirit is given so the church can advance God's kingdom (Acts 2-5²⁹).
- God gives the gifts, we are never the owners of Holy Spirit gifts; we are stewards using God's gifts for God's purposes (1Cor 12:4-7, 11³⁰).
- Each believer is given spiritual gifts; if you are in Christ's body then you have been given Holy Spirit gifts for ministry (Rom 12:4-6, 1Cor 12:7, 1Peter 4:10³¹).

- Diversity of gifts, not uniformity of gifts, breeds unity of the body. A favorite analogy for Paul is that of the body; a body has many parts and it is the inter-working of different parts that make the one body whole (Rom 12:4-6, 1Cor 12:12-26³²). Mercy is a gift just as much as administration is a gift just as much as prophecy is a gift just as much as healing is a gift.^F
- The Spirit determines when and to whom He gives which gifts (1Cor 12:11³³).
- Spiritual gifts are given to help and serve others (Rom 12:5, 1Cor 12:7, 1Peter 4:10³⁴).
- Spiritual gifts are given to build up the body leading toward maturity (Ephesians 4:12-13³⁵).

We believe character counts, therefore as Christ-followers we are being transformed into the likeness of our Lord and savior Jesus. Bearing the fruit of the Spirit is not optional; it is essential for disciples of Jesus.

It is important to teach about the Holy Spirit and His power and filling/fullness and about Holy Spirit gifts, and so on; but this MUST be taught, modeled, learned and practiced by disciples whose deepest pursuit and desire is to be transformed into Christ-likeness (Rom 8:29a³⁶) displaying the attitudes of Jesus (Phil 2:3-8³⁷) and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-25³⁸). Bearing the fruit of the Spirit is not optional; it is essential for all disciples of Jesus. And whereas the Spirit gives particular gifts as He determines to each believer, all the fruit of the Spirit is to be evident in all believers lives. Billy Graham, in plain language wisdom, put it like this:

*Unlike the gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is not divided among believers. Instead, all Christians should be marked by all the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is God's expectation in our lives.*³⁹

In similar fashion John Stott writes, *The Spirit gives different Christians different gifts, ... but he works to produce the same fruit in all. He is not content if we display love for others, while we have no control of ourselves; or interior joy and peace without kindness to others...*⁴⁰

Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35). Interestingly, love, not power or gifts or demonstrations of signs and wonders, is to be the primary indicator of one's discipleship. It is not that power or gifts or signs and wonders are wrong, they are not; they simply must flow through people who are being transformed into tangible Christ-likeness.

Jesus makes an even stronger statement near the conclusion of his "Sermon on the Mount." Beginning with Matthew 7:15, Jesus teaches:

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them (vv. 15-20).

Obedience to God's will, which includes life transformation and character development into Jesus' likeness, is essential, and never peripheral, to a disciple.^G

In sum, *the fruit of the Spirit is God's expectation in our lives.*⁴¹

We believe the New Testament teaches Christ-followers to constantly seek the presence and fullness of the Spirit and to not be satisfied or smug about a Holy Spirit moment in the past.

Whatever one believes about the initial experience/touch/filling/baptism of the Holy Spirit in a person's life, the New Testament is abundantly clear that Christ-followers must not grow complacent about a past Holy Spirit experience; rather believers are to press in and constantly seek the filling of the Holy Spirit. Paul makes this abundantly clear in his letter to the Ephesians.

Paul plants the church in Ephesus. Chronicled in Acts 19, the birth of the church in Ephesus begins with about 12 disciples of John the Baptist with whom Paul shares Jesus. After being baptized into Jesus' name Paul lays hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them *and they spoke in tongues and prophesied* (Acts 19:7). A pretty memorable day. From there Paul preaches in the synagogue for three months, and then after being kicked out of the synagogue Paul holds open air meetings for two years. Miracles, casting out of demons and open confession of past evil deeds by believers dramatically witnessed to salvation found in Jesus. Luke summarizes these days by writing, *In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power* (Acts 19:20). If ever a people had a "wow" beginning and a powerful testimony to the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives it was our brothers and sisters in Ephesus and especially those initial dozen or so disciples.

About six or so years later, Paul writes a letter to his beloved church in Ephesus. In chapter 1 he reminds the church of the incredible blessings God lavished on them (and us) in Christ and of the Holy Spirit's seal upon their lives:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. ...

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:3-4, 13-14)

Could they have forgotten the blessings of their salvation? Possibly, and a sad reality that would be. But it seems more likely that they were resting on the "laurels" of their past and were in need of a jump start to resume passionate, Spirit-empowered living for Jesus in the present.

In chapter 2 Paul reiterates that we are saved by grace and for *good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do* (Ephesians 2:10).

In chapter 3 Paul prays that they, *being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God* (Ephesians 3:17-19). Remember now, these are the Ephesians of Acts 19 who began with a dramatic filling by the Holy Spirit and witnessed miracles over an extended two-year ministry by Paul!

In chapter 4 he calls them to live in unity and as children of the light and in chapter 5 he "pastorally" hammers them to:

Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to

debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (5:17-20)

Verse 18 is pivotal; *be filled with the Spirit*, Paul commands. “Be filled” is a plural present passive imperative^H, which could correctly be translated “be being filled” with the Spirit or “be filled and keep on being filled” with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time forever event, rather we are to constantly and forever, this side of eternity, be vessels open to and longing for the filling of the Spirit every day and all the time^I. Michael Green summarizes thoughts on Ephesians 5:18 well with these words:

To be filled with the Spirit means to allow Jesus to have the fullest control in our lives that we are conscious of. In so far as we do that, we will always be finding new areas of self-centeredness to surrender as the Lord who is Spirit possesses us more and more fully. To such submission all Christians are called. And it is not once and for all transaction: ‘go on being filled with the Spirit’ is the meaning of the original.⁴²

Luke, likewise, underscores a similar point as he illustrates the same people being filled and re-filled by the Spirit in Acts (see Acts 2: 1-4 and 4:31). Past experiences of the Spirit’s filling are wonderful but God needs his followers “be being filled” today so we can do the good works God has prepared in advance for us to do today.

Luke seems to underscore this same point when he notes that the apostles in Acts 6 were looking for disciples who were *full of the Spirit and wisdom* (Acts 6:3) and when Barnabas is described as a *good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith*, (Acts 11:24) he is describing believers who were constantly seeking the filling of the Spirit. We don’t believe Luke is talking about a something-that-happened-to-me-back-then experience, but rather the ongoing “be being filled” life Paul commands in Ephesians 5:18. And obviously this full-of-the-Spirit character of life is something that can be observed by others within the family of God⁴³, so the apostles in Acts 6 can turn to the body and say choose men who are known to be (present tense) full of the Spirit.

We agree with Billy Graham, “*It is not how much of the Spirit we have, but how much the Spirit has of us.*”⁴⁴ Would that all Christ-followers lived this way, longing to give over to the Holy Spirit more and more of ourselves until we give over all of ourselves to the Spirit every moment of every day! Then we will truly “be being filled.” This is what God desires and what the New Testament teaches about life as a Spirit-filled follower of Jesus.

We believe Christ-followers must show Christian liberty and love to fellow believers who hold a different theology regarding the Holy Spirit.

We realize that the universal Church is divided^J regarding some aspects of the present day ministry of the Holy Spirit – like manifestations of Holy Spirit, gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially “sign gifts,” and understandings of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Understanding this, we believe it is important for us to declare our biblical understandings because this will form the foundation for our congregation’s life and ministry.

However, we do not want to give the impression that Christ-followers who, after sincere and earnest study of Scripture (our only rule for faith and action), come to conclusions which are different from those we have about the Holy Spirit are not somehow fellow believers in Christ. To help us maintain this delicate balance we hold to three ground rules and “safety parameters”

- In essential beliefs – we have UNITY (Eph 4:4-6⁴⁵).

Jesus is the center of the Christian faith and faith in Jesus alone is what saves. (To

know more about our stated essentials and beliefs we refer you to our website and “Ten Things We Believe” Statement found under the “About Us” tab or directly at <http://pcogonline.org/index.php?s=au&nid=23900>.)

- In non-essential beliefs – we have LIBERTY (Rom 14:1, 4, 12, 22⁴⁶).
By non-essentials we mean those Christian faith issues over which the Church, due to differing faithful interpretations of scripture, disagrees.^K
- To all people – we show LOVE (1Cor 13:13⁴⁷).

So as an example, we believe the spiritual gifts listed in scripture are for today, however, we do not feel that this belief constitutes a Christian essential for salvation. Hence it is important to state that people who love and follow Jesus yet do not believe the gifts are operative today are brothers and sisters in Jesus and have the liberty to believe what they believe so long as their belief grows from earnest study of Scripture. UNITY in essentials, LIBERTY in non-essentials and LOVE towards all defines a workable set of parameters within which to discuss the work of the Holy Spirit today.

We believe love is God’s most excellent way as we grow in the things of the Spirit.

Sandwiched between the two most extensive New Testament teachings on spiritual gifts is a magnificent passage on love, a passage we often hear at weddings yet rarely hear in its Holy Spirit inspired context. The passage is 1Corinthians 13. Take a moment to read it:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Consider its original context; in Chapter 12 Paul corrects some faulty understandings with regard to the “things of the Spirit.”^L It seems that the Corinthians became obsessed with the gift of tongues and likely placed that gift on a pedestal higher than others and this obsession expressed itself in disorderly worship with too great an emphasis on tongues as opposed to other spiritual gifts (see Fee’s comments in the endnotes^M). Diversity of gifts is the hallmark of chapter 12, with Paul using direct didactic teaching in vv. 1-11 and an illustration of how a body works in vv. 12-26. After a concluding paragraph (vv. 27-31) Paul includes his interlude on love, which opens with the words, *And now let me show you the most excellent way.* To drive home his love message Paul writes in staccato fashion, “If I have tongues... if I have prophecy... if I have faith...

(three manifestations of the Spirit listed in 12:7-11) but have not LOVE I am nothing! In the church it is critical for us to love one another. We are to love those who abuse spiritual gifts and those who loathe spiritual gifts. We are to love those with this gift, that gift and these other gifts and we are to love those who do not have this gift, that gift and these other gifts. And how are we to love? Paul leaves little wiggle room; love is lived out both by action and attitude:

Love is patient (Am I patient with sisters and brothers who are running faster than I into spiritual gifts or running slower than I? Am I patient with Christian theologies that may even denounce my particular belief and/or experiences in the things of the Spirit?)

Love is kind (How do I act toward people with different beliefs regarding spiritual gifts? Do I give the cold shoulder to people who desire spiritual gifts and seek them or do not depending upon my particular bent.)

It does not envy, it does not boast (wow place this one in the arena of spiritual gifts!)

It is not rude (Do I make fun or belittle others in my conversations that have differing views/experiences on the things of the Spirit?)

It is not self-seeking (Remember the gifts are for the common good, never self gratification.)

We could continue... rather read it for yourself. You can make the applications.

Now notice Paul's use of "always" in verse 7.

Love always protects (Do we protect everyone in our body, particularly as we grow in our things of the Spirit understanding or do I leave others behind, or worse harm them in some way?)

Always trusts (Do I trust church brothers and sisters in matters of the Spirit or am I constantly undermining them???)

Always hopes (Am I hoping ...)

Always perseveres (Am I committed to the body for the long haul? Will I persevere in study, care and love with my brothers and sisters...?)

Love is the foundation that allows Paul to correct faulty theology and to unify an "us vs. them" division.

A CLOSING COMMENT

This paper represents a synopsis of our understanding of who the Holy Spirit is and how He works in the life of one who follows Jesus. We want to understand God and the teaching of His word correctly so that we can live faithfully. The desire to understand 'correctly' sounds noble; however, we recognize that there are inherent dangers in wanting to understand 'correctly.' For one, we can exhibit a sense of superiority over against others who believe differently. We addressed this problem presenting the concepts of UNITY, LIBERTY and CHARITY.

More subtle but equally dangerous is the 'paralysis of analysis' that can settle in where a person avoids venturing out into ministry because more and more study-time is necessary to assure 'correctness.' Regarding the issues discussed in the paper^N, for example, one might avoid praying for another to experience the filling of the Holy Spirit or might avoid receiving such prayer from others until they understand 'correctly or completely' what the filling might mean and how to pray for it correctly.

Joan Gray is correct, *“The Holy Spirit is the birthright of every baptized believer and the only source of life for the church. Jesus promised us in Luke 11:13, If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! Maybe now is the time to claim this promise and to invite the Spirit to move and shake again in the church.”*⁴⁸

Therefore, we believe God is calling PCOG to move out into life and ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. ^o

* * * * *

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, transform us into the likeness of your Son Jesus. Along with that God, may we earnestly desire the fullness of your Holy Spirit and any gifts that your Spirit might choose to give... we pray this so that Jesus' name will be lifted up and your kingdom will grow. Amen.

FOOTNOTES

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:12-ff teaches that operating in the gifts means that Spirit gifts in their diversity are being used.

² Maybe the wrong is the attitude of the “gift-users” or maybe the wrong is the attitude of “others,” whatever the case something is wrong.

³ Keener, 168.

⁴ Gray, “Come Holy Spirit” The Presbyterian Outlook, June 4, 2007.

⁵ Matthew 28:19: *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

⁶ Titus 3:4-5: *But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,*

⁷ John 16:8: speaking of the Holy Spirit, the Counselor: *When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:*

⁸ John 14:26: *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

John 15:26: *When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.*

John 16:13-14: *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.*

Acts 5:32: *We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.*

⁹ Ephesians 1:13-14: *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.*

¹⁰ Romans 8:15-17: *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Galatians 4:6-7: *Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

¹¹ Acts 1:8: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

¹² Ephesians 5:18: *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

¹³ At conversion, God transfers the converted person from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. In Colossians 1:13, Paul expresses it like this: *For he [God] has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

¹⁴ Ephesians 2:1-10, especially verses 8, teaches us that our faith is not a human work but rather a grace-gift from God. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works so that no one can boast.

¹⁵ Romans 8:2: ... *And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*
1 Corinthians 3:16: *Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?*
Galatians 3:2: ... *Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?*

¹⁶ Keener, 20.

¹⁷ Galatians 3:1-5: *You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Have you suffered so much for nothing--if it really was for nothing? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?*

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:3: *Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*

¹⁹ Acts 2:1-4: *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

²⁰ Acts 8:14-19: *When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."*

²¹ Acts 9:17-18: *Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,*

²² Acts 10:44-4: *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.*

²³ Acts 19:1-6: *While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.*

²⁴ Romans 12:4-8: *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is **prophesying**, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is **servicing**, let him serve; if it is **teaching**, let him teach; if it is **encouraging**, let him encourage; if it is **contributing** to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is **leadership**, let him govern diligently; if it is **showing mercy**, let him do it cheerfully.*

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:7-11: *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the **message of wisdom**, to another the **message of knowledge** by means of the same Spirit, to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another **gifts of healing** by that one Spirit, to another **miraculous powers**, to another **prophecy**, to another **distinguishing between spirits**, to another speaking in different kinds of*

*tongues, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues**. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

²⁶ 1Corinthians 12:27-31: *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all **apostles**, second **prophets**, third **teachers**, then workers of **miracles**, also those having **gifts of healing**, those able to **help** others, those with **gifts of administration**, and those speaking in different kinds of **tongues**. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.*

²⁷ Ephesians 4:2-7, 11-13: *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ... It was he who gave some to be **apostles**, some to be **prophets**, some to be **evangelists**, and some to be **pastors and teachers**, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

²⁸ 1Peter 4:10-11: *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone **speaks**, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone **serves**, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

²⁹ Acts 2: the Spirit manifests himself, curiosity draws people, Peter “witnesses” to Jesus and 3000 are saved.

Acts 3: Peter and John heal a cripple, an awed crowd gathers, Peter again witnesses to Jesus and the need for people to repent and turn to God for forgiveness of sins.

Acts 4: Peter and John arrested for the actions of Acts 3 are “filled with the Holy Spirit” and witnesses to the religious leaders that “salvation is found in no one else [Jesus].”

Acts 5: miraculous signs and wonders linked to more and more men and women being added to the church. I could continue for the examples in Acts are especially numerous.

³⁰ 1Corinthians 12:4-7, 11: *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the **manifestation of the Spirit** is given for the common good. ... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and **he gives them to each one, just as he determines**.*

Ephesians 4:11: *It was **he [Christ] who gave** some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ...*

1Peter 4:1: *Each one should use whatever **gift he has received** to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

³¹ Romans 12:4-6: *Just as **each** of us has one body ..., and **each** member belongs to all the others. **We** have different gifts, according to the grace given us. ...*

1Corinthians 12:7: *Now to **each one** the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good*

1Peter 4:10: ***Each one** should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, ...*

³² Romans 12:4-6: *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have **different gifts**, according to the grace given us.*

1Corinthians 12:12-26 makes this point powerfully, I include for brevity only vv. 12, 14: *The body is a unit, though it is made up of **many parts**; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ... Now the body is **not made up of one part but of many**.*

³³ 1Corinthians 12:11: *these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

³⁴ Romans 12:5: *so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*
1 Corinthians 12:7: *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*
1 Peter 4:10: *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, ...*

³⁵ Ephesians 4:12-13: *to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

³⁶ Romans 8:29a: *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, ...*

³⁷ Philippians 2:3-8: *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death--
even death on a cross!*

³⁸ Galatians 5:22-25: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

³⁹ Graham, 239.

⁴⁰ Stott, *Baptism*, 77.

⁴¹ Graham, 239.

⁴² Green, 199.

⁴³ We find no instances in the New Testament where someone says of themselves, "I am filled/full of the Holy Spirit" rather all comments about someone being "filled/full of the Spirit" are made by others who observe a character and depth of faith warranting that distinction. Likewise we believe we should avoid self-declarations about our being filled/full of the Spirit, instead as followers of Jesus we should seek to be filled by the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and then live faithfully for Jesus hopefully allowing others to see Jesus and the Spirit at work in our lives.

⁴⁴ Graham, 120.

⁴⁵ Ephesians 4:4-6: *There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

⁴⁶ Romans 14:1, 4, 12, 22: *Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God..*

⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 13:13: *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

⁴⁸ Gray, *Come Holy Spirit*

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APPENDIX OF EXTENDED NOTES

^A From page 2: Joan Gray. Come Holy Spirit? The Presbyterian Outlook, June 4, 2007. Available at <http://www.pres-outlook.com/tabid/1595/Article/4994/Default.aspx>. Joan is the Moderator of the 217th PC (USA) General Assembly and a pastor from Atlanta, Ga.:

In the 1970s I came of age theologically in a Presbyterian Church (PCUS) that was facing two threats: the formation of the Presbyterian Church in America and the charismatic movement. Though the PCA decimated the PCUS in some areas, it was the charismatic movement that seemed to inspire more fear. Stories abounded of church members, or sometimes ministers, attending charismatic conferences and coming back to split their congregations. Everything connected with the Holy Spirit became suspect. Just mentioning the Spirit was the kiss of death for candidates being examined on the floor of presbytery. The specter of fanaticism and schism hung over anything deemed to be “spiritual.”

Much of this fear was well grounded. The predominant focus on the flamboyant gifts and manifestations of the Spirit, such as glossolalia, tended toward a “more spiritual than thou” attitude in charismatics. With good reason, persons not caught up in the movement resented the implication that their faith was lacking if they were not speaking in tongues and having knock-your-socks-off emotional experiences. I once heard a wise Episcopal priest, himself a part of the movement, say that anyone who gets the Spirit should be locked in a closet for fifteen years until he or she matures. Many churches paid dearly in those days for the spiritual immaturity of people on both sides of the charismatic fence.

However, several decades have gone by since then, and I sense that now might be a good time for Presbyterians to reexamine the place of the Spirit in the life of the church. This time I would suggest a different focus. Rather than focusing on charisma let us focus on *dunamis*.

Power is what is sadly lacking in many of our churches today, spiritual power that transforms lives and has a major impact on communities and the wider world. When you really think about it, this *dunamis* of the Spirit is the only thing the early church had going for it. It had no buildings, no budget, no paid staff, and very few members. However, the power of the Risen Christ that was poured out on all believers at Pentecost blew them out of Jerusalem to transform the world.

When I am with fellow ministers in situations where we can talk honestly these days, I sense in what I hear a yearning for more spiritual power. We want to experience what we preach about and what the Bible talks about more deeply in our own lives and in our churches. Is there something real and vital we can offer people that goes beyond what the therapist, doctor, and social worker can offer? Is there a power that can move us beyond just doing church, however successfully we may be doing it, into the kind of adventure with God that the early Christians had? Is there a power that enables us to engage the powers, principalities, and structures of this world in ways that turn them toward the reign of God? Here I am reminded of Kenneth Leech’s comment that any spirituality worth its salt must ultimately be cosmic in scope (spirituality and pastoral care). It’s not that we aren’t already experiencing some of this power, but is there more than we have yet known?

This is the point at which I think our theology by and large does us a disservice. Assuredly, our confessions along with our systematic theologies and theologians give proper place to the third person of the Trinity. However, the old dispensationalist heresy that interprets the workings of the Spirit in the Bible as something special for that time alone is still alive and well among Presbyterians. This kind of thinking leads us to expect very little from God. Our low expectations of God naturally throw us back on our own human resources to do God’s work. We sink or swim depending on what we have to work with on a human level and, as our denominational statistics show, in large part we are sinking. Have we forgotten that the church was from the beginning meant to be a supernatural institution? Does it offend our scientifically-nurtured sensibilities to admit that the body of Christ might be dependent on the *dunamis* of Christ for its life?

I believe that we can benefit today from a new outpouring of the Spirit’s power as:

- Pastors let ministry drive them to their knees. Many of us are leaving the ministry today because, frankly, it is a punishing profession. The cruelty of some parishioners, along with our own sense of inadequacy, and the needs and conflicts that never end, increasing chew us up and spit us out of the church. However, when we clergy find ourselves at the end of our resources, there is somewhere else to go other than out of ministry. The unceasing challenges of ministry can also be received as an invitation to go deeper with God. A pastor who has the humility to live and minister out of the *dunamis* of Christ rather than his own talents or her own charisma has something authentic and compelling to share. People, especially post-modern people, recognize this as the real thing and are drawn to it.

- Elders are challenged and trained to be spiritual leaders. Calvin had the amazingly radical idea that lay people could actually run the church, and our system of polity is set up for that to happen. The elders of old were spiritual leaders, and the pastor sat on the session as a spiritual leader among spiritual leaders. Somewhere along the way, we lost this understanding. Today most Presbyterian elders would be genuinely shocked at the suggestion that they are spiritual leaders. The idea that their primary task is to seek God's will and lead the church to do it is foreign. They default to the pastor, who is expected to be spiritual enough for everybody. However, because of the way our polity functions, no church will rise above the level of its lay leadership. While elder training is generally neglected in the church, the training of lay people for spiritual leadership and discernment is almost nonexistent. Until this lost art is revived, churches will continue to flounder and even the most gifted Presbyterian pastors will be frustrated.
- Prayer regains its rightful place at the center of our church life. The story of the Acts of the Apostles is really the story of Christ pouring out the power of the Spirit on a praying church. If we truly believe that God can do more than we can ask or imagine, and if we yearn for that to happen in our churches, prayer will shape everything we do. We have to get beyond the perfunctory prayers before and after meetings and anemic prayer groups that spend more time talking than praying. We must reclaim prayer as a predominant means of grace in our individual life, in our corporate life, and in our mission. John Wesley chastised the busy leaders of his class meetings for neglecting prayer asking, "Why are you starving yourselves?" This is not a phenomenon unique to the Methodists. I fear that the epitaph on the grave of our beloved church may be: "They starved themselves to death while doing good."

The Holy Spirit is the birthright of every baptized believer and the only source of life for the church. Jesus promised us in Luke 11:13, *If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!* Maybe now is the time to claim this promise and to invite the Spirit to move and shake again in the church.

^B From page 4: Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, contains a rich and full chapter on "The Spirit in the Individual" where he writes about many aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit that are accepted by Christians of all stripes. This chapter includes topics like:

The Spirit assures us – through signs: with individual sub-sections...

- changed behavior
- fellowship
- love, joy, and power
- Inner confidence
- Assurance not presumption

Another topic is **Five aspects of belonging to the Spirit...**

- Adoption
- Seal
- First installment
- Firstfruits
- Assurance

Through these and other topics Green lays out numerous core understanding on the Holy Spirit. We reference this and encourage the reading of this chapter for the sole purpose of emphasizing that most aspects of the Holy Spirit are not controversial.

We also came across a Charles Spurgeon sermon, *The Power of the Holy Spirit*, which delineates many of the universally held functions of the Holy Spirit. Following a summary we reprint the entire sermon below for your continued study and edification.

Sermon Summary: Spurgeon explained that the Holy Spirit was given for a number of reasons, including demonstrating the power of God, transforming believers into Christ-likeness, enabling believers to accomplish God's kingdom purposes in the world and ultimately glorifying God. Within the believer, the power of the Holy Spirit works to transform the inner person including their hearts, wills and imaginations. The Holy Spirit also perfects the believer in holiness and destroys the works of the devil. The power believers receive from the Spirit is to witness (Acts 1:8) and demonstrate the gospel of the kingdom of God, not only in word but also in power (1Cor 2:4-5, 4:20). Spurgeon goes on to say that there are many kinds of demonstrations of the power of the Spirit including the power to heal and cast out demons (Mt 10:1, John 14:12) and that sometimes the Spirit's demonstrations of

power come unexpectedly. This power of the Spirit is sometimes referred to as “the anointing,” which enables believers to do what Christ wants them to do and that is to destroy the works of the devil (1Jn3:8b).

C. H. Spurgeon. *The Power of the Holy Spirit* (preached June 17, 1855) © Copyright 2002 by Tony Capoccia. This updated file may be freely copied, printed out, and distributed as long as copyright and source statements remain intact, and that it is not sold. All rights reserved.

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“The Power of the Holy Spirit.”--Romans 15:13

Power is the special and distinctive prerogative of God, and God alone. Power belongs to God. God is God: and power belongs to him. If he delegates a portion of it to his creatures, yet it still is *his* power. The sun in the heavens, although it is “...like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course” [Psalm 19:5], yet it has no power to move through the universe except as God directs it. The stars, although they travel in their orbits and no one can stop them, yet they have neither power nor force except that which God daily infuses into them. The tall archangel, near God’s throne, who outshines a comet in its brilliance, and who excels in strength and listens to the voice of the commands of God, still has no strength except that which his Creator gives to him. As for Leviathan, who causes the sea to boil like a pot that one would think the ocean was white: as for Hippopotamus, who could almost drink up the Jordan in one swallow, and boasts that he can inhale rivers; as for those majestic creatures that are found on earth, they owe their strength to him who formed their bones of steel and made their muscle of brass. And when we think of man if he has might or power, it is so small and insignificant, that we can scarcely call it such; yes, when it is at its greatest-when he waves his scepter, when he commands vast armies, when he rules nations-still the power belongs to God.

This exclusive prerogative of God is to be found in each of the three persons of the glorious Trinity. The Father has power: for at his word the heavens were made, and by his strength all things continue, and through him they fulfill their destiny. The Son has power: for like his Father, he is the Creator of all things; “Without him nothing was made that has been made” [John 1:3], and “in him all things hold together” [Colossians 1:17]. And the Holy Spirit has power.

It is concerning the power of the Holy Spirit that I will speak this morning; and may you gain a practical example of that attribute in your own hearts, when you sense that the influence of the Holy Spirit is being poured out on me, so that I am speaking the words of the living God to your souls, and the power bestowed on you when you feel the effects of it in your own souls.

We will look at the power of the Holy Spirit in three ways this morning. First, *the outward and visible displays of his power*, second, *the inward and spiritual manifestations of his power*, and third, *the future works of his power*. I trust that the power of the Spirit will be clearly presented to your souls.

I. First, the OUTWARD AND VISIBLE DISPLAYS of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The power of the Spirit has not been dormant; it has exerted itself. Much has been done by the Spirit of God already; more than could have been accomplished by any being except the Infinite, Eternal, Almighty Jehovah, with whom the Holy Spirit is one person.

There are four works which are the outward and visible signs of the power of the Holy Spirit: creation works; resurrection works; works of testimony; and works of grace. I will briefly speak on each of these works.

1. First, the Holy Spirit has demonstrated the omnipotence of his power in *creation works*; for sometimes creation is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Father and the Son.

The creation of the heavens above us is said to be the work of God’s Spirit. This you will see at once by referring to the sacred Scriptures, Job, chapter 26, and verse 13, “By his Spirit he has [adorned] the heavens, and his hand has formed the crooked serpent” [KJV]. All the stars of heaven are said to have been placed there by the Holy Spirit, and one particular constellation called the “crooked serpent” is especially pointed out as his handiwork. He loosens the cords of

Orion and he joined the beautiful Pleiades. He made all the stars that shine in heaven. The heavens were adorned by his hands, and he formed the crooked serpent by his power.

In addition, the Holy Spirit’s power is displayed in those continued acts of creation which are still performed in the world; such as the creation and birth of men, women, and animals. These are also ascribed to the Holy Spirit. If you look at Psalm 104, verses 29 and 30, you will read, “When you [God] hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your [Holy] Spirit, they

are created, and you renew the face of the earth.” Therefore the creation of every man and woman and angel is the work of the Holy Spirit: and the creation of all life and all flesh in this world is as much to be ascribed to the power of the Holy Spirit as the creation of the heavens. But if you will look in the 1st chapter of Genesis, you will see even more clearly presented that special act of power on the universe which was done by the Holy Spirit; you will discover what his special work was. In the

2nd verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis, we read, “The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” We don’t know for certain how long it has been since the universe was first created. Our planet has passed through various stages of existence, and different kinds of creatures have lived on its surface, all of which have been created by God. But before that time came, when man became its principal tenant and monarch, the earth was formless, and empty; and darkness was over the surface of the deep. The Holy Spirit came, commanded the darkness to separate, and as he moved over it, all the different pieces of matter came into their places, and it was no longer “formless and empty;” but became round and began to move, singing the high praises of God-not out of tune as it had done before, but as one great note in the vast scale of creation. This was done by the power of the Holy Spirit. If we could have seen that earth in all of its confusion, we would have said, “Who can make a world out of this?” The answer would have been, “The power of the Holy Spirit can do it. He can make all the things come together. There will be order where there was nothing but confusion.”

Nor is this the only power of the Holy Spirit. We have seen some of his works in creation. But there was one particular instance of creation in which the Holy Spirit was more particularly concerned, namely, the creation of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a woman and made in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet the power that conceived him came entirely from God the Holy Spirit-as the Scriptures reveal, the Angel Gabriel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God” [Luke 1:35]. The physical body of the Lord Jesus Christ was a masterpiece of the Holy Spirit. I suppose his body would have excelled all others in beauty; to have been like that of the first man, the very pattern of what the body is to be in heaven, when it will shine forth in all its glory. That body, in all of its beauty and perfection, was formed by the Holy Spirit. He created and shaped the body of Jesus, thus here again we have another instance of the creative energy of the Spirit.

2. A second demonstration of the Holy Spirit’s power is to be found in the *resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

If you have ever studied this subject, you have perhaps been rather perplexed to find that sometimes the resurrection of Christ is ascribed to Jesus. By his own power and divinity he could not be held by the chains of death, for just as he willingly gave up his life he also had the power to take it back again. In another section of Scripture you will find the resurrection of Christ attributed to God the Father: “He [the glorious Father] raised him from the dead” [Ephesians 1:20:]” “God exalted him” [Acts 5:31], and many other similar passages. But, again, it is said in Scripture that Jesus Christ was raised by the Holy Spirit. Now all these things are true. Jesus was raised by the Father because the Father said, “Let the prisoner go. Justice is satisfied. My law does not require any more compensation-vengeance has had its day, let him go.” Here the Father gave an official message which delivered Jesus from the grave. And yet, Jesus still was raised by his own majesty and power because he had a right to come out of the grave and he knew that he had, and therefore he “broke the chains of death: he could no longer be held by them.” But, the actual power that raised his body was the power of the Holy Spirit. It was the power of Holy Spirit by which the body of Jesus was raised from the grave after having laid there for three days and nights. If you want proofs of this you must turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter 3:18, “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body **but made alive by the Spirit.**” And you can find further proof in Romans 8:11, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”

The resurrection of Christ, then, was achieved by the activity of the Holy Spirit, and here we have a good illustration of his omnipotence. If you could have stepped, as angels did, into the grave of Jesus, and seen his dead body, you would have found it as cold as any other corpse. Lift up the hand, it falls by the side. Look at the eye: it is glazed. There the gash in his side, which was to ensure that all life is destroyed. See his hands; the blood does not drip from them,

They are cold and motionless. Can that body live? Can it rise up again? Yes; it can and will be an illustration of the power of the Holy Spirit. For when the power of the Holy Spirit came on Jesus, as it was when it fell on the dry bones of the valley [Ezekiel 37:4-5]: “He arose in the majesty of his divinity, and bright and shining, astonished the guards so that they ran away, yes, he arose no more to die, but to live forever, King of kings and Prince of the kings of the earth.”

3. The third demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power, is *testimony works*. I mean by this-works of witnessing.

When Jesus Christ was baptized in the river Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove, and proclaimed him to be God's beloved son. That was what I call a testimony work. And later when Jesus Christ raised the dead, when he healed the leper, when he spoke to diseases and they fled away, when demons by the thousands were cast out from those who were possessed by them, it was done by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lived in Jesus without limit, and by that power all those miracles were accomplished. These were testimony works. And after Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, you will remember the greatest testimony of the Holy Spirit when he came like a mighty rushing wind upon the assembled apostles, and tongues of fire came to rest on each of them; and you will remember how the Holy Spirit testified to their ministry by giving them the ability to speak with tongues, as he gave them utterance; and how, also, miraculous works were produced by them, how they taught, how Peter raised Dorcas, how he breathed life into Eutychus, how great works were done by the apostles just like they were done by their Master-so that Paul could say, "I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done-by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the [Holy] Spirit." Who will doubt the power of the Holy Spirit after that? Ah! those Socinians who deny the existence of the Holy Spirit and his absolute personality, what will they do when we reveal to them the Holy Spirit's work in creation, resurrection, and testimonies? They must rush in the very teeth of Scripture. But note this! it is a stone on which if any man falls he will be bruised; but if it falls on him, as it will do if he resists it, it will grind him to powder. The Holy Spirit has omnipotent power-the power of God.

4. Once more, if we want another outward and visible sign of the power of the Holy Spirit, we can look at the *works of grace*.

Remember the city where there lived a sorcerer named Simon who boasted of divine power and that he was someone great. Philip then enters that city and preaches the Word of God, and right away Simon loses all of his power and seeks that the power of the Holy Spirit be given to him, even believing that it might be purchased with money.

Now move to modern times, to a pagan country where the inhabitants live in gloomy tents, feeding on reptiles and other wretched creatures; observe them bowing down before their idols and worshipping their false gods, and therefore plunged in superstition, so degraded and debased, that it was questionable whether they had souls or not; Now observe that a Scottish missionary, named Robert Moffat, goes with the Word of God in his hand to these lost people, listen to him preach as the Holy Spirit gives him the words, and accompanies that Word with power. They throw away their idols-they hate and abhor their former lusts; they begin to build houses, where they live; they become clothed, and in their right mind. They destroy their bows, and break their spears in two; the uncivilized become civilized; the savage becomes polite; he who knew nothing begins to read the Scriptures, thus out of the mouths of savages God shows the power of his mighty Spirit.

Now, coming back to our country-go to a household in this city-and we could guide you to many where the father is a drunkard; he has been the most desperate of characters; see him in his madness, and you might just as well meet an unchained tiger as to meet such a man. He seems as if he could tear a man to pieces who would offend him. Note his wife. She, too, has a spirit in her, and when he treats her badly she can resist him; many fights have been seen in that house, and often has the neighborhood been disturbed by the noise created there. As for the poor little children-see them in their rags and nakedness, poor untaught little ones. Untaught, did I say? They are taught and well taught in the devil's school and are growing up to be the heirs of damnation. But then someone whom God has blessed by his Spirit is guided to the house. Perhaps, he may only be a humble city missionary but he speaks to the wicked man: "Sir," he says, "come and listen to the voice of God." Whether it is his own witnessing, or a minister's preaching, the Word, which is quick and powerful, cuts to the sinner's heart. The tears run down his cheeks such as never been seen before. He shakes and shudders. The strong man bows down-the mighty man trembles-and those knees that never shook begin to knock together. That heart which never trembled before, now begins to shake before the power of the Holy Spirit. He bends his knees, while his lips utter a child's prayer, but, although it is a child's prayer, a prayer of a child of God. He becomes a new creation. Note the reformation in his house! His wife becomes a respectable woman. Those children become obedient and well-mannered, and in due time they grow up like olive branches around his table, adorning his house like polished stones. Walk pass the house-no noise or fights, but rather we hear songs of Zion. Look at him-no more drunkenness; he has drunk his last drink; and now renouncing it, he comes to God and is his servant. Now, you will not hear at midnight the drunken shout; but should there be a noise, it will be the sound of the solemn hymn of praise to God. And, now, let me ask you, is there such a thing as the power of the Holy Spirit? Yes, there is, and these persons, just mentioned, have witnessed it and seen it.

I know a village, once, perhaps, the most wicked in England—a village inundated by drunkenness and wickedness of the worst kind, where it was almost impossible for an honest traveler to stop in the city without being annoyed by blasphemy; a place noted for arsons and robbers. One man, the ringleader, listened to the voice of God. That man's heart was broken. The whole gang came to hear the gospel preached, and they sat and seemed to reverence the preacher as if he were a god, and not a man. These men were changed and reformed; and every one who knows the place affirms that such a change had no other explanation than that it had been accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let the gospel be preached and the Holy Spirit poured out, and you will see that it has the power to change the conscience, to improve the conduct, to raise the debased, to chastise and to curb the wickedness of men and women. The change will be so noticeable that you must the glory to God. I say, there is nothing like the power of the Holy Spirit. Only let that come, and, indeed, everything can be accomplished.

II. Now, for our second major point this morning, THE INNER SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

What I have already spoken of may be seen; what I am about to speak of must be felt, and no one will understand the truth of what I say unless they have felt it. Even the unbeliever must confess, and the greatest blasphemer, if they would be honest, cannot deny the outward and visible manifestations of the Holy Spirit. But the inner spiritual power of the Holy Spirit is what the unbeliever and blasphemer will laugh at as being nothing but emotion and the invention of our confused minds. However, no matter what they say, we have a clear testimony. We have a witness within. We know it is the truth, and we are not afraid to speak of the inner spiritual power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us now notice three ways the inner spiritual power of the Holy Spirit is easily seen and thus worthy of our praise.

1. First, we note that the inner spiritual power of the Holy Spirit has *power over the hearts of men and women.*

Normally, it is very hard to affect a person's heart. However, if you want to get at them for any worldly purpose you can do it. A cheating world can win the hearts of men and women, a little gold can win their hearts, a bit of fame and a little applause can win their hearts. But there is not a minister alive, who by himself, can win the hearts of men and women. He can win their ears and make them listen; he can win their eyes, and cause those eyes to look at him; he can win their attention, but their hearts are very slippery. Yes, the heart is like a fish that all gospel fishermen find difficult to hold on to. You may sometimes almost pull it out of the water; but slippery as an eel, it slips between your fingers, and evades capture. Many a minister has imagined that he has caught the heart but has been disappointed. It would need a strong hunter to overtake the deer on the mountains. It is too fast for a human on foot to approach.

Only the Holy Spirit has power over the hearts of men and women. Did you ever try your power on a heart? If any person thinks that a minister can convert the soul, I wish they would try. Let them go and become a Sunday-school teacher. They will take their class, they will have the best books that can be obtained, they will have the best rules, they will draw their lines of defenses around their fortified spiritual city, they will take the best child in their class, and if they are not tired in a week I will be very much surprised. Let them spend four or five Sundays in trying, and in the end they will say, "The young person is incorrigible." Let them try another. And they will have to try another, and another, and another, before they will manage to convert one. They will soon find it is "'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty." [Zechariah 4:6] Can a minister convert anyone? Can he touch the heart? David said, your "...hearts are callous and unfeeling." [Psalm 119:70] Yes, that is very true; and we cannot break through such a hard heart. Our sword cannot get at the heart, for it is so calloused and unfeeling, it is harder than a millstone. Many a sharp blade has been blunted by the hard heart. Many pieces of the true steel that God has put into the hands of his servants has had the edge dulled by being used against the sinner's heart. We cannot reach the soul; but the Holy Spirit can. He can give a sense of blood-bought pardon that will dissolve a heart of stone. He can,

*"Speak with that voice which wakes the dead,
And commands the sinner to rise:
And makes the guilty conscience dread
The death that never dies."*

He can make Sinai's thunders audible; yes, and he can make the sweet whisperings of Calvary enter into the soul. He has power over the hearts of men and women. And here is a glorious proof of the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit that he has rule over the heart.

2. But if there is one thing more stubborn than the heart it is *the will*.

"My lord; Will-be-will," as John Bunyan calls him in his book "Holy War," is a fellow who will not easily be convinced. The will, especially in some men and women, is a very stubborn thing, and in all men and women, if the will is once stirred up in opposition, there is nothing that can be done with them.

Some believe in *freewill*. Many dream of *freewill*. Freewill! Where is that to be found? Once there was freewill in Paradise, and freewill made a terrible mess there, for it spoiled all of Paradise and turned Adam and Eve out of the garden. Freewill once existed in heaven, but it turned the glorious archangel out and a third part of the angels of heaven fell into the abyss. I want nothing to do with freewill, but I will try to see whether I have a free will within me. And I find that I have. I have a very free will to commit evil, but a very poor will to do that which is good. I demonstrate my freewill when I sin, but when I want to do good evil is present with me, and I cannot carry it out. Yet some boast of freewill. I wonder whether those who believe in freewill have any more power over other person's wills than I have. I know I have no power. I find the old proverb is very true, "One man can bring a horse to the water, but a hundred cannot make him drink." I find that I can bring all of you to the water, and a great many more than can fit into this church; but I cannot make you drink; and I don't think a hundred ministers could make you drink. I have read all about the great preachers, Rowland Hill, and George Whitfield, and several others to see what their secret was; but I cannot discover from them any plan that would work in turning your wills. I cannot coax you; and you will not yield by any other means. I don't think any man has power over his fellow creature's will, but the Spirit of God has. "I will make them willing in the day of my power." He makes the unwilling sinner so willing that he is eager for the gospel; he who was obstinate, now runs to the cross. He, who laughed at Jesus, now begs for his mercy; and he who would not believe, is now made by the Holy Spirit to do it, not only willingly, but eagerly; he is happy, he is glad to do it, rejoices in the sound of Jesus' name, and delights to obey God's commands. The Holy Spirit has power over the will.

3. And yet there is one thing more which I think is worse than the will. The will is somewhat worse than the heart to bend but there is one thing that exceeds the will in its wickedness, and that is the *imagination*.

I hope that my will is managed by Divine Grace, but I am afraid that at times, my thoughts are not. Those who have a fair share of imagination know what a difficult thing it is to control. You cannot restrain it. It will break the reins. You will never be able to manage it. The imagination will sometimes fly up to God with such a power that eagles' wings cannot match it. It sometimes has such power that it can almost see the King in his beauty, and the land which is very far off. With regard to myself, my imagination will sometimes take me over the gates of iron, across that infinite unknown, to the very gates of pearl, and discovers the blessed home of the glorified. But if it is powerful one way it is also powerful in another; for my imagination has taken me down to the vilest gutters and sewers of the earth. It has given me thoughts so dreadful, that while I could not avoid them, yet I was thoroughly horrified at them. These thoughts will come, and when I feel in the holiest frame of mind, the most devoted to God, and the most earnest in prayer, it often happens that that is the very time when the plagues breaks out the worst. But I rejoice and think of one thing, that I can cry out to the Holy Spirit when these thoughts come upon me. I know it is said in the Book of Deuteronomy, when an act of rape was committed, that if the girl cried out against it, then her life was to be spared. So it is with the Christian. If they cry out there is hope. Can you chain your imagination? No; but the power of the Holy Spirit can. Yes, he will do it, and He does it throughout all of eternity; He does it even on earth today.

III. Lastly this morning, I want us to look at the FUTURE WORKS of the Holy Spirit--for although the Holy Spirit has done so much already he cannot say, "It is finished."

Jesus Christ could cry out concerning his own work of salvation-"It is finished." But the Holy Spirit cannot say that. He still has more to do: and until the fulfillment of all things, when the Son himself becomes subject to the Father, it will not be said by the Holy Spirit, "It is finished." What, then, are the future works of the Holy Spirit?

1. First, the Holy Spirit has to *perfect us in holiness*.

There are two kinds of perfection which a Christian needs-one is the perfection of justification in the person of Jesus; and the other is, the perfection of sanctification worked in them by the Holy Spirit. Presently corruption still resides even in the hearts of the regenerate. At present the heart is partially impure. At present there are still lusts and evil thoughts. But, Oh! my soul rejoices to know that the day is coming when God will finish the work

which he has begun; and he will present my soul, not only perfect in Christ, but, perfect in the Spirit, without spot or blemish, or any such thing. And is it true that this poor depraved heart is to become as holy as that of God? And is it true that my spirit, which often cries, "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this sin and death!" will get rid of sin and death-I will have no evil things to bother my ears, and no unholy thoughts to disturb my peace? Oh! Joyful hour! May it soon come! At the moment of my death, sanctification will be finished; but not till that moment will I ever claim perfection in myself. But at that moment when I depart, my spirit will have its last baptism in the Holy Spirit's fire. It will be put in the crucible for its final refinement in the furnace; and then, free from all impurities, and fine like a wedge of pure gold, it will be presented at the feet of God without the least degree of impurities or contamination. O glorious hour! O blessed moment! I think I would still long to die even if there were no heaven, if I might but have that last purification, and come up from Jordan's stream pure white from the washing. Oh! To be washed white, clean, pure, perfect! No angel will be more pure than I will be-yes, as holy as God himself! And I will be able to say, in a double sense, "Great and Glorious God, I am clean-through the blood of Jesus I am clean, through the Holy Spirit's work I am clean too!" We must praise the power of the Holy Spirit for making us fit to stand before our Father in heaven!

2. Another great work of the Holy Spirit which is not yet accomplished is *the bringing on of the latter-day glory.*

In a few more years-I don't know when, I don't know how-the Holy Spirit will be poured out in a far different way than the present. There are diversities of ministries; and during the last few years it has been the case that the diversified ministries have consisted in very little pouring out of the Spirit. Ministers have gone on in a dull routine, continually preaching-preaching-preaching, and little good has been accomplished. I do hope that perhaps a fresh era has begun, and that there is a better pouring out of the Spirit even now. For the hour is coming, and it may be that it now is, when the Holy Spirit will be poured out again in such a wonderful manner that many will go here and there to increase knowledge-the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth just as the waters cover the surface, when his kingdom will come, and his will, will be done on earth even as it is in heaven. We are not going to be dragging on forever. My heart praises and my eyes sparkle with the thought that very likely I will live to see the out-pouring of the Spirit when "the sons and the daughters of God again will prophecy, and the young men will see visions, and the old men will dream dreams." Perhaps there will be no miraculous gifts-for they will not be required; but yet there will be such a miraculous amount of holiness, such an extraordinary fervor of prayer, such a real communion with God and so much true religion, and such a spread of the doctrines of the cross, that every one will see that truly the Holy Spirit is poured out like water and the rains are descending from above. For that let us pray: let us continually labor for it, and seek it from God.

3. One more future work of the Holy Spirit which will clearly show his power is *the general resurrection.*

We have reason to believe from Scripture that the resurrection of the dead, while it will be effected by the voice of God and of his Word, (the Son) will also be brought about by the Holy Spirit. That same power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead, will also cause your mortal bodies to come alive. The power of the resurrection is perhaps one of the finest proofs of the works of the Spirit. Oh! my friends, if this earth could have its crust torn away for a little while, if the green sod could be pulled back from it, and we could look down about six feet into its heart, what a world it would seem! What would we see? Bones, carcasses, rotteness, worms, and decay. And you would say, "Can these dry bones live? Can they rise up?" "Yes! in a moment! in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the dead will be raised." He speaks: they are alive! See them scattered: bone comes to his bone! See their bare skeletons: flesh comes on them! See them still and lifeless: "Come from the four winds, O **breath**, and breathe into these slain!" When the wind of the Holy Spirit comes, they live, and they stand up on their feet a very great army of saints.

Thus I have attempted to speak of the power of the Holy Spirit, and I trust I have shown it to you. We must now have a moment or two for practical application. Oh, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the Holy Spirit is very powerful! What do you infer from that fact?

Why, that you never need to distrust the power of God to carry you to heaven.

The power of the Holy Spirit is your protection, and all his omnipotence defends you. Can your enemies overcome omnipotence? If they could then they can conquer you. Can they wrestle with Deity, and throw him to the ground? If they could then they might be able to conquer you. But we are safe because the power of the Holy Spirit is our power; the power of the Holy Spirit is our strength.

Once again, dear Christians, if this is the power of the Holy Spirit, *why should you doubt anything?*

There is your son. There is that wife of yours for whom you have prayed for so frequently: don't doubt the Holy Spirit's power. "Though he delays with an answer, wait for him." There is your husband, O holy woman! And you have wrestled in prayer for his soul. And though he is ever so hardened and desperate a wretch, and treats you badly there is power in the Holy Spirit. And, you who have come from weak churches with scarcely a bit of truth. Don't doubt the power of the Holy Spirit to raise you up. For it will be a "pasture for flocks, a den of wild donkeys," open, but deserted, until the Holy Spirit is poured out from on high. And then the parched ground will be made a pool, and the thirsty land will be covered with springs of water.

And, you who are members of our church! And especially you who remember what your God has done for you, never distrust the power of the Spirit. You have seen the wilderness blossom like Carmel, you have seen the desert blossom like the rose; trust him for the future. Then go out and labor with this conviction, that the power of the Holy Spirit is able to do anything. Go to your Sunday-school; go to your tract distribution; go to your missionary enterprise! Go to your witnessing, with the conviction that the power of the Holy Spirit is our great help.

And now, lastly, to you sinners, to you who are not saved-What is there to be said to you about this power of the Holy Spirit?

Why, to me, there is some hope for some of you. I cannot save you: I cannot convince you. I make you cry sometimes-you wipe your eyes, and it is all over. But I know my Master can. That is my consolation. Chief of sinners, there is hope for you! This power can save you as well as anybody else. It is able to break your heart, though it is made of iron; to make your eyes run with tears though they have been like rocks before. His power is able this morning, if he is willing to change your heart, to turn the current of all your ideas, to immediately make you a child of God, to justify you in Christ. There is enough power in the Holy Spirit. You are not weak in him, but in your own hearts. He is able to bring sinners to Jesus: he is able to make you willing in the day of his power. Are you willing this morning? Has he gone so far as to make you desire his name, to make you wish for Jesus? Then, O sinner! while he draws you, say, "Draw me, I am wretched without you." Follow him, follow him, and while he leads, follow in his footsteps, and rejoice that he has begun a good work in you, for there is evidence that he will continue it even to the end. And, O desponding one! put your trust in the power of the Holy Spirit. Rest in the blood of Jesus, and your soul is safe, not only now, but throughout eternity. God bless all of you who have listened to this sermon. Amen.

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^C From page 4: Our pastor found an affinity with both Keener and Green in their books on the Holy Spirit partly because they seemed to straddle the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" divide with grace and clarity landing somewhere in the "in-between" area. Another "tweener" is C. Peter Wagner who seems to have coined the phrase "Third Wave" to refer to people open to the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit and to signs and wonders yet who do not hold the classic Pentecostal/charismatic position of tongues as the authenticating gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Wagner's book "The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit" is not an exegetical study, like those of Keener and especially Green, rather it chronicles his faith journey toward openness to signs and wonders of the Holy Spirit. In it he writes:

The Third Wave is a new moving of the Holy Spirit among evangelicals who, for one reason or another, have chosen not to identify with either the Pentecostals or the charismatics...

The major distinguishing point of the Third Wave is not the final result of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Within it the sick are being healed, the lame are walking, demons are being cast out, and other New Testament manifestations of supernatural power are seen. This has been happening among Pentecostals and charismatics for years.

The major variation comes in the understanding of the meaning of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the role of tongues in authenticating this. I myself, for example, would rather not have people call me a charismatic. I do not consider myself a charismatic. I am simply an evangelical Congregationalist who is open to the Holy Spirit working through me and my church in any way he chooses. (pp. 18-19)

^D From page 4: For us Michael Green's textual insights put to rest this post conversion notion once and for all (his entire chapter "The Spirit's Baptism" on is worth reading). Green (174) exegetes with clarity Acts 19, which is probably the lead passage for those arguing for a post conversion experience called baptism with the Holy Spirit.:

Equally, there is no ground for supposing that the events of Acts 19 are meant to advocate a two-stage initiation for Christian people. It is clearly an exceptional instance: only a handful of men are involved, a mere dozen 'disciples'. The word to be sure, usually denotes Christians, and Paul initially mistook them for Christians. But he soon found out his mistake. They seemed to possess none of the marks of the Spirit's indwelling. So he asked them, not, as the Authorized Version rather carelessly put it, 'Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?', as if the Greek warranted some great space between their belief and their reception of the Spirit; but, 'Have you believed and received the Holy Spirit?' – the participle 'believing' being contemporaneous with their 'receiving'. It is unfortunate that many Pentecostal writings still rely on this simple mistranslation of the Greek original for their teaching on a two-stage experience.

Green later reveals his firm planting in the land of "in-between" when he writes (189-190):

On the other hand, if the language which neo-Pentecostals use for their experience is unfortunate, this is not the case with the experience itself. It is tragic that many Christians have robbed themselves of the blessing because they distrust, feared or despised this movement. They have been satisfied with a low level of spirituality. They have not allowed God to release them in prayer and praise and personal relationships, from the imprisonment of age-long inhibitions. ...

Let those who want to retain the New Testament link between baptism in the Spirit and water baptism, justification, adoption –becoming a Christian, in fact- make very sure that it is the full New Testament concept of baptism which they espouse; a plunging beneath the waters of the Spirit, an inundation with him, a vitality produced by him that could cause folk to wonder if we were drunk. Have we that power in prayer, that strength over temptation, that growing Christlikeness, which marked the communities of Christ in the New Testament days and of which the one baptism was the outward bond?

^E From page 5: Michael Green (pp. 159-163) provides a more detailed glimpse of the various understandings of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which we include here in the endnotes for those who care to read further. This extended quote is the opening paragraphs of Chapter 8, which is titled "The Spirit's Baptism."

1. The Spirit and Baptism

One of the most lively debates about contemporary spirituality concerns what is often called baptism 'in' or 'by' the Holy Spirit. Broadly speaking, there are three attitudes towards it.

Is the Spirit's baptism water baptism?

First, there are those who identify baptism in the Holy Spirit with water baptism If a person has been baptized with water in the name of the Trinity, then he must be considered as a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, a person equipped with the Spirit of God. Those who take this view believe that the sacrament does not merely symbolize but actually effects the change from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, from death to life. They rightly stress the objective nature of Christ's incarnation and atonement which are, as it were, made over to us in baptism. They rightly stress that we are saved not because of anything that we do, but because of what has been done for us by Christ independent of any of our efforts and fancied merits, and long prior to any response that we may make. They properly point to the one baptism shared by Christians throughout the world as the really significant way of marking allegiance to Jesus and fellowship with all others who share the baptismal bath.

But where this view is weak is in the whole area of personal response, of faith, of allegiance. There are millions of people who have been baptized in infancy without their knowledge or consent; they have been 'done' surreptitiously in a parish church on a Sunday afternoon when nobody but the family was present. They neither believe in the Christian story themselves, nor do those who brought them to baptism, except perhaps in the most general, not to say superstitious terms. They do not practice the Christian religion. They do not go to church. They do not believe the creeds. They do not know anything of the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit. They question is forced sharply upon us: in what sense is it meaningful to speak of such people as Christians despite the fact that they have been baptized with water in the name of the Trinity?

Is the Spirit's baptism conversion?

The second main view is the. Baptism with the Holy Spirit is identical with conversion. When a man repents and believes in Christ, when he makes his life over to the Lordship of Jesus and receives the Spirit of the risen Christ into his personality, he is thereby baptized with the Holy Spirit. This view, common in Protestant and Evangelical churches, is strong where the previous view was weak, and, conversely, weak where the previous view was strong.

Its strength lies in its stress on personal response to the grace of God in Christ. Personal repentance and personal faith are crucial if the Holy Spirit is to baptize us into Christ.

But what about water baptism, on this view? It is either thought to be largely irrelevant (after all, what does the symbol matter if you have the reality?) or merely the mark of man's repentance and faith. Assuredly, baptism is integrally connected with repentance and faith, but is that all there is to it? Is it entirely something we do, and not at all something that God does to or for us? If so, it is very odd that the New Testament does not talk about a man baptizing himself; instead, baptism is always something that is done for him by another. Clearly, we shall have to look a bit closer at the meaning of baptism in the New Testament before we can accept this identification of conversion with baptism in the Spirit. And even if we were convinced, it would still pose problems, this Protestant view. It is too cerebral, too intellectual. How about the children of believing families? Must they remain alienated from the Spirit of God until they make an act of personal faith? Is the Church merely the body of those who can exercise active belief? Has the Church no room for those who are too old, too young, or too mentally ill-equipped to believe the good news and entrust themselves to Christ? Must all such people be cut off from the Holy Spirit?

Is the Spirit's baptism a two-stage initiation?

The third answer to this question 'What is baptism in the Holy Spirit?' comes with a divided voice from two very dissimilar backgrounds.

The Catholic view

On the one hand, some Catholics, seeing the inadequacy of supposing that water baptism of infants must necessarily produce new birth by the Spirit, have argued that it is not baptism alone, but baptism accompanied (normally years later) by the imposition of hand sin confirmation, which imparts that Holy Spirit. Distinguished Catholic theologians like Thornton, Mason and Gregory Dix have taken up this view. They have drawn attention to two passages in the acts where the Holy Spirit was given through the imposition of apostles' hands on the heads of folk who had been baptized but had not received the Holy Spirit. In Acts 8 the Samaritans receive the Spirit through the hands of John and Peter; in Acts 19 some disciples of John the Baptist receive him through the ministry of the apostle Paul. Accordingly, they believe that through confirmation by a bishop who is (it is hoped) in direct line with the apostles, people receive the Holy Spirit in a full and distinctive way at confirmation. The phrase 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' is not normally used by those who think in this way; but they clearly advocate a two-stage Christian initiation. Stage one, baptism, is incomplete; stage two, confirmation, brings the Holy Spirit into a person's life.

The Pentecostal view

Curiously enough, Pentecostal Christians are in the habit of using precisely the same verses to support their claim that Christian initiation is a two-stage affair. Coming, for the most part, from a Protestant background, they are inclined to take a person's conversion as stage one, and a subsequent over-powering experience of the Holy Spirit, which is normally (though not necessarily) accompanied by speaking in tongues, a stage two. It is this second stage which is commonly called by Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals 'the baptism in the Holy Spirit.' It is seen as the indispensable step to spiritual power and a full Christian life. Although Pentecostalism as a denomination dates only from the first decade of the twentieth century, and neo-Pentecostalism (the spread of Spirit-baptism teaching and practice through other denominations) has only become prominent since the middle of that century, the roots go back a long way. John Wesley had taught a 'second work of grace' in the believer subsequent to justification. The worldwide Holiness Movement which includes the Keswick Convention, and boasts such influential names as Finney, Torrey, Andrew Murray and Watchman Nee, espoused this two-stage view of what makes a man a Christian. The nomenclature differed, but whether you spoke of 'entire sanctification', 'the gift', 'the blessing', 'the second blessing' or 'the baptism with the Holy Spirit' made little difference except in detailed description of the contents of the experience. In all cases it meant a new quality of Christian experience distinct from conversion; an experience which for some made Christian living at the previous level look so pale and shoddy that it was hardly worthy of the name Christian at all. And whether the recipients laid special claim to sanctification of the life, as the early Methodists did, or to an experience of the Spirit marked by speaking in tongues, as the Pentecostals did, made little difference in practice. For those who possessed the experience inevitably came to think of themselves as an 'in' group, the people who had arrived; and those who did not share that experience were, inevitably, regarded as in some sense second-class Christians. After all, they hadn't got the baptism in the Holy Spirit...

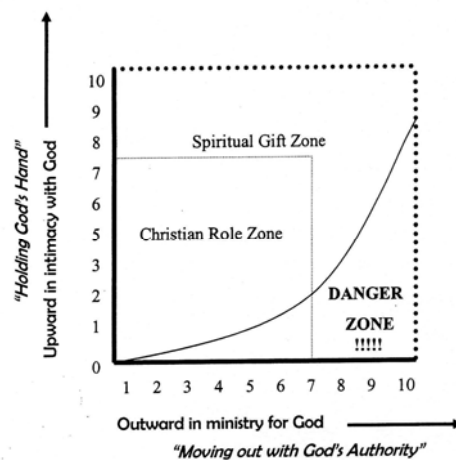
^F From page 7: The idea of healing has an interesting twist in the New Testament. Clearly healing is listed as a gift of the Holy Spirit, actually in 1Corinthians 12:9 it is referred to as gifts of healing. Interestingly in addition to this

manifestation of the Spirit, which the Spirit doles out as He determines, healing is also effected through the laying on of hands and anointing with oil by the elders. This latter is unambiguously noted in James 5:13-18:

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

^G From page 7: In discussing fruit verse deeds, we are reminded of a teaching by Chuck Davis (professor at Alliance Theological Seminar in Nyack, NY) gave to the elders on retreat in 2004 on the danger of moving out in ministry, and especially power ministries, beyond your level of intimacy with the Lord. Using this graphic from C. Peter Wagner (source unknown) Chuck underscored the “Danger Zone,” where people operate beyond their



intimacy foundation with Jesus. When people do so, Chuck underscored, they potentially face the fate of the seven sons of Sceva who were casting our demons in Jesus name. The text records that some Jews were casting our demons, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. [One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding (Acts 19:13-16). Chuck's message was that as we confront the kingdom of darkness we need to make sure our connection (intimacy) with the Lord is strong enough to protect us from the enemy's onslaughts and that it is dangerous for Christians to operate beyond their intimacy. Though not the same as Jesus' teaching in Matthew 7, this teaching provides a complimentary reason for developing intimacy with Jesus. Developing intimacy with Jesus, walking in obedience with him and walking in his character and will allow us to live under his protection as we face down and confront God's enemy and his kingdom of darkness.

^H From page 9: John Stott. (God's New Society The Message of Ephesians. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press;, 1979. 208-209) has a masterful teaching on this verb.

First, it is the imperative mood. 'Be filled' in not a tentative proposal, but an authoritative command. ...

Secondly, it is in the plural form. In other words, it is addressed to the whole Christian community. ...

Thirdly, it is the passive voice. NEB renders it 'Let the Holy Spirit fill you.' What is essential is such a penitent turning from what grieves the Holy Spirit and such a believing openness to him that nothing hinders him from filling us. ...

*Fourthly, it is in the present tense. In Greek there are two kinds of imperative, an aorist describing a single action, and a present when the action is continuous. ... when Paul says to us, 'Be filled with the Spirit', he uses a present imperative implying that we are to go on being filled. **For the fullness of the Spirit is not a once-for-all***

experience which we can never lose, but a privilege to be renewed continuously by continuous believing and obedient appropriation. (Bold mine)

^I From page 9: John Stott (Baptism, 48) captures the distinction between the one-time baptism in the Spirit and being filled/fullness well:

What happened on the Day of Pentecost was that Jesus ‘poured out’ the Spirit from heaven and thus ‘baptized’ with the Spirit first the 120 and then the 3,000. The result of this baptism of the Spirit was that ‘they were all filled with the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 2:4). Thus the fullness of the Spirit was the consequence of the baptism of the Spirit. The baptism is what Jesus did (pouring out the Spirit from heaven); the fullness is what they received. The baptism was a unique initiatory experience; the fullness was intended to be the continuing, the permanent result, the norm. As an initiatory event the baptism is not repeatable and cannot be lost, but the filling can be repeated and in any case needs to be maintained. If it is not maintained, it is lost. If it is lost, it can be recovered. The Holy Spirit is ‘grieved’ by sin (Eph. 4:30) and ceases to fill the sinner. Repentance is then the only road to recovery. Even in cases where there is no suggestion that the fullness has been forfeited through sin, we still read of people being filled again, as a fresh crisis or challenge demands a fresh empowering by the Spirit.

Michael Green’s (I Believe..., 199) study of the New Testament draws a similar conclusion:

Thus, while baptism in the Spirit is the initial experience of Christ brought about by the Spirit in response to repentance, faith and baptism, the fullness of the Holy Spirit is intended to be the continual state of the Christian. It is not a plateau on which you are ushered by some second stage in initiation, a plateau which separates you from other Christians who have not had the same experience. The New Testament gives no support to that view whatsoever. In plain language, we are meant to be progressively filled the Spirit of our Saviour Jesus Christ. That position can be lost, through disobedience (e.g., Acts 5:3, 9, 7:51). It can also be regained, through repentance and asking God to fill us afresh. God give his Spirit to those who obey him (Acts 5:22) and to those who ask him (Luke 11:13).

^J From page 9: The spectrum of church beliefs on these two issues is amazingly broad. Regarding the operation of the gifts of the Spirit and particularly “sign gifts” the range runs from cessationists who believe that gifts like tongues, prophecy etc. ended with the apostles to hyper-Pentecostals who believe that you are not saved unless you speak in tongues. As you will see in this statement we do not agree with either extreme and the hyper-Pentecostal is particularly troublesome because adding anything to the all-sufficiency of Christ undermines the very heart of our foundation in Christ. Craig Keener perceptually notes on this case “*adding any condition to salvation – whether tongues speaking or anything else – distorts the sufficiency of Christ and enter the realm of heresy*” (Keener, 83). You see as well that we do not believe with classic Pentecostals that tongues is an essential manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Regarding the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” it is particularly interesting that range of thought and belief is even wider and more convoluted. The basic distinction is between those who believe Scripture teaches a “second definite work of grace” (a time distinct from conversion when the Holy Spirit comes upon a believer in a more full or complete way sometimes referred to as sanctification or baptism of the Holy Spirit) and those who believe that the fullness of the Holy Spirit comes at conversion. Interestingly the former, second-definite-work-of-grace-group, have some who believe tongues is the evidence of this second work and others who might be cessationist in their theology.

The point in all of this is to note the wide diversity of teaching within the Church on some Holy Spirit related issues and from all of this we learn that we are in a gray area, which defines for us a non-essential where liberty and charity must rule our debate. Again quoting Keener, *Our differences on these points do not divide us on the central issue of Christ’s lordship and our mission to disciple nations for him.* (Keener, 12)

^K From page 10: Understanding about gifts of the Holy Spirit is only one of a number of faith understanding - non-essential faith understandings - that divide the Church. Other examples are:

- number of sacraments, ordinances vs. sacraments,
- when and the amount of water to use at baptism... infant vs. adult, sprinkling vs. immersion, etc.
- regarding Communion, who may serve, Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, Spiritual presence, purely memorial meal
- forms of worship: traditional, contemporary, emerging,

- ordination credentials of clergy
- Calvinism vs. Arminianism
- Organizational and denominational polity

We make these observations because non-essential differences are not important eternally speaking... when we all get to heaven God will render our various human interpretations insignificant. So when it comes to the Holy Spirit we believe we need to know what we believe, but not hold it so tightly that we alienate others who believe differently. If we can do this with these other differences we should be able to do likewise with understanding about how the Holy Spirit works.

^L From page 10: By using “things of the Spirit” rather than spiritual gifts as in the NIV we are following Gordon Fee, who commenting on the translation in 12:1 and the NIV “spiritual gifts” Gordon Fee writes, “both here (12:1) and in 14:1 the better translation might be “things of the Spirit,” which would refer primarily to spiritual manifestations, from the perspective of the Spirit’s endowment; at the same time it would point toward those who are so endowed.” (Gordon Fee. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, 576)

^M From page 10: Fee, 571-572.

“The problem is almost certainly an *abuse* of the gift of tongues. ...

“Since on the basis of this structural pattern the whole argument aims at the specific correctives in chap. 14, it is appropriate to begin our analysis there. This argument is in two parts: (1) In vv. 1-25, using a running contrast between tongues (unintelligible inspired speech) and prophecy (intelligible inspired speech), Paul argues for the *absolute need for intelligibility* in the assembly. This is both for the sake of fellow believers (vv. 1-19), since only what is intelligible can build them up, and for the sake of unbelievers (vv. 20-25), since only what is intelligible can lead to their conversion. (2) In vv. 26-40, offering some specific guidelines, beginning with tongues, he argues for the *absolute need for order* in the assembly.

“Two related concerns emerge from this argument. First as in 11:2-26 and 17-34, the problem is one of corporate worship. This is specifically indicated by the language “in church” and “when you assemble together (vv. 18-19, 23, 26); is also implied throughout. Second the correctives are all aimed at the abuse of tongues in the assembly, which seems to be both singular in its emphasis and disorderly in its expression (cf. 14:12, 23, 33, 40).

“Since this is unquestionably the focus of chap. 14, it is reasonable to assume that the argument in chaps. 12 and 13 leads to these correctives. ... Paul emphasizes the need for *diversity* of gifts and manifestations in the unity of the one Spirit. That is the clear concern of vv. 4-11, as well as the major note struck in that analogy of the body in vv. 12-26 and in the concluding reiteration in vv. 27-30. This emphasis is best understood vis-à-vis their singular enthusiasm for tongues.

^N From page 12: Other examples could be the person who avoids sharing his/her faith in Jesus with others because they might get asked a question they cannot answer. Our pastor mentioned people who have avoided friends who have just experienced the death of a love one because “they don’t know the right words to say.” And with similar fears people avoid teaching Sunday school or being on prayer teams, etc.

There comes a time when followers of Jesus must step out into the water of faith living and risk ministry realizing that we will never know everything and that God uses broken, incomplete and imperfect vessels every time He uses any person because we are all broken and imperfect.

This is not to say that we shouldn’t “study to show our selves approved” we should. Diligent study is important, but to hold off ministry until we have absolute correctness means we would never enter ministry this side of eternity. And that is a travesty of kingdom proportions.

^O From page 11: As we close this paper, we are reminded by the words spoken for PCOG and given to the session in April 2003 for their discernment. After prayer and discussion the session received these words believe they are from God and for our church family.

I want to come like a mighty wind, in power, My power, to release My gifts of the Spirit – in order for you to serve Me and bring Me all glory, honor and praise – by serving those whom I love. I will start with the leaders so

I may use them to show and therefore further My gifting. There must be a relinquishment of power to Me. I want to bless you that I might use you for the advancement of My Kingdom. Abide in My Son that He may abound in you.

(Received by session April 22, 2003)

Come Lord fulfill this word that your kingdom might advance powerfully.