

LIVING BULWARK

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sources of strength and renewal for Christian life and mission in today's world

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“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” – Luke 3:16

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Living Bulwark is committed to fostering renewal of the whole Christian people: Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox. We especially want to give witness to the charismatic, ecumenical, evangelistic, and community dimensions of that renewal. Living Bulwark seeks to equip Christians to grow in holiness, to apply Christian teaching to their lives, and to respond with faith and generosity to the working of the Holy Spirit in our day.

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God wants every Christian to be filled with the Holy Spirit

The free gift of the Holy Spirit is the result of Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven where he reigns with the Father in glory. The Father poured out the Holy Spirit upon the first disciples of Jesus on the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2). Jesus told his disciples that anyone who asks the Father in faith will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). This is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy that there would come a time when God would pour out his Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28).

The gift of the Holy Spirit is not limited to a few but is available to every believer and disciple of Jesus Christ, in every land, every culture, and every place on the face of the earth. What is the essential and unique role of the Holy Spirit for Christians today? And what can we expect to receive when we ask the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire

When John the Baptist announced the coming of the Christ, God's Anointed Son, Messiah, and Savior of the world, he explained the Messiah's mission in terms of baptism with the Holy Spirit:

"I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

Many Christians today recognize the vital need for ongoing renewal in the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is the unique role of the Holy Spirit to draw us into deeper unity with the Father and the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to draw us into greater unity of mind, heart, and spirit with all who belong to Christ as

members of his body. The Holy Spirit is the guiding force for effective mission and fruitful evangelization - even in the face of increasing opposition, hostility, and persecution.

We all need the power and the gifts of the Holy Spirit so we can stand strong in faith, steadfast in hope, and on fire with the fervent love of Christ in our hearts - a burning and earnest love for all - even our enemies.

Paul the Apostle reminds us of the greatest gift and fruit of the Spirit who dwells within us:

"Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Romans 5:5).

The Century of the Holy Spirit

This past century has been called the Century of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal and charismatic movements have their origin in a revival that culminated in the outpouring of the charismatic manifestations and gifts of the Spirit on January 1, 1901. (See [The Century of the Holy Spirit](#) by Dr. Vinson Synan.)

Now, more than 114 years later, many millions of Christian in every country of the world have experienced the baptism in the Spirit and the charismatic gifts and workings of the Holy Spirit. What is this spiritual phenomena? Is it for everyone? This issue seeks to give some answers for those who hunger for deeper conversion, fuller release of the power and gifts of the Spirit, and greater transformation in holiness, fruit of the Spirit, and Christlike character.

Don't miss the articles on being [Baptized in the Holy Spirit](#) by Steve Clark and why the [Baptism in the Spirit is a Grace for the Whole Church](#) by Raniero Cantalamessa.

Why do we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Why should every Christian today desire the full release of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit? The Scriptures present us with many attributes of the Holy Spirit and with reasons why we should always desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit is the giver of life – he fills us with the abundant supernatural life which comes from God.
- The Holy Spirit is our guard, defender, and shield of faith
- The Spirit is the Bulwark of Truth who guides and teaches us all the truth
- The Spirit is the giver of knowledge and understanding
- The Spirit is the giver of wisdom and counsel
- The Spirit is the giver of righteousness who helps us to do what is just and good
- The Spirit is the giver of discernment who frees us from ignorance, error, and wrong
- The Spirit is the giver of power, might, and strength which come from on high
- The Spirit performs mighty works and miracles in and through us
- The Spirit is the giver of prophecy, revelation, vision, and signs
- The Spirit is the giver of awe and reverence for God
- The Spirit is the all-consuming fire of God's presence and warmth
- The Spirit is our guide who leads and directs us in doing God's will
- The Holy Spirit is the purifying fire who cleanses us of guilt and sin
- The Holy Spirit is our sanctifier who makes us holy as God is holy
- The Spirit of glory transforms us from one degree of glory to another
- The Spirit of fortitude instills confidence, boldness, and courage in us
- The Spirit is the giver and power of undying love and overflowing compassion

- The Spirit is the power of forgiveness and mercy who shows us the way of mercy
- The Spirit of meekness makes us meek and gentle of heart like the heart of Jesus
- The Spirit of humility makes us willing servants as Jesus served humbly and willingly
- The Spirit of hope gives us patience, long-suffering, and perseverance
- The Spirit of discipline and self-control helps us grow in self-mastery and maturity
- The Spirit is the giver of peace that passes all understanding
- The Spirit is the giver of unspeakable joy, happiness, and contentment
- The Spirit is the anchor and hope of heaven who makes our hope grow strong and steady
- The Spirit is our intercessor who knows our needs and shows us what to pray for.
- The Spirit prays in and through us and gives us the gift of tongues and gift of praise.
- The Spirit fills us with generosity and magnanimity
- The Spirit is a guiding light when we are lost, confused, or perplexed
- The Spirit is our burning bush and pillar of fire who burns constantly within us
- The Spirit makes us a tabernacle and temple of God's presence
- The Spirit is the power and strength of saints
- The Spirit is the power and strength of missionaries
- The Spirit is the power and strength of martyrs
- The Holy Spirit is our Helper, Comforter, and Advocate.

God wants to “pour out his Spirit on all flesh” (Joel 2:28). That has been his plan since the beginning and it is his will for us today. We can ignore or resist God's offer to fill us with his Holy Spirit, or we can ask the Father to fill us with the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:11).

God is Spirit – we can only know and experience his presence and power at work in his creation, his people, and in our personal lives through the gift and working of his Holy Spirit. God wants each of us to know him personally and experientially as our Father in heaven.

We can only know God personally and experientially as our Father through his Spirit. This is the supreme work of the Holy Spirit who witnesses with our spirit that God is our Father who lives in us and makes his home with us and remains with us.

We can personally and experientially know God's love for us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. God pours his love into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

May this issue inspire you to ask the Father to give you the gift and full release of the Holy Spirit and to renew within you the gifts of faith, hope, and love and the spiritual gifts that equip us for effective mission and growth in holy living for Jesus Christ.

Sincerely in Christ,
Don Schwager
editor

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The Century of the Holy Spirit

Origins of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal

by Dr. Vinson Synan

Introduction: *"The touch felt round the world"*

[Note: Dr. Vinson Synan, in the first chapter of his book, *Century Of The Holy Spirit: 100 Years Of Pentecostal And Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001*, describes the beginning of the early Pentecostal movement at the turn of the twentieth century.]

On January 1, 1901, a young woman named Agnes Ozman was baptized in the Holy Spirit at a small Bible school in Topeka, Kansas. A student of former Methodist pastor and holiness teacher Charles Fox Parham, Ozman received a startling manifestation of the gift of tongues and became, in effect, the first Pentecostal of the 20th century.

“I laid my hands upon her and prayed,” Parham later recalled of the event. “I had scarcely completed three dozen sentences when a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking the Chinese language and was unable to speak English for three days.”

According to J. Roswell Flower, the founding secretary of the Assemblies of God, Ozman’s experience was the “touch felt ’round the world.” As Topeka and the rest of the nation celebrated the new century, few people could have imagined that this humble event would trigger the worldwide Pentecostal charismatic movement, one of the mightiest revivals and missionary movements in the history of the church.

Beginning with only a handful of people in 1901, the number of Pentecostals increased steadily to become the largest family of Protestants in the world by the beginning of the 21st century. With more than two hundred million members designated as “denominational Pentecostals,” this group had surpassed the Orthodox churches to become the second largest denominational family of Christians, exceeded in number by only the Roman Catholics.

Origins of the early Pentecostal movement

Perhaps the most important immediate precursor to Pentecostalism was the Holiness movement which issued from the heart of Methodism at the end of the Nineteenth Century. From John Wesley, the Pentecostals inherited the idea of a subsequent crisis experience variously called “entire sanctification,” “perfect love,” “Christian perfection,” or “heart purity.” It was John Wesley who posited such a possibility in his influential tract, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1766). It was from Wesley that the Holiness Movement developed the theology of a “second blessing.” It was Wesley’s colleague, John Fletcher, however, who first called this second blessing a “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” an experience which brought spiritual power to the recipient as well as inner cleansing. This was explained in his major work, *Checks to Antinomianism* (1771). During the Nineteenth Century, thousands of Methodists claimed to receive this experience, although no one at the time saw any connection with this spirituality and speaking in tongues or any of the other charisms.

In the following century, Edward Irving and his friends in London suggested the possibility of a restoration of the charisms in the modern church. A popular Presbyterian pastor in London, Irving led the first attempt at “charismatic renewal” in his Regents Square Presbyterian Church in 1831. Although tongues and prophecies were experienced in his church, Irving was not successful in his quest for a restoration of New Testament Christianity. In the end, the “Catholic Apostolic Church” which was founded by his followers, attempted to restore the “five-fold ministries” (of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) in addition to the charisms. While his movement failed in England, Irving did succeed in pointing to glossolalia as the “standing sign” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, a major facet in the future theology of the Pentecostals.

Another predecessor to Pentecostalism was the Keswick “Higher Life” movement which flourished in England after 1875. Led at first by American holiness teachers such as Hannah Whitall Smith and William E. Boardman, the Keswick teachers soon changed the goal and content of the “second blessing” from the Wesleyan emphasis on “heart purity” to that of an “endowment of spiritual power for service.” Thus, by the time of the Pentecostal outbreak in America in 1901, there had been at least a century of movements emphasizing a second blessing called the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” with various interpretations concerning the content and results of the experience. In America, such Keswick teachers as A.B. Simpson and A.J. Gordon also added to the movement at large an emphasis on divine healing “as in the atonement” and the premillennial rapture of the church.

Neo-Pentecostals and Charismatics

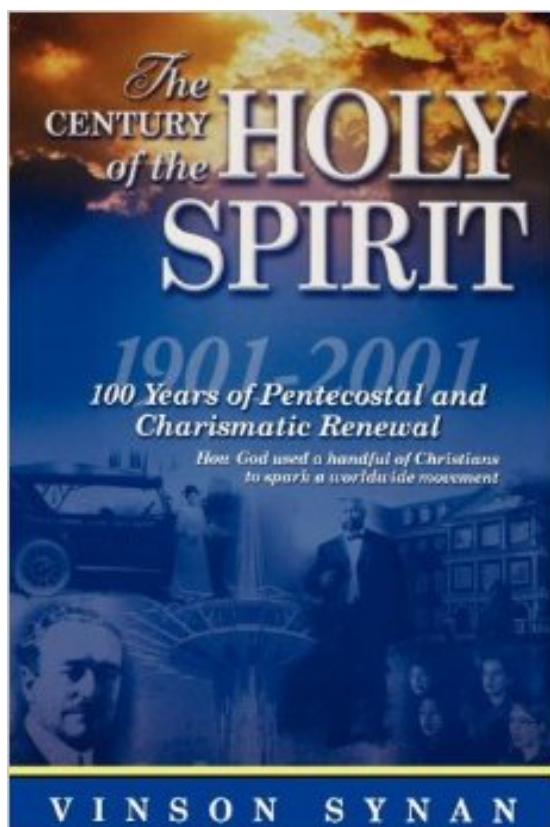
This first wave of Pentecostal pioneer missionaries produced what has become known as the “Classical Pentecostal Movement” with over 11,000 Pentecostal denominations throughout the world. These continued to proliferate at an amazing rate as the century came to an end. In retrospect, the pattern established in South Africa was repeated in many other nations as the movement spread around the world. That is, an enterprising Pentecostal pioneer such as Lake broke the ground for a new movement which was initially despised and rejected by the existing churches. This phase was followed by organized Pentecostal denominational missions efforts which produced fast-growing missions and indigenous churches. The final phase was the penetration of Pentecostalism into the mainline Protestant and Catholic churches as “charismatic renewal” movements with

the aim of renewing and reviving the historic churches.

Strangely enough, these newer “waves” also originated largely in the United States. These included the Protestant “Neo-pentecostal” movement which began in 1960 in Van Nuys, California, under the ministry of Dennis Bennett, Rector of St. Marks Episcopal (Anglican) Church. Within a decade, this movement had spread to all the 150 major Protestant families of the world reaching a total of 55,000,000 people by 1990. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement had its beginnings in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1967 among students and faculty of Duquesne University. In the more than thirty years since its inception, the Catholic movement has touched the lives of over 70,000,000 Catholics in over 120 nations of the world. Added to these is the newest category, the “Third Wave” of the Spirit, which originated at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1981 under the classroom ministry of John Wimber. These consisted of mainline Evangelicals who moved in signs and wonders, but who disdained labels such as “pentecostal” or “charismatic.” By 1990 this group numbered some 33,000,000 members in the world.

In summary, all these movements, both Pentecostal and Charismatic, now number over 640,000,000 and have come to constitute a major force in Christendom throughout the world with explosive growth rates not seen before in modern times. In 2010, these groups united together to form [Empowered21](http://empowered21.com/about/history/) which will continue to focus on the growth of the movement in the 21st Century.

[Excerpt from [The Origins of the Pentecostal Movement](http://empowered21.com/about/history/), by Vinson Synan, Ph.D., source: <http://empowered21.com/about/history/>]



Dr. Vinson Synan is one of the leading authorities on the history of Pentecostalism. Writing and editing more than 18 books in his lifetime, he has contributed works such as *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, *The Old-Time Power*, and his most recent major work, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*. In addition to these publications Dr. Synan released his memoirs titled *An Eyewitness Remembers the Century of the Holy Spirit in 2010*. His work and writings are authoritative resources on the history of Pentecostalism and various other topics in the church. In addition, he was one of the founders of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS) in 1970.

A definitive history of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement and an intriguing reference for persons outside the movement, *The Century of the Holy Spirit* details the miraculous story of Pentecostal / Charismatic growth around the world. This book features five chapters by the premier Pentecostal historian, Vinson Synan, with additional contributions by Pentecostal/Charismatic authorities--David Barrett, David Daniels, David Edwin Harrell Jr., Peter Hocken, Sue Hyatt, Gary McGee, and Ted Olsen.

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The Transforming Work of the Holy Spirit



The Magnificent Stranger

who transforms our lives into the likeness of Christ

by Carlos Mantica

I have been asked to talk about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. When somebody requests me to give a lecture, and even more when the request includes a threat that I have to give it in the presence of several bishops and a lot of theologians such as those here present, the first thing a poor layman like myself does is run to document himself in order to give the impression that he knows what he's talking about. So the first thing I did was to re-read my whole library about the Holy Spirit, and once again I was perplexed as I realized that the only thing that the Holy Spirit does in our lives is *everything*.

If he withdraws his breath, we perish; if he breathes, he renews the whole face of the earth. It was he who in the beginning was moving over the waters, and through whose power everything was made.

It was he who begot Christ in the womb of Mary, who anointed him for the beginning of his mission, who led him to the desert to be tempted by the devil. It was with the power of the Spirit that Christ healed the sick and cast out demons.

It is the same Spirit who finally raised Christ from the dead and raised him up to heaven, where, having been established now as the Lord of all that exists, he is sitting at the right hand of the Father.

To be honest, for many of us Jesus Christ used to be somewhat like *Clark Kent*, the son of *Jor-El*: a being from a

different world, who walks among men disguised as a man, but who is not at all like us but is *Superman*. That's why he can do really wonderful things that we cannot do. We are not like him and we are not supposed to imitate him, because we will never do the same things he does. Thus Christ ends up being a God disguised as a man, but not a true man. And if this is so, attempting to imitate him is absurd. The mission he charges us with is a mockery, because it goes far beyond our ability. Taking him as model is a utopia, something unreachable. It was then that we began to settle for imitating the saints, and began to ask St. Martin de Porres to do what we were supposed to do.

I now believe that Christ wanted to become like us *in everything*, and the concrete way to become like us in everything was that he wanted to share our human powerlessness with us. He decided to depend on God's power for everything. For Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit was a need just as absolute as it is now for us. He could do nothing without it.

From the beginning, he was conceived in the womb of Mary by the work of the Holy Spirit. God's life was in him, but he had not yet been anointed with power from on high in order to carry out his mission. That is why Christ does not perform miracles, or teach, or leave a track of his passing through the world, until he is anointed with the Holy Spirit and power in the Jordan River. Now, don't be scandalized – it is Peter himself who says this, in Acts 10:36-39:

You know the word... which was proclaimed throughout Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we were witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

Immediately after being baptized in the Jordan River, we read in Luke 4 that he came back full of the Spirit and was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. In the desert, the Lord conquers the devil. With what power? Christ himself explains it in Matthew 12:28:

But if it by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

It is, then, with the power of God's Spirit that Jesus casts out demons. His first words as he comes back from the desert, the first known words of his public life, are these words he utters in Nazareth (Luke 4:18):

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor....

Christ is anointed by the Spirit for his task of evangelization. That is why, a few verses below, we read that "they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority" (Luke 4:32). Later he reveals his secret to the apostles (Matthew 10:19-20):

Do not be anxious how you are to speak.... for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

The last words of Jesus are, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" He has delivered up his Spirit to the Father, so he can send him to us. That's why he had said, "It is to your advantage that I go away." Paul then tells us that it is the Spirit of God who raised Jesus (Romans 8:11):

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.

Christ is no actor. He is not a God disguised as a man, like Jupiter, to mock us, nor does he bring with him a script that he will read as if in a soap opera. Instead, he is a God become true man, who needs to be guided and led by the Spirit in order to know what he has to do, and to be anointed with power from on high in order to do what he has to do.

If this is so, then Christ, in order to do all he did, did not have anything beyond what we have today. That is why he tells Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you.” We have God’s own omnipotence dwelling within ourselves. The Spirit of God, who on the day of creation was moving over the waters, is the same that has been give us for the construction of a new world. Christ was not mocking us when he said we would be able to do the same things he did and even greater things. Rather, he expects us to do such things, since he has given us, for us to do them, the same that he had received from the Father.

Christ shared our human nature in order that we might share with him his divine nature, for us to be like him, for us to be *him*, and for us to be gods in him one day.

Therefore, he does with us the same that his Father did with him – he makes us depend totally on his Spirit.

It is he who comes to us on the day of Baptism, through whom we are born again of water and of the Spirit; it is he who anoints and empowers us on our Confirmation so that we would witness to our faith and preach the word of Christ with power; it is he who, as “light of our hearts,” teaches us all things; it is he who convicts us of sin, of justice and of judgment. It is he who will speak for us when we are driven to the courts, our Paraclete or Defender, and the “sweet guest in our souls, Comforter in anguish, rest and refreshment in weariness”. It is he who manifests himself in each of us with various gifts for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ. It is he who strengthens our inner man through his fruits. Finally, it is he who will one day give life to our mortal bodies, as St. Paul says, and raise us from the dead.

what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, [is] what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Corinthians br>

What we learned as young children is simply that the Spirit of God *sanctifies us*. This is what the Holy Spirit does in us. But I haven’t yet heard among you any exclamations of amazement or shrieks of unbelief or deep cries of praise and thanksgiving, which clearly indicates that you have not understood what this means.

St. Thomas Aquinas explains the same thing with different words, and tells us that the Holy Spirit *divinizes* us – that is, he makes us like God.

It’s good to realize that it’s not I who am saying this, because in that case I would be a sure candidate for excommunication, but it is the Church Fathers who say it. Let’s listen to some of them. I take the following quote from the book of St. Basil the Great, the Bishop, on the Holy Spirit:

*Just as clean, smooth bodies become shining when they receive a ray of the sun, and issue of themselves something like a new light, just the same those souls that bear the Holy Spirit become fully spiritual and convey grace to others. It is from this fellowship with the Spirit that comes the foreknowledge of the future, the insight into mysteries, the understanding of hidden things, the distribution of gifts, the life supernatural, the exchange with angels. It is from here that comes this joy that will have no end. It is from here that comes **being like unto God; it is from here, finally, that comes the most sublime thing one can desire – for man to become like God.***

So praise the Lord! This saint does know how the whole thing works!

Saying that the Holy Spirit sanctifies us (i.e., makes us holy) and saying that he divinizes us are but two different ways of saying the same thing. Because God is holy; but holiness or sanctity is not just an attribute of God, but God's character. *That's what God is. That's what defines him.* Thus, becoming holy amounts to becoming increasingly like God.



Up to this point, we haven't found the gist of this talk. And the gist of this talk lies in the fact that, in this truth that God wants us to be *right now* as he is, is the solution to everything that now hinders us from living as Christians. That in being like God is the key for us to be able to live as Christians in a natural, free, joyous way, or to spend the rest of our lives kicking the goads and fighting with myself against the grain. That on this depends whether trying to live as a Christian is a tooth and nail fight, where we try to do what we don't like and cease to do all that we like, or living in doing whatever I feel like because that's how I feel like living.

Let me give a clearer explanation. Suppose I ask one of you right now, "What do you think about this idea of living as a Christian?" Some of you will reply, "That's real tough, brother." Another one will probably say, "That's hard... but you can do it." This "you can do it" means that you can do it every once in a while – sometimes yes, sometimes no. A kind, pious lady is likely to answer, "That's really easy." Somebody else will add, "It's very easy, and in addition it's the most beautiful thing in the world. I'm infinitely happy since I began walking the ways of the Lord."

Why do we get so many different responses? My answer is very simple – living as a Christian is impossible... unless you're like Christ. If you're like Christ, or if you become more and more like Christ each day, then it's the easiest thing in the world. *It's only difficult to be a Christian when you are not.* That is, when you don't have the character of Christ.

God's plan is for us to be able to live out Christianity in joy and peace, doing what we feel like – living like this because you are like this, and you are like this because you are God's son or daughter and have inherited your father's own character as part of your heredity. Because it's very easy to live the way God wants us to live, when we are the way God is.

Christians, I repeat, can follow either of two ways – the way of the old covenant, walking in the law and regarding being a Christian as fulfilling a series of precepts or norms of behavior that we strive to abide by through the effort of our own will, even though our fallen nature rebels and drags us towards a way of acting which is often contrary to God's law; or we can walk in the Spirit, expecting from God, asking God and collaborating with God in order to

allow him to give us his own character, so that our actions will then be free, spontaneous, joyful.

We then ask ourselves this question, “So what can I do to be like God?” Well, that’s easy. I have at least one son who wants to be like me. He may have to do a few things to become more like me each day. But there are other areas in which he doesn’t need to do anything. Why? Well, because he’s my son. He’s got my life and my genes inside himself. He’s like me even if he doesn’t want to.

So here is the key to why it is that God wants us to be like him, and to why it is that we can in fact be like him. And that’s because we are his children. Because, from eternity, God’s plan was for us to be his children. God wanted man to be his son, with all that a son was supposed to be for a Jew – among other things, someone who is just like his father, a photocopy of himself, the image of the living God. We read in Genesis 1:26:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”

The Hebrew word “Adam” means “man”. God’s plan for Adam is God’s plan for the whole human race. Genesis goes on (vv. 26-28):

“...and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it...”

Let’s now jump over to Jesus Christ, whom Scripture calls several times the New Adam (Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45-49). In the introduction to the letter to the Hebrews we find a quite interesting paragraph that says:

In many and various ways god spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs. (Hebrews 1:1-4)

What we see in this passage is that the Lord Jesus was sent to the world for the same purpose for which Adam was created and placed in the world – to be God’s Son, the image and likeness of God, and the head of God’s household, that is, of the whole creation. (That’s why in the genealogy of Jesus, presented in the Gospels, Adam is mentioned as son of God.)

It then says that Jesus “reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature,” that is, that Jesus is the very image of God, and that he is also given dominion over all things, and is established as Lord of the universe, as Adam had been of old.

In other words, *what God intends with Christ is to start again the whole history of creation*. Jesus, true God and true man, will be his Son, his image and likeness, and the Lord of the universe. With him God wants to start a new human race, which is the Body of Christ.

Since the man Adam spoiled this plan through sin, he lost the Spirit of God, who was the one that could give him his own character and make him like God, as God intended when he created man in his image and likeness.

When the Spirit of God was absent from man, God showed his mercy on man and gave him a law, so that he would at least know how he was supposed to act, even though inside he felt a tremendous inclination to the opposite. The law is then like a mirror that tells us that our face is dirty, and in that sense it is very useful, but it will not cleanse our face. So my flesh continues to push me towards the things I must not do. That's what I say, and that's what St. Paul says in Romans 7:19:

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.

And then Paul cries out (vv. 24-25):

Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

God gives his law to the Jewish people, but he also makes them a promise – that some day everything will be as it was in the beginning, before the fall of Adam; and that at that time the law will not be written on stone any more, but he will instead give them a new heart, that is, a new nature; and that his law will be written in their new hearts. And this is the new covenant.

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean... A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Hebrews 8:10, quoting Jeremiah 31:33)

And that's what Christ comes for. He pays for our sins, he redeems us, he re-establishes our relationship to God, and he finally sends his Holy Spirit to us in order to write his law on our hearts and thus begin a new creation, where the new man can actually be God's image and likeness and have God's own character. God's promise has been fulfilled.

St. Paul states this clearly in Galatians 3:26-27:

For in Christ you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Then in chapter 4 (vv. 4-7) he adds:

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.

This means we are once again in Adam's original situation! In chapter 3 of 2 Corinthians, St. Paul gives a wonderful explanation of what has happened. He says (vv. 6-11):

The written code kills, but the Spirit gives life [i. e. it can cleanse our face!]. Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such splendor that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness, fading as this was, will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendor? For if there was splendor in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation of righteousness must far exceed it in splendor. Indeed, in this case, what once had splendor has come to have no splendor at all, because of the splendor that surpasses it. For if what faded away came with splendor, what is permanent must have much more splendor.

And now the best of it comes! He says in verses 17-18:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

In the Office of Readings we find a commentary by Bishop St. Cyril of Alexandria on the Gospel of John, where he speaks of this transformation. He says:

This same Spirit transforms and leads to a new living condition the faithful in whom he lives and has his dwelling. This can easily be shown with witnesses from both the Old and the New Testament.

Thus, the pious Samuel tells Saul: "The Spirit of the Lord will fill you, and you will become a different man." And St. Paul: "We all, with unveiled face, reflect the glory of the Lord and are being changed into his likeness with growing splendor, for this is the work of the Lord who is the Spirit."

It is not difficult to perceive how it is that the Spirit transforms the image of those he indwells: from the love of earthly things, the Spirit leads us to hope for heavenly things; and from cowardice and timidity, to the courage and generous boldness of the Spirit. No doubt it is thus that we find the disciples, encouraged and strengthened by the Spirit, so that they would not let themselves be conquered in any way by the attacks of their persecutors, but adhered the love of Christ with all their strength.

In fact, on the day of Pentecost, the Lord changed his apostles from cowards into brave men, and he even made Peter a theologian. A homonym of the author we quoted, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, says this:

Even though he has one and the same way of being, the Spirit... yields multiple effects... In some he strengthens self-control; in others mercy; to this one he teaches to practice fasting and ascetic life, to the other to control his passions, and yet another one he prepares for martyrdom. The Spirit is thus manifested in different ways in different people, but he is never different from himself.

Here is the key to the whole thing! The Spirit of the Lord gradually transforms us into his own image, so that what is reflected in the mirror is more and more the image of God, the image of the son that increasingly resembles his father. Thus, we are increasingly able to do what we feel like doing, because we feel like doing what our father wants, because we want the same things he wants, and because we think as he thinks and we feel the way he feels, and therefore we behave increasingly like him.

It turns out, in fact, that the new character God wants to give us is not just any old character. What he wants to give

us is Christ's character, his own way of thinking, of feeling, of wanting, of loving, of acting. And this God achieves through his Spirit. If we understand God the Holy Spirit as God's way of being, we realize that when God gives us his own Spirit he wants to give us more and more his own way of being. And this is what we call the fruit of the Spirit, that is, what the Spirit produces in us.

Now what is it that the Spirit produces within us? Well, it's God's image, a portrait of God. Today we would rather say, a photocopy of God. He gives us all of God's traits. And since God has no physical traits, then what he gives us is God's character traits.

If can't understand this, we won't understand anything. St. Paul tells us in Galatians 5:22 that the fruit of the Spirit [i.e., what the Spirit produces] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Brother and sisters, this is nothing more than a portrait of Christ, painted by St. Paul! That's what Christ is like. That's his character. If we wanted to define what Christ is like, we couldn't put it better. And that way of being is what the Spirit of God is supposed to produce in us, so that we can be a photocopy of Christ.

Let us remark that Paul doesn't say, "The *fruits* of the Spirit *are*, what the Spirit produces *are*..." this whole lot of good things. Instead, he says, "The *fruit* of the Spirit *is*." What is the fruit? The living portrait of Christ, a photocopy of Christ's character, the image of God, because Christ is the Logos, the idea God has of himself, that which expresses and embodies what God is.

That's the reason why Paul begins by saying that the fruit of the Spirit is love, because God is love. And then he explains to us what love is like, because that's the same as explaining what God is like: love (like God) is patient, kind, without envy. It does not act with baseness or seek its own interest. (Jesus says, "Learn of me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.") Love does not allow anger to master it, but forgets offences and pardons them. That's how God manifests himself to Moses – as a God who is slow to anger. Love never rejoices in something unjust, but is pleased with truth. (And God reveals himself as the truth.) Love excuses everything (like God, who forgives even sin, which is unforgivable). It believes all things, hopes all things, bears all things. Like God, who believes in us, trusts us and bears us with patience (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7). Now all of this is a list of character traits – *God's* character traits.

Elsewhere Paul says that *the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Spirit*. He is not merely saying that God loves us. That has already been said. Rather, he says that God has given us his own way of loving, through his Spirit. And since he has given us his own Spirit, we can now comply with the new commandment to love like he loves us, because with his Spirit he has given us the ability to love his way.

The day we have Christ's way of being, that is, his character, we will habitually, naturally and spontaneously respond the same way he did. We will have self-control, which includes control over our passions.

Given all that, it is really easy to be a Christian! And this is the only way to be a Christian in a free, joyful and natural way, instead of spending our lives kicking against the goad of emotions, passions and desires. I always say that a Christian is a man who does whatever he desires, because he has inside himself the Spirit of Christ who gives him the right desires. What we need to do is allow him to fulfill all his desires in us. He will turn us inside out until he has formed the Image of the Son of God in us.

The central message of this talk is that God wants to give us his own character through his Spirit. The only problem with this talk is that it will normally seem too good to be true. A human being finds it just too easy to let God transform him, and prefers to go on walking in the law, despite the fact that receiving this new heart from God is the

quintessence of the new covenant promised by God and inaugurated by Jesus Christ.

All of this is too beautiful to be true, and man finds it hard to understand, but this is precisely the Good News that we are supposed to proclaim to all men, while at the same time showing to them, with our own transformation, that this is serious; that being a Christian is above all having Christ's character and God's way of loving, and that everything else will be added unto us in a natural, spontaneous, joyful way.

It was in order to make all of this a reality that the Lord sent the Holy Spirit upon us. In the work of the Spirit in us, the new covenant established from of old is fulfilled.... and most people don't even know it. That's why they continue to walk in the law, and not in the free grace of God's gift – in the Kingdom of God, where all that is not grace is sin, as St. Paul says, and it is sin because it falls short of God's actual plan. So people spend their lives kicking against the goads, and regarding following Christ as an unbearable burden and an uphill walk, where you fall down again and again and never find rest.

Our conversion will be completely a work of God. But there is something we can do to collaborate with him, and we are going to understand this better with an example. In chapter 40 of Isaiah we have found the best illustration concerning how we can collaborate with God's transforming work. Isaiah says, "But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (v. 31).

God has determined for certain eagles to experience a periodic, instinctive renewal which is inherent to their very nature.

Every seven years, this eagle delivers up its own equipment and exchanges it for a new, better one. God has given the eagle the instinct to prepare for this special act, by flying on high and choosing a hidden place in the slopes of a mountain, where he knows it won't be bothered for some time, since he knows he'll spend some time there.

Led by this God-given instinct, that is, following God's plan, the first thing the eagle does in its hideout is to open the beak and pull out the thick feathers that allow it to fly. These are excellent feathers, but he uproots them without mercy, and this beautiful specimen begins to take on a pitiful aspect. But in no way does it resemble what God has foreseen and what it will soon become.

It is thus that, a little later, the eagle proceeds to pull out the strong, sharp, curved nails that are the point of its claws the claws that up to this day have helped it to grab its food.

Deprived of the feathers that allow it to soar, and of the active part of its claws, the eagle now has only one item in its favor. But not for long. This item is the long, powerful beak, that will also need to disappear. The eagle rubs its beak against a rough rock, until it is reduced to an insignificant stump, and finally nothing is left but a big opening where the beak used to be.

Without the feathers, the claws and the beak, the majestic eagle is now a defenseless, ugly bird that makes a pitiful sight. And thus, poorly equipped, the eagle sits and

It waits for the Lord, and it waits, and it waits, and it waits, because God has determined that the eagle be patient. And after a few weeks of faithfulness to its call, clear signs that something is happening can be seen.

There appear thick, fresh feathers that have replaced the old, worn-out ones. New claws emerge, bigger and stronger than the former ones, not splintered or broken by use. A new, shining beak begins to emerge, much better than the old one, which had been partly chipped by rocks and hard bones.

While the eagle is waiting for the Lord, it undergoes a total transformation. It does not contribute absolutely anything of itself, except for the will, the willingness and the conscious need to be renewed. And when the long wait reaches its end, it starts to fly, bigger and stronger than ever, because it had renounced everything it relied on, for that which the Lord had prepared for it.

God has determined that this species of eagle, or all eagles, wait on him in an instinctive way for their renewal. And he offers his beloved children the opportunity to do likewise, if they are willing to submit to God's will, instead of insisting on the useless perfection of doing things by themselves, falsely promised by an obsession for perpetual movement that makes calculations for everything. Everything, except for waiting on the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, we have discussed God's perfect plan for us. We have discussed the sanctifying work of God the Holy Spirit within us, that intends to form in us the image of God. This is the fruit of the Spirit. This is the same fruit which he shaped in the womb of Mary: Jesus, the Image and Logos of the living God, the very splendor of his glory and the very stamp of his essence. Blessed be the fruit of thy womb, Jesus!

> See other Living Bulwark [articles](#) by [Carlos Mantica](#)

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Baptized in the Holy Spirit

by Steve Clark

There is a passage in the third chapter of Paul's letter to the Galatians which is disarming to most Christians. The passage is:

Are you people in Galatia mad? Has someone put a spell on you. in spite of the plain explanation you have had of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ? Let me ask you one question: was it because you practised the Law that you received the Spirit, or because you believed what was preached to you? Are you foolish enough to end in outward observances what you began in the Spirit? Have all the favors you received been wasted? And if this were so, they would most certainly have been wasted. Does God give you the Spirit so freely and work miracles among you because you practise the Law, or because you believed what was preached to you? (Galatians 3:1–5)

The main message of the letter is that we come into the right relationship with God (are justified) through faith in Jesus Christ rather than by following the Jewish Law. In the above passage Paul is making the point that the Galatians are going back on their Christian faith by agreeing to the idea that people need to be circumcised in order to be justified. His main argument is this: isn't it true that you experienced the work of the Spirit among you because you had faith in the Christian message and not because you

What is so disarming about this passage is the glimpse it offers into the life of early Christian Churches. The basis of Paul's argument is the experience of the Spirit. In order for his argument to have any force to the Galatians, they would have had to have experienced being given the Spirit and experienced miracles being worked among them. If Paul asked a modern parish of Christians, "Does God give you the Spirit so freely and work miracles among you because you practise the Law, or because you believed what was preached to you?"

most of them would not be able to make sense of the question. Their instinctive response would be, “What do you mean, ‘God give us the Spirit so freely and worked miracles among us’? What are you talking about?”

The challenge of this passage for us comes from the fact that Paul simply takes it for granted that the Christians to whom he is writing have had these experiences. He does not feel that he has to explain what he is referring to or argue that it is possible to experience such things. He just expects that the Christians to whom he is writing know what he is talking about. He expects that they have experienced the giving of the Spirit and the working of miracles, and he expects that these are distinct enough experiences and common enough experiences that he can simply refer to them.

Nowadays in the Church it is again beginning to be possible to refer to people’s experience of the work of the Spirit among them and expect them to know what is meant. As the charismatic renewal grows into all parts of the Church, people are beginning to experience the Spirit given so freely and miracles being worked through faith. In other words, they are beginning to experience the life of the Spirit.

The life of the Spirit

For early Christians, the Holy Spirit was an experience before he was a doctrine. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, he promised that he would send the Spirit upon his followers. And he promised them that the Holy Spirit would do things among them that they could experience. He told them that they would be “clothed with power from on high” (Lk 24:49), that they would “receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). He said that “the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you” (John 14:26). He said that his followers would know the Holy Spirit: “I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you” (Jn. 14:16–17).

In the life of the early Church, the Holy Spirit was someone who was with them and acted among them. When the Christians in Jerusalem prayed for courage to speak the gospel message, “the house where they were assembled rocked; they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31). Stephen “filled with the Holy Spirit” was able to gaze into heaven and see Jesus (Acts 7:55).

The Holy Spirit guided them. Philip was led by the Spirit when “the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go up and meet that chariot’” (the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch), and after baptizing the eunuch “Philip was taken away by the Spirit of the Lord” (Acts 8:29, 39). Paul was led by the Spirit in his missionary journeys when “they traveled through Phrygia and the Galatian country, having been told by the Holy Spirit not to preach the word in Asia. When they reached the frontier of Mysia, they thought to cross it into Bithynia, but as the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them, they went through Mysia and down to Troas” (Acts 16:6–7).

The Holy Spirit spoke to them frequently. When some prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch, “one of them, Agabus, stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world, and this took place in the days of Claudius” (Acts 11:28). When some of the leaders of the Church at Antioch were praying and fasting, “the Holy Spirit said, ‘I want Barnabas and Saul set apart for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2). Before Paul was taken prisoner by the Jews and given to the Romans, the Spirit constantly kept warning Paul about what would happen. He described this experience to the elders of Ephesus by saying, “I am on my way to Jerusalem, but have no idea what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit in town after town has made it clear enough that imprisonment and persecution wait for me” (Acts

20:21).

The Holy Spirit did many other things among the early Christians. Paul lists some of the kinds of things the Spirit does in a Christian community in I Corinthians: “To one person is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit.”

But the most important thing which the Spirit did for the early Christians was to let them experience God’s love for them and his union with them. In the eighth chapter of Romans, Paul says, “The spirit you received is not the spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of sons, and it makes us cry out, ‘Abba, Father!’ The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God.” Paul clearly expects the Christians he is talking to to have had an experience of God’s love given through the Spirit. The same thing is true of John, who expects the Christians he is writing to to be able to use their experience of the Spirit as a test of whether they are living in God or not: “We can know that we are, living in him and he is living in us, because he lets us share his Spirit” (1 John 4:13).

The whole New Testament is alive with the fact that the early Christians were able to experience the presence of the Spirit in them and his work among them. And it is this experience which is returning with the charismatic renewal. The very same things are happening now which were happening then. Today people are reporting experiences of being filled with the Spirit, of being led by him, of having him speak to them, experiences of inspired speech, of prophecy, of discernment of spirits, of healing, of miracles. They are, in other words, beginning to live the life of the Spirit.

The life of the Spirit is a life in which a Christian can experience the Holy Spirit living in him and working through him. Most Christians today are not living the life of the Spirit. They live their Christian lives on the basis of doctrine. They were taught about Christ and about how to live as Christians. They decided to do it, and they have been trying to pattern their lives according to Christ’s teaching. They believe that Christ is real and that he hears them and helps them. But they do not feel that they are in much contact with him. They do not experience his presence nor do they see things happen which they can tell are his working.

The life of the Spirit changes that. When people are living the life of the Spirit, they know by experience that the Holy Spirit is in them. They do not have to “take it on faith” in the sense of believing it without any experience to indicate it is true. When people are living the life of the Spirit, they begin to experience the Holy Spirit making it possible for them to praise God and worship God with a new freedom. They experience the Holy Spirit making the scriptures come to life and making Christian doctrines make sense. They experience a new ability to talk to people about Christ, a deeper peace and joy.

The life of the Spirit also involves an experience of a new kind of community life — a community living “in the Spirit”. The life of the Spirit is not meant to be an individual life. The Spirit is given to form us into the body of Christ, and the life of the Spirit is a life which a community lives as well as an individual. A person who is part of a community that is living the life of the Spirit can experience the community being led in worship by the Spirit, being guided by the Spirit, being taught by the Spirit. The community as a whole experiences the presence of the Spirit.

When I talk about “experiencing” things I do not necessarily have something emotional in mind. “Experience” to us often means “emotion” or “feeling”. We say something is “an experience” if we mean that it is a great

event or a striking happening. We can, however, have experiences that are not especially emotional. Suppose I meet my friend's cousin. I may have heard of him before, so I knew he existed. Then I met him, and I "experienced" the fact that he existed. The meeting may not have been particularly emotional or striking, but the difference is that before I had just heard of him and now I know him by experience. This is the most important sense in which we experience the Holy Spirit.

Before I first began to hear about the charismatic renewal I had wanted to experience the life of the Spirit. I had always known that what happened in the New Testament and among the great saints could happen today. I never could see why it should not happen now, among us, if God is the same. And I was always unimpressed by the argument that the workings of the Spirit were only for the beginnings of the Church — to get it started. If ever the Church needed the work of the Spirit to make it effective and alive in the world, it is today.

I also knew that the presence and working of the Spirit must be something more than just interpreting circumstances or events as the Spirit's working. Many Christians today know that the Holy Spirit should be in their lives, and so they decide to interpret what happens to them as the work of the Spirit. If circumstances turn out a certain way, that is the Spirit leading them. If someone tells them something helpful, that is the Spirit speaking to them. If they get a good idea, that is the Spirit inspiring them. I have never felt very easy about that approach. I always knew that the experience of the Holy Spirit for the early Christians and for the great saints was more than just interpreting what happened to them as the work of the Spirit. It was a distinct, recognizable experience.

My first exposure to the charismatic renewal came through reading *The Cross and the Switchblade*. It was in that story that I could see that the leading of the Spirit could be something a person experienced and not just something that he could deduce from circumstances. And I could see that it brought results. I could also see in that story that the Holy Spirit had the power to cure people from drug addiction much more effectively than psychological methods. Shortly after that, I read about the gift of tongues and what that could mean to a person. I discovered at the same time that many people were experiencing the workings of the Spirit that I was reading about.

Soon I began to talk with people who had experiences of being filled with the Spirit. Friends of mine began to tell me about a new ability to pray as the result of the Holy Spirit. They shared about praying for people for healing, and the results that came from it. They told me about the gift of prophecy, and how it was returning to use. And I soon began to experience all these things myself. I began to see from personal experience that the Lord would do for us all the things he did for the early Christians.

I also gradually have come to experience a community that lives in the Spirit, as our community has been built up in the life of the Spirit. I have seen gatherings for worship happen regularly in which there is a free, spontaneous spirit of worship and praise and in which the Spirit of God has brought about a remarkable unity among very different people. I have seen the Spirit give guidance to the community as a whole, the same message coming through many people, often independently of one another. I have seen a people be knit together and grow in numbers, not so much because of a plan, but because the same Spirit was living in them.

I was early convinced that we needed these workings of the Spirit if the Church was to stay alive and make headway in today's world. I knew from my own experience in trying to bring people to faith in Christ that some kind of power was needed. And as I began to see that these things did not have to happen sporadically, but could happen regularly ("so freely" as Paul said to the Galatians), I began to become convinced that they were normal for Christians. The life in the Spirit, the life in which a person experiences the presence of the Spirit and his working, is the normal Christian life.

When I say “normal” I do not mean “average”. I do not mean that most Christians today are experiencing these things. They are not. But I mean that the life in the Spirit is the “norm” for the Christian life. This is the way it was meant to be. This should be the expected standard. There is no good reason why it cannot be.

My experience has been that most Christians would like to live the life of the Spirit, but they do not know how to begin. Catholics especially have been taught a great deal about the spiritual life. They know a lot about it. Many of them have given up a great deal and entered religious orders so that they can live a deeper spiritual life. But they often do not know how to start. They do not know how to get into that contact with the Spirit that allows them to experience his presence and to let him produce the spiritual life in them. It is for this reason that it is important to understand what it is to be baptized with the Spirit because the life of the Spirit only becomes possible after having been baptized in the Spirit.

Baptized in the Spirit

We can best understand what it means to be baptized in the Spirit by seeing what happens to people when they are baptized in the Spirit. The New Testament contains a number of passages which describe people receiving the Spirit. From these passages we can discover some interesting things.

In the nineteenth chapter of Acts, Paul comes to Ephesus. When he arrives, he comes across a group of “disciples”. He probably noticed something missing right away, because he began by asking a question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” Now, think what a strange question this is. What would a group of modern Christians say to this? Probably, “What do you mean, ‘receive the Holy Spirit’?” That is, as a matter of fact, almost the answer the group of disciples gave. They told Paul they had not even heard there was such a thing as the Holy Spirit which they could receive. But what is strange about the question is that Paul expected them to know the answer. He expected them to be able to tell whether they had received the Holy Spirit or not.

When Paul got their answer, he knew that they were not yet fully Christians, and so he told them the good news about Jesus. “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the moment Paul had laid hands on them the Holy Spirit came down on them, and they began to speak with tongues and to prophesy.” When Paul was done, these disciples had definitely received the Holy Spirit. They knew it, and so did he. There was a change in them.

The same definite coming of the Holy Spirit characterizes the passages in Acts where there is description of what happened when Christians received the Holy Spirit. It was certainly true at Pentecost. At Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit was manifested by “what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven” and “something that seemed like tongues of fire”. But it also made a distinct change in the apostles because they began to speak in tongues and even looked like they were drunk.

The same thing was true when the Spirit came upon the group of Samaritans who had believed because of Philip’s preaching. Peter and John came and laid hands on them “and they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:17). Acts then goes on to say, “When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the imposition of hands by the apostles, he offered them some money”. In other words, the giving of the Holy Spirit was obvious enough and good enough that Simon could see that something was going on and that it would be worth a small investment to obtain the same power.

Finally, the same thing happened when the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his friends. Peter and some other Christians went to Cornelius’ house, because God insisted upon it, and they told them the good news.

However, it was clear all along that they were not inclined to feel that these gentiles could become Christians. But “while Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the pagans too, since they could hear them speaking strange tongues and proclaiming the greatness of God. Peter himself then said, ‘Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people, now they have received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?’” (Acts 10:44–47). In other words, the coming of the Holy Spirit upon these pagans produced a definite, manifest change (it had to for the Jewish Christians to accept it).

From the passages in the New Testament, it is clear that when people are baptized in the Spirit, they know it. They experience the Spirit coming to them in such a way that they can recognize it. They can recognize it, in other words, not only in themselves but also in others. The result of being baptized in the Spirit is that the Spirit enters their life and begins to make things happen in a way that they can experience.

Nowadays, people are experiencing the same thing happen. The Holy Spirit is coming to people in a way that they know it and can recognize it from experience. Increasing numbers of people are being baptized in the Spirit in a way that is similar to what happened in the New Testament.

What happens at the moment when people are baptized in the Spirit varies a great deal. One person I prayed with for the coming of the Spirit said that he felt like an electric current was running through him. Another felt “a strange warmth” fill him. Many simply feel a deep peace, or a joy. Some even laugh. But the most important part of what happens when a person is baptized in the Spirit is not any physical sensations or emotions. It is the change that comes from having the Holy Spirit live in us in a new way. It is a new kind of contact with the Lord. People have described it in the following ways:

Immediately I was filled with peace. And it wasn’t just a feeling. I think it could best be described as if I met Jesus Christ without seeing him. It was just as if Jesus Christ came up to me and said, Hi. It was just like I knew him all along. That night was the big turning point in my life.

The next week I received the baptism of the Spirit and I spoke in tongues right away. It has made all the change in the world. Now I say I believe in God, but not because of a theory but because I’ve met him.

At one prayer meeting there was silence and I was meditating. It seemed to me that if I had a gift to give in response to Christ’s love, it would be myself. And then something very curious happened. It was very much like the words came, ‘Do it’. So I said, ‘OK’ After the prayer meeting was over, for good measure I went up to the chapel and knelt down and said, ‘I don’t understand but all right.’ And I left the chapel and I started to feel a tremendous happiness, more than I’ve ever felt in my life. It was maybe a week later that I prayed in tongues. There are effects. Basically you are no longer loose and questioning who God is. You know Jesus Christ is risen, loves you, is concerned about you personally.

In other words, the same type of thing is happening now as happened to the early Christians. And from the experiences which people are now having, we can draw the same lessons: that when the Holy Spirit comes to them, they know it, that people can experience the Holy Spirit coming to them in a way that they can recognize, and that the result of being baptized with the Holy Spirit is a change in their lives that involves

experiencing the Holy Spirit in their lives in a new way.

What then is it to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? Perhaps the most obvious description of what happens when people are baptized in the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit comes to them in a way that they can know it. As a result of this coming of the Holy Spirit, they experience a new contact with God.

But there is something more to being baptized in the Spirit than that. When people are baptized in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit not only comes to them in a new way, but he also makes a change in them. Their life is different because their relationship with God has been changed. God is in them in a way in which he was not before. He has made his home in them in a new way.

As a result of the change which the Holy Spirit makes in people, those people can then begin to experience the presence of God. They can know God in a way they never did before — by immediate experience. They can also begin, to experience the Holy Spirit working in them in a new way. The Spirit guides them, speaks to them, teaches them, lets them know God and know that God loves them.

Another way of saying what it is to be baptized in the Spirit is that it is an introduction to the life of the Spirit. It is a beginning, the doorway, to the life of the Spirit. What makes the life of the Spirit in people possible is the presence of the Holy Spirit in them doing all the things which God promised the Holy Spirit would do. Therefore, the only way for people to experience the life of the Spirit is for the Holy Spirit to be in their life in a new way (to dwell in them in a new way). There has to be a change such that the Holy Spirit begins to do all these things. When that change occurs, a person has been baptized in the Spirit.

Being baptized in the Spirit is an introduction to the life of the Spirit, but it is also an introduction to the Christian community. I can remember the first time I went to a “charismatic” prayer meeting. I felt “out of it” — and only partly because some of the things people did were strange to me (like praying with their hands lifted up). I could pray with my hands lifted up (and did, somewhat self-consciously), but I still could not be fully part of what was happening there, because they had experienced something I had not. The Spirit was moving in them both individually and as a group in a way he was not moving in me. I needed some way of “getting into” what they were “into”. Or rather, I should say, I needed to let it into me.

If a community is living in the Spirit, the only way of coming into the life of that community is by being baptized in the Spirit. People cannot simply join (even if they “joined” they could not take part in its life). And since we need a community that is living in the Spirit in order to live in the Spirit ourselves, being baptized in the Spirit should not only mean coming into a new life with the Spirit. Normally it should mean coming into a community as well. “In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (I Cor. 12:13).

Being baptized in the Spirit is just a beginning, an introduction. It puts us into the kind of relationship with God that makes it possible for us to live the life of the Spirit. If we do not realize that it is just a beginning but instead start to think of it as a one-time spiritual experience which is an end in itself, we can develop some bad attitudes, for instance, the attitude that once I have had an experience of the Holy Spirit, I have “got it”.

From now on, all through my life, I am numbered among those who have “got it”. From the way people sometimes talk, a person might get the idea that God is mainly concerned about who has once had this experience and who has not. Those who have had it are the sheep, and those who have not are the goats.

Once we are baptized in the Spirit, we have not “got it”. But we can have it. The “it” is the Holy Spirit living in us and working through us. Once we have been baptized in the Spirit, we can have the Holy Spirit live in us

and work through us. We have experienced the Holy Spirit in a new way and that experience makes it possible for us to live with him in a new way. But that experience is not a guarantee that we always will. People who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit can end up farther away from God and from the life of the Spirit than people who have not. And what God is interested in is not people who once had the experience of being baptized in the Spirit, but he is interested in people who are now living in the Spirit.

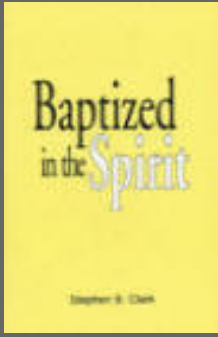
Another bad attitude that comes from thinking of being baptized in the Spirit mainly as a single experience is the attitude that once I have been baptized in the Spirit I have all I need to live the Christian life. In a way this is true (the Holy Spirit is all we need to live the Christian life), but in a way it is all wrong. When we are baptized in the Spirit, we are in a new relationship with God, but we have to know how to grow in that relationship. It is like being married. We can be fully and completely married and still not have a good married life. We can be baptized in the Spirit and still not live in the Spirit very well. We have to learn how to live the life of the Spirit.

The key to learning how to live in the Spirit is the experience of living in a community of people who are living the life of the Spirit. Being part of a community that is living in the Spirit is so important that it is almost true to say that when we are baptized in the Spirit, we receive as much of the life of the Spirit as the community we are part of is experiencing (fortunately this is not completely true). If the community we are part of has learned to yield to the gift of tongues, when we are baptized in the Spirit, we will speak in tongues much more readily. If the community we are part of either is closed to the gift of tongues or has difficulty in yielding to it, we will have a much harder time speaking in tongues when we are baptized in the Spirit. If the community we are part of experiences the guidance of the Spirit deeply in a regular way, we will experience it easily and soon. If the community we are part of does not know what the guidance of the Spirit is, we will have a hard time discovering it for ourselves.

The life of the Spirit is something which is shared with us by the community we are a part of. If the community has faith in something (tongues or guidance or whatever it might be) it will be able to impart that faith to us. There are, of course, exceptions. The Holy Spirit often gives an individual more than the community he is part of. But as a general rule, the Lord prefers to work with people as a body and not individually. He prefers to give the gift of prophecy, for instance, to a body through an individual and not to an individual for his own use when the body cannot receive it.

In other words, being baptized in the Spirit involves coming into a new relationship, a relationship with God and with a Christian community. It is a beginning. Without it, we cannot live the life of the Spirit. But being baptized in the Spirit is only a beginning. We need to learn how to live the life of the Spirit in a community of Christians who are living the life of the Spirit together.

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Baptized in the Spirit

By Stephen Clark, 71 pages, \$5.50

Published by [Tabor House](#)

This book helps Christians of all traditions to understand what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Steve's analysis is based on scripture and is illustrated with modern examples. First published in 1969, it is a practical and stimulating introduction to a significant spiritual experience and provides a clear explanation of the key theological issues associated with it.

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The Baptism in the Spirit - A Grace for the Whole Church

by Raniero Cantalamessa

***“God our Savior saved us.. by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior”
– Titus 3:5,6***

Renewal in the Spirit

Before speaking about the baptism, or outpouring, in the Spirit, I think it is important to understand what the renewal in the Spirit is, where this experience happens and of which it constitutes the source and the high point. Then we will better understand that the outpouring is not an event in and of itself but rather the beginning of a journey whose aim is the profound renewal of life in the whole Church.

The expression “renewal in the Spirit” has two biblical equivalents in the New Testament. To understand the soul of the charismatic movement, its profound inspiration, we must primarily search the Scripture. We need to discover the exact meaning of this phrase that is used to describe the experience of the renewal.

The first text is in Ephesians 4:23-24: *“Be renewed in the spirit of your minds and . . . clothe yourselves with the new self.”* Here the word “spirit” is written with a small “s,” and rightly so, because it indicates “our” spirit, the most intimate part of us (the spirit of our minds), which Scripture generally calls “the heart.” The word “spirit” here indicates that part of ourselves that needs to be renewed in order for us to resemble Christ, the New Man par excellence. “Renewing ourselves” means striving to have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had (see Philippians 2:5), striving for a “new heart.”

This text clarifies the meaning and the aim of our experience: The renewal should be, above all, an interior one, one of the heart. After the Second Vatican Council, many things were renewed in the church: liturgy, pastoral care, the *Code of Canon Law* and religious constitutions and attire. Despite their importance, these things are only the antecedents of true renewal. It would be tragic to stop at these things and to think that the whole task has been completed.

What matters to God is people, not structures. It is souls that make the church beautiful, and therefore she must adorn herself with souls. God is concerned about the hearts of His people, the love of His people, and everything else is meant to function as a support to that priority.

Our first text is not enough, however, to explain the phrase “renewal in the Spirit.” It highlights our obligation to renew ourselves (“be renewed!”) as well as what must be renewed (the heart), but it doesn’t tell us the “how” of renewal. What good is it to tell us we “must” renew ourselves if we are not also told how to renew ourselves? We need to know the true author and protagonist of the renewal.

Our second biblical text, from Titus, addresses that precise issue. It says that God “*saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit*” (Titus 3:5).

Here “Spirit” has a capital “S” because it points to the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. The preposition “by” points to the instrument, the agent. The name we give to our experience signifies, then, something very exact: renewal by the work of the Holy Spirit, a renewal in which God, not man, is the principal author, the protagonist. “I [not you]” says God, “am making all things new” (Revelation 21:5); “My Spirit [and only He] can renew the face of the earth” (see Psalm 104:30).

This may seem like a small thing, a simple distinction, but it actually involves a real Copernican revolution—a complete reversal that people, institutions, communities and the whole church in its human dimension must undergo in order to experience a genuine spiritual renewal.

We often think according to the “Ptolemaic system”: Its foundation consists in efforts, organization, efficiency, reforms and good will. The “earth” is at the center of this scheme, and God comes with His grace to empower and crown our efforts. The “Sun” revolves around the earth and is its vassal; God is the satellite of man.

However, the Word of God declares, “We need to give the power back to God” (see Psalm 68:35) because the “*power belongs to God*” (Psalm 62:11). That is a trumpet call! For too long we have usurped God’s power, managing it as though it were ours, acting as though it were up to us to “govern” the power of God. Instead, we need to revolve around the “Sun.” That’s the Copernican revolution I’m talking about.

Through that kind of revolution, we recognize, simply, that without the Holy Spirit we can do nothing. We cannot even say, “Jesus is Lord!” (see 1 Corinthians 12:3). We recognize that even our most concerted effort is simply the effect of salvation, rather than its cause. Now we can begin to really “lift up our eyes” and to “look up,” as the prophet exhorts (see Isaiah 60:4), and to say, “*I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth*” (Psalm 121:1-2).

The Bible often repeats the command of God, “*You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy!*” (Leviticus 19:1; see Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:15-16). But in one place in that very same book of Leviticus, we find a

statement that explains all the others: “*I am the Lord; I sanctify you!*” (Leviticus 20:8). I am the Lord who wants to renew you with My Spirit! Let yourselves be renewed by My Spirit!

Baptism: An “Unreleased” Sacrament

Now let’s move on to the theme of the baptism of the Spirit. First of all it must be said that this expression is not a recent invention of pentecostals and charismatics. It comes directly from Jesus. Before leaving his disciples he said to them: “*John baptized in water but, not many days from now, you are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit*” (Ac 1:5). We know what happened not many days from that moment: Pentecost! The expression baptism in the Spirit therefore on one hand refers to the event of Pentecost and on the other hand to baptism. We could speak of it in terms of “a new Pentecost” for the church (and I often do so) or in terms of a renewal of our baptism. This time I want to explore this second dimension of it.

The term “baptism in the Spirit” indicates that there is something here that is basic to baptism. We say that the outpouring of the Spirit actualizes and revives our baptism. To understand how a sacrament received so many years ago and administered in infancy can suddenly come alive and be revived and release such energy as we see on the occasions of outpouring, we must recall some aspects of sacramental theology.

Catholic theology can help us understand how a sacrament can be valid and legal but “unreleased.” A sacrament is called “unreleased” if its fruit remains bound, or unused, because of the absence of certain conditions that further its efficacy. One extreme example would be the sacrament of marriage or of holy orders received while a person is in the state of mortal sin. In those cases, such sacraments cannot confer any grace on a person. If, however, the obstacle of sin is removed by repentance, the sacrament is said to revive (*reviviscit*) due to the faithfulness and irrevocability of the gift of God. God remains faithful even when we are unfaithful, because He cannot deny Himself (see 2 Timothy 2:13).

There are other cases in which a sacrament, while not being completely ineffective, is nevertheless not entirely released: It is not free to work its effects. In the case of baptism, what is it that causes the fruit of this sacrament to be held back?

Here we need to recall the classical doctrine about sacraments. Sacraments are not magic rites that act mechanically, without people’s knowledge or collaboration. Their efficacy is the result of a synergy, or collaboration, between divine omnipotence (that is, the grace of Christ and of the Holy Spirit) and free will. As Saint Augustine said, “He who created you without your consent will not save you without your cooperation.”

To put it more precisely, the fruit of the sacrament depends wholly on divine grace; however, this divine grace does not act without the “yes”—the consent and affirmation—of the person. This consent is more of a “*conditio sine qua non*” than a cause in its own right. God acts like the bridegroom, who does not impose his love by force but awaits the free consent of his bride.

God's Role and Our Role in Baptism

Everything that depends on divine grace and the will of Christ in a sacrament is called “*opus operatum*,” which can be translated as “the work *already* accomplished, the objective and certain fruit of a sacrament when it is administered validly.” On the other hand, everything that depends on the liberty and disposition of the person is called “*opus operantis*”; this is the work yet to be accomplished by the individual, his or her affirmation.

The *opus operatum* of baptism, the part done by God and grace, is diverse and very rich: remission of sins; the

gift of the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (given in seed form); and divine sonship. All of this is mediated through the efficacious action of the Holy Spirit. In the words of Clement of Alexandria:

Once baptized, we are enlightened; enlightened, we are adopted as sons; adopted, we are made perfect; made perfect, we receive immortality The operation of baptism has several names: grace, enlightenment, perfection, bath. It can be called a “bath” because through it we are purified of our sins; “grace” because the punishments deserved for our sins are removed; “enlightenment” because through it we can contemplate the beautiful and holy light of salvation, and see into divine reality; “perfection” because nothing is lacking.

Baptism is truly a rich collection of gifts that we received at the moment of our birth in God. But it is a collection that is still sealed up. We are rich because we possess these gifts (and therefore we can accomplish all the actions necessary for Christian life), but we don’t know what we possess. Paraphrasing a verse from John, we can say that we have been sons of God until now, but what we shall become has yet to be revealed (see 1 John 3:2). This is why we can say that, for the majority of Christians, baptism is a sacrament that is still “unreleased.”

So much for the *opus operatum*. What does the *opus operantis* consist of in baptism?

It consists of faith! *“The one who believes and is baptized shall be saved”* (Mark 16:16). With regard to baptism, then, there is the element of a person’s faith. *“But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God”* (John 1:12).

We can also recall the beautiful text from the Acts of the Apostles that tells about the baptism of Queen Candace’s court official. When their journey brought Philip and the official near some water, the official said, *“Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” Philip said, ‘It is permitted if you believe with all your heart’*” (Acts 8: 36-37). (Verse 37 here, an addition from the early Christian community, testifies to the common conviction of the church at that time.)

Baptism is like a divine seal stamped on the faith of man: *“When you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, [you] were marked with the seal [this refers to baptism] of the promised Holy Spirit”* (Ephesians 1:13). Saint Basil wrote, “Truly, faith and baptism, these two modes of salvation, are bound indivisibly to one another, because if faith receives its perfection from baptism, baptism is founded on faith.” This same saint called baptism “the seal of faith.”

The individual’s part, faith, does not have the same importance and independence as God’s action because God plays a part even in someone’s act of faith: Even faith works by the grace that stirred it up. Nevertheless, the act of faith includes, as an essential element, the response—the individual’s “I believe!”—and in that sense we call it *opus operantis*, the work of the person being baptized.

Now we can understand why baptism was such a powerful and grace-filled event in the early days of the church and why there was not normally any need for a new outpouring of the Spirit like the one we are experiencing today. Baptism was administered to adults who were converting from paganism and who, after suitable instruction, were in a position to make an act of faith, an existential, free and mature choice about their lives. (We can read about baptism in the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem, to understand the depth of faith of those who were prepared for baptism.)

They came to baptism by way of a true and genuine conversion. For them baptism was really a font of personal renewal in addition to a rebirth in the Holy Spirit (see Titus 3:5). Saint Basil, responding to someone who had asked him to write a treatise on baptism, said that it could not be explained without first explaining what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, because the Lord commands,

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. --MATTHEW 28:19-20

In order for baptism to operate in all its power, anyone who desires it must also be a disciple or have a serious intention of becoming one. According to Saint Basil:

A disciple is, as the Lord Himself taught us, anyone who draws near to the Lord to follow Him, that is, to hear His Words, to believe and obey Him as one would a master or a king or a doctor or a teacher of truth. . . . Now, whoever believes in the Lord and presents himself ready to be disciple must first set aside every sin and everything that distracts from the obedience which is owed to the Lord for many reasons.

The favorable circumstance that allowed baptism to operate in such power at the beginning of the church was this: The action of God and the action of man came together simultaneously, with perfect synchronism. It happened when the two poles, one positive and one negative, touched, making light burst forth.

Today this synchronism is usually not operative. As the church adopted infant baptism, little by little the sacrament began to lack the act of faith that was free and personal. The faith was supplied, or uttered, by an intermediate party (parents and godparents) on behalf of the child. In the past, when the environment around the baby was Christian and full of faith, the child's faith could develop, even if it was slowly. But today our situation has become even worse than that of the Middle Ages.

The environments in which many children now grow up do not help faith to blossom. The same must often be said of the family, and more so of the child's school and even more so of our society and culture. This does not mean that in our situation today normal Christian life cannot exist or that there is no holiness or no charisms that accompany holiness. Rather, it means that instead of being the norm, it has become more and more of an exception.

In today's situation, rarely, or never, do baptized people reach the point of proclaiming "in the Holy Spirit" that "Jesus is Lord!" And because they have not reached that point, everything in their Christian lives remains unfocused and immature. Miracles no longer happen. What happened with the people of Nazareth is being repeated: "Jesus was not able to do many miracles there because of their unbelief" (see Matthew 13:58).

The Meaning of the Outpouring of the Spirit

The outpouring of the Spirit, then, is a response by God to the dysfunction in which Christian life now finds itself. In these last few years we know that the church, the bishops, have also begun to be concerned that Christian sacraments, especially baptism, are being administered to people who will make no use of them in their lives. Thus, they have considered the possibility of not administering baptism when the minimum guarantees that this gift of grace would be valued and cultivated are absent.

We cannot, in fact, "throw our pearls before swine," as Jesus said, and baptism is a pearl because it is a fruit of

the blood of Christ. But we can say that God is concerned, even more than the church is, about this dysfunction. He has raised up movements here and there in the church that are proceeding in the direction of renewing Christian initiation among adults.

The renewal in the Spirit is one of those movements, and its principal grace, without doubt, is tied to the outpouring of the Spirit and what precedes it. Its efficacy at revivifying baptism consists in this: Finally a person is doing his or her part, making a decision of faith that is prepared through repentance. This allows the work of God to “be released” in all its power.

It is as though God’s outstretched hand has finally grasped the hand of the individual, and through that handclasp, He transmits all His creative power, which is the Holy Spirit. To use an image from physics, the plug has been inserted into the outlet, and the light has been turned on. The gift of God is finally “unbound,” and the Spirit permeates Christian life like a perfume.

For the adult who has been a Christian for many years, this faith decision necessarily has the characteristic of a *conversion*. We could describe this outpouring of the Spirit, insofar as the person is concerned, either as a renewal of baptism or as a second conversion.

We can understand something else about this outpouring if we also see its connection with confirmation, at least in the current practice of separating it from the sacrament of baptism and administering it later. In addition to being a renewal of the grace of baptism, the outpouring is also a “confirmation” of baptism itself, a conscious “yes” to it, its fruit and its commitments. As such it parallels (at least in its subjective aspect) the effects of confirmation on the objective, sacramental level.

Confirmation is understood as a sacrament that develops, confirms and fulfills the work of baptism. The outpouring is a subjective and spontaneous—not sacramental—confirmation in which the Spirit acts not from the power of the sacramental institution but through the power of His free initiative and the openness of the person.

The meaning of confirmation sheds light on the special sense of greater involvement in the apostolic and missionary dimension of the church that usually characterizes someone who has received the outpouring of the Spirit. That person feels impelled to help build up the church, to serve the church in various ministries, clerical or lay, and to give testimony to Christ. All of these things recall Pentecost and actualize the sacrament of confirmation.

“The One Who Baptizes in the Holy Spirit”

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is not the only occasion in the church for this renewal of the sacraments of initiation and, in particular, of the coming of the Holy Spirit at baptism. Other occasions include the renewal of baptismal vows during Easter vigils; spiritual exercises; the profession of vows, called “a second baptism”; and, on the sacramental level, confirmation.

It is not difficult, then, to find the presence of a “spontaneous outpouring” in the lives of the saints, especially on the occasion of their conversion. For example, we can read about Saint Francis at his conversion:

After the feast they left the house and started off singing through the streets. Francis’ companions were leading the way; and he, holding his wand of office, followed them at a little distance. Instead of singing, he was listening very attentively. All of a sudden the Lord touched

his heart, filling it with such surpassing sweetness that he could neither speak nor move. He could only feel and hear this overwhelming sweetness which detached him so completely from all other physical sensations that, as he said later, had he been cut to pieces on the spot he could not have moved.

When his companions looked around, they saw him in the distance and turned back. To their amazement they saw that he was transformed into another man, and they asked him, “What were you thinking of? Why didn’t you follow us? Were you thinking of getting married?”

Francis answered in a clear voice: “You are right: I was thinking of wooing the noblest, richest, and most beautiful bride ever seen.” His friends laughed at him saying he was a fool and did not know what he was saying; in reality he had spoken by a divine inspiration.

Although I said the outpouring of the Spirit is not the only time of renewal of baptismal grace, it holds a very special place because it is open to all of God’s people, big and small, and not just to certain privileged people who do the Ignatian spiritual exercises or take religious vows. Where does that extraordinary power that we have experienced in an outpouring come from? We are not, in fact, speaking about a theory but about something that we ourselves have experienced. We can also say, with Saint John, “What we have heard, and what we have seen with our own eyes and touched with our own hands, we declare to you because you are in communion with us” (see 1 John 1:1-3). The explanation for this power lies in God’s will: It has pleased Him to renew the church of our day by this means, and that is all there is to it!

There are certainly some biblical precedents for this outpouring, like the one narrated in Acts 8:14-17. Peter and John, knowing that the Samaritans had heard the Word of God, came to them, prayed for them and laid hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit. But the text that we need to begin with to understand something about this baptism in the Spirit is primarily John 1:32-33:

And John [the Baptist] testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'"

What does it mean that Jesus is "the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit"? The phrase serves not only to distinguish the baptism of Jesus from that of John, who baptized only “with water,” but to distinguish the whole person and work of Christ from His precursor’s. In other words, in all His works, Jesus is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

“To baptize” has a metaphoric significance here: It means “to flood, to bathe completely and to submerge,” just as water does with bodies. Jesus “baptizes in the Holy Spirit” in the sense that he “gives the Spirit without measure” (see John 3:34), that He has “poured out” His Spirit (see Acts 2:33) on all of redeemed humanity. The phrase refers to the event of Pentecost more than to the sacrament of baptism, as one can deduce from the passage in Acts: “*John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*” (Acts 1:5).

The expression “to baptize in the Holy Spirit” defines, then, the essential work of Christ, which already in the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament appeared oriented to regenerating humanity by means of a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit (see Joel 2:28-29). Applying all this to the life and history of the church, we must conclude that the resurrected Jesus baptized in the Holy Spirit not only in the sacrament of baptism but in

different ways and at different times as well: in the Eucharist, in the hearing of the Word of God, in all other “means of grace.”

The baptism in the Spirit is one of the ways that the resurrected Jesus continues his essential work of “baptizing in the Spirit.” For this reason, even though we can explain this grace in reference to baptism and Christian initiation, we need to avoid becoming rigid about his point of view. It is not only baptism that revives the grace of initiation, but also confirmation, first communion, the ordination of priests and bishops, religious vows, marriage—all the graces and charisms. This is truly the grace of a new Pentecost. It is, like the rest of Christian life, a new and sovereign initiative, in a certain sense, of the grace of God, which is founded on but not exhausted in baptism. It is linked not just to “initiation” but also to the “perfection” of Christian life.

Only in this way can we explain the presence of the baptism in the Spirit among Pentecostal brothers and sisters. The concept of initiation is foreign to them, and they do not invest the same importance in water baptism as do Catholics and other Christians. In its very origin the baptism in the Spirit has an ecumenical value, which is necessary to preserve at all costs. It is a promise and an instrument of unity among Christians, helping us to avoid an excessive “catholicizing” of this shared experience.

Brotherly Love, Prayer and Laying on of Hands

In the outpouring there is a hidden, mysterious dimension that is different for each person because only God knows us intimately. He acts in a way that respects the uniqueness of our personalities. At the same time, there is also a visible dimension, in the community, that is the same for all and that constitutes a kind of sign, analogous to the signs in the sacraments. The visible, or community, dimension consists primarily in three things: brotherly love, prayer and the laying on of hands. These are not sacramental signs, but they are indeed biblical and ecclesial.

The laying on of hands can signify two things: invocation or consecration. We see, for example, both types of laying on of hands at Mass. There is the laying on of hands as invocation (at least in the Roman rite) at the moment of epiclesis, when the priest prays, “May the Holy Spirit sanctify these gifts so that they may become for us the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” Then there is the laying on of hands when the concelebrants pray over the offerings at the moment of consecration.

In the rite of confirmation, as it now occurs, there are also two occasions for the laying on of hands. The first has the character of invocation. The other, which accompanies the anointing with the oil of chrism on the forehead, by which the sacrament becomes actualized, has the character of consecration.

In the outpouring of the Spirit, the laying on of hands has only the character of invocation (similar to what we find in Genesis 48:14; Leviticus 9:22; Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 19:13-15). It also has a highly symbolic significance: It recalls the image of the Holy Spirit's overshadowing (see Luke 1:35); it also recalls the Holy Spirit as He “swept over” the face of the waters (see Genesis 1:2). In the original the word that is translated “swept over” means “to cover with one's wings,” or “to brood, like a hen with her chicks.”

Tertullian clarifies the symbolism of the laying on of hands in baptism: “The flesh is covered over by the laying on of hands so that the soul can be enlightened by the Spirit.” This action is a paradox, like many things in God: The laying on of hands enlightens by covering, like the cloud that followed the chosen people in Exodus and like the one that surrounded the disciples on Mount Tabor (see Exodus 14:19-20; Matthew 17:5).

The other two elements are brotherly love and prayer, or “brotherly love that expresses itself in prayer.”

Brotherly love is the sign and vehicle of the Holy Spirit. He, who is Love, finds a natural environment in brotherly love, His sign par excellence. (We can also say this love is like a sacramental sign, even if it is in a different sense: “a signifying cause.”) We cannot insist enough on the importance of an atmosphere of brotherly love surrounding those who are going to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is also closely connected with the outpouring of the Spirit in the New Testament. Concerning Jesus’ baptism, Luke writes, “While he was in prayer, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him” (see Luke 3:21). It was Jesus’ prayer, we could say, that made the heavens open and the Holy Spirit descend upon Him.

The outpouring at Pentecost happened this way too: While they were all continuing in prayer, there came the sound of a violent wind, and tongues of fire appeared (see Acts 1:14-21). Jesus Himself said, “*I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate*” (John 14:16). On every occasion the outpouring of the Spirit is connected to prayer.

These signs--the laying on of hands, brotherly love and prayer--all point to simplicity; they are simple instruments. Precisely because of this, they bear the mark of God’s action. Tertullian writes of baptism:

There is nothing which leaves the minds of men so amazed as the simplicity of the divine actions which they see performed and the magnificence of the effects that follow. . . . Simplicity and power are the prerogatives of God.

This is the opposite of what the world does. In the world the bigger the objectives are, the more complicated are the means. When people wanted to get to the moon, the necessary apparatus was gigantic.

If simplicity is the mark of divine action, we need to preserve it in our prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit. Simplicity should shine forth in prayers, in gestures, in everything. There should be nothing theatrical, no excited movements or excessive words, etc.

The Bible records the glaring contrast between the actions of the priests of Baal and the prayer of Elijah during the sacrifice on Mount Carmel. The former cried out, limped around the altar and cut themselves until they bled. Elijah simply prayed, “*O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, . . . answer me, so that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back!*” (1 Kings 18:36-37). The fire of the Lord fell on the sacrifice prepared by Elijah but not on the one prepared by the priests of Baal (see 1 Kings 18:25-38). Elijah later experienced that God was not in the great wind, or in the earthquake, or in the fire but in the still, small voice (see 1 Kings 19:11-12).

From where does the grace of the outpouring come? From the people present? No! From the person who receives? Again, no! It comes from God. It makes no sense to ask if the Holy Spirit comes from inside or from outside of the person: God is inside and outside. We can only say that such grace has a connection to baptism because God always acts with consistency and faithfulness; He does not contradict Himself. He honors the commitment and the institutions of Christ. One thing is certain: It is not the brothers and sisters who confer the Holy Spirit. Rather, they invite the Holy Spirit to come upon a person. No one can give the Spirit, not even the pope or a bishop, because no one possesses the Holy Spirit. Only Jesus can actually give the Holy Spirit. People do not possess the Holy spirit, but, rather, are possessed by Him.

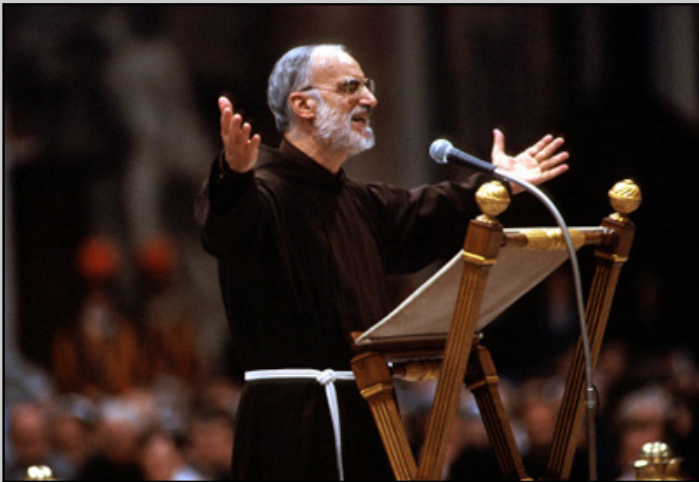
When we talk about the mode of this grace, we can speak of it as a new coming of the Holy Spirit, as a new

sending of the Spirit by the Father through Jesus Christ or as a new anointing corresponding to a new level of grace. In this sense the outpouring, although not a sacrament, is nevertheless an event, a *spiritual event*. This definition corresponds most closely to the reality of the thing. It is an *event*, something that happens and that leaves a sign, creating something new in a life. It is a *spiritual* event, rather than an outwardly visible, historical one, because it happens in a person's spirit, in the interior part of a person, where others may not recognize what is happening. Finally, it is spiritual because it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

There is a wonderful text from the apostle Paul that speaks specifically of the renewing of the gift of God. Let's hear it as an invitation addressed to each of us:

I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.--2 TIMOTHY 1:6-7

Excerpt from a presentation given by Father Raniero Cantalamessa at the "Awakening the Domestic Church" [conference](#) held in Norfolk, Virginia, USA, May 2104. Full text available at [Zenit](#).



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Raniero Cantalamessa and the Call for a New Evangelization



Part 3: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Proclaiming the Gospel Message

By Sue Cummins

Note: The following article is adapted from the thesis, *Raniero Cantalamessa and the New Evangelization: Proclaiming the Kerygma in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, which was submitted to the School of Theology of Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, Michigan USA, December 2014. Sue Cummins works full time for the Archdiocese of Detroit's Department of Evangelization and Catechesis as Regional Catechetical Coordinator.

In the previous issue (see Part 2) we examined the content of the kerygma (Gospel message) and showed the importance of proclaiming it. In this issue (Part 3) we will explore the *method* of the proclamation.

The Gospel needs to be proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit

Cantalamessa teaches that “The Gospel is the object to be proclaimed, the Holy Spirit is the method, that is, ‘the medium’ or the ‘way’ in which to do it.”¹¹⁰ What does he mean by this? He states repeatedly that the gospel message needs to be proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit in order for the word of God to be fully efficacious:

One cannot proclaim Jesus effectively except with the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostles are “those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit” (1 Pet 1:12). Between proclaiming Christ simply “in doctrine” and proclaiming him “in the Holy Spirit” there is the same difference as between proclaiming the word “from without,” standing outside of its sphere of action, its domination, and its “grip,” free and neutral before it, and proclaiming it while standing “within” the word, in its mysterious grasp, moved by it, in vital contact with it, getting from it power and authority. In the first case there is a transmission of doctrine, in the second a transmission of existence.¹¹¹

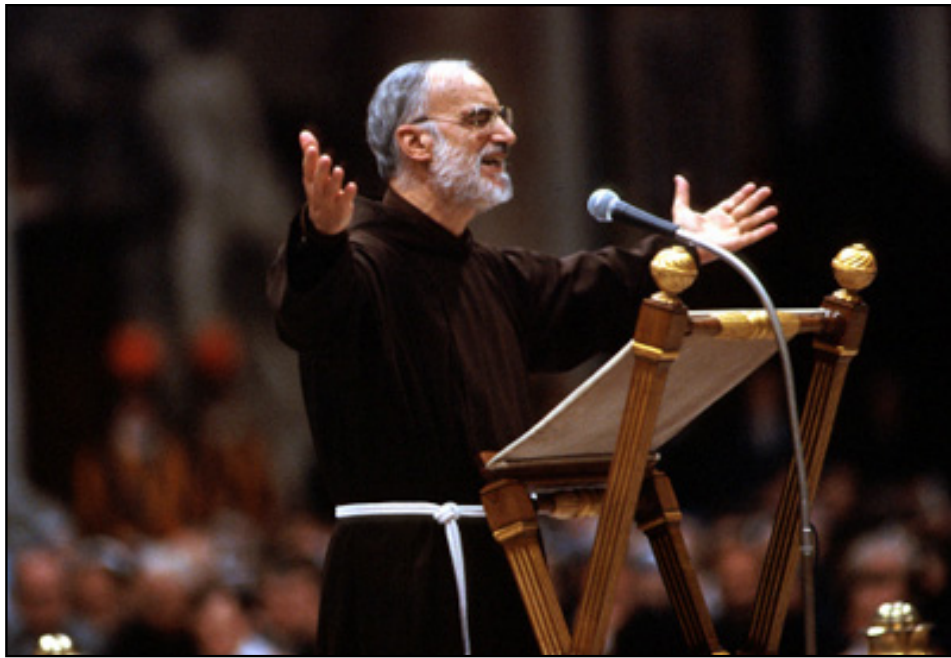
In this chapter we will first examine Cantalamessa’s teaching on the nature and the role of the Holy Spirit as articulated in *Come, Creator Spirit: Meditations on the Veni Creator and Sober Intoxication of the Spirit*, including his treatment of the sacramental grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Next we will consider the exegesis of the New Testament accounts of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that Cantalamessa offers in *The Mystery of Pentecost*. The last section of the chapter will explore the ways that the Holy Spirit empowers and anoints a person for fruitful evangelization and effective proclamation of the Gospel message. Cantalamessa has written and spoken extensively on this theme. His works *Jesus Began to Preach: The Mystery of God’s Word* and *The Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus* provide an excellent synthesis of his thought on this topic.

Come Creator Spirit

In *Come Creator Spirit* Cantalamessa gives an overview of the person and the work of the Holy Spirit using the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*¹¹² as a basis for his commentary. The hymn addresses the Holy Spirit with many titles: creator, paraclete, gift of God, living water, fire, anointing for the soul, and finger of God’s right hand. The Holy Spirit gives light, peace and love, heals physical bodies, and drives the enemy away. The Holy Spirit was present at creation. In his commentary, Cantalamessa emphasizes the perfecting work of the Holy Spirit as the one who brings order out of chaos:

The Spirit is always the one that brings about the change from chaos to cosmos, from disorder to order, from confusion to harmony, from deformity to beauty, from oldness to newness—not in a mechanical way and all of a sudden, but in the sense that the Spirit is at work in all of this kind of change for the better, guiding its evolving progress until it reaches its fulfillment. The Spirit is always the one at work, ‘creating and renewing the face of the earth.’¹¹³

Along these same lines, St. Ambrose writes: “Who indeed can doubt that the Holy Spirit quickens all things, since he, too, just as the Father and the Son, is the Creator of all things, and God, the omnipotent Father, is understood to have done nothing without the Holy Spirit; for even in the beginning of the creation the Spirit moved over the waters.”¹¹⁴ As the Church prays for renewal she invokes the help of the Spirit who brings order out of chaos and puts life where there is no life.



Cantalamessa draws attention to the fact that one of the first words used in Scripture in reference to the Holy Spirit is the Hebrew word *ruah* which means “wind” and “breath.” This meaning is carried on in the translations into Greek (*pneuma*) and the Latin (*spiritus*).¹¹⁵ Ezekiel 37:1-4 describes dry bones that have no life until the prophet calls forth the wind and invokes the breath of the Holy Spirit: “So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host” (Ezekiel 37:10). Cantalamessa writes:

“Spirit, Come!” This is the primordial epiclesis, the root of all prayers of invocation. This is where the opening invocation of our hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* comes from, as well as the opening line in the Sequence for Pentecost: *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*. It is the only prayer to the Holy Spirit recorded in Scripture, and it is the only prayer to the Holy Spirit that the church has made its own and continued to pray through the centuries. It is the *Maranatha* of the Spirit, equal to that “Come, Lord!” that the early Christians used to cry out to Christ when they gathered for worship.¹¹⁶

This power that raised the dry bones to life is still at work today. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is still at work today renewing and bringing life to the Church.

Chapter 3 of *Come, Creator Spirit* provides a commentary on the line of the hymn that implores: “Fill with heavenly grace the hearts that you have made.” Cantalamessa writes that the word “grace” refers to the Holy Spirit in person. The hymn connects the Holy Spirit with grace and therefore with the work of Christ who is the author of grace. Reflecting on the question, “What did the Holy Spirit bring at Pentecost that was new?” Cantalamessa points out that the Creator Spirit and the Spirit of redemption are the same Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the principle of our creation, is also at work to sanctify us.¹¹⁷ There are not two different Spirits with separate realms of operation. The Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity, has always existed with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit who was present at creation is the same Holy Spirit who anointed the prophets and kings of Old Testament times. This same Holy Spirit rested on Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan and fell on the disciples in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost. The same Holy Spirit is present today; since the passion of Christ, the Holy Spirit is present in a fuller way to those who believe in Christ.

The prophet Joel predicted a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit that was not to be fulfilled until the day of Pentecost: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit” (Joel 2: 28-29). The incarnation of Christ, his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven opened the way for this new presence of the Holy Spirit. Cantalamessa states that the Holy

Spirit is now “*hypostatically* present.” By this he means that the Holy Spirit is present in person:

For as long as the Word had not yet become “flesh and lived among us” (Jn 1:14), neither was the Spirit able to dwell among us. Before the Spirit had descended on Jesus and rested on him (Jn 1:33), the Spirit was not able to descend on us and remain with us. Consequently we can say, in language that is somewhat more developed, that before Pentecost the Spirit was present in the world through the Spirit’s gifts and power, but since the time of Pentecost onward the Spirit has been *hypostatically* present, that is, present in person.¹¹⁸

Cantalamessa makes it clear that this presence and grace of the Holy Spirit is not simply a concept or idea. He states that “grace is an experiential reality.”¹¹⁹ The Gospel of Luke says that Jesus “rejoiced in the Holy Spirit” (Lk 10:21). Paul’s writings are overflowing with references to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit; he and his fellow believers were clearly motivated by a profound experience of the love, grace, and power of the Holy Spirit at work in their lives.



In Cantalamessa’s view, the Holy Spirit sustains and renews the people of God in two fundamental ways. First, the Spirit is poured down “from above” through the institutions and hierarchy of the Church:

In His infinite wisdom God has established two distinct channels to sanctify the Church or, one could say, two different directions from which the Spirit blows. There is the Spirit who comes from above, so to speak and who is transmitted through the pope, the bishops and the priests. He acts through the magisterium of the church, through the hierarchy, through authority and especially through the sacraments. It is through these channels instituted by Christ and entrusted to the institutional Church, that the Spirit or grace comes to us. No one, not even the hierarchy of the church, can make changes to these channels.¹²⁰

Sacramental grace is intended for all of God’s people. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the institutional channels of the Church is a sign of the unity of the Church. Cantalamessa writes: “The sacraments are shared in common; there is no objective distinction among believers who receive them in the same manner. The only distinction depends on an individual’s personal faith and holiness and not on his or her position in the Church.”¹²¹ Sanctifying grace that brings about transformation of life is equally available to all. Cantalamessa points out that Jesus who died for all is the source of all grace; Christ established the sacraments from which we draw the grace that flows from his sacrifice on the cross.¹²²

The second manner of operation of the Holy Spirit is the Spirit blowing “from below,” giving different charisms to different individuals. Cantalamessa says that the Spirit is “truly the wind that Jesus said “blows where it chooses” (Jn 3:8):

Charisms are the concrete manifestations of this Spirit who blows “where he chooses” and whom no one

can foresee or determine ahead of time. If the sacraments are the established outlets of grace, the charisms are the surprise outlets of grace and of the Holy Spirit.¹²³

Charisms are bestowed on God's people for the purpose of service to others. The charisms are given in order to equip Christ's disciples for mission. The diversity of gifts shows the diversity of the Church; but it is the same Holy Spirit at work in and through the people of God. Cantalamessa writes: "The charisms, then, are for the Church, for the enrichment of the Church, for the vitality and variety of the Church."¹²⁴ Both modes of operation of the Holy Spirit are essential to the health and growth of the Church.

Unfortunately, there are many baptized Catholics who do not fully understand the nature of the grace that is given through baptism and the other sacraments they receive. They have received a gift, but they have failed to unwrap it. Cantalamessa points to the Catholic understanding of "*opus operatum*" and "*opus operantis*" as a way of understanding how a sacrament can be valid and objectively accomplish the work of the sacrament and yet, at the same time, not be fully released in the life of an individual who is consciously or unconsciously failing to cooperate with the grace of the sacrament:

Everything that depends on divine grace and the will of Christ in a sacrament is called *opus operatum*, which can be translated as "the work already accomplished, the objective and certain fruit of a sacrament when it is administered validly." On the other hand, everything that depends on the liberty and disposition of the person is called *opus operantis*; this is the work yet to be accomplished by the individual, his or her affirmation.

The *opus operatum* of baptism, the part done by God and grace, is diverse and very rich: remission of sins; the gift of the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (given in seed form); and divine sonship. All of this is mediated through the efficacious action of the Holy Spirit. . . Baptism is truly a rich collection of gifts that we received at the moment of our birth in God. But it is a collection that is still sealed up. We are rich because we possess these gifts (and therefore we can accomplish all the actions necessary for Christian life), but we do not know what we possess.¹²⁵

In the early Church adults who had been evangelized and catechized received baptism with an active and full consent of faith. They were instructed on the goods of the sacraments they received. At present most Catholics are baptized as infants when they are not yet able to make a conscious assent of faith; reception of other sacraments often takes place without conversion or adequate teaching. The statistics cited in the first chapter of this thesis point to the fact that many baptized Catholics do not regularly receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist; many couples fail to seal their union with the sacrament of marriage. Numerous individuals who consider themselves Catholic are not benefitting from the grace and power that is available to them in the sacraments.

Sacramental grace is available to all and all are called to serve God, the Church, and society at large. *Christifideles Laici* states that clergy, religious, and laity are all called to serve the same mission and that all possess charisms and ministries that are "diverse yet complementary" (CF, 55). The call to proclaim the good news is extended to all believers; preaching is not reserved to those who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders. The New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law states:

The reality is that everyone in the Church has the radical duty and right to participate in the ministry of the divine word by virtue of their initiation (baptism, confirmation, Eucharist), communion, and possession of the Spirit of Christ (LG 11-14). Some have further rights and responsibilities in regard to this ministry by virtue of their share in the sacrament of orders and their ecclesiastical office. All must be able and qualified in order to exercise the ministry in the name of the Church.¹²⁶

The proclamation of the Gospel is part of the mission of every disciple of Christ. However, bishops, priests, and deacons have particular responsibilities and authority given to them as ministers of God's word; they have access to sacramental

grace that flows from their ordination for the purpose of equipping them for those responsibilities.

Jean Galot describes the sacramental character imparted to priests at their ordination as an active, dynamic power that equips them to carry out their duties of preaching and teaching: “The character provides the foundation for the empowerment to speak in the name of Christ, to proclaim the word of God, and to expound with authority the gospel message.”¹²⁷ Galot says that this sacramental character is given for the sake of transformation into the likeness of Christ and for the sake of the mission of Christ:

True, we may be tempted to equate the “mark” with a static reality, or to imagine that it encourages self-absorption. It is not so. We should see in that mark an energy meant to explode, the energy of Christ the Shepherd that seizes one’s entire being in order to get hold of one’s activity and confer upon it the much wider dimensions of Christ’s own mission. Truly, priestly power engages all the vital powers of a human being in order to raise them to a higher level.¹²⁸

Of course the development of human capacities and openness to exercising the grace of the sacrament are essential to the full fruition of the sacramental power available through the reception of Holy Orders. It seems that very few clerics have plumbed the depths of the sacramental grace available to them as ministers of God’s word.

The other mode of operation of the Holy Spirit that Cantalamessa writes about is that of distributor of the charisms to God’s people. These gifts of the Spirit are to be used for the sake of others and for the up building of the Church. Many Catholics misunderstand or do not appreciate the importance of the charisms. At times some demonstrate outright resistance to asking for and using the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Many Catholics are simply not acquainted with the teaching of the Church on charisms. In his commentary on First Corinthians 12, George Montague writes about a time when he was unaware of the importance of the charisms for today:

I must confess that when I wrote my first textbook on Paul, subtitled, *An Intensive Study of Key Texts*, I skipped chapters 12 to 14 of 1 Corinthians (even would you believe it Chapter 13!) because I thought the gifts as described by Paul would be irrelevant to today’s audience. . . But there is so much evidence of the importance of the spontaneous movement of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament (Rom 12:3-8; Eph 4:7-16; I Pet 4:10; the Acts of the apostles throughout), reinforced by the Second Vatican Council. . . that this vital element cannot be ignored. . . . Paul was not suggesting that the gifts are for the few. What he says to the Corinthians is addressed to Christians of all times: *strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts*.¹²⁹

Montague’s development in his understanding of the importance of charisms reflects a positive change that took place in the climate of the church after Vatican II.

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council taught about the need for a renewed appreciation of the role of the charisms in the Church.¹³⁰ Since then a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit has led to what is commonly known as the “charismatic renewal.” Some progress has been made, but the exercise of charisms is still not a part of the mainstream existence of the Church as it was in the time of the apostles. Cantalamessa writes: “This does not mean that in our situation today normal Christian life cannot exist or that there is no holiness or no charisms that accompany holiness. Rather, it means that instead of being the norm, it has become more and more of an exception.”¹³¹

Understanding the person and the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit is clearly a key to the new evangelization and the effective proclamation of the kerygma. In the next section we will look at Cantalamessa’s exegesis of the New Testament accounts of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the insights they give into two distinct modes of operation of the Holy Spirit.

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

In this section we will look at Cantalamessa’s exegesis of Luke’s account of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4 as contrasted to the account of Jesus’ meeting with his disciples on the evening of the first Easter found in John 20:19-23. Cantalamessa

shows that the two different but compatible approaches to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are both reflected in the Paul's epistles. He writes that both events took place in the same location, but at different times:

There is a Lukan Pentecost, the one described in the Acts of the Apostles, and there is a Johannine Pentecost, described in John 20:22, when Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." This Johannine Pentecost takes place in the same location as Luke's account, in the Cenaculum, the Upper Room, but not at the same time. In fact it happens on the very evening of Easter and not fifty days after it.¹³²

In his exegesis of the two accounts, Cantalamessa presents a theology of the Holy Spirit using the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles to represent the view of the Synoptics. He contrasts the focus of the Synoptics with the approach taken in the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John; he then analyzes Paul's approach as it reflects a synthesis of the approaches taken by Luke and John.

Luke focuses on the Holy Spirit being given for mission and the up building of the Church. Before he ascends into heaven, Jesus tells his disciples, "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit descends on the apostles and disciples—men and women—as they are praying together on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14; 2:1-4). As recounted in the Acts of the Apostles, this event ends with Peter's preaching and the conversion of three thousand (Acts 2). The Holy Spirit is given from above. The Holy Spirit is the distributor of the charisms. This is very much in line with the view of the Holy Spirit given in the Old Testament and in the other Synoptic Gospels. What is unique to Luke, according to Cantalamessa, is Luke's emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of prophecy:

The novelty of Luke is that, of the various marvels and supernatural actions of the Spirit, he privileges one in the sharpest way: prophecy. The Spirit is the Spirit of prophecy; it is the power that makes possible speaking in the name of God and with the authority of God. In the life of Jesus, this is clear from the beginning. In the baptism at the Jordan, the Spirit came upon Jesus of Nazareth and "anointed him," above all, for one thing: "to bring glad tidings to the poor," in other words, to evangelize (Lk 4:14-18).¹³³

In the Gospels the baptism of Jesus launches his active ministry; in the Acts of the Apostles the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples on the feast of Pentecost marks the beginning of the active ministry of the first believers. In Cantalamessa's view, Luke presents the Holy Spirit as the "gift of the risen one to the Church so that it may be capable of bringing the good news to the world."¹³⁴ The function of the Holy Spirit is to proclaim the Word.¹³⁵ As predicted in the prophecy of Joel 2: 28-29, the Spirit falls on the young and the old, on men and women, even on servants and slaves.

The Holy Spirit as the spirit of prophecy is needed for the new evangelization. The Spirit motivated the early Christians to preach and proclaim the good news. The same Spirit empowers God's messengers today. Priests, religious, teachers, preachers, catechists, parents—all Christians—are called to proclaim the good news of salvation. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* makes the point that those who are truly evangelized become evangelizers: "Here lies the test of truth, the touchstone of evangelization: it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn" (EN 24). The Spirit witnesses to Christ and empowers each person who is baptized into Christ to be a herald (*keryx*) of the Gospel message (*kerygma*). According to Cantalamessa, Luke's account of Pentecost points to two important truths. First, the "primary activity of the Church is the proclamation of the dead and risen Christ."¹³⁶ The Church's main task is to proclaim the kerygma. Second, the kerygma must be proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit. All of the efforts for the new evangelization to involve laity, to form priests, and to find new methods of communication will be fruitless if the work is not done in the power of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁷

There are similarities between the writings of John and those of Luke in regard to the Holy Spirit, but there are some marked differences as well. John portrays the Holy Spirit as the source of new life: the Holy Spirit is the new life that is given to those who believe in Christ. The Spirit wells up from within the hearts of men and women: "If any one thirst let

him come to me and drink. To He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water’” (Jn 7:37-38).¹³⁸ The Spirit is the one who gives life as He comes to dwell within the hearts of believers. In his book *Deification and Grace*, Daniel Keating writes that the “theme of the coming gift of the indwelling Spirit” is “one of the central themes of the Fourth Gospel.”¹³⁹ John emphasizes the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and the lives of those who are open to receive. The presence of the Holy Spirit within transforms a person and that transformation is part of the witness of a Christian.

Cantalamessa uses the example of St. Francis of Assisi as an illustration of what happens when a person falls in love with Christ and opens up to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. As a youth Francis had an encounter with Christ that moved him to make a decision to leave his wealth and position in order to respond to God’s call to live according to the Gospel. Francis did not fall in love with Lady Poverty, he fell in love with Christ.¹⁴⁰ Francis’ life of simplicity and service and his insistent preaching of the Gospel message flowed out of his deep life of prayer and union with Christ. Francis of Assisi exemplifies the powerful witness of a life radically conformed to the life of Christ. He embraced poverty, he reached out to the poor and he tirelessly called men and women to repentance. Cantalamessa writes: “Francis did nothing other than re-launch the great appeal to conversion with which Jesus’ preaching opens in the Gospel, and that of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. He did not need to explain what he meant by conversion: his whole life showed it.”¹⁴¹ The Holy Spirit who dwells within and transforms from within does not remain closed inside a believer. The transformation that the Spirit works from within a believer bursts forth into fruitful witness.

The Gospel of John contains many allusions to the anticipated coming of the Spirit.¹⁴² The Johannine account of the last supper discourse includes Jesus’ promise to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:15-26).¹⁴³ Jesus says that after he leaves the earth, he will ask the Father to send a Counselor to remain forever with his disciples. Cantalamessa contends that the account from John 20:19-22¹⁴⁴ shows that John writes about the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit as the life-giving presence within; John also recognizes the Holy Spirit as the one who empowers the disciples for mission:

Nevertheless, it is not quite right to say that there is no point of contact between John’s vision of the Spirit and Luke’s. John deepens the vision of the Synoptics, but he does not deny it. A clear point of contact exists between the two in John 20:22 which we have called the Johannine Pentecost. The Holy Spirit that Jesus here gives to the apostles is clearly for the sake of their mission: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” After saying this, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” The gesture of breathing recalls Gen 2:7 and Ezek 37:9 and thus represents the Spirit as giver of life and principle of the new creation, but the words that accompany the gesture represent the same Spirit as the force that will enable the apostles to carry out their mission and will confer upon them the power to take away sins. They represent it, in other words, as a prophetic and ministerial Spirit.¹⁴⁵

It is one Spirit at work with a variety of modes of expression. To proclaim God’s Word effectively an individual needs the help of the sanctifying Spirit working from within and that person needs the gifts of the Spirit who anoints for the sake of ministry.

Cantalamessa describes the approach that the Apostle Paul takes toward the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a combination of the approaches of Luke and John. Paul describes the Holy Spirit as the source of new life and as the distributor of charisms: “In St. Paul we find the synthesis of these two lines of thought, not in the sense that he reunites elements that existed separately before him—in fact, he writes before Luke and John—but in the sense that in him both of the perspectives are represented and anticipated.”¹⁴⁶ Paul’s epistles make frequent reference to the Holy Spirit as the one who confers gifts on God’s people (1Cor 12-14; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11-12).¹⁴⁷ Paul speaks of many charisms¹⁴⁸ that are given for the up building of the body of Christ: “To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Cor 12: 8-10). There are particular charisms related to speech that are given to those who are called to witness to Christ through teaching, preaching, and one-on-one evangelization.

Cantalamessa points out that among the charisms that are related to evangelization, the apostle Paul refers to wisdom, knowledge, teaching, and prophecy.¹⁴⁹

On the other hand, Paul speaks often about the Holy Spirit as the giver of new life in Christ. The Holy Spirit fills the hearts of God's people: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). The Holy Spirit lives within each believer: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you (1 Cor 3:16)?" The Church, made up of many believers, is the dwelling place of God (Eph 2:19-22). Paul writes about the transforming power of the Holy Spirit that brings a believer to full maturity in Christ: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:3-18). Paul's description of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit is very similar to John's descriptions of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

For Paul, the Holy Spirit is alive, active, and personal. In his exegesis of 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Thomas Stegman points out that all of the verbs in 2 Corinthians 3:18 are in the present tense: "Paul is not talking about a future reality but something that takes place here and now."¹⁵⁰ The Holy Spirit is the love of God poured into the hearts of believers, the grace of God at work through the saving power of Jesus Christ. Cantalamessa writes that, according to Paul, the Holy Spirit works within the believer and the Holy Spirit reaches out to others through the believer:

St. Paul knows, therefore, two fundamental actions of the Holy Spirit: the charismatic one that we can define *ad extra*, since it exists for the benefit of everyone and terminates outside the subject who receives it, and the interior one that we can define *ad intra*, since it terminates in the subject who receives it and renews his or her existence. However, Paul does not stop here but also poses explicitly the problem of the mutual relation between these two different operations of the Spirit. His position can be summarized as follows: *recognition of the charisms* as the determining factor for the construction and growth of the body of Christ but *subordination of the charisms to charity*—that is subordination of the manifestations of the Spirit to his permanent interior dwelling.¹⁵¹

As Cantalamessa points out, Paul recognizes that the Holy Spirit is the "interior principle of new life," the "principle of new knowledge of God," and the "principle of the resurrection and immortality."¹⁵² Paul instructs his followers to desire the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:31), but he reminds them that the greatest of these gifts is love (1 Cor 13:8-13).

Thomas Aquinas presents the same hierarchy in his *Summa Theologica*. He uses the term *gratia gratum faciens* for sanctifying grace (charity) and *gratia gratis data* (gratuitous grace) for the charisms:

And thus there is a twofold grace—one whereby man himself is united to God, and this is called *sanctifying grace*—the other is that whereby one man co-operates with another in leading him to God, and this gift is called *gratuitous grace*, since it is bestowed on a man beyond the capability of nature, and beyond the merit of the person. But whereas it is bestowed on a man, not to justify him, but rather that he may co-operate in the justification of another, it is not called sanctifying grace. And it is of this that the Apostle says (1 Cor. 12:7): And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto utility, i.e., of others.¹⁵³

Thomas teaches that the final purpose or end that God intends for men and women is eternal happiness in union with God; because of this, the work of the Holy Spirit to prepare individuals for union with God takes precedence over the service they might offer to others through the use of charisms. Cantalamessa points out that "'Being' in the Spirit is superior to 'acting' (on others) in the Spirit, to such an extent that without charity the rest would be good for nothing."¹⁵⁴ The emphasis on charity should not be used as an excuse for failing to seek the charisms. Paul instructs his followers: "Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy" (1 Cor 14:1).

Before concluding this section on the New Testament accounts of the impartation of the Holy Spirit, we will consider Cantalamessa's observation that the distinct approaches of John and Luke are reflected in the history of the liturgy of the Church and the celebration of Pentecost. The tradition that has been carried on into modern-day practice is the

celebration of the Feast of Pentecost on the fiftieth day after the celebration of Easter. Pentecost concludes the fifty days of celebration of the resurrection and marks the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Christ's disciples in the Upper Room on the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47). A more ancient approach to the celebration of Pentecost was to celebrate Pentecost throughout the fifty days after Easter. In the understanding of this mode of celebration, it was the celebration of the spiritual presence of Jesus after the resurrection. This fits with the Johannine account of Jesus breathing on the disciples after his resurrection (Jn 20:19-22). Cantalamessa writes: "According to this conception . . . the gift of the Holy Spirit *inaugurated* Pentecost, whereas according to the other conception, based on the Lukan account of Acts, it *concluded* it."¹⁵⁵

Commenting on the approach taken by the Fathers to the two different Pentecost accounts Cantalamessa writes: "The Fathers usually explained this 'anomaly' by saying that the gift of the Spirit spoken of in John was a partial gift, restricted either in content or in the number of those receiving it, a kind of first fruit with response to the more complete and universal gift lavished fifty days later."¹⁵⁶ Most of the Church Fathers agree that when Jesus breathed on the disciples on the evening of his resurrection, he did not bestow on them the fullness of the Holy Spirit that was poured out at Pentecost. Some thought it was a prophetic act and others considered it to be more than a prophetic act.

Modern scholars are not all in agreement about the implications of the two different approaches of Luke and John. John W. E. Vine contends that Jesus' words to his disciples in the John 20 passage were given as prophecy or a promise of the coming of the Spirit. In his commentary on the Gospel of John, Vine suggests that when Jesus said, "Receive the Holy Spirit," he was speaking about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that would take place on the day of Pentecost. According to this understanding, Jesus' breath might be seen as a foreshadowing of the mighty winds that filled the upper room:

His word "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" referred not merely to His own breath, it was symbolic of the Holy Spirit as about to be sent at Pentecost. It was connected with their being sent out into the world, and with the effect of their ministry of the Gospel in the forgiveness of sins by the Spirit's power, or the retention of sins by the rejection of the message (vv. 23, 24). It was a prophetic act as well as symbolic.¹⁵⁷

Cantalamessa points out that while the Church Fathers generally took an approach of synthesizing the two different accounts of the giving of the Holy Spirit that are found in the writings of Luke and John, present day theologians tend to take an analytical approach that emphasizes the differences between the two perspectives of Luke and John. Cantalamessa, on the other hand, suggests utilizing an overlay approach where each perspective is taken in its entirety and put together much as the overlay sheets that are used to illustrate the different organ systems in a body and the way that they all fit together.¹⁵⁸ He contends that a fully developed theology of the Holy Spirit must include the distinct yet complementary perspectives that are presented in Scripture:

Luke and John describe—from two different angles and with two different theological preoccupations—that same fundamental event of the history of salvation: the outpouring of the Spirit made possible by the paschal sacrifice of Christ. This outpouring manifested itself at different moments and in different ways. Luke, who sees the Holy Spirit as a gift made to the Church for its mission, stresses one of these moments, the one that took place fifty days after Easter on the day when the Jews were celebrating the conclusion of the feast of Pentecost. John, who sees the Spirit as the principle of the new life welling up from the paschal sacrifice of Christ, stresses the earliest manifestations of it which happened on the very day of Easter. In time and in space, Easter and Pentecost draw near to one another.¹⁵⁹

Both modes of operation of the Holy Spirit are essential for the life and the mission of the Church. The Holy Spirit is present within believers and acting through believers. Having presented an overview of Cantalamessa's theological observations on the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the next section of this chapter will examine the particular work of the Holy Spirit as the one who conveys the word of God, and the one who imparts the gifts and anointing to proclaim God's word.



The Holy Spirit Gives Power to the Proclamation

As the Church embraces the call to the new evangelization, the importance of the help of the Holy Spirit and the exercise of the charisms in the proclamation of the good news cannot be ignored. Cantalamessa considers the kerygma to be the content of the evangelistic proclamation, and he writes that the method, the medium of preaching the word of God is the Holy Spirit. He points out that the primary means of communicating human words is by the use of the voice which is air, breath. Writing is a symbol of speech; speech requires voice or breath to take the human word which is formed within and to bring it out to those who listen. In a similar way, the breath of the Holy Spirit is the only medium for the word of God. According to Cantalamessa,

Even the word of God observes this law. It is transmitted by means of a breath, by a sound. What is, or who is, the breath of God, the *Ruah Yahweh*, according to the Bible? We know the answer: it is the Holy Spirit. Can my breath transmit your word, or your breath transmit my word? No, my word can only be pronounced with my breath and your word with your breath. Thus, in an analogous way the word of God can only be transmitted by the breath of God which is the Holy Spirit. This is a very simple and almost obvious truth but of the utmost importance. It is the fundamental law of every message and of all evangelization. . . The Holy Spirit is the real, essential means of communication, without whom only the human content of the message is perceived. The words of God are “spirit and life” (Jn. 6:63), and, therefore, one can only transmit and receive them “in the Spirit.”¹⁶⁰

The words of the Gospel message spoken without the breath of the Holy Spirit will not have the power to pierce human hearts. The Holy Spirit is the life and the power of the proclamation that illumines minds and brings about conversion.

Luke writes that after his baptism and the temptation in the wilderness Jesus began to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 4:1; 4:14-19); Jesus later promised his disciples that they would receive power from on high to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, God put words on the lips of Jesus’ disciples and empowered those words to touch the hearts of three thousand men and women (Acts 2). Paul writes to the Thessalonians: “Our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction” (1 Thess 1:5).

In his book *Jesus Began to Preach: The Mystery of God's Word* Cantalamessa gives an explanation of what it means to proclaim God's word in the power of the Holy Spirit:

What does "speaking in Christ" mean, or so to speak "as if with words of God"? It surely does not mean to repeat, materially and only, words said by Christ and God in Scripture. It means that the basic inspiration, the thought that "informs" and supports all the rest, must come from God, not from man. The preacher must be "moved by God" and speak as if in his presence.¹⁶¹

In much the same way that the Holy Spirit is active and alive and able to touch the hearts and minds of those who read Sacred Scripture, a person who proclaims God's word in the power of the Holy Spirit can be a vehicle of God's word and a channel of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants to use human beings to impart words of life and truth to others. Cantalamessa makes this point when he says: "The Spirit continues to do what he did when he inspired the Scriptures, though of course no longer in a normative and canonical way: 'When men spoke for God, it was the Holy Spirit that moved them' (2 Pet 1:21)."¹⁶²

In considering the exercise of charisms, it is important to remember that God is a God of love who is active and relational. God desires communication and relationship; because of this God is generous in pouring out the charisms of the Holy Spirit on those who are open to receive them. There is real, active, transforming grace available to those who proclaim God's word. God wants to touch the hearts of his people; because of this he is ready to pour out the gifts of the Holy Spirit on those who ask for them for the purpose of preaching and evangelizing more effectively. At home, at work, in ministry, at any time or in any place, God has a word to speak. God uses priests and evangelists; he also uses parents, teachers, catechists, doctors, and businessmen to speak his word. Cantalamessa speaks about the importance of being open to the word that God has for his people:

We must start from the certainty of faith that, in every circumstance, the risen Lord has in his heart a word that he wishes to communicate to his people. The Risen One did not write the seven letters only to seven Churches of Asia Minor. He continues to send "letters" to every Church. That's what changes things and what we must discover, and he does not fail to reveal it to his minister, if he asks humbly and persistently.¹⁶³

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not a list to be memorized before receiving the sacrament of confirmation and then forgotten; they are not intended for a few elite servants of God. The grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given by God to the people of God for the sake of the growth and the maturity of the Church. God has a word to impart and the Holy Spirit will anoint those called to impart that word. To disregard the grace, power, and gifts of the Holy Spirit because of indifference or false humility will result in fruitless labor. Cantalamessa writes: "An evangelization without the quickening breath of the Holy Spirit is like a sharp sword which is left aside and never brandished. It will not 'cut to the heart.'"¹⁶⁴ Openness to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit is imperative for the work of the new evangelization. Commenting on an article by Joseph Ratzinger, "The Holy Spirit and the Church," Joseph Murphy writes:

Rather than allowing ourselves to be burnt by the fire of faith, the fire of the Holy Spirit, we tend to reduce faith to a vision of the world made to our own measure, with the intention of inflicting no damage on our own comfort . . . Only if we do not fear the flame of fire and the tempest it brings with it will the Church truly become the icon of the Holy Spirit. Only then, Ratzinger says, will she open the world to the light of God. The Church began when the disciples were united in prayer in the Upper Room, awaiting the descent of the Holy Spirit. This is how the Church is constantly renewed, and it is for this gift that we should constantly pray when we invoke the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁵

The exploration of the charisms of the Holy Spirit that are related to the proclamation of God's word is of interest academically, but even more importantly, this investigation has pastoral relevance. The Holy Spirit is not merely a subject to be studied; the Holy Spirit is active and at work within believers to bring them into new life in Christ. The

Holy Spirit is the source of the grace and power poured out into the lives of believers that empowers them in their mission of helping others come to know the love of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is at work today, just as he was at work in the early Church. Jesus and the apostles proclaimed God's word in the power of the Holy Spirit and signs and wonders accompanied that proclamation. Cantalamessa points out that those signs and wonders are helpful to unbelievers and because of that we should pray for them to be manifest in our day and age of disbelief. He prays:

Lord turn your gaze on upon us, today also extend your hand so that cures, miracles, and wonders are performed in the name of Jesus, because we have become distracted, deaf, and hard of heart and the words no longer suffice. Let us have the courage to ask you again for signs and prodigies not for us, but for your glory and for the spread of your kingdom. It is true, you have told us that such signs are useful "for unbelievers" (1 Cor 14:22). But our world is again—or has become once more—in great part unbelieving. For this reason we need some of your signs that might convince the world or at least reclaim its attentions. You have promised us to work together with those who preach and to confirm their words "through accompanying signs" (Mk 16:20).¹⁶⁶

According to Cantalamessa, the signs and miracles that sometimes accompany preaching are directed to the listener, while the charisms are given directly to the preacher to help with the task of proclaiming God's word. Signs and wonders are an important component of the work of the Holy Spirit in evangelization. Signs and wonders are to be desired and prayed for as are the charisms. Clearly it is up to God to grant signs and wonders and to distribute the charisms according to his plan and purpose; the people of God are called to pray for God to grant them the gifts and the anointing that they need to be equipped to do God's work and to give witness to the love of Christ. All of God's people are called to be open to receive the charisms, and they have a responsibility to be willing to exercise all of the charisms that God grants. Cantalamessa recognizes that the exercise of the charisms including healing and the manifestation of other signs and wonders are part of God's plan for reaching men and women with the love of Christ.

Throughout the history of Christendom, God has raised up men and women anointed by the Holy Spirit to speak in a significant way to the needs of the Church and society. There is a special anointing for those who have received Holy Orders; some clergy and laity are given spectacular gifts to match a unique call to ministry. But the charisms are not only for the ordained or for a few who are specially called and gifted. Through the anointing of their baptism and confirmation all disciples of Jesus are called and gifted to witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus and to proclaim the good news. The charisms of the Holy Spirit are available to all of God's people.¹⁶⁷ The proclamation of the good news may or may not be accompanied by dramatic signs of healing and deliverance. The presence of the anointing of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by the piercing of hearts and minds with the truth of God's love and mercy. Preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit will bring about conversion whether that preaching is loud and dramatic or quiet and inconspicuous. The content of the proclamation and the manner may vary, but the anointing of the Holy Spirit is essential. The end, the goal, is to turn hearts from love of sin to the love and mercy of God. God distributes the charisms according to his plan and purpose, but we should all "strive for the spiritual gifts" (2 Cor 14:1). In the final chapter we will look at some of the obstacles that stand in the way of preaching the kerygma in the power of the Holy Spirit, and discuss ways to overcoming those obstacles in order to be open to the anointing of the Holy Spirit.



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Footnotes

- 110 Cantalamessa, "Preaching Ministry," 63.
- 111 Cantalamessa, *The Mystery of Pentecost*, 21-22.
- 112 See Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 1. The hymn was most likely written by German theologian Rabanus Maurus (780-856). A Latin and English version of the hymn is included at the end of this thesis.
- 113 Ibid., 34-35.
- 114 Ambrose, *The Holy Spirit*, in *Saint Ambrose: Theological and Dogmatic Works*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 107.
- 115 Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 7-8.
- 116 Ibid., 21.
- 117 Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 45.
- 118 Ibid., 47.
- 119 Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 50.
- 120 Cantalamessa, *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit*, 60.
- 121 Ibid.
- 122 Cantalamessa, *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit*, 61.
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 Ibid., 66.
- 125 Cantalamessa, *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit*, 43-45.
- 126 *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, John P. Beal, James A. Coriden, and Thomas J. Green, eds. (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 920. For a full treatment of the canons relating to the proclamation of the word see *New Commentary, Book III: The Teaching Function of the Church: Introductory Canons* (c 747-755); *Title I: The Ministry of the Divine Word* (756-780). See Charles Davis, "The Theology of Preaching" from *Preaching*, Ronan Drury, ed. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1962), 7-10 for a description of the role of bishops and priests as preachers. See Patricia A. Parachini, *Lay Preaching: State of the Question, American Essays in Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press) for a historical overview of the approach to laity and preaching in Scripture and Church tradition.
- 127 Jean Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood*, Roger Balducelli, trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 208.
- 128 Ibid., 210. See 177-215 for Galot's full analysis of the sacrament of holy orders and priestly being.
- 129 George T. Montague, *First Corinthians, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 220. See his entire chapter "Many Gifts, One Body" for an examination of Paul's approach to the charisms as well as excerpts from the Church Fathers on the topic.

- 130 See *Lumen Gentium* 12 and *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 3.
- 131 Cantalamessa, *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit*, 47.
- 132 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of Pentecost*, 34.
- 133 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of Pentecost*, 20.
- 134 Ibid., 21. See Acts 4:31.
- 135 Ibid.
- 136 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of Pentecost*, 26.
- 137 Ibid., 29-30.
- 138 See also Jesus and the Samaritan woman, John 4:1-30: “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:12-14).
- 139 Daniel Keating, *Deification and Grace* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007), 51.
- 140 Cantalamessa, *In Love With Christ: The Secret of Saint Francis of Assisi* (Rome: Zenit, 2014), 16.
- 141 Ibid., 27.
- 142 See Jn 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15.
- 143 See “The Spirit of Christ in the Fullness of Time,” from *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 717-41. “Only when the hour has arrived for his glorification does Jesus promise the coming of the Holy Spirit, since his Death and Resurrection will fulfill the promise made to the fathers. The Spirit of truth, the other Paraclete, will be given by the Father in answer to Jesus' prayer; he will be sent by the Father in Jesus' name; and Jesus will send him from the Father's side, since he comes from the Father.” (CCC, 729).
- 144 “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (Jn 20:19-23)
- 145 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of Pentecost*, 38.
- 146 Ibid., 49.
- 147 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of Pentecost*, 48-52. See also CCC, 1830-1832 and 2003. The Catechism distinguishes between the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:1-3); the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23); and a list of the “graces of state” (Rom 12:6-8).
- 148 Paul uses the Greek term charisma that means “favor,” “gratuitous gift,” or “benefit,” to refer to “special graces” that are given to God’s people in order that they can “collaborate in the salvation of others” (CCC, 2003). See also *Lumen Gentium* 12: The Holy Spirit “distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church.”
- 149 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of God’s Word*, 56.
- 150 Thomas D. Stegman, *Second Corinthians, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 96.
- 151 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of Pentecost*, 51.
- 152 Ibid., 50.
- 153 Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, Vol II, Ia IIae QQ 111 Art 1, Fathers of the English Dominican Province, trans (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1981), 1135-1136.
- 154 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of Pentecost*, 51.
- 155 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of Pentecost*, 35-36.
- 156 Ibid., 46.
- 157 W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Commentary on John* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 208.
- 158 Cantalamessa, *Mystery of Pentecost*, 36-37.
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- 160 Cantalamessa, “Preaching Ministry,” 41. See Cantalamessa, *Jesus Began to Preach*, 40-41.

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- 162 Cantalamessa, *Come Creator Spirit*, 231.
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- 165 Joseph Murphy, *Christ Our Joy: The Theological Vision of Pope Benedict XVI* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 157-58. See Joseph Ratzinger, "The Holy Spirit and the Church," in *Images of Hope: Meditations on Major Feasts* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 63-73.
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- 167 Sherry Weddell developed the Called and Gifted Workshop to help Catholic discern and begin to exercise the charisms that God has given them. See Catherine of Siena Institute, www.siena.org, accessed October 25, 2014, <http://imail.siena.org/Called-Gifted/called-a-gifted>.

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Amazing Grace at Work

An interview with Jean Barbara, President of the Sword of the Spirit

by Berry Pelaez-Marfori

[Sword of the Spirit](#) (SOS) president Jean Barbara makes leading a community of 75 communities in 24 countries seem easy. By his reckoning, he spends about half of his “awake time” every month doing work for the Sword of the Spirit.

Even if he travels an average of 10 days in a month to Sword of the Spirit communities around the globe, the tax advisor who runs his own company in his native Lebanon is a firm believer in God’s grace and provision. It is grace that has allowed him to pass on a passion for mission work, which he shares with his wife, to three of his four grown children. The three have finished university and are now doing Christian service for various Sword of the Spirit communities. His fourth child, who is 14 years, hopes to follow in his siblings’ footsteps.

Surprisingly low key, Jean can easily lead people even if he is meeting them for the first time. Visitation work or assessing the state of a community by conducting a series of interviews with its members can be grueling. But even after five days of meetings that began at 9 a.m. and often lasted past 9 p.m., Jean managed to keep our team of eight members from three communities on track and eager to keep working.

Q: How do you explain the significance of the Sword of the Spirit to those you meet?
[The Sword of the Spirit](#) is a response to an action that the Lord started more than 45 years ago to renew the Christian people. We have responded to that call to be radical disciples who strive to live community life day-in and day-out

in the way the first disciples did. The Sword of the Spirit is an international community of communities, though each community has its own local expression. Moreover, all communities are ecumenical.

Q: What is the importance of being an ecumenical community of communities?

It is important to be living it out because it is important in God's eyes. We didn't simply begin by saying: "Oh let's sit down and be ecumenical." We responded to God moving among us and putting us together as Christians from different denominations, so we approach it as an essential element of our call.



Q: What amazes you most about how God has put this community of communities together?

I am most amazed by the way our own youth in the Sword of the Spirit are responding to the same call, that we, their parents, heard. We are seeing the majority of the youth in the Sword of the Spirit respond with even more zeal than we ever had.

A while ago I was invited to speak at a Kairos conference, our youth program that cuts across communities in the Sword of the Spirit. There I was in Ohio (USA) in the company of 400 young men and women, who were very much on fire for the Lord and for the mission. Most of these kids grew up in community and eventually experienced for themselves the goodness of the Lord. This past February (2015) I spoke and prayed with some 140 people at the [Kairos "Power for Mission" European Conference](#) held in Belgium. [You can read some [testimonies from the Conference](#) in this issue of Living Bulwark.] Here I witnessed a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and release of spiritual gifts and a new fire for mission.

Q: What kind of challenges are our communities facing today?

There are always two kinds of challenges to being radical Christians and doing mission in the modern world, external ones and internal ones. Our world today is being affected by globalization... by the very fast growth in communication technology and by anti-Christian sentiments even in the civilized world and so on. So the external challenges are real.

But there is another kind of challenge: Those that are internal. I recall that at the early stages of community life in Lebanon when we were in the midst of war and our very survival was at stake... when everything around us seemed to fall apart... the Lord spoke to us and said: You are responsible for internal challenges. I will deal with those that are external. These internal challenges involve our relationships with one another, and dealing with "the flesh," dealing with the influences of the world on us. These are internal challenges which each Christian and each

community needs to face, confront and conquer by the grace of God. Handling the external challenge is up to God – and not us – to change those circumstances.

Q: What are your priorities at the moment?

First of all, God has said this is a time of grace. We are invited to go through the open door and he will provide us with the resources we need for mission. So the first priority is about helping the Sword of the Spirit and its regions and communities to be more united in our zeal and determination to go through the open door and live out fully the mission that the Lord has asked us to do.

My second priority is youth. Again it is a priority in response to God's action among us to raise up a new generation of young men and women who want to follow the call. And it's our responsibility to equip them, to train them, to provide them with Christian opportunities, and to allow them more international exposure and integration. It is my conviction that our kids gain a great advantage when they live the Sword of the Spirit reality in a different community from their own. This is why Gap year (serving for a year after graduating from university and before starting a career) is such an important tool.

A third priority would be to promote our ecumenical identity, call, and mission.

Q: It's part of our call, we didn't just make it up. But for an ordinary individual, why ecumenism?

To be a good Catholic means to be ecumenical. This is the Church's teaching. Many popes including John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis, can be considered ecumenical popes. One could ask in Manila, for example, how can I be ecumenical when the Ligaya community and the whole country are mostly Catholics? Well, to be ecumenical is an attitude of the heart. We could speak and act in an inclusive way or in an exclusive way – and the exclusive way would be very harmful to ecumenical efforts. When we have brothers and sisters from other Christian traditions (such as Orthodox and Protestants) coming from other parts of the world, members of Ligaya community are expected to show ecumenical courtesy.

Q: During your visit to Sword of the Spirit communities in India, I've heard you say many times that much of our lives are a result of God's grace.

That truth has been so evident and clear in my own life. You asked me earlier how I manage my time. I can be at work in my office and within the course of three or four hours I would normally receive as many as 30 telephone calls. But every time I am away for a week or more on Sword of the Spirit work, my secretary reports that hardly anyone has called for me. The surprising thing is that they don't even know my travel plans. When I do get a few calls, they can usually be handled by someone else. That can only be grace (at work in my life).

Q: Has this been consistently happening to you?

Only in the past 25 years. The more you live with this consciousness of God's grace operating in your life, the more you can move in confidence.



Victor (left), Marie-Therese, Jean, Jean-Marc (front) Nicole and George, Philip (front), Peter

Q: Does your family share your convictions?

That is another area of grace at work in my life. In the past few years, my wife Marie-Therese has gone with me on several mission trips. My older son is working full-time and leading our University Christian Outreach (UCO) in Lebanon. My daughter is married and has two young boys - she and her husband are actively involved in community life and service. My second son has just completed three years of training with the Servants of the Word in Belfast and London. He is now moving on to further education and continues to serve in Kairos and Antioch community. My youngest, who is 14, is waiting to follow in his brothers' and sister's footsteps. That's grace. Marie-Therese and I did what we could do... and only what we could. God did not ask us to do more. But even if my kids had not followed the same road, I would continue to believe in grace.

I want to make sure to give this message to parents. Believe in grace, including it's perfect timing. You who labor in the Lord will never labor in vain.

[This interview [with some added recent updates] was originally conducted by Berry Pelaez-Marfor, the Editor-in-chief for *True North Magazine*, a publication of [Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon](http://www.angligaya.org) and its partners – Christ's Youth in Action, Ang Lingkod no Panginoon, and the Institute for Pastoral Development. The article first appeared in *True North*, Volume 6, Number 1. Used with permission.]

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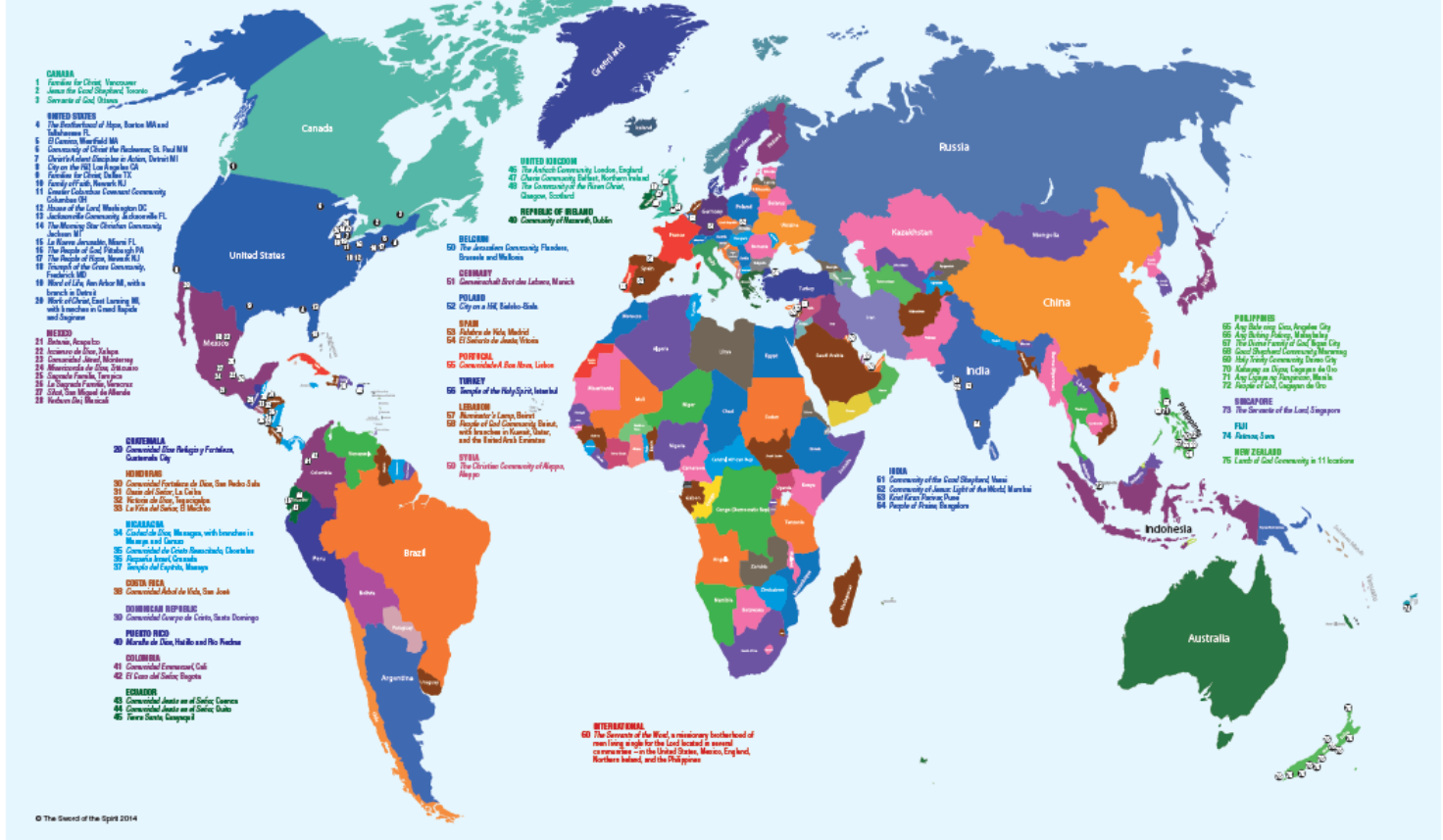
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LIVING BULWARK sources of strength and renewal for Christian life and mission

June / July 2015 - Vol. 80

The **Sword of the Spirit**  a community of disciples on mission



[A larger size map can be downloaded here](#)

Sword of the Spirit Communities Worldwide

The Sword of the Spirit is a growing network of more than 75 lay Christian communities around the world that have a common vision, way of life, and spiritual culture. Recent estimates put the numbers of those involved at around 9,000 people worldwide. We sometimes describe ourselves as a **“community of communities.”** Each community within the Sword of the Spirit is self-governing, but receives help in living out its life as a community from the sharing of resources with other communities around the world.

The Sword of the Spirit has a **strong common culture** that transcends our international differences. As a result, when members of different communities get together, even though they may be from different parts of the world, there is a very strong sense that we are part of the same international community of communities.

The Sword of the Spirit is **ecumenical**. Some of our communities are ecumenical in their make-up, with members who belong to various churches – Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox. Other communities are all one

denomination. But the call of all our communities is to foster the unity of all Christians. While recognizing our differences, we look to see how we can share in the riches of one another's Christian traditions and work together for Christ.

> Visit the New and Expanded [Sword of the Spirit Website](#)

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Spirit of Christ Community

**Community members in Jacksonville Florida strive daily to be
radical disciples of Christ**

by Joe Difato

In 2006, I was invited to give a talk to a few young professionals in Jacksonville, Florida – some married, some single. I spoke on conversion and new life. When the talk was over I asked if they had any interest in a whole course on spiritual conversion. They did. Six weeks later the Jacksonville Prayer Meeting was born.

Now, 9 years later, the prayer meeting has evolved into a young but still immature community of about 70 adults and 20 children, some primary school age, some teenagers. The average age of the adults is around 35. We are pleased to be an affiliate member community of the Sword of the Spirit.

We live in various parts of Jacksonville, a suburban city of some 840,000 people. Most of us are within a half-hour's drive of one another. In our life together, we have a prayer meeting each week, and meet in small groups twice a month.



We have six community-wide Saturday evening Lord's Day celebrations a year, and we invite guests. These events have turned out to be a great way to introduce people to our life, welcoming Sunday in with prayer and a relaxed, festive meal. All told, we're usually 100 people. We hold the events at a recreation center and begin at 2pm with swimming, volley ball, ping pong, basketball, football, talking and walking. Then at 6pm the actual Lord's Day opening begins with 30 minutes of prayer, followed by a short personal sharing about how someone has experienced the Lord, and then dinner. We end at about 9pm. We also organize six community-wide outreaches to the poor per year.

We are an ecumenical community which at present includes Catholics, Baptists, and those from non-denominational churches. Two people work full time for the community.

The covenant (solemn agreement) we have made to the Lord and one another has three primary areas of emphasis, as we seek to be radical disciples of Christ: 1.) To come into the presence of the Lord each day, 2.) To live a life of honor, and 3.) To change our environment for the better. This is how we practice being "a community of disciples on mission," the official description of the whole Sword of the Spirit.



Recently we changed our name to "The Spirit of Christ Community." The name reflects our two-fold emphasis: one, that our community would treasure being baptized in the Holy Spirit as God's gift to our generation; and, two, that the gifts of the Spirit – primarily prophecy, healing, and evangelistic revelation gifts (sometimes known as "words of knowledge") – would have a prominent place in the life of our community.

Our goal is to be an Acts 2:42 community (“and they held steadfastly to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers”) – with corporate prayer, signs and wonders, personal holiness and right relationships, a heart for the poor, and desire to evangelize. To help us meet this goal, we have just recently established the “eight hour a week” plan. Each covenant member has drawn up a plan – with help from others – that has at least 30 minutes of personal prayer each day (roughly 4 of the 8 hours). The other 4 hours are spent building the community in one way or another. The plan helps keep everyone praying and closely involved in mission.

We are humbled by the way the Lord is working here.

Joe Difato is the senior coordinator of the Spirit of Christ Community. He has been involved in the communities movement for over forty years and is founder of the Christian publishing house, The Word Among Us. He and his wife Felicia live in Jacksonville, Florida, USA.

[> Visit the New and Expanded Sword of the Spirit Website](#)

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A New Season of Grace and Growth for Sword of the Spirit Communities



**Triumph of the Cross Community
in Maryland,USA**

by Jeff Smith

Triumph of the Cross Community (TCC), located in Maryland, USA celebrated its annual covenant commitment gathering in January. We are grateful to the Lord that seven new brothers and sisters made their first commitment to the community. Now, Triumph of the Cross has 45 adult members participating in our life. During the gathering, we recounted how faithful the Lord has been throughout our history, thanked Him for making us part of the Sword of the Spirit bulwark, and prayed for greater Christian Unity.

The Lord has sent us a good number of post-college age people. We now have thirty young professionals who are members or friends, so we have organized TCC Young Professionals. TCC Young Professionals has two events per month: a dinner after our gathering in a community family's home, and a second event planned by the leadership team. Our goal is to create an environment that is hospitable and gives witness to our Lord Jesus Christ.



Beginning of new Sword of the Spirit Community in Seattle, Washington, USA

*"He will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth."
(Isaiah 11:12)*

The Lord has been blowing a new Spirit in Seattle, Washington, USA during the past year. We have heard the call and joined together following the Lord to form and grow a Sword of the Spirit community. He has gathered us from a variety of communities: the United States, Honduras, Lebanon, and Mexico. The Lord's bulwark has been growing in Seattle. We are the Seattle Sword of the Spirit Community!

We are a community of young families and singles. Our community life has been growing as well as our outreach work. Through the variety of outreach events, retreats and prayer gatherings, we have been meeting and receiving new families and singles. Included among those events was a picnic last August, a Life in the Spirit seminar in October and many Lord's Day evenings. Take a look at the picture above of our Lord's Day Celebration in February.

We have also been reaching out to our local churches and have established many important relationships. We have recently completed a Life in the Spirit Seminar weekend.

Please remember us in your prayers as we pray for all of our brothers and sisters in in Sword of the Spirit communities.

[> Visit the New and Expanded Sword of the Spirit Website](#)



Empowering a Generation in Mission

Members from [Kairos in Europe and the Middle East](#) gathered for a powerful weekend retreat in Belgium February 2015

A New Generation with Power for Mission:

reflection from James Mead



This was the first year I'd attended the [Kairos Weekend](#) as a university student missionary, which also happens to be a season of my life in which the Lord has been blessing me generously through his spiritual gifts. It was for both these reasons that I found the theme 'Power for Mission' particularly relevant, and as a result I now feel equipped to "make disciples of all nations" as Jesus tells us in Matthew 28.

Throughout the weekend, our speaker Jean Barbara spoke to us about his own experience of being empowered for mission, and gave countless examples of times the Lord had rewarded



his faithfulness with miracles and conversion. Taking time separately as men and women on Saturday afternoon provided us with an opportunity to pray over individual members from each of the represented outreaches, as well as allowing for a

time of fellowship.

As we gathered in the evening for our prayer meeting, some older Christian community leaders who had been meeting in Leuven also joined us. Taking the opportunity to pray and worship alongside these brothers and sisters served as a reminder to the responsibility that is now being shared with us as a new generation. A number of people following our prayer meeting spoke about tongues of fire they had seen being placed over our heads as we prayed, which to me was a powerful affirmation that the Lord is now starting to fully equip his “younger warriors.”

Offering It Up: Hearing a New Invitation into God's Heart

by Cathy Holmes

I have three main criteria for what makes a good retreat: good prayer times, good fellowship and a large variety of herbal teas – and the [Kairos Weekend 2015](#) met all of these! This was my first Kairos Weekend Encounter, so I was nervous. I’d never been to such a large event before. Despite there being 110 people from all over the place, it was very easy to settle in and make friends. Everyone was open with each other, but more importantly, open to receiving the Lord. Our theme was ‘Power for Mission,’ which helped us not only to look at how each Kairos outreach could adapt their approach to mission, but also at how I myself could adapt my mindset for mission in daily life. I came away from the weekend on fire for mission. This was incredible to me because I’m usually a “just holding out the UCO leaflets because I was asked to” kind of person rather than someone who wants to actually open up, share and bring Jesus to those who need him.

Something that struck me throughout the weekend was how strong every prayer time was, especially during the women’s session and the prayer meeting on Saturday night. People prayed for and with us for a variety of things from healing to freedom – this was a very powerful time and the Lord moved within every single person present. I’ve given, or tried to give, my life to God many times before, but at the prayer meeting I was given the opportunity to offer up my life again, this time with new certainty. It was the best thing I’ve ever done! I can honestly say lives were changed this weekend, not only for good, but for God’s purpose.

Courage to Speak: Stepping Out in Obedience and Boldness

by Aagje Vander Plaetse

This was the first [Kairos Weekend](#) I had ever gone to. I didn't know quite what to expect. It was definitely a new experience to pray together with so many people – over 110 young people. It was challenging and inspiring to be in an environment where so many of us were using the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I had prayed before to receive the gift of tongues, but I thought the few sounds I was making were just me copying others in my outreach who were speaking in tongues.

During the prayer night on the weekend, I suddenly felt the Holy Spirit ask me to speak out a prophesy in tongues. I was so afraid! “God, I don't even speak in tongues! How do you want me to speak out loud to the whole group?” I held back, but then asked God to give me a second chance to speak it, and the courage to speak. Not long afterward, someone else in the group spoke out that he sensed there was a sister who had a prophecy in tongues, and that this was the moment to speak! I knew this was my second chance. I decided to go for it. The Spirit gave me courage and spoke through me. It was a beautiful experience, and I was so thankful for my second chance. It taught me a lot about courage, to obey God when he asks something. I also met someone in my small group whom I was able to pray with and exchange some advice for similar situations in our lives. I know it was not by accident that we met each other.

Also see more > [Power for Mission](#) testimonies by Joelle Mok and Gregory Potter

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Check out this time capsule video in celebration of YouthWorks-Detroit 20th Anniversary

YouthWorks-Detroit Celebrates 20 Years

by Joshua Rock

Just over twenty years ago, Dave O'Connor and Stan Mathay, both members of the [Servants of the Word](#), moved to Detroit at the prompting of God to teach in the inner city. After a year of teaching, Dave and Stan were looking for how they could work with their students and other Detroit youth in a more intentional way outside of the classroom walls.

In 1995, Stan envisioned the idea of college men embracing the call to live household life together in the city of Detroit while working with youth during the summer, and [YouthWorks-Detroit](#) was born.

This year, we are celebrating our 20th anniversary. Over the past twenty years, we have seen God's faithfulness and transforming love in the lives of Detroit youth, young people from the Sword of the Spirit who come to serve in the city, and in the lives of those of us who have made Detroit our home. God has touched thousands of lives through this work he began here twenty years ago.

Over 300 young people from the Sword of the Spirit have encountered Jesus here through our Detroit Summer Outreach internship program. Thousands of Detroit youth have heard the good news preached through our retreats with Cornerstone Schools and elsewhere.

We've hired nearly 250 youth through our StreetTeam Leadership program. Over 300 Detroit young people have engaged in academic, art, and leadership based training through Bezael Project. Many have continued afterwards with our youth group and StreetTeam, and have returned later as Bezael Project volunteers, Detroit Summer Outreach interns, and even as staff.



Most importantly, many of our youth are building long term relationships among us in the Sword of the Spirit and growing as disciples of Jesus. Many Sword of the Spirit youth who are alumni of our programs have caught the vision for a missionary life following Jesus and for our life in community, and have taken up a mantle of leadership among us. Many among our Detroit youth are attending college, and some are connecting with our university work through Kairos. Some are becoming missionaries through our UCO outreaches in North America and around the world.

We honor our Lord Jesus for his provision for us over these twenty years, and express our deepest gratitude to him and to our brothers and sisters who have supported this work with their prayer, time, friendship, and finances.

[Joshua Rock is the Executive Director of [YouthWorks-Detroit](#). He is married to Yvette and is raising his family of four children in Detroit. He moved to Detroit in 2001 after doing a Detroit Summer Outreach (DSO) internship in 2000.]

> Visit YouthWorks-Detroit on [Facebook](#), [Tumbler](#), and [Website](#)

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Transition Fail

by Michael Shaughnessy

In high school, Johnny Jackson went to church every Sunday with his family. The pastor of his church knew him by name, although they had never really talked. Johnny participated in his Christian youth group every week. He was part of the leadership team. He knew his youth leader, Mark, well. They often met just to gab but also to talk about how Johnny was doing with prayer, Bible reading, and the hot issues of the month.

Johnny had been to camp three times. It was there, in his tenth-grade year, that he gave his life to the Lord. His best friends were part of the youth group, but he got along well with almost everyone in school. He graduated third in a class of 227.

Over the four months after he graduated he would be stripped of every system of support that he had for living the Christian life. Not because he chose so—most of the supports simply evaporated.

By the week after his graduation he no longer had his weekly youth group meeting. Like most youth groups, it didn't meet in the summer—the most challenging season of the year for youth.

By mid-June his youth worker, Mark, had turned his attention to summer camp and was putting his time into building relationships with the incoming ninth-grade boys so he could have them on board in September. But then Mark got offered a full-ride scholarship for divinity school and part-time job in Dallas. His youth career was over. He resigned on June 25th and moved to Texas.

Johnny got his first, well-paid summer job, doing construction. The crew was a bit rough and fbombed their way through the day. That wasn't shocking to Johnny. He'd heard it before, but now he joined in, at least some days, and then more days. Johnny went to a few parties with his peers that summer. They got drunk for the first time because now they couldn't get kicked off the baseball team anymore.

Johnny still had one more summer camp. He went as a counselor. On the third night he acknowledged he was becoming a backslider and repented as genuinely as he could.

In late August he left home to attend a small liberal arts college in upstate New York where his father had gone. It was a Christian college when his dad went but the church was no longer an integral part of the college. Johnny arrived, thinking he would attend Sunday services, but he just didn't connect in the first few weeks. His mom texted him once, asking him if he had found the church. He responded he had, which was true. He just hadn't been there yet.

At the "Fresher's Fair" he signed up to be part of the biggest Christian student group on campus. He got a text message inviting him to their first barbecue but no one from his new peer group was going—not that he asked them, but none said they were going. The barbecue was only a block off campus, but in a place he didn't know, with people he didn't know. He didn't go.

His new peer group was made up of the guys and girls in his dorm, a couple of people he met in class, and others he met through his new roommate, a lapsed Catholic from Miami. They got along fine but never talked about faith. In fact, Johnny had no discussions with anyone about his faith during the first month of college.

Johnny didn't expect the direct assault on his faith he experienced in biology class. Dr. Smith made it clear that faith had no place in science. He would only tolerate "objective opinions."

Two weeks into September Johnny was living in a hostile environment with no Christian peers, no parental support, no pastor, no church, no idea of when church services were, no youth worker, no program, no role in leadership, no charitable service, and a Bible that was gathering dust in a box in the trunk of his car.



And most of the church is puzzled about why Johnny lost his faith.

Is Johnny (or his sister) about to graduate from your youth group? Now is the time to prep them for one of the most difficult transitions of their lives.



Michael Shaughnessy is the [Kairos](#) director for the Sword of the Spirit both in North America and Internationally. He is the editor of the Kairos Youth Culture Newsletter (http://www.kairos-na.org/YouthCulture_News). Kairos is an international federation of outreaches to high school, university and post university aged people.

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Florence Cathedral

Quo Vadis?

Is Christian Youth Culture Possible?

an interview with Michael Shaughnessy,
Director for Kairos both in North America and Internationally

Kairos Youth Culture News: Mike, those who know you, know you have lot's of ideas about youth and youth work. What's next?

Mike: Christians pray that God's kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven – on earth, not just in heaven. We shouldn't settle for something less than the kingdom. We too easily accept the prevailing culture as inevitable. Unfortunately, that means many young people are missing out on the hope, joy, beauty and goodness that God intends for them on earth (not to mention heaven.) Many Christian parents and youth workers are limited by a strategy that just tries to keep evil out. They must say "NO!" over and over again, or just give up and give in. In Kairos we see this challenge and are doing something about it. Our goal is to build a positive youth culture that promotes whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious (Phil. 4:8). This includes more than just whatever is spiritual. It includes every area of human culture: food, sports, games, music, art, dress...

Kairos Youth Culture News: Why not just eliminate youth culture totally!

Mike: Eliminating youth culture is impossible to do. Isolating Christian youth from youth culture completely is also unrealistic. Even the Amish admit that. More importantly, we have a commission from Christ to bring the gospel to the world. We should not just write off youth culture. We should want to transform it and those

who live in it. Besides, shaping today's youth means shaping tomorrow's world leaders.

Kairos Youth Culture News: Creating a new youth culture... That seems like a lot of work!

Mike: Oh, it will be. It was a lot of work to build Florence Cathedral, but it was done. I think we need to do this and for two good reasons. First, we lose too many young people to the powerful world of youth culture. Their lives get messed up. They lose what faith they have. We need to provide an alternative culture, a whole culture – not just a good youth group and some Christian music. We need to provide a place where youth can flourish. The second reason we should do it is exactly because this mission is big. Its vision is big. It will provide a place in mission for all sorts of our young people, not just youth workers. This mission will need businessmen and women, web designers, musicians, writers, clothes designers, video editors, sound geeks... That's a short list. I have a longer one and it's growing.

Kairos Youth Culture News: Where do you begin?

Mike: Like with any good project – get the right people and the funding. I think I have a good start on the right people. I am hoping our readers will help with the funding.



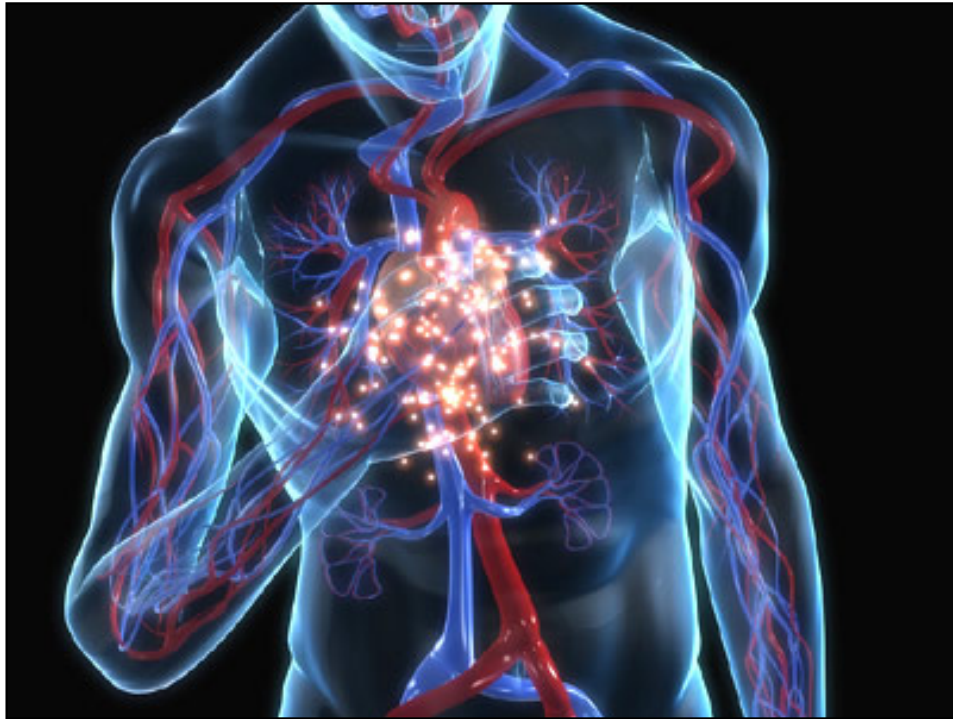
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CHALLENGES IN LIVING TOGETHER AS COMMUNITY



Carpe Diem: Seizing the Moments in Your Life

by Tom Caballes

“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

- Isaiah 55:6–7

Several months ago I had a car accident. I thanked God that in spite of the accident, I was safe. But it shook me for a while, knowing one moment everything was fine and then suddenly finding this car speeding in front of me without a time to stop. What if I was hit by the other car, knowing that the other car is heavier and bigger than mine? What if it was my time to go?

I also looked back in my life when I was in grave danger – being hit by a taxi when I was twelve, nearly being hit by a motorboat while swimming when I was in my twenties, and when my appendix burst more than ten years ago and I underwent emergency surgery.

Most of the times I take life for granted, until these events come. Now more than ever, I thank God for this precious one life that He has given me. How about you – in spite of all the challenges you face now, do you thank God daily for your life? Do you seize your day for God?

So How Do I Seize the Moments in My Life?

1. We all live on borrowed time. We can only be rich or happy up to a point in this life, and then one day we have to leave them behind. The way to make the most out of this life is to insure you will have everlasting life with God. How? By following Jesus with all of your life, for the rest of your life.
2. No matter how young or old you are, you need to be ready to be ready 'to go' anytime, anywhere. We are citizens of heaven, [Philippians 3:20] and that is our real permanent home. We need not to be attached to anything in this life – money, possessions, honors, and even includes good relationships.
3. Count each day as if it might be your last. Do not leave any important things – activities, decisions, relationships, etc. for granted, as if you have all your future is ahead of you.
4. Make sure everything in your life is in place before the inevitable. Life insurance, wills, etc. should be ready and updated all the time so that those who you will leave behind will know what do when you are gone. It is wise and loving to make sure that your loved ones are taken care of when you are gone.
5. If you have anger within, deal with it NOW: learn to forgive and let go while there is time. You need to CHOOSE to forgive those who offended you. Jesus was very clear – you ask forgiveness as you forgive those who sin against you. You are in clear danger of not being forgiven if you choose not to forgive.
6. Lastly, develop an attitude of gratitude for each and every day of your life. Life is a GIFT. God has chosen each and every one of us to live one life. Thank God for that one life. You will never have another – other than the one that comes eternal. It will either be a glorious eternity or a horrible one – either will be beyond compare. After all, eternity is just a breath, a heartbeat, or an accident away from reality.

Other Scripture passages:

1. You do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. [James 4:14]
2. Besides this you know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. [Romans 13:11-12]
3. Other references: Matthew 18:21-35; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Philippians 1:21-23.

For personal reflection or group sharing

1. Have I considered how temporary this life is? What am I attached with in this life?
2. Am I prepared to 'go' anytime? How will those I leave behind cope when I go?



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Hearing God in Reflection

by Sam Williamson

Many years ago, I lived in London with a bunch of friends, working in campus ministry. One of my friends spent a couple hours with Dr. John Stott, an internationally-known pastor with a church that also ministered to university students.

Dr. Stott and my friend discussed prayer. Dr. Stott confessed that his best prayer time is spent in thinking *with* God, reflecting on scripture passages, and meditating on eternal truths.

My friend argued that the best prayer is found in corporate worship, enthusiastic singing, exalting in the presence of God, shouting his praises, singing, dancing, kneeling, and bowing before the throne of God. We considered Stott's "prayer" of reflection too intellectual, too shallow, too unenlightened, and perhaps unspiritual. We chuckled.

In fact, I'd say we snickered.

By the end of his life, *Time* Magazine identified Stott as one of the 100 most influential people in the world; he had written over 50 books; and he had helped hundreds of thousands of people—probably millions. And we twenty-something neophytes snickered at his shallowness.

Thirty-five years later, I'm rethinking spiritual reflection—actually practicing it—and it is rich beyond belief. Stott was oh-so-very right, and I was oh-so-very wrong. Spiritual reflection is one of the deepest ways to connect with God that I've ever experienced.

I love to brainstorm, whiteboard, and creatively go after innovative ideas. I love doing this with

friends when considering anything, so I am trying it with God. And I love it.

Spiritual reflection is connecting me to God, and I'm hearing his voice.

What's the point?

Dallas Willard claimed that one of largest human problems—for believers or not—is our denial of deep reality. We live in shallow realities while denying or ignoring the deep.

The primary purpose of prayerful reflection is to connect with the Real God deep in our hearts. C. S. Lewis said that we are content to play in mud puddles while God invites us to the seashore. Prayerful reflection is a visit to the coast. Jesus loves to speak to us at the beach.

The external, solid world appears more “real” to us than our intangible inner life; our external senses are more alive than our inner senses. I “see” the reality of stains on the carpet; I “hear” the grind of the garbage truck; I “feel” the soreness in my bad knee. These senses seem more concrete than the elusive inner life of God's love and presence.

Our daily reality mostly consists of our five physical senses. They have more appeal; they are on HD video while our inner life with God is on scratchy old audio.

Our prayers are usually limited to: *Asking* (Please help me with my test tomorrow), *Worship* (God, you are so great!), *Thanksgiving* (Thanks for dinner), and *Repentance* (Please forgive me for snapping at my wife). These prayers are great. But they are one-sided monologues, us saying something to God. Sometimes God wants to respond.

Discussion and connection

Real prayerful reflection is much more like conversation, a connection with a friend, a back and forth like tennis practice, questions and answers, clarification and interpretation, speaking and listening. It is a personal, conversational connection to God, the Ultimate Reality.

Prayerful reflection requires [curiosity](#) and a heightened personal awareness. We notice—that is an awareness arise—of our anger at a negative comment. In curiosity we ask God why we responded with such ferocity. Our curiosity is not satisfied with our own shallow answers like, “I’m angry because they disparaged me in front of others.”

Of course negative comments triggered anger, but why do the opinions of others matter so much? We ask God, and he speaks. Sometimes he speaks words—“Why is their opinion so important?—and sometime he simply triggers the inner realization that the opinions of others are more “real” to us than the opinions of God.

And then God offers a heart sense of his reality and care, and our hearts are at peace.

Questions and reflection

With increased inner awareness, and in curiosity, we go to God with questions like,

- I've read this passage a hundred times, but this time something quickened in my heart. God, what is that quickening about, what are you surfacing?
- God, I just watched a movie and during the ending I began to tear up; what about that ending is moving me? What are you revealing to me?
- Father, I'm feeling anxious about my children. Why do I think you are less concerned for them than I am?
- God, what does it really mean that you love me? How can that shape my life?

Here's the thing: when we go to God in prayerful reflection it fuels our ability to Ask, Worship, Thank, and Repent. Let's look at that anger. As we discuss it with God—as we practice prayerful reflection—God speaks, and all of a sudden we,

- **Ask:** God, may the magnitude of your majesty eclipse the opinion of man.
- **Worship:** As I see the beauty of your reality, I am moved to adore you.
- **Thanksgiving:** Thank you God for your opinion and care for me.
- **Repentance:** I repent that the molehill of human opinion continually overshadows the mountain of your great interest in me.

Prayerful reflection is a conversation with God that connects us to him. It is learning to have a conversation with God. I am learning that one of the best ways to hear God is through prayerfully reflection.

Hey! Did I just hear someone snicker?

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Hearing God in Our Inner Being

by Sam Williamson

Why did Jesus come to earth when he did? Why not *immediately* after Adam and Eve sinned? Wouldn't that have saved the world from centuries of pain? Or, why didn't he come to the slaves in Egypt instead of sending Moses? Or, why not now? Why didn't God choose to appear on earth to our confused, depressed, decadent Western World? Why then and why not now?

Scripture says, "When *the right time* came, God sent his Son" (Gal.4:4); elsewhere it reads, "While we were still weak, *at the right time* Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). The Bible says God figured

out that the perfect time—the exact right time in all of history for all of humanity—to appear on earth. And it was two thousand years ago. Why then?

I can imagine a few better times. How about when “each man did what was right in his own eyes;” or the *centuries* of worshiping idols in the “high places;” or during those same times when the wealthy oppressed the poor, widows, and orphans? Why not then?

Or what about when brutal Assyria and Babylon cold-bloodedly conquered, pillaged, and raped God’s chosen people, when enemies dashed their little ones against stones? Why not then?

Instead Jesus came when God’s people were the most righteous they’d ever been in their two thousand year history: there was no hint of any idolatry, the Scriptures were taught in every synagogue, and temple worship was practiced exactly as taught by the Bible.

Of all the evil and needy times in the history of God’s people, why was *that* the right time?

The two lives

Each of us lives two lives: we inhabit the husk of outer life that everyone sees, and we occupy an inner life known only to us. Remember the little boy Jimmy? His mother commands him, “Sit down;” she counts, “One ... two ... three” And the boy sits. Then he declares, “I may be sitting down on the outside, but I’m still standing up on the inside.”

On the outside you and I smile and proclaim our faith in God’s love. On the inside we are angry, easily hurt, or just confused. On the outside we succeed at work or raise obedient kids; on the inside we are driven by hidden, inner motivations of fear, need for recognition, childhood wounding, or a compulsion to prove that our lives matter.

Ever since the time of Adam and Eve, God commanded his people, *Sit down!*—“Don’t eat from that tree . . . Don’t commit adultery . . . Have no other gods before me”—and for centuries the people of God remained standing up: worshiping idols, oppressing the poor, and relying on their culture’s answers instead of God’s promises.

During the Roman occupation, God’s people finally sat down. But they continued standing up on the inside.

Our inner-doing

Jesus said, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you find eternal life; *but they point to me*” (John 5:39). The Jews in the time of Jesus finally wanted to obey. They sifted through every chapter, paragraph, and word of the Bible, hunting for one more way to sit down. Jesus said they missed its most vital message.

The last idol ever yielded on the altar of God is the surrender our inner-selves.

Instead of renouncing inner-idols, we modern believers still obsess on behavior. We search the Scriptures for one more way we can perform, to [prove our goodness](#), to [boost our self-esteem](#), or to

[increase our self-acceptance](#). Or we read every book we can find on parenting, church leadership, marriage communication, or therapy.

God says our final act of worship is to sacrifice any and all of our inner-*doing*.

That's why Jesus pushed so hard in his Sermon on the Mount. Our problem is not just external adultery, it's our inner lust; it's not just murder on the outside, it's our inner ridicule of others. Adultery and ridicule (inner and outer) are living evidence of our self-proving inner-doing.

Our real life is in inner life. That is where we live. Our outer life is aluminum siding. Jesus came at the exact right time in history—when virtually everyone had re-sided their homes—he came to redecorate our inner-being.

For what?

The God of all creation broke through time and space—spirituality and physicality—to save us. But to save us for what? The incarnate Son of God came to earth to redeem our lives *from* slavery to hell on earth (and beyond). But to redeems us *for* what?

He didn't endure all that merely to make good little boys and girls who sit down.

Adam and Eve walked and talked with God in the cool of the garden. Their internal and external rebellion severed that conversation with God. Jesus saved us so that we once again can walk and talk with him.

Christianity is not about being goody-two shoes on the outside; it's about having a restored conversational relationship with God. It's not just about sitting down to feed our inner and outer egos, it's about sitting down for a cup of coffee with God and re-learning to talk.

So why not now?

Okay, so why not now? Why didn't Jesus come and teach that inner lesson here and now, today? He did and he does. Our real life is our inner life not our outer husk, it's the part no one sees but it's where we live. It's in the hidden parts of our lives that we really exist.

That's where Jesus comes today. He really does come now. He saved us so that we can walk and talk with him in our inner being; so we can hear his voice there just as he hears our voices. Our lives are now hid with Christ, and in our inner lives with him, we talk.

Jesus calls to each of us, here, today, right now: *Walk with me*.

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Sam Williamson grew up in Detroit, Michigan, USA. He is the son of a Presbyterian pastor and grandson of missionaries to China. He moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1975. He worked in London England from 1979 to 1982, helping to establish [Antioch](#), a member community of the Sword of the Spirit. After about twenty-five years as an executive at a software company in Ann Arbor he sensed God call him to something new. He left the software company in 2008 and now speaks at men's retreats, churches, and campus outreaches. He is married to Carla Williamson and they have four grown children and a grandson. He has a blog site, www.beliefsoftheheart.com, and can be reached at Sam@BeliefsoftheHeart.com.



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The Fire of the Holy Spirit

by Don Schwager

The Scriptures present us with a variety of visible images which signify the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. These signs include wind, fire, breath, and rivers of living waters.



Signs of fire in Scripture signify in a special way God's holy presence, power, and glory, as well as the purification and cleansing action of the Holy Spirit. Some examples include:

- The Burning Bush – Exodus 3
- The Pillar of Fire in the wilderness – Exodus 13:21-22
- The Consuming Fire on Mount Carmel – 1 Kings 18:17-40
- The Burning Coal that purified the lips of Isaiah the Prophet – Isaiah 6:6-7
- The Tongues of Fire at Pentecost – Acts 2:1-4
- God's Consuming Fire in the new heavenly Jerusalem – Hebrews 12:22,28



When the Lord Jesus began his public ministry, the first thing that John the Baptist said about him was:

“He will baptize you with the **Holy Spirit** and **with fire**” (Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16).

What does it mean to be baptized with the fire of God's Spirit?

When the Holy Spirit comes he sets our hearts on fire with the love of Jesus Christ. Paul the Apostle tells us that,

“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).

When we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ, and pray for the Holy Spirit to be fully released in our lives, what happens – what does the Holy Spirit do?

- The Holy Spirit opens our ears to hear God’s voice – the Spirit enables God’s Word to come alive in us so that God’s word becomes a living and life-changing Word that is sharper than any two-edged sword – Paul the Apostle calls the Word of God the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6).
- The Spirit opens our eyes to give us vision of what God is doing today in the Church, the world, and our personal lives. “Without vision the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18)
- The Spirit opens our minds to give us knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of God and his ways (Isaiah 11:2). Jesus said the Holy Spirit will teach us the truth and help us remember all that Christ has taught (John 14:26; 16:13).
- The Spirit opens our tongues to praise God and to speak his word with faith, conviction, and boldness and to encourage the fainthearted, the hopeless, and the weak.
- The Spirit anoints our hands to bring blessing, healing, comfort, and help to others.
- The Spirit equips our feet with speed and haste to bring the good news of the Gospel to every neighbor near and far.
- The Holy Spirit purifies our hearts and minds and sets us on fire with the love of Christ.

When Jesus began his ministry, he was led by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the good news of the kingdom to every village, town, and region of Israel. The Spirit gave force or power to every word Jesus spoke. The Spirit revealed the thoughts and intentions of people’s hearts to Jesus. The Spirit empowered Jesus to perform signs and wonders and miracles, and power to free people from Satan’s oppression in their lives.

We are Christ’s body – members of his church on the earth. Jesus calls us to do the same works he did and he equips us with spiritual gifts to carry on the work which he began.

Saint Theresa of Avila (1515-1582) wrote:

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

Outpouring of the Holy Spirit today

Why is God pouring out his Holy Spirit today, with signs, healings, and spiritual gifts? I believe one reason is that the Gospel and the Christian people are under unprecedented attack today. We need spiritual power to counter this attack and to proclaim the Gospel in the joy and power of the Holy Spirit. The charismatic renewal is a key part of God’s work to renew, restore, and equip God’s people to stand strong in faith and courage, to persevere with unwavering hope, and to be on fire with the love of Christ. Our task is to make

Jesus known and loved by all who will receive him and the good news of salvation he brings.

Our role in the charismatic renewal movement

We are first foremost disciples of Jesus – disciples who are personally committed to the Lord Jesus, to follow him and obey him and to submit to his word for our lives.

The Lord Jesus calls us to be servants just as he came "not to be served, but to serve." As his servants who use their gifts, talents, and time to generously and selflessly serve others to help them grow in faith, hope, and love. We use our gifts, not to build up ourselves, but to build up the body of Christ and to advance his mission in the world.

The charismatic renewal is a sign of what God is bringing about through the gift of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. It is a visible public sign of the Lord's work of renewal in bringing people into a revitalized relationship with God and a sign of the unity he desires for all of his people. The Spirit unites, Satan divides. A true sign and fruit of charismatic renewal is love for our church – our church leaders and members, and for all believers who are brothers and sisters in Christ. A sign can't do everything – but it can point to God and to the work of the Holy Spirit to renew the churches and to bring God's people into greater unity and love for one another.

Some traps or pitfalls we must avoid

We don't lead or serve to draw attention to ourselves, to gain esteem, praise, or applause. We serve in humility like John the Baptist who said, "He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Our reward comes from our Master Jesus Christ. He suffered abuse, mistreatment, and even rejection, and yet he loved his own to the very end (John 13:1), even those who rejected him and those who nailed him to the cross. Paul the Apostle said, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

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Exercising the Charismatic Gifts of the Holy Spirit



**The Holy Spirit's Gift of Tongues is for All
Who Believe in the Power of God**

*"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other
tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" - Acts 2:4*

by Don Schwager

Tongues of Fire

The first signs of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost were the visible tongues of fire and the audible gift of tongues which enabled the first Christian disciples to speak out in languages which they did not previously know.

What is the significance of the visible display of tongues of fire at the feast of Pentecost? The tongues of fire were a visible manifestation of the presence and power of God at work in and through the early disciples of Jesus who had gathered in the upper room in prayer on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:12-14 and 2:1-4). God gave each of them a tongue of fire to signify his immediate presence and power to change them and work through them in a new and mighty way.

Miraculous signs of fire were not unheard of in the Old Testament Scriptures. There are a number of occasions

when God used fire to manifest his presence and power to his people. One example is the burning bush which Moses saw at the foot of Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:1-6). This was a miraculous fire which continued to burn without consuming the bush and from which the voice of God could audibly be heard by Moses. Another key example is the Pillar of Fire by night and the Pillar of Cloud by day which guided the Israelites as they journeyed in the wilderness for forty years (Exodus 13:21-22, Exodus 40:38, Psalm 78:14). The Pillar of Fire and the Pillar of Cloud were a continual reminder and a vivid display of God's presence, protection, and guidance for his people.

This manifestation of God's continual presence with the Hebrew people in the wilderness points to the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to fill his followers with the Holy Spirit who would remain with them. Just as the Pillar of Fire and the Pillar of Cloud continued to guide the Hebrews throughout their journey in the wilderness until they reached the Promised Land, so, too, the Holy Spirit continually guides and gives light to God's people today as we journey to our homeland in heaven.

When the Temple was dedicated in Jerusalem the glory of God's presence was manifested in a cloud which filled the Temple and a fire was kept burning to remind the people of God's presence with them. Now God's presence comes to dwell in the people whom Jesus has redeemed and made holy through his blood shed for us on the cross. We are sealed in this new covenant blessing and grace through the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Paul the Apostle tells us that since the Holy Spirit now dwells within us both corporately and individually, we become living temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and Ephesians 2:19-22).

The Gift of Speaking in Tongues

Why did the miraculous fire which appeared on the Feast of Pentecost take the shape of a tongue above the head of each of the disciples (Acts 2:3)? The tongues of fire were a visible sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon each of the disciples and was immediately followed by the miraculous gift of speaking in other tongues or languages (Acts 2:4). The tongues of fire pointed to the purifying action and power of the Holy Spirit working in and through the disciples of Jesus.

The gift of speaking in tongues was both for the benefit of the disciples and for the people they would witness to about the marvelous deeds of Jesus who came to save his people and to fill them with the Holy Spirit. The gift of speaking in other tongues is a sign of God purifying our tongues and anointing us with a spiritual gift which is given by the Holy Spirit. This charismatic gift enables us to pray and to speak the praises of God and to declare his mighty deeds in a new and direct way under the inspiration and action of the Holy Spirit who works in and through us for the glory of God.

This gift demonstrates how the charismatic gifts of the Spirit work in and through us under the anointing and leading of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit require our cooperation - God gives the gift and the power to exercise the gifts. We must then use the gifts as God directs so that they will bear fruit and accomplish what God intends. This is what happened on the day of Pentecost. The disciples were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they all began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Why did they speak out in different and varied languages which they had not previously learned or known? God obviously wanted to manifest his presence and power through this new gift of speaking in unknown tongues or languages. That is why the Holy Spirit prompted them and compelled them to utter words beyond their own natural comprehension. They were given the supernatural ability to speak under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit words which only God could form as they yielded their physical tongues to the inspired "utterances of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). The Holy Spirit gave them words of praise and revelation of the marvelous works of God and the glory of God. Thus through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the Father filled the

disciples of Jesus with the same glory which he and the Son share together with the Holy Spirit.

The miracle of speaking in tongues reverses the curse of Babel

What is the significance of the gift of speaking in other tongues? And why was this the first gift of the Spirit given to the disciples at Pentecost? Speaking in unknown tongues or languages normally causes confusion, misunderstanding, and division among peoples. At Pentecost God reversed the curse of the Tower of Babel where he had confused the rebellious peoples with diverse languages they could not comprehend (Genesis 11:1-11). God caused division and confusion at Babel as a curse and punishment for their rebellious pride and usurping of God's rightful authority and sovereignty over them. Now God reverses the curse of Babel by filling the disciples of Jesus with the fulness of his Spirit which enabled them to speak in diverse languages which they previously could not speak on their own - both heavenly angelic languages as well as many varied human languages. Strangely enough this diversity of unknown languages brought about a wonderful and harmonious work of unity as the disciples spoke and prayed under the inspiration and prompting of the Holy Spirit.

The fact that the disciples did not know what strange language they were each speaking out did not hinder them from raising their voices loud enough for all the visitors from around who came rushing to hear what all the noise was about. Then the foreign-speaking peoples who were in Jerusalem for the Jewish Feast of Pentecost began to recognize in their own native language what the disciples were speaking out. Luke lists at least 14 different language and nation groups present when the apostles and other disciples began to speak out in foreign tongues (Acts 2:8-11).

The reaction of the bystanders was utter amazement. They thought the apostles had gotten drunk with wine even though it was still early morning - around 9:00 am! That is why the Apostle Paul would later write, "Do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

This miraculous gift of speaking in unknown and strange languages now brings about a new kind of unity in the Holy Spirit that both purifies and unites all the diverse languages into a harmonious language of praise and revelation of God's glory among the human race. Now the languages of heaven - the angelic orders who sing their choruses of praise and worship - are united with the multitude and diversity of humans who praise and glorify God with diverse tongues and languages. This united chorus of angelic and human beings blend into a glorious chorus of praise, worship, adoration, and revelation of God's glory and majesty which shine through all of his creation - both spiritual and material, angelic and human.

The Holy Spirit unites and draws us to the Lord

The hallmark of the Holy Spirit's action is to always unite rather than to divide, to heal rather than harm, build up rather than tear down. The Holy Spirit does not drive people away but draws us into the presence of God. The Spirit gives us a direct immediate experiential knowledge of God's presence with us. The Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit that the Father has raised his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, from the dead and has exalted him at his right hand in heaven. It is only by the Holy Spirit that we can truly acknowledge that Jesus is Lord over the heavens and the earth - he is the Lord and Ruler over all his creation (1 Corinthians 12:3; Philippians 2:11).

The gift of tongues is a sign of God's sovereign power to bring us into his presence and to unite our spirit with his Spirit in a chorus of praise, wonder, awe, reverence, glory, and exultation.

Exercising the gift of tongues today

Some scholars and teachers argue that the charismatic gifts of the Spirit, including the gift of tongues, ceased with the death of the last apostle. The historical record of eyewitness testimonies of numerous people

throughout the past 20 centuries give ample evidence of charismatic gifts and miraculous signs and wonders recorded in the lives of many saints, missionaries, martyrs, churches, and renewal movements.

The gift of tongues did not completely cease after the age of the early apostles. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the pentecostal and charismatic movements which began in the early 20th century, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the charismatic gifts have spread widely to many millions of people around the world (see Dr. Vinson Synan's article on [The Century of the Holy Spirit](#) - an historical account of the Pentecostal - charismatic renewal since January 1, 1901.) It is clearly the largest growing Christian movement worldwide.

Today many millions of people experience the charismatic gifts of the Spirit - including the gift of tongues. Modern skeptics who do not believe in miracles regard the "speaking in tongues" as mere babble or incoherent sounds. Paul the Apostle lists two kinds of tongues - the "tongues of humans" and the "tongues of angels" (1 Corinthians 13:1). Who are we - mere mortals - to tell God that the gift of tongues is impossible or too impractical for modern skeptics and believers alike!

I have personally recognized some of the languages which people have unknowingly spoken out when they were praying in tongues or prophesying in tongues under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I have heard people I know personally pray out the Lord's Prayer (the Our Father) and other prayers in perfect Greek or in perfect Latin (two languages I had studied and learned to speak in university) - even though these people had no previous understanding or ability to speak these languages. When I told them what language they were praying out and translated the words of the prayers they were saying, they were completely dumbfounded and amazed.

I have also witnessed and have spoken with other observers who could identify the particular language and dialect uttered by people who were speaking in tongues they did not previously know. I remember very vividly on one occasion a visiting missionary who had been stationed for several years with a small isolated tribe in a remote section of Africa attended our Thursday evening charismatic prayer meeting. He was a professor who specialized in linguistics. During the course of the prayer meeting he distinctly heard someone close to him pray out loud in an obscure foreign language which he immediately understood and recognized to be from the remote tribe he lived with in Africa. The person who was praying in tongues was a university student who did not have any previous learning or facility for speaking in another language.

This professor had spent several years working with this particular tribe in order to decipher their language and translate the Bible into their native tongue. As far as he knew he was the only person outside this isolated tribe who had systematically studied their language and could understand it well. Now, thousands of miles away at a prayer meeting in the United States he hears a young American student pray a perfectly articulated prayer in this native tribal dialect. The visiting professor stood up in the prayer meeting and explained to everyone present what he had just heard and understood. He was absolutely convinced that this was a miracle and a sign God had used for his own personal edification.

In the past 45 years, since I was baptized in the Holy Spirit in January, 1969, I have prayed with thousands of people to receive a full release of the power of the Holy Spirit and for the gifts of the Spirit. Nearly everyone I have prayed with have received the gift of tongues during the prayer session for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. A few received the gift of tongues a few days or weeks later. I also know a few who refused to ask for the gift of tongues because they didn't want it. I am convinced that God wants this gift for everyone because it helps us to pray more easily and with greater expectant faith and conviction. The Holy Spirit knows better than we do how God wants us to pray and what he wants us to pray out and intercede for.

Paul the Apostle describes how the Spirit helps us pray:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).

The Scriptures are full of examples of how the Lord opens our lips to praise him and to speak his word:

Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. (Psalm 51:15).

The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary. Morning by morning he wakens, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.(Isaiah 50:4)

Yielding to gifts of the Holy Spirit

If we desire to receive the gifts of the Spirit, then we must learn to yield to the Holy Spirit. Jesus instructed his disciples in how to pray with expectant faith for the gift of the Holy Spirit:

And I tell you, **Ask, and it will be given you**; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 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!**” (Luke 11:9–13)

The first step to yielding to the Holy Spirit is **asking with expectant faith**. If God makes a promise, do we expect him to fulfill his promise? If we ask him to give us something he wants us to have now and not later, then we ask with trust and with expectant faith that he will answer us as he has promised.

What do we ask for when we pray to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? We ask with expectant faith for a full outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our personal lives - for a full release of the gifts and power of the Spirit within us. We ask for the Holy Spirit to give us the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues. We ask for the Holy Spirit to give us the gift of prophecy so we can speak his word to others as he leads us to speak to them. We ask for prophetic direction in being led by the Spirit to speak with certain individuals the Spirit wants us to speak with. And we ask for the Spirit to give us the words and message he wishes us to speak to others - especially in evangelizing and sharing our testimony with others.

Yielding to the gift of tongues

Paul the Apostle writes, "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues" (1 Corinthians 14:4). Learning how to yield to the gift of tongues is very beneficial for us. It is first and foremost a gift of prayer - a prayer that allows the Holy Spirit to pray in and through us for the glory of God (Romans 8:26–27).

The Acts of the Apostles explains how the first disciples of Jesus received the gift of tongues on Pentecost:

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

Notice in this passage from Acts that "**all** were filled, not some." Each of the 120 disciples did something – they each spoke out in a language they did not previously know. As they began to speak out the Holy Spirit formed their speech into a new tongue or language they did not know. When we pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give us the gift of tongues it is important that we first stop speaking out in our own language. We then speak out whatever sounds, syllables, and words the Holy Spirit begins to give us. As we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, the new words in another language will flow from our lips as we allow the Spirit to speak through and within us for the glory of God.

Learning to exercise spiritual gifts

Speaking out and praying in tongues is a cooperative work of the Holy Spirit and the individual who yields to the gift of the Spirit by speaking out with the new tongue the Spirit gives. Learning how to yield to the gift of tongues is an excellent way for learning how to yield to the other charismatic gifts of the Spirit. We ask with expectant faith. We yield ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We step out in faith by acting and speaking out as the Spirit leads us.

Do you want to grow in yielding to the Holy Spirit and to the gifts the Spirit wishes to give you? Pray with other Christians who have experience and wisdom in exercising the gifts of the Spirit. Learn from those who are wise in discerning the spiritual gifts and who have experience in helping others grow in using the gifts of the Spirit. The Life in the Spirit Seminars is an excellent and proven way to learn how to yield to the Holy Spirit and gifts of the Spirit.

[Three excellent books: *Life in the Spirit* and *Life in the Spirit Seminar for Children* by Jerry Munk, and *Life in the Spirit Team Manual* all available from [Tabor House](#).]

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Exercising the Prophetic Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Church Today



Exercising the Prophetic Gifts: The Forms of Prophecy

by Bruce Yocum

*Let me now sing of my friend
my friend's song concerning his
vineyard. Isaiah 5:1*

[Agabus] came up to us and taking Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it. 'Then he said, Thus says the Holy Spirit...' Acts 21:10

The prophets of both the Old and New Testaments did a great deal more to communicate the word of the Lord than just saying, "Thus says the Lord." They composed songs (or sang songs inspired by the Holy Spirit). They performed dramatic actions. They even gave their children prophetic names: "In fact, they showed no hesitation in

availing themselves of all manner of forms in which to clothe their message. None, secular and sacred alike, was safe from appropriation as a vessel for discharge of his task by one prophet or another.”¹

OBSTACLES

The simplest and most direct form of prophecy is the prophetic oracle, in which the prophet addresses the people of God in plain speech as if it were the Lord himself speaking. A prophetic oracle may or may not contain such idioms as “The Lord says” or “The Holy Spirit says this.” But whether or not these familiar prophetic phrases are employed, it is clear from the speaker’s presentation that the speech proceeds from the Lord.

Oracles are blunt. They state the message of the Lord without elaborate presentation. Therein lies their greatest usefulness. There are occasions (frequent occasions) which call for the simple statement of the message God has for his people. Prophetic oracles present a direct word as a direct word, and state simply, “This word is from the Lord.”

PROPHETIC EXHORTATION

Perhaps the most common form of prophetic speech is exhortation. The fifteenth chapter of the Book of Acts mentions two prophets, Judas and Silas, who came to Antioch and “exhorted the brethren with many words, and strengthened them.” Exhortation (or encouragement, as it is often translated) is speech which revives, renews, or strengthens people. It builds up their hope and gives them new courage. Most of us are familiar with exhortation, although we probably have not called it that. The well-known halftime pep talk which the coach gives to his team, for instance, is exhortation.

Any Christian can exhort and encourage others. If a Christian woman were anxious and worried about her financial state, any good Christian could encourage her to have faith in God, who provides more abundantly for us than for the sparrows. But there is a true prophetic exhortation too, and prophetic exhortation is something more: it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is a word of encouragement that comes from the Lord himself.

Oftentimes we may know that the Lord wants to say something to his people, yet do not feel that we should prophesy. In such cases, we should perhaps yield to an inspired exhortation. In some ways, inspired exhortation allows us greater freedom for expression than direct, first-person prophecy. We can communicate the Lord’s word at greater length or in more detail is otherwise possible. We can express our own convictions about the Lord’s word or use personal examples to explain how the word can be applied. Just two weeks before writing this I attended a gathering of Christians from my hometown. As we were praying together, I felt inspired to speak a word. But when I considered the message, I realized a story I had just read could express it better than a first person prophecy. So, rather than prophesying, I gave a prophetic exhortation including the story as an illustration.

If you ever feel that the Lord wishes to speak through you, direct prophecy does not appear to be the right way to his word, try expressing it through a prophetic exhortation. Some people fear that speaking an exhortation rather than a prophecy will weaken the force of God’s word -- perhaps people will think we are only expressing some personal convictions. If we believe our exhortation is God’s word, we can say that. If it is, our words will carry God’s authority.

INSPIRED PRAYER

At times God will inspire a person to pray publicly in a way that touches and moves the hearts of those who hear. At times too the prayer will have in it the unmistakable element of prophetic revelation. When Zechariah and Simeon

prayed in thanks to God (see Lk 1 and 2), their prayers were thoroughly prophetic. Through those prayers God revealed the plan he was unfolding in the lives of John the Baptist and Jesus.

Prophetic prayer often has a place in worship of the Lord. Ezra 9:6-15 and Nehemiah 9:6-37 are examples of prophetic prayer. When Ezra prayed before the people, the people were deeply affected, His prayer had power because it was inspired. A truly inspired prayer will turn people's hearts to the Lord, and will lead them to a deep praise and worship of God. When inspired prayer is present, worship of God is a powerful and transforming experience.

Prophetic prayer is as easy to yield to as direct prophecy. If you are praying and feel that the Lord has given you something to pray publicly, just speak out, and let the power of the Holy Spirit do the rest.

PROPHECY IN SONG

Some of the most beautiful and moving melodies and lyrics I have heard were prophetic. Prophetic songs most often occur in the context of worship, and serve as an encouragement to even greater praise of God. Many of these songs describe God's goodness, his love, or his majesty, in a way which almost compels us to bless God and praise him.

Receiving a prophetic song is similar to receiving a simple prophetic message. Sometimes you will begin to hear in your mind a word from the Lord, and then a melody to go with it. Other times you may receive only the words of a prayer or message, but feel urged to sing the message rather than to speak it. When that happens, if you just choose an opening note and begin to sing, the melody will come. Or, you may receive only a melody, but as you begin to sing, the words will be given to you. Prophetic song does not come when you decide to set something to music, but when you are inspired to sing in the Holy Spirit. In other words, you don't compose a prophetic song, you receive it.

The words of a prophetic song are not so much a focus as the words of a spoken prophecy. Prophetic song usually communicates an experience, or stirs us up spiritually, in somewhat the same way prayer or exhortation does.

Normally prophetic song will be given to people who have a good singing voice. God uses the natural gifts which he gives to us to support the spiritual gifts which he bestows. If you do have a good singing voice, you should be open to receiving from the Lord a prophecy in song. But keep in mind that there are surprises in the ways of the Lord. Maybe you don't think that you can sing at all. Well, I have heard people who have been trained in voice try to sing prophecy with embarrassing results. It helps to know that God normally uses our natural gifts; but that shouldn't keep us from receiving any gift which he wants to give.

REVELATION

When Jesus told the woman at the well (John 4) that she had five husbands, and was now living with a man who was not her husband, she replied, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet." That reply would have come naturally to most people at the time of Jesus. They knew that a prophet could bring hidden to light and lay bare the secrets of the heart. Scripture abounds with accounts of prophets who revealed secrets they never have known except through the action of the Holy Spirit. To cite one example, the prophet Elisha knew that his servant Gehazi had lied to get money from a man whom Elisha had cured (2 Kgs 5).

From time to time God may reveal things to us which we not otherwise know, just as he revealed Gehazi's theft to

Elisha. Four years ago I was counseling a young woman troubled by serious emotional difficulties. I knew that the Lord wanted to help her, but I myself was at a loss about what to do. At the of one session, we sat down to pray together. As we prayed the Lord showed me an incident involving a small child and her mother. I saw the incident in very great detail, almost as if a movie was being shown in my mind. A girl who appeared to be four years old was sitting in her living room playing with some toys. Suddenly her mother came into the room and began to yell at her. She spanked the girl severely and sent her to her room. As I saw all of this, I understood (how I am not sure) that the little girl had been wetting her bed at night. Her mother was angry because it had happened again. The little girl was frightened, and frustrated. I understood (again, I don't know how) that she felt helpless; how could she control what had happened in her sleep?

I was a little nervous about mentioning this, but I finally worked up the courage. I told the woman that I thought something had happened between her and her mother when she was about four years old. As I described what I had seen, she became more and more excited. The revelation was an exact description of an incident she had almost forgotten.

Every detail matched. Talking about that spanking given many years before led us to some insights that eventually helped her overcome some of her emotional problems.

Revelations of facts which we could not know on our own can be a powerful and convincing work of the Holy Spirit. The woman at the well came to believe in Jesus because e knew things about her that he could never have known but through God's revelation. Paul says in his First Letter to the Corinthians, "If all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so, falling on his face he will worship God and declare that God is really among you" (1 Cor 14:24-25).

However, we must be careful to use these revelations in a way that will help and encourage the people involved. This is especially true of revelations concerning people's private lives. Such revelations can cause tremendous harm if they are rashly or unlovingly used. Several years ago I was praying with another person, and as I prayed, God showed me something that had happened to him many years before. This revelation touched on a very delicate matter, and I felt it unwise to bring the subject up. So I said nothing. One year later I talked with the same person, and he began to speak about the very incident that had been revealed to me a year earlier. I now thank God that I did not say anything about that revelation when I first received it. God had a time and a place for making use of the knowledge he had given me.

There are two areas in which we need to exercise care with prophetic revelation. First, we may be wrong when we think that something has been revealed to us. Second, it is not always appropriate or helpful to say anything about the true revelations which we receive.

We could be wrong. Imagine what would happen if you walked up to a woman who had been faithfully married for fifteen years and said, "You have had five husbands and you are now living with a man who is not your husband." When we receive true revelation, we may become the instruments of a dramatic conversion. But when we have received something false, we can only hurt, offend, or embarrass another individual. The more serious the matter which we think has been revealed, the more serious is our responsibility to discern and judge it. We must always be prudent about such matters.

Again, God may give us a true revelation, but not want us to act on it. He may be revealing something just so we can pray and wait for him to act. I do believe, however, that most of the time when God shows us something, he will also

show us what he wants us to do. If we seek for his guidance about how to act (or not act) on the revelation we receive, we can avoid mistakes.

God wants to equip us to serve him, and revelations can be an important part of that equipment. But they have to be approached with caution and wisdom. If we exercise a reasonable amount of care and common sense, revelation can bear fruit for the Lord.

PERSONAL PROPHECY

The Lord can speak through prophecy to individuals just as he can to groups of people. Through Agabus (and many others) the Holy Spirit warned Paul of the troubles awaiting him in Jerusalem. From time to time we may also experience the Lord giving us a specific word for some other individual. The word may give direction to someone who is trying to make a decision; it may encourage or console; it may convict a person of sin, as Nathan's prophecy convicted David of his sin in killing Bathsheba's husband (2 Sm 12).

My own first experience with prophecy for another individual is worth relating, because it demonstrates the powerful effects that such prophecy can have. As I was praying one morning six years ago, I looked up and saw another man sitting across the room I knew this man rather well, and there was nothing unusual about seeing him in the room, for he often prayed there. But as I looked at him that morning, I sensed that the Lord had something to speak to him. I went over to him and told him that I thought I should prophesy to him. He looked a bit surprised. The prophecy which I spoke was very simple. God knew him and loved him. Later that day this man came to me to thank me for the prophecy. The knowledge that God loved him. Cloved him enough to speak to him personally had a profound effect. Two years later he again thanked me for what I had done that day. That simple word had been for him a support and encouragement through many difficult times. Often, he told me, it would come back to his mind in the midst of trials and bring with it an inner strength and refreshment.

At times prophecy for individuals can be misused. I have heard of instances where people have made use of personal prophecy as a means for getting their own way. For instance, one person prophesied to another person that God wanted the two of them to get married. Apparently he wanted his proposal to have some authority behind it! Prophecy for an individual is subject to the same need for testing and discernment as any other form of prophecy. If a prophecy requires some definite response, then it should be examined and judged, whether it is intended for a group or for an individual. There should be no such thing as private prophecy if by that is meant that the prophecy is not open to discernment by those authority in the community, or by others who can take an objective position in helping the recipient to evaluate what has been prophesied.

Public personal prophecy should normally not be allowed. That is, prophecy directed to an individual in a public setting. Receiving personal prophecy in such a setting is intimidating, and can have (and often does have) the effect of giving the prophecy more authority than it deserves.

VISIONS

For many of us the archetypal prophet may be John on the Island of Patmos:

"And after this I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door! And the first voice, which I had heard

speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up hither and I will show you what must take place after this.' At once I was in the Spirit, and, lo, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne! And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian, and round the throne there was a rainbow that looked like an emerald..." (Rv 4:1-3).

Or it may be Ezekiel: "In the thirtieth year in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.. ." (Ez 1:1).

Probably nothing else makes us feel so different from the prophets, so alienated from their experiences, as the visions they received. Visions seem to have about them an air of unreality and mystery and spectacle. And yet visions are no more mysterious than normal prophecy. Actually, they ought to be expected.

Through visions God opens up to us his actions and his plan in a new and powerful way; they have impact. I was startled, to say the least, the first time I received a vision. After all, I considered myself a reasonable and down-to-earth sort of a guy. And I didn't think any reasonable and down-to-earth person should be having visions!

But in the summer of 1969, while I was on retreat with a group of men in Canada, I had a vision. We were all praying together one night, and I felt that the Lord wished to speak to us through prophecy. I began seeking the Lord to hear his word. Suddenly, I seemed to be standing on a large level plain. A huge crowd of people was walking toward me. I could not see any leader, but all the people were moving along together as if following someone. The question I had read many times in the books of the prophets immediately came to my lips, "Lord, what is this?" I think, in fact, that I actually asked the question half out loud because at that moment I was not particularly aware of the other people in the room. Then I heard the Lord speaking, just as he normally does in prophetic revelation: "These are my people. They follow me where I lead...."

In a minute or two the vision ended. What was I to do next? Tell people that I had had a vision? So much for my reputation as a reasonable and down-to-earth guy! But I plucked up my courage and said, "Ah, brothers, I think I've... uh... had a vision!" As I went on to explain what I had seen and heard, the other men responded just as they would respond to the word of the Lord in a spoken prophecy.

If we receive prophetic visions, we should share them with others properly. There is no reason to act as if something very strange or mysterious has happened. We can simply give a matter-of-fact description of what we have seen and heard. The vision can then be tested and judged as any other prophecy is tested and judged. If it is from God, it will bear the testing.

We should also talk about visions with dignity and restraint. I was tempted to half joke about my first vision, because I felt slightly embarrassed by it. But if a vision is from the Lord, embarrassment or joking will take away from what he wishes to do through it.

I have a relatively active imagination, and when I first experienced visions I thought I might be imagining them. That is a reasonable consideration: many people do mistake their own active and colorful imaginings for prophetic visions. But though such mistakes do occur, they mean only that we must apply the same tests to visions that we apply to every other form of prophecy. People who are emotionally unstable or prone to imagining things should not be relied upon in prophecy at all. We should know that a person is reliable before we accept his or her visions.

PROPHETIC ACTIONS

Thus the Lord said to me: “Make yourself thongs and yoke-bars, and put them on your neck. Send word to the king of Edom, the king of Moab...” Jeremiah 27:2-3

While we were staying for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us he took Paul’s girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the one who owns this girdle and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’” Acts 21:10-11

The prophets of both the Old and the New Testaments brought drama and impact to their prophecies by performing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, actions that vividly portrayed the message they proclaimed. Hosea and Isaiah gave their children prophetic names (Hosea 1:4, 6,9; Is 8:3). Jeremiah, the champion prophetic actor, buried a waistcloth (Jer 13:1), smashed an earthen flask as a sign of destruction (Jer 10), walked around wearing an oxen-yoke (Jer 27), and bought a field as a sign of future restoration (Jer 32).

All of these actions were inspired dramatizations of the prophetic message. The prophets did not perform them because they wanted to be dramatic; they performed them as the word of the Lord. Today we can see many people performing what they claim are prophetic actions -- holding demonstrations against abortion, or trying to save the lives of several beached whales, etc. In a broad sense of the term, we might justly call these actions "prophetic symbols." But acting at the immediate command of the Lord in support of an inspired prophetic message is a different matter. The power of truly prophetic actions comes from the Holy Spirit who inspires them.

TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION

Therefore he who speaks in tongues should pray for the power to interpret.... If any speak in a tongue, let there be two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silence in the assembly and speak to himself and to God.

1 Corinthians 14:13, 27-28.

Paul spoke very strongly to the church at Corinth about speaking in tongues in meetings of the church. Speaking out in tongues was to be done only if the message spoken could be interpreted. The reason Paul gives is common sense: unless the message is interpreted, no one will understand it, and therefore, no one will profit from the message. It is clear that at times the Holy Spirit does inspire individuals to speak out in tongues in Christian meetings. When the message spoken is interpreted, all are “built up.”

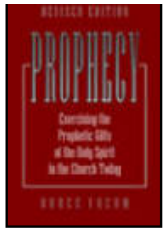
I have been asked on many occasions, “Why should God inspire tongues and interpretation? Wouldn’t it be simpler for someone to just speak the message in an intelligible language in the first place?” I do not have an answer for a question like that. It seems clear that God does inspire tongues and interpretation. It would be better for us simply to exercise and receive the gift with thanksgiving rather than to ask why God why God works in this way.

Notes:

1. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 38.
2. See George Montague's explanation of this gift in *The Spirit and His Gifts* (New York: Paulist, 1974), 33-35



This article is adapted from the book, *Prophecy: Exercising the Prophetic Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the*



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The Holy Spirit Keeps Us in Perfect Peace

by John Henry Newman (1801 – 1890 AD)

[Note: Minor changes, including capitalization style, were made to allow the text to be more accessible to modern readers. Sub-headings were also added. Editor]

The Holy Spirit reveals the Father to us

1. The heavenly gift of the Spirit fixes the eyes of our mind upon the divine Author of our salvation.

By nature we are blind and carnal; but the Holy Spirit by whom we are new-born, reveals to us the God of mercies, and bids us recognize and adore him as our Father with a true heart. He impresses on us our heavenly Father's image, which we lost when Adam fell, and disposes us to seek his presence by the very instinct of our new nature. He gives us back a portion of that freedom in willing and doing, of that uprightness and innocence, in which Adam was created. He unites us to all holy beings, as before we had relationship with evil.

He restores for us that broken bond, which, proceeding from above, connects together into one blessed family all that is anywhere holy and eternal, and separates it off from the rebel world which comes to nothing. Being then the sons of God, and one with him, our souls mount up and cry to him continually. This special characteristic of the regenerate soul is spoken of by St. Paul soon after the text. "You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Nor are we left to utter these cries to him, in any vague uncertain way of our own; but he who sent the Spirit to dwell in us habitually, gave us also a form of words to sanctify

the separate acts of our minds. Christ left his sacred prayer to be the peculiar possession of his people, and the voice of the Spirit. If we examine it, we shall find in it the substance of that doctrine, to which St. Paul has given a name in the passage just quoted. We begin it by using our privilege of calling on Almighty God in express words as "Our Father."

We proceed, according to this beginning, in that waiting, trusting, adoring, resigned temper, which children ought to feel; looking towards him, rather than thinking of ourselves; zealous for his honor rather than fearful about our safety; resting in his present help, not with eyes timorously glancing towards the future. his name, his kingdom, his will, are the great objects for the Christian to contemplate and make his portion, being stable and serene, and "complete in him," as beseems one who has the gracious presence of his Spirit within him. And, when he goes on to think of himself, he prays, that he may be enabled to have towards others what God has shown towards himself, a spirit of forgiveness and loving-kindness.

Thus he pours himself out on all sides, first looking up to catch the heavenly gift, but, when he gains it, not keeping it to himself, but diffusing "rivers of living water" to the whole race of man, thinking of self as little as may be, and desiring ill and destruction to nothing but that principle of temptation and evil, which is rebellion against God; – lastly, ending, as he began, with the contemplation of his kingdom, power, and glory everlasting.

This is the true "Abba, Father," which the Spirit of adoption utters within the Christian's heart, the infallible voice of him who "makes intercession for the Saints in God's way." And if he has at times, for instance, amid trial or affliction, special visitations and comfortings from the Spirit, "plaints unutterable" within him, yearnings after the life to come, or bright and passing gleams of God's eternal election, and deep stirrings of wonder and thankfulness thence following, he thinks too reverently of "the secret of the Lord," to betray (as it were) his confidence, and, by vaunting it to the world, to exaggerate it perchance into more than it was meant to convey: but he is silent, and ponders it as choice encouragement to his soul, meaning something, but he knows not how much.

The Spirit glorifies the Son

2. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit raises the soul, not only to the thought of God, but of Christ also.

St. John says, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." And our Lord himself, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him" (1 John 1:3; John 14:23). Now, not to speak of other and higher ways in which these texts are fulfilled, one surely consists in that exercise of faith and love in the thought of the Father and Son, which the Gospel, and the Spirit revealing it, furnish to the Christian. The Spirit came especially to "glorify" Christ; and vouchsafes to be a shining light within the Church and the individual Christian, reflecting the Savior of the world in all his perfections, all his offices, all his works.

He came for the purpose of unfolding what was yet hidden, while Christ was on earth; and speaks on the house-tops what was delivered in closets, disclosing him in the glories of his transfiguration, who once had no comeliness in his outward form, and was but a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. First, he inspired the holy evangelists to record the life of Christ, and directed them which of his words and works to select, which to omit; next, he commented (as it were) upon these, and unfolded their meaning in the Apostolic Epistles. The birth, the life, the death and resurrection of Christ, has been the text which he has illuminated.

He has made history to be doctrine; telling us plainly, whether by St. John or St. Paul, that Christ's conception

and birth was the real Incarnation of the Eternal Word, – his life, “God manifest in the Flesh,” – his death and resurrection, the atonement for sin, and the justification of all believers. Nor was this all: he continued his sacred comment in the formation of the church, superintending and overruling its human instruments, and bringing out our Savior’s words and works, and the apostles’ illustrations of them, into acts of obedience and permanent ordinances, by the ministry of saints and martyrs. Lastly, he completes his gracious work by conveying this system of truth, thus varied and expanded, to the heart of each individual Christian in whom he dwells. Thus he condescends to edify the whole man in faith and holiness: “casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

By his wonder-working grace all things tend to perfection. Every faculty of the mind, every design, pursuit, subject of thought, is hallowed in its degree by the abiding vision of Christ, as Lord, Savior, and Judge. All solemn, reverent, thankful, and devoted feelings, all that is noble, all that is choice in the regenerate soul, all that is self-denying in conduct, and zealous in action, is drawn forth and offered up by the Spirit as a living sacrifice to the Son of God.

And, though the Christian is taught not to think of himself above his measure, and dare not boast, yet he is also taught that the consciousness of the sin which remains in him, and infects his best services, should not separate him from God, but lead him to him who can save. He reasons with St. Peter, “To whom should he go?” and, without daring to decide, or being impatient to be told how far he is able to consider as his own every Gospel privilege in its fullness, he gazes on them all with deep thought as the church’s possession, joins her triumphant hymns in honor of Christ, and listens wistfully to her voice in inspired Scripture, the voice of the Bride calling upon and blest in the Beloved.

The Spirit keeps us in perfect peace

3. St. John adds, after speaking of “our fellowship with the Father and his Son:” “These things we write to you, that your joy may be full.”

What is fullness of joy but peace? Joy is tumultuous only when it is not full; but peace is the privilege of those who are “filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you” (Isa. 26:3). It is peace, springing from trust and innocence, and then overflowing in love towards all around him. What is the effect of mere animal ease and enjoyment, but to make a man pleased with everything which happens? “A merry heart is a perpetual feast”; and such is peculiarly the blessing of a soul rejoicing in the faith and fear of God. He who is anxious, thinks of himself, is suspicious of danger, speaks hurriedly, and has no time for the interests of others; he who lives in peace is at leisure, wherever his lot is cast.

Such is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, whether in Jew or Greek, bond or free. He himself perchance in his mysterious nature, is the Eternal Love whereby the Father and the Son have dwelt in each other, as ancient writers have believed; and what he is in heaven, that he is abundantly on earth. He lives in the Christian’s heart, as the never-failing fount of charity, which is the very sweetness of the living waters. For where he is, “there is liberty” from the tyranny of sin, from the dread, which the natural man feels, of an offended, unreconciled Creator. Doubt, gloom, impatience have been expelled; joy in the Gospel has taken their place, the hope of heaven and the harmony of a pure heart, the triumph of self-mastery, sober thoughts, and a contented mind.

How can charity towards all men fail to follow, being the mere affectionateness of innocence and peace? Thus

the Spirit of God creates in us the simplicity and warmth of heart which children have, nay, rather the perfections of his heavenly hosts, high and low being joined together in his mysterious work; for what are implicit trust, ardent love, abiding purity, but the mind both of little children and of the adoring seraphim!

[see longer version of this homily, [The Indwelling Spirit](#)]

John Henry Newman, 1801-1890, was an influential Christian writer and a major figure from the Church of England in the Oxford Movement. In 1845 he became a Roman Catholic priest and was made a Cardinal late in life in 1879. He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010.

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First disciples gathered in prayer on the Day of Pentecost
(Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2)

Come, Holy Spirit

a selection of prayers and invocations to the Spirit of God

Intercession for the Feast of Pentecost

prayer from the Taizé Community

O living God, come and make our souls temples of thy Spirit.

Sanctify us, O Lord!

Baptize thy whole Church with fire, that the divisions soon may cease, and that it may stand before the world as a pillar and buttress of thy truth.

Sanctify us, O Lord!

Grant us all the fruits of thy Holy Spirit: brotherly love, joy, peace, patience, goodwill and faithfulness.

Sanctify us, O Lord!

May the Holy Spirit speak by the voice of thy servants, here and everywhere, as they preach thy word.

Sanctify us, O Lord!

Send thy Holy Spirit, the comforter, to all who face adversity, or who are the victims of men's wickedness.

Sanctify us, O Lord!

Preserve all nations and their leaders from hatred and war, and build up a true community among nations, through the power of thy Spirit.

Sanctify us, O Lord!

Holy Spirit, Lord and source of life, giver of the seven gifts,

Sanctify us, O Comforter.

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, Spirit of counsel and strength,

Sanctify us, O Comforter.

Spirit of knowledge and devotion, Spirit of obedience to the Lord.

Sanctify us, O Comforter.

Come, Holy Spirit

prayer for Liturgy of the Hours - Terce, by Ambrose of Milan (339-397 AD)

Come, Holy Spirit, who ever One

Are with the Father and the Son,

It is the hour, our souls possess

With your full flood of holiness.

Let flesh, and heart, and lips and mind,

Sound forth our witness to humankind;

And love light up our mortal frame,

Till others catch the living flame.

Grant this, O Father, ever One

With Christ, your sole begotten Son

And Holy Spirit we adore,

Reigning and blest forevermore. Amen.

Prayer of St. Augustine (354-430 AD)

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

Prayer for the Indwelling of the Spirit

by Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD)

Holy Spirit, powerful Consoler,

sacred Bond of the Father and the Son,

Hope of the afflicted,

descend into my heart and establish in it your loving dominion.

Enkindle in my tepid soul the fire of your Love

so that I may be wholly subject to you.

We believe that when you dwell in us,

you also prepare a dwelling for the Father and the Son.

Deign, therefore, to come to me, Consoler of abandoned souls,

and Protector of the needy.

Help the afflicted, strengthen the weak, a

nd support the wavering.
Come and purify me.
Let no evil desire take possession of me.
You love the humble and resist the proud.
Come to me, glory of the living, and hope of the dying.
Lead me by your grace that I may always be pleasing to you. Amen.

O Heavenly King

*a common Orthodox prayer to the Holy Spirit,
first known use for the service of Pentecost, likely date 8th-9th century*

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth;
Present everywhere and filling all things.
Treasury of blessings and giver of life,
Come and abide in us.
Cleanse us from every stain
And save our souls, O Good One.

Come Creator Spirit

*hymn attributed to Rabanus Maurus in the 9th century
(Pope John Paul II said this prayer every day)*

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator blest,
and in our souls take up Thy rest;
come with Thy grace and heavenly aid
to fill the hearts which Thou hast made.
O comforter, to Thee we cry,
O heavenly gift of God Most High,
O fount of life and fire of love,
and sweet anointing from above.

Thou in Thy sevenfold gifts are known;
Thou, finger of God's hand we own;
Thou, promise of the Father, Thou
Who dost the tongue with power imbue.

Kindle our sense from above,
and make our hearts o'erflow with love;
with patience firm and virtue high
the weakness of our flesh supply.

Far from us drive the foe we dread,
and grant us Thy peace instead;
so shall we not, with Thee for guide,
turn from the path of life aside.

Oh, may Thy grace on us bestow
the Father and the Son to know;
and Thee, through endless times confessed,
of both the eternal Spirit blest.

Now to the Father and the Son,
Who rose from death, be glory given,
with Thou, O Holy Comforter,
henceforth by all in earth and heaven. Amen.

Speaking with God from the Depths of the Heart

prayer 34, G from the [*Armenian Prayer Book of St. Gregory of Narek*](#) (951 –1003 AD)

We always praise along with the Son and Father, the Holy Spirit,
which is of the same essence,
mighty, true, perfect, and hoily,
wo from nothing brought into existence everything that exists,
who acts through itself and shares rule with the other two,
in the same indestructible, boundless kingdom,
who is the first cause, the awesome Word of his selfhood.
And the same exalted Holy Spirit,
good ruler, who dispenses the gifts of the Father,
in praise of the name and the glory the only begotten Son,
who acted through the Laws and inspired the Prophets,
with the encouragement of your co-equal Son commissioned your apostles.

In the form of a dove you appeared at the River Jordan,
for the greater glory of the one who had come,
shone forth in the writings of the evangelists,
created genius, strengthened the wise,
filled the teachers, blessed the kingdom,
assisted kings, appointed the guardians,
issued the decrees of salvation, granted talents, prepared atonement,
cleansed those baptized into Christ's death that you might dwell in them
a sacrament performed jointly by the Father and Son with the Holy Spirit,
who is God, honored as Lord, in all ways in all things.

Fire of the Spirit

by Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

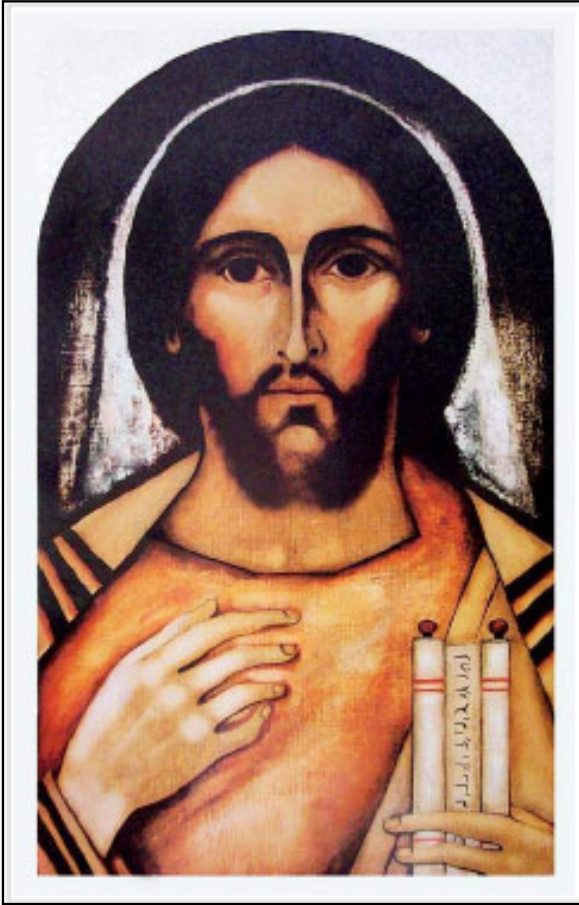
Fire of the Spirit, life of the lives of creatures,
spiral of sanctity, bond of all natures,
glow of charity, lights of clarity,
taste of sweetness to sinners--
be with us and hear us.

Composer of all things,
light of all the risen,
key of salvation,
release from the dark prison,
hope of all unions, scope of chastities,
joy in the glory, strong honor--
be with us and hear us.

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Have the Gifts of the Holy Spirit Ceased?

by Jerry Munk

Jesus Christ the Word of Life

a painting by Michael O'Brien

based the figure on the oldest known icon of Christ,

a sixth century "Christ Pantocrator" in St. Catherine's monastery, Sinai

In the New Testament Church we see many overt manifestations of the Holy Spirit: speaking in unlearned languages (languages known and unknown to mankind), prophetic utterance, supernatural healings, visions and dreams, working of miracles, and several others. This is not generally our experience today. In fact, the very gifts which once served as the catalyst for establishing and extending the Church of Jesus Christ, would today be rejected in all but a very few Orthodox parishes. Why?

An Innovation?

I suspect the majority of Orthodox Christians have not given much thought to the place of spiritual gifts in the life of the church. We tend to be a traditional lot and pretty much accept the idea that the way we do things now is the way they have always been done. Since little place is given to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is easy to assume that this has always been the case, and therefore the charismata (spiritual gifts) must be some Protestant innovation. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Indeed, the record of the early church tells us that charismatic ministry was the norm for the first several hundred years. It worked hand in hand with and often overlapped the hierarchical ministries of the church (see *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* by Ronald A. Kydd, Hendricks Publishing Co.). Rather than being a recent innovation, there is a great deal of evidence that the charismatic renewal we see today is, in fact, a restoration of early church, and therefore Orthodox, practice.

Cessation Theology

On the other hand, there are a number of Orthodox Christians (Protestant and Catholic as well) whose opposition to

charismatic manifestations goes much deeper. They hold a developed theology that says the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased, or were severely curtailed, with the close of the Apostolic Age.

Several New Testament passages, at first reading, seem to support this idea of cessation. Also, until the Pentecostal awakening in the early 1900s, spiritual gifts seemed almost extinct, and this argues in favor of cessation. But, as we examine the evidence closely, and bring to the discussion some additional information, a strong argument emerges that it was and always has been God's intent for his children to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit which so typified the New Testament believers.

Orthodox Position

Before we pursue this discussion, however, it would be good to address a point of major concern for Orthodox Christians. That is the question: "what is the position of the Orthodox Church in all of this?"

This question, although it is an important one, has never been addressed by anything close to an Ecumenical Council of Bishops. As a result, people hold a variety of understandings on this issue, but no one can claim to have the Orthodox position.

There are some writings by respected authors that lean one way, but just as many writings by authors equally respected that lean the other. A few bishops have condemned the Charismatic Renewal, several have endorsed it, but most have been silent.

Three Passages

There are three main passages used to support the cessation theory, one from Scripture, and two from Church Fathers: Augustine and Chrysostom.

"...For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away" (1 Corinthians 13: 8-10).

"The sign [speaking in tongues] was given and then passed away. We no longer expect that those on whom the hand is laid...will speak in tongues" (St. Augustine).

"This whole passage [ref. to 1 Corinthians 12: 1-2] is very obscure, for they [the spiritual gifts] used to occur regularly but not anymore..." (St. John Chrysostom).

Primary weight should, of course, be given to the passage from Holy Scripture. We will examine the first text cited above.

1 Corinthians 13: 8-10

There are three main points in the 1 Corinthians passage; (1) Spiritual gifts are partial; (2) something perfect is coming; (3) the partial will cease.

The first point, that our spiritual gifts are partial or imperfect, is quite clear and direct. This fact can be seen in the record of the New Testament church (in the Corinthian believers), in the early church (the Montanists), and even in our own day among many charismatics. There is little question about its meaning and is accepted at faced value.

The second point, however, generates a question for the reader which is not directly answered in this passage or in the surrounding material. Just what is this perfect thing?

How you answer this question will determine how you interpret the passage. Because there is no general agreement on the answer, there is also a lack of agreement about what the passage means. In fact, this one passage is used both to argue that the gifts have ceased and that they have continued.

In my reading I have encountered four different explanations of what this perfect thing might be: the establishment of the church, the New Testament revelation, an eschatological reference indicating the return of Jesus Christ or the close of the age, and personal maturity in a Christian.

Several Understandings

Some say that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to the Apostles for the work of establishing the church (although the Bible records several non-apostles as ministering in the gifts of the Holy Spirit). These people argue that as the Apostles died, the gifts died with them. Others cite the acceptance of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine as the watershed bringing to a close the time of charismatic gifts.

Others, however, would say that spiritual gifts, especially word gifts, ceased when the written Word of God was completed, but even here people point to two different dates: the Revelation received by John near the close of the first century AD, or the establishment of the New Testament canon several hundred years later.

Still others hold that Paul was referring in this passage to the second coming of Jesus Christ. In this case, the perfect thing would represent the realized kingdom of God. The surrounding verses support this interpretation: “What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we see shall see face to face” (1 Corinthians 13: 12). Proponents of this view argue that spiritual gifts will not be needed in heaven since we will then know Jesus face to face, but until then they continue.

St. John Chrysostom, on the other hand, sees this passage as a teaching on spiritual maturity (the word translated “perfect” can also be translated “mature”). There is support for this interpretation in surrounding passages. The following verse, for example, says, “When I was a child, my speech, feeling and thinking were those of a child; now that I am a man, I have no more use for childish ways.”

Before we leave this passage, we must also examine the third point: that something partial or imperfect will cease. Even here, there are two possible options; the spiritual gifts themselves will cease, or the imperfection of the spiritual gifts will cease, i.e. an individual’s gifts will be made pure. Either understanding could be acceptable depending on how one understands the preceding point.

Clarity Needed

What have we determined by this discussion of the First Corinthians passage? Essentially this, that the passage is not clear. It could mean that the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased many years ago, that they will be perfected as we mature, or they will continue until Jesus comes again.

If we look to the rest of Scripture to clear up the confusion, we find that no other passage says that spiritual gifts should cease or will cease. We have several different lists of spiritual gifts, pages of instruction about their place and use, even a lengthy correction for misuse of God’s gifts, but nowhere else is there any indication that such gifts will cease. If Paul, or any of the other writers of the New Testament, had understood that spiritual gifts would come to an end, they never came out and said so. Rather, one gets an impression that they felt charismata constituted an important aspect of Christianity, one that would be essential to the body of Christ into the foreseeable future. Surely, if Paul intended to communicate cessation, he would have done so much more clearly.

The Fathers

Let us now turn to the quotations of Sts. Chrysostom and Augustine. Here I would make only one observation; while both comment that spiritual gifts are not a common or expected phenomenon, they do not develop a theology which excludes them. In fact, John Chrysostom acknowledges that the situation is confusing, and in his commentary on Romans longs for the days past when “the Spirit controlled all things.”

Actually, all that we can safely determine from these quotations is that spiritual gifts were not common during the time or in the vicinity of the authors.

Ongoing Gifts

Of course, one of the greatest arguments against cessation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the fact that the gifts did not cease. To be sure, spiritual gifts became the exception rather than the norm, but even so, from time to time, throughout the history of the church up to this present day, the Holy Spirit has worked powerfully giving his gifts for the edification of the church.

Justin Martyr, writing in the middle of the second century, testifies “we see among us today men and women who possess the gifts of the Spirit of God.” St. Gregory of Nyssa, who lived in the fourth century, also speaks of contemporaries who possess the gifts of the Holy Spirit: “I know the deeds of our fellow men who walk in the Spirit and give evidences of the power of healing...and have great power against the demons.” As late as the fourteenth century, Nicholas Kabasilas speaks of charismatic ministries, “Even in our day...some possess such charismata and they have predicted the future, expelled demons, and healed diseases with prayer alone.”

Expectant Seeking

Indeed, if the gifts of the Holy Spirit passed away with the Apostles, to what are these saints testifying?

In fact the faithful have exercised the gifts of the Holy Spirit in every age. At times there have been many charismatics and at other times few, but the simple fact of their presence and their acceptance by respected fathers of the church stands as evidence that such gifting should be expected, sought and approved of in our day.

Life and Virtue

In his commentary on First Corinthians, John Chrysostom teaches, “the present church is like a women who has fallen from her former prosperous days and in many respects retains only the symbols of that ancient prosperity... and I say this not in respect of the gifts, for it would not be notable if it were this only, but also in respect to life and virtue.”

In times past, the faithful had great expectation of what the Holy Spirit would do when he entered a consecrated believer. Healing, prophecies, the expulsion of demons, and spiritual prayer, if not the norm, was a very present possibility. At the very least, a life changed to glorify Jesus Christ was expected.

Today, we are less comfortable with supernatural manifestations. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, so many think, belong to another time, to the saints, to the monasteries – a nice safe distance from any impact on *my* life.

Is the Church Richer because of this Rejection?

Does it present a more powerful witness to the reality of Jesus Christ? The real issue, as John Chrysostom points out, is not whether the gifts of the Spirit are exercised, but rather, is the Holy Spirit free to work in and through the lives of the faithful as he wills. Perhaps, by closing ourselves to the gifts of the Spirit, we have also limited his work of producing the fruit of life and virtue.



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Preparing Children for a Spirit-filled Life

by Jerry Munk

“You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you. It is also for your children” (Acts 2:38&39 ICB).

Grace for Spirit-filled family life

The whole of the Christian life can be summed up in one word: grace. Grace is God’s undeserved gifts, which He pours into our life each and every day. Through God’s grace I came to know Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. Through His grace I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Through His grace I was introduced to the [Work of Christ Community](#), where I received the teaching, fellowship, and tangible support needed to sustain my Christian life through the years. And, through His grace I met and married a wonderful Christian woman: my wife Jan.

The Lord has continued to pour His grace into our family. When our children were quite young, many parents in our community came to the conclusion that our children should share fully in our life together — including the charismatic aspect of that life. We began praying for them to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and they were. About this time, the community developed a special prayer meeting so the children could experience charismatic worship with their peers. We also made room for the children to exercise their charismatic gifts in the adult gatherings. In addition, the Work of Christ began a summer children’s camp. The week contained all of the things you would expect: games, crafts, boats, swimming, and, of course, camp food. It also featured a lot of activities aimed at spiritual development. But, the most important event at camp was the “Gathering for Christ” where we would pray for the children to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. At camp, the children would be prayed with year after year: not because what happened the previous year did not “stick” but because the children had matured and were ready for more.

Daily life in the Spirit

The charismatic life is not just about summer camp and prayer meetings; it is mostly about day-to-day life. Families in our community were encouraged to have family prayer — including charismatic prayer — on a regular basis.

This, too, was a gift of God's grace.

Somewhere in all of this, it seemed right to take our own children, one by one, through the Life in the Spirit Seminar. We wanted to be personally involved in our children's spiritual life and to share with them this material that had been so pivotal in our own lives. For several weeks in a row, Jan and I would sit down with one of our children and work through the outlines with them — making the content understandable at a child's level. (I have a strong opinion that it is especially helpful for Dad to be the visible leader in all of this, but I will spare you that lecture.) When it was time for the prayer session, we invited another family for the Lord's Day meal and afterwards prayed with the child to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

What a blessing it has been to see our children grow up living a Spirit-filled Christian life. They were blessed with regular opportunities to exercise their spiritual gifts at both children and adult gatherings. They first attended and then served at summer camp. They participated in regional youth retreats and conferences. They went on mission trips, joined [University Christian Outreach](#), and lived in Christian household. As young adults, they, and many of their peers in the community, have a maturity in the Holy Spirit that comes from many years of living in the Holy Spirit.

[Jerry Munk is a member of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Lansing, Michigan and a coordinator of the [Work of Christ Community](#) in Lansing, Michigan, USA. His wife Jan serves as a senior woman leader in the Work of Christ. Their three grown children, Ruthie, James, and Christina, are actively involved in [The Sword of the Spirit](#) and its outreaches.

This article is excerpted from Jerry Munk's book, *Life in the Spirit Seminar for Children* and is available from [Tabor House](#).]

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Sweet Manna from the Son's Heart

Verse by Edith Stein

Who are you, sweet light, that fills me
And illumines the darkness of my heart?
You lead me like a mother's hand,
And should you let go of me,
I would not know how to take another step.
You are the space
That embraces my being and buries it in yourself.
Away from you it sinks into the abyss
Of nothingness, from which you raised it to the light.
You, nearer to me than I to myself
And more interior than my most interior
And still impalpable and intangible
And beyond any name:
Holy Spirit eternal love!

Are you not the sweet manna
That from the Son's heart
Overflows into my heart,
The food of angels and the blessed?
He who raised himself from death to life,
He has also awakened me to new life

From the sleep of death.
And he gives me new life from day to day,
And at some time his fullness is to stream through me,
Life of your life indeed, you yourself:
Holy Spirit eternal life!

Are you the ray
That flashes down from the eternal Judge's throne
And breaks into the night of the soul
That had never known itself?
Mercifully relentlessly
It penetrates hidden folds.
Alarmed at seeing itself,
The self makes space for holy fear,
The beginning of that wisdom
That comes from on high
And anchors us firmly in the heights,
Your action,
That creates us anew:
Holy Spirit ray that penetrates everything!

Are you the spirit's fullness and the power
By which the Lamb releases the seal
Of God's eternal decree?
Driven by you
The messengers of judgment ride through the world
And separate with a sharp sword
The kingdom of light from the kingdom of night.
Then heaven becomes new and new the earth,
And all finds its proper place
Through your breath:
Holy Spirit victorious power!

Are you the master who builds the eternal cathedral,
Which towers from the earth through the heavens?
Animated by you, the columns are raised high
And stand immovably firm.
Marked with the eternal name of God,
They stretch up to the light,
Bearing the dome,
Which crowns the holy cathedral,
Your work that encircles the world:
Holy Spirit God's molding hand!

Are you the one who created the unclouded mirror
Next to the Almighty's throne,
Like a crystal sea,
In which Divinity lovingly looks at itself?

You bend over the fairest work of your creation,
And radiantly your own gaze
Is illumined in return.
And of all creatures the pure beauty
Is joined in one in the dear form
Of the Virgin, your immaculate bride:
Holy Spirit Creator of all!

Are you the sweet song of love
And of holy awe
That eternally resounds around the triune throne,
That weds in itself the clear chimes of each and every being?
The harmony,
That joins together the members to the Head,
In which each one
Finds the mysterious meaning of his being blessed
And joyously surges forth,
Freely dissolved in your surging:
Holy Spirit eternal jubilation!

[poem from *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, © 1992 ICS Publications. Used with permission.]

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Godly Hobbits

On the Pentecostalism of Tolkien's Inspired Heroes

by Lance Nixon

An odd thing happens to Samwise Gamgee on the journey toward Mordor. Defending his wounded master, Frodo, from the attack of the giant spider Shelob, Sam is all but certain that he is going to die. Then a thought comes to him “as if some remote voice had spoken,” and Sam takes up the Phial of Galadriel, the gift of the elf queen, and speaks her name out loud. J. R. R. Tolkien goes on to say in *The Two Towers*:

And then his tongue was loosed and his voice cried in a language which he did not know:
“A Elbereth Gilthoniel
o menel palan-diriel,
le nallon sí di’nguruthos!
A tiro nin, Fanuilos!”

At that point, Sam finds the resolve he so desperately needs. It’s the second such incident that Tolkien puts into *The Two Towers*. Only a few pages earlier, Frodo also cries out in what is for him an unknown tongue at the moment when he also needs courage to face Shelob. As Tolkien tells it: “‘*Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!*’ he cried, and knew not what he had spoken; for it seemed that another voice spoke through his, clear, untroubled by the foul air of the pit.”

Here Frodo Baggins, a rather well-to-do hobbit, and Sam Gamgee, a simple gardener, have both experienced in Middle-earth something like the Pentecostal/charismatic spirituality that is familiar to perhaps a quarter of the world’s Christians. To put it another way: During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the number of

Pentecostals in the world stood at somewhere between 400 million and 525 million people—and two hobbits. And odd as it may seem, a close reading of Tolkien can reveal something about this kind of Christianity.

The Mystical Torch

Pentecostalism emphasizes the New Testament charisms that the Apostle Paul believed the Holy Spirit distributed to build up the body of Christ, including speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, gifts of faith, healing, and miracles.

Defying attempts to define it doctrinally, Pentecostalism is a movement primarily concerned with the experience of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts within a vast range of Christian denominations and doctrinal persuasions. Although it might not be readily apparent, it is also concerned with a theological and philosophical issue: Who hears from God? Who speaks for God? How does this take place? And what language, as we know it, could possibly contain God, who is revealed as *the Word*, yet who remains in some way utterly Other?

Harvey Cox places Pentecostals within an old tradition of writers and mystics who understand the inadequacy of language. Cox cites Susan Sontag's observation in an essay some decades ago about "something like a perennial discontent with language" in major civilizations both East and West, and her assessment that "the antecedents of art's dilemmas and strategies are to be found in the radical wing of the mystical tradition." Sontag blasts her religious contemporaries for being too timid to take up this fight, suggesting that in our day, it is artists, not religious mystics, who carry on this grappling with language. But Cox points out that Sontag has overlooked Pentecostals:

[I]t is not surprising that she did not think of tongue speaking as a possible exception. Pentecostalism was not as widespread or visible when she wrote the essay in 1967, and in any case, because of the social crevasse that separates them, few high-culture writers ever come in contact with Pentecostals. But the case could be made that it is precisely this ragtag religion from across the tracks that is now bearing the mystical torch with the most vigor and carrying on the insights of the very same mystics Sontag discusses.

Let God Speak

The episodes of tongue-speaking hobbits in Middle-earth correlate with Pentecostal experiences. Frodo and Sam Gamgee find the courage and strength they need to confront evil after speaking in Elvish, a tongue they've never learned. In a similar way, Pentecostals and charismatics feel they are *strengthened* by praying in tongues.

This is not merely Pentecostal experience dictating theology. Rather, Pentecostals cite Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 14:2–4: "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. . . . He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself." Pentecostals also read Jude's advice to be "building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost," as an exhortation to pray in tongues. From tongues comes spiritual strength.

Tolkien scholar Ralph Wood notes that Frodo and Sam seem especially devoted to the angelic, mercy-bearing figure of Elbereth, also known to the elves as Gilthoniel. "This queen of the valar seems to be praying through *them* as much as they are praying to *her*," Wood writes. "To use the language of the New Testament, it is as if

—the Hobbits being unable to pray as they ought—the Spirit were interceding for them.” Indeed, as Tolkien himself says of Frodo, “it seemed that another voice spoke through his.”

Yet Tolkien writes that Frodo also “knew not what he had spoken,” which means more than mere ignorance of the language. University of Pennsylvania researchers reported in late 2006 that, in a fashion similar to what the hobbits experience, praying with glossolalia is a different kind of activity than speaking with conventional language. Brain scans of five Pentecostal women in the act of speaking in tongues showed that their frontal lobes, or that part of the brain through which people control what they do, were relatively quiet, and so were the language centers. Yet the regions involved in maintaining self-consciousness were active—that is, the women were not in trances, but they were not processing language in the same way as usual.

Frodo is not in a trance, either; yet it is as though someone else, not he, is speaking through him to confront the evil that he faces—similar to what the Pennsylvania researchers describe as “perceived loss of intentional control” in glossolalia.

Dr. Andrew B. Newberg, leader of the study team that did the research, was quoted in the *New York Times* (November 7, 2006) as noting that brain images supported the study participants’ interpretation of what was happening: “The way they describe it, and what they believe, is that God is talking through them.”

Crisis & Worship

Sam and Frodo are in dire circumstances when their tongue-talking episodes occur. However this happened to fit Tolkien’s story line, it also fits with what sociologists have found about glossolalia. The scholars H. Newton Malony and A. Adams Lovekin cite a number of studies from the 1960s and 1970s in which there is broad agreement that those who experience glossolalia are often in crisis at the time the experience first occurs. Just as with Frodo and Sam, it is at those times that the inability of language to manage the complexity of life is fully revealed and the believer finds he must reach outside of language.

Perhaps there is a similar crisis of communication that goes on routinely when believers approach the ineffable God to offer praise and worship. In his 1994 book *Word and Spirit at Play: Towards a Charismatic Theology*, the Dutch theologian Jean-Jacques Suurmond alludes to the nineteenth-century enthusiast Edward Irving’s overlooked observation that the gift of tongues is an implicit criticism of any language that tries to “capture” God.

Here might be an explanation for some Pentecostal practices such as dancing and lying face down, and such expressions as lifting, waving, and clapping of hands. The believer may simply be grappling with the inadequacy of language to convey all he wants to say to God. A Pentecostal who jumps or dances or lifts his hands to God or falls face down is using his body in the same way that he uses glossolalia—as an instrument to play notes that do not exist on the verbal keyboard that he’s been given.

In a letter in October 1958, Tolkien notes that “Sam’s invocation” is in the style and meter of an Elvish hymn fragment the epic includes earlier, although Sam’s speech is “composed or inspired for his particular situation” and, in the crisis of the moment, the meter and style of what he is saying are probably the very least of his concerns.

Sam’s unawareness of using an ancient meter is also an echo of Pentecostal practice. For though Pentecostals are blissfully unaware of having liturgies, the dean of Pentecostal studies, W. J. Hollenweger, finds that they

do. Pentecostals are simply unaware that their “services” often follow a historical pattern of Invocation, Kyrie, Confession, Gloria, Eucharistic Canon, and Benediction. God might be aware of it, but Pentecostals are not, when they meet to appeal for aid and offer worship.

Lesser Vessels

In Tolkien’s epic, glossolalia is a phenomenon that befalls hobbits—not mighty leaders of men such as Boromir and Aragorn, nor even the learned and powerful wizard, Gandalf—but *hobbits*. They are “halflings,” who at first glance do not seem likely to make a great difference in Middle-earth.

In socio-economic terms, hobbits have their counterparts in the make-up of early twentieth-century Pentecostals. Suurmond might as easily have been speaking of hobbits when he described those who became part of the Pentecostal revival that spread outward from the Azusa Street meetings in 1906 in Los Angeles:

It was above all the “little folk” of this kind, in Scripture called the *anawim*, who seem to have been receptive to this movement of the Spirit. They belonged to the oppressed and those without possessions. They included many descendants of slaves, illiterate women and workers without a voice in society. In the revival they heard that at the heart of the universe there was a God who was concerned for them, concerned for the “little folk.” Often the playthings of impenetrable power structures, not noticed by anyone, here they encountered a God who “saw” them.

What would Tolkien have thought of the suggestion of historian Philip Jenkins that the most successful social movement of the twentieth century was not one of those headline-making movements like National Socialism or Communism, but Pentecostal Christianity with its wrong-side-of-the-tracks beginnings?

If Jenkins is right, then twentieth-century history corroborates the thought Tolkien expresses in an undated letter from about 1951. He remarks on “the motive (to become dominant in Hobbits) that the great policies of world history, ‘the wheels of the world’, are often turned not by the Lords and Governors, even gods, but by the seemingly unknown and weak.” This is reminiscent of the Virgin Mary acclaiming, “He hath exalted those of low degree” (Luke 1:52), as she reflects on becoming the bearer of God the Word.

While the Elvish prayers give Sam and Frodo strength, the weapon that helps Sam survive and triumph is a gift, the Phial of Galadriel. Galadriel is, of course, female, but one of the most powerful figures in Tolkien’s epic.

Pentecostalism, similarly, recognizes and makes good use of women’s gifts. Harvey Cox is probably correct when he says that Pentecostalism is “unthinkable” without women. Starting with figures such as Lucy Farrow, a black woman who was in at the ground floor of the Azusa Street revival in 1906, and Aimee Semple McPherson, the outrageous and colorful founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, women have had a powerful prophetic voice in Pentecostalism.

In Tolkienesque terms, Pentecostalism sees in every woman an elf queen. As a Roman Catholic, Tolkien might have been sympathetic to the idea that in the prophetic activities at the heart of Pentecostalism, there are echoes of Mary’s piety. For what is the prophetic element that is so powerful in the Bible, if not the ability to conceive and give birth to the words God would say? Sam and Frodo would understand. •

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