

The Powerful DELUSION

Douglas Jacoby

DEMCO

The Powerful Delusion

How to Study with Charismatics

Second Edition

by

Douglas Jacoby

Property of

published by

London Church of Christ
56-A Heathfield Road
London, England W3 8EJ

© 1987 by
Central London Church of Christ
London, England

Revised Edition © 1988

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced for resale in any form, including photocopy or film, without permission in writing from the author and publisher.

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the *The Holy Bible, New International Version*, © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society.



Dedication

To my father, Charles Jacoby, who brought me into this world, loved me enough to discipline me, provided—and still provides—a constant example of unflagging work, gave me an excellent education, and in all things has allowed me the freedom to pursue worthwhile goals in my life. May my son have as good a father as I have had!

Dad, you are very special to me, and I realise that, if not for your firmness, logical mind, and constant love, I would never be able to become all that God has in mind for me. It is to you, my father and friend, that this book is dedicated.

Special Thanks

To Bobby "Chico" Garcia for the artwork. For information about his art services contact Bobby "Chico" Garcia, at 2137 Ernest Street, Jacksonville, Florida 32204-3207. Cover design: Bob Conroy and Boston Church of Christ Printing Ministry.

To Alex Mnatzaganian and all the other proof-readers for their help on the manuscripts.

To Toney Mulhollan and the Boston Church of Christ Printing Ministry, for their tireless labour through all the typesetting, revisions, and printing.

Acknowledgments

For the privilege of writing this book I am deeply appreciative, first of all, of Gary Knutson for his patience in studying the Bible with me and showing me Jesus in the autumn of 1977. Next, I owe a great deal to Steve Pipkin for answering my many questions as a young Christian fresh out of the Charismatic Movement, and for teaching me to think for myself. I acquired the desire to teach the subject only after hearing a series of six lessons on the Holy Spirit by Dr Al Bergeron (Raleigh, North Carolina), who did more to stimulate my private research than anyone else. And finally, I owe everything else to Douglas Arthur and James Lloyd: Many times they allowed me to teach on the topic in the Central London congregation, thus crystallising my basic views and organising my teaching materials which you, the brotherhood of the churches of Christ, have so warmly received.

Table of Contents

Preface 8

Introduction 10

Chapter One
The Spirit is Thrilling, but the Church is Weak
Why people turn to the charismatic movement 15

Chapter Two
Experience, Feelings and the Irrational
The charismatic mind-set 21

Chapter Three
Nothing New Under the Sun
Miracles outside Christianity 41

Chapter Four
The Holy Spirit Primer
Crucial insights from the Old Testament 59

Chapter Five
Clearing up the Confusion
Internal/external reception of Spirit: Acts 8 & 10 73

Chapter Six
A Warm, Fuzzy Feeling
"Holy Spirit Baptism"? 81

Chapter Seven
Beyond a Shadow of a Doubt
Confirmation of the message 105

Chapter Eight
Tongues of Men and Angels
Basic questions about tonguespeaking 113

Chapter Nine

Going for the Jugular
Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14 129

Chapter Ten

The Hands of an Apostle
How miraculous gifts were transmitted 157

Chapter Eleven

The Ebb Tide
Passing away of miraculous gifts 167

Chapter Twelve

No Sign will be Given
Jesus: playing down the miraculous 173

Chapter Thirteen

Enough about What He *Doesn't* Do!
The work of the Spirit and gifts today 185

Chapter Fourteen

The Wrong Side of the Boat
How to study with charismatics 199

Appendix A

Difficult Questions on the Holy Spirit 219

Appendix B

Comprehensive Study on the Holy Spirit 243

Appendix C

Catalogue of Charismatic Churches 253

Appendix D

Teaching The Powerful Delusion as a course series 255

Appendix E

Glossary 257

Postscript 273

Bibliography 275

WHY THIS BOOK NEEDS TO BE WRITTEN

Many excellent books have been written on the subject of the Holy Spirit, quite a few of them from within the brotherhood. I owe much to the many gospel preachers whose thoughts—insights, convictions and opinions—have stimulated me to further research. Yet despite all that has been said and all that has been published, I do not recall ever seeing a book written to teach disciples how to study the Bible with charismatics.

Most books are written from a defensive—at times, unfortunately, polemical—posture. They are intended to strengthen Christians, to protect them from the threat of the Charismatic Movement, which annually siphons off thousands of members from our congregations. Certainly we need literature to teach our people, and there is a dearth of men and women willing to shoulder the responsibility for teaching the rising generation of disciples. But let everything be done—and said—in love.

Like my predecessors, I would hope that this book will prove useful for strengthening the saints: firstly, because many, whether from a charismatic background or not, have questions and nagging doubts about the Holy Spirit; secondly, because there is an irrational strain present in the brotherhood which seeks a more sensational expression of religion; and thirdly, because if we are not clear on where the borders of the kingdom lie, we will remain unclear about the scope of the Great Commission.

These are worthy purposes, but this is not why I have written the book. I have written the book because there are many sincere charismatics in the world; they need Christ, but first they need answers.

I was one such person. I am personally indebted to the charismatic prayer group of which I was a member for two years before my baptism into Christ. They were the first people I had ever met who appeared to take their faith seriously. Their emphasis on *surrender* to the Spirit of God was somewhat frightening, but a lesson we would do well to learn all the same. It was through my involvement with the charismatics that I came to grips with the basics of the Christian faith: the existence of God, the truth of the Bible, the reality of heaven and hell, the necessity of rebirth, the lostness of traditional Christianity, etc. True, after my conversion and challenge to the group to be committed to Christ, I realised, on the basis of their lukewarm response, that virtually no one in the group had scripturally repented, but that in no way minimises the debt I owe.

The Powerful Delusion has been written with this aim in mind: to offer clear, practical guidance on how to convert the charismatic.

Douglas Jacoby
London, England
August 1987

How To Get The Most Out Of This Book!

This book is designed to help Christians of all ages to understand the Charismatic Movement and to bring charismatics to Christ effectively. To get the most out of the book it is helpful to understand its structure, so read the Introduction first.

- Chapters 1 and 2 are written to show us how charismatics *think*: both their reasons for joining the movement as well as the basic mind-set they hold as charismatics. This will be especially helpful for those not acquainted with the Charismatic Movement, although others will appreciate them, too. Chapter 2 contains a Bible study on *Feelings* which we can use with our charismatic friends.

- Chapters 3 and 4 illuminate the pagan and Old Testament *background* of charismatic phenomena generally. Chapter 3 will contain some surprises for many readers, while Chapter 4 lays the OT (Old Testament) foundation for studies on the Spirit in the NT (New Testament).

- Chapters 5 to 10 take up various issues in the NT, such as the purpose of miracles, Holy Spirit Baptism, the passing away of the miraculous gifts, and difficult parts of Acts. (Some readers may think Chapters 6 and 9 rather technical, and may prefer to return to them after completing the book.)

- Chapter 11 summarises five arguments for the cessation of the miraculous gifts.

- Chapter 12 reveals Jesus' perspective on the sign-seeking mentality of pentecostalism.

- Chapter 13 explains how the Spirit works in our lives today.

- Chapter 14 offers practical advice on studying with charismatics, and integrates the various themes of the book. (Do not skip to Chapter 14 before reading the rest of the book!)

- Appendix A covers nearly forty of the most common questions charismatics ask that are not covered in the body of the book. You may wish to refer to it only as specific questions arise, or read it straight through as you would any other chapter in the book.

- Appendix B is a comprehensive analysis of the Holy Spirit which covers the fundamental issues in one study. Bible study leaders especially should aim to become versatile in handling this material.

- Appendix C is a listing of most of the major charismatic churches and fellowships.

- Appendix D is intended for teachers who would like to use the book and present *The Powerful Delusion* as a class series.

- Appendix E is a glossary of most of the terms used in the book. More than a hundred basic terms are explained in order to build our vocuabulary and sharpen our argumentation skills.

- The bibliography contains many works referred to in the book, as well as a number of advanced studies.

Finally, do not get bogged down in any one part of the book; keep reading and come back to it later.

It is my prayer that **The Powerful Delusion** will be a blessing to you now and in the years to come.

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a ***powerful delusion*** *so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.*

(2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

1

The Spirit is Thrilling, but the Church is Weak

Why People Turn to the Charismatic Movement

Many people today are attracted by the charismatic movement. They see in it something that the traditional churches are not offering. Isn't it a fact that many, if not most, of those who have been lured by the thrill of the Charismatic Movement have gone in that direction not so much because of what it *is* offering as because of what their former church situation was *not* offering? They never would have left if their needs were being met in the local congregation.

On a larger scale, this accounts for the rise of the monastic movement [third century], a reaction against the lack of spirituality in the catholic church of that time. Men left the church and banded together in separate communities, often becoming mystics seeking fresh revelations from God and intimate experiences of fellowship with him. In fact, such reactions against worldliness have been chronicled countless times in the annals of the major religions of the world. So it is with those who, disillusioned with traditional Christianity, strike out to join the Charismatic Movement.

Do not misunderstand my position—I am not saying that our needs are better met when we compromise doctrine and throw objectivity to the winds. The Charismatic Movement is not offering people the truth of the gospel. 2 Peter 3:16 comes to mind:

> *...[Paul's] letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction.*

The general charismatic approach to the interpretation of the Bible involves assumptions and methods alien to the spirit of Christianity. Furthermore, exceedingly few charismatic groups practise or teach New Testament repentance and baptism.

No, it is not my position that the truth can be found within the Charismatic Movement, yet I do believe that, when we have considered the reasons men and women are attracted by the thrill of the "spiritual gifts," we will have at least some sympathy.

Dissatisfaction results from disillusionment with the general church situation, church members ("laity"), church leaders ("clergy"), and personal lack of growth. Consider some comments typical of people on the verge of joining the Charismatic Movement:

DISILLUSIONED WITH CHURCH SITUATION:

"God just doesn't seem real here—all these meaningless ceremonies..."

"How do they expect my kids to believe in Christianity when this is what it's like?"

"There's a lot of talk, but no power here—the church is dead."

"I get a lot more out of visiting the church across town."

DISILLUSIONED WITH CHURCH MEMBERS:

"People are so materialistic here. No one seems to really care about spiritual things..."

"Hardly anyone shares their faith, and whenever I ask people why not they tell me I'm being judgmental."

"The fellowship just isn't warm. Newcomers are usually ignored, and even I feel like an outsider—and I've been here for years!"

"People are so intolerant..."

DISILLUSIONED WITH CHURCH LEADERS:

"The preacher puts me to sleep."

"When the reverend preaches I can't figure out what he's trying to say!"

"He's more concerned with politics and current events than with God and the Bible. Jesus takes a back seat."

"I get the feeling the pastor doesn't really believe what he's saying."

"The hierarchy is so cumbersome, I wonder if there's any hope of real change..."

DISILLUSIONED WITH PERSONAL LACK OF GROWTH:

"I just don't seem to be growing; I'm at the same place spiritually I was at two years ago."

"I feel something is missing in my life, but whatever it is, I know I won't find it here."

"I suppose I should stay, but how can I help everyone else when no one's helping me?"

Much research has been conducted into the Charismatic Movement, or "neo-pentecostalism." Consider the following



"Is John receiving a vision—or is he simply sound asleep?"

survey, where participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they were dissatisfied with their spiritual lives before their "Spirit-baptism" (R. P. Spittle, *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, 143):

Spiritual Satisfaction before "Spirit Baptism"

Not at all	15.9%
A little	25.0%
Quite a bit	34.1%
Extremely so	22.7%
(No reply	2.3%)

In this particular survey, some 82% of those questioned indicated that they were spiritually unfulfilled, fundamentally unhappy with their religion before finding something new in the Charismatic Movement.

Taking into account the utter spiritual poverty of most churches (Amos 8:11-12), it is easy to see why people are drawn into the Charismatic Movement. And when we begin to empathise with those whose feelings correspond to the comments we read about above, we are well on our way towards making progress with our charismatic friends. All too often our approach is one of intimidation or aloofness, if not outright disdain.

Yes, we have something in common! The charismatics are protesting against the cold rationalism and formalism of the traditional church. They separate not so much because of theological differences as because of *frustration.* As Jimmy Jividen has observed, fellowship bonds between charismatics in different denominations are much stronger than their bonds with non-charismatic members of the same congregation (*Glossolalia*, 158).

Conclusion

As important as **sound doctrine** is, the best way to safeguard our congregations against false teaching—of any variety—is not teaching against what others believe. It is to have a **strong discipling ministry.**

I have been a member of congregations whose teaching was technically correct, but whose discipling was so weak that there was nothing to prevent members from leaving and joining a charismatic congregation. Again, the best way to protect our flock is to have a strong discipling ministry. As Paul admonished Timothy,

> *Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers (1 Tim 4:16).*

Probably more are lost to Satan through weak churches than through the influence of heresy. And when that is the situation, we can only expect that the allure of the "Spirit" in charismatic groups will thrill and woo the weaker disciples.

Indeed, the "Spirit" is thrilling when the church is weak!

2

Experience, Feelings and the Irrational

THE CHARISMATIC MIND-SET

Discerning the charismatic mind-set is essential if we are to relate effectively and confidently to charismatics. The whole charismatic concept of spirituality is confused. The basic fallacy is that spirituality is equated with *feeling* the divine, as opposed to *obeying* the divine. Rather than going through normal mental and logical channels in order to *understand* what God's word is saying and then to obey it, emphasis is placed on *tuning in* to the divine wavelength. In short, subjectivity rules.

In this chapter we will examine these three components of the charismatic mind-set: experience seeking, feelings orientation, and irrationality. Then we will offer some practical advice on how to deal with these important factors.

EXPERIENCE

For the charismatic, personal spirituality and even salvation are based on the experiences he has had. The more experiences he has had, or the more spectacular the experiences are, the more esteem he has: esteem within the group as well as self-esteem.

Take me, for instance. I've had several dramatic personal experiences. Once, in the woods, I carved a cross into a tree and then stabbed it with my knife—leading to an immediate thunderbolt, flash of lightning,

darkening of the sky, a downpour of rain and a howling wind. My heart was pounding, and as I walked away from the tree I looked back and saw a trail of light, created by the sunrays directly behind the tree, reflecting off the glistening leaves, wet from the thundershower. What an eerie feeling I had in my heart! I felt exhilarated, uplifted, as though God had revealed himself to me. Many would stake their entire salvation on such an experience.

It is edifying to exchange stories of experiences, or "testimonies." The more wonderful things have happened to you, the more evidence you have that you are saved! You may recall Paul's words about the superspiritual Colossian angel-worshippers, who, psychologically at least, operated on a similar basis:

> *Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost all connection with the Head . . . (Col 2:18-19).*

Those who were troubling the Colossians [technically, Judaising Gnostic ascetics, if you want to be theological about it!] *went into great detail about what they had seen.* They mistakenly assumed that the more experiences they had had, the more spiritual they were. But they had lost all connection with the Head (Christ); as for the depth of their spiritual insight, they were in theological outer space.

As with these people, many today seek experiences—not only for themselves, but for us as well. In their gospel, spiritual *experience* takes the place of spiritual *obedience.* The free-floating "Spirit" is exalted at the expense of the crucified Christ.

FEELINGS

Feelings are the means by which the charismatic makes decisions. He seeks God's will by looking into his own heart, for that is where he believes the Spirit speaks.

Therefore he must be alert to the prompting of God, correctly interpreting the various signs latent in events, words, scriptures, dreams, the weather, etc. If he does this, he is "led by the Spirit."

In his book *You Can be Led by the Spirit of God,* Kenneth Hagin, an extremely influential charismatic author-speaker, reveals some of the secrets of the trade. In the preface he shares his "open vision" of Jesus in an El Paso, Texas hotel room, followed by a thirty-minute conversation with the Lord himself. Jesus was 5 feet 11 inches tall and weighed 180 pounds—a real giant by the standards of first century Palestine, where archaeology has yet to unearth a skeleton taller than 5 feet 3 inches! He then introduces us to his basic premise: *God's Spirit leads us through our spirits* (p.15).

Hagin goes on to state that the primary means by which God leads his children is the "inward witness" (pp.31,98). *"If you renew your mind by the Word, whatever your spirit tells you to do will be right."* (There is actually some truth in this, since the more we walk in paths of obedience, the more obeying God will feel right. For example, evangelism may feel awkward at first, but in time it becomes easier and easier and eventually becomes an almost spontaneous action.) One of his chapters is even entitled "Listen to Your Heart"! [Reminiscent of the apocryphal Ecclesiasticus 37:13, where we are told, *"Stick to the advice your own heart gives you, no one could be truer to you than that."*] In his conclusion Hagin states:

> *If you will follow these points...after a while you can know the will of God the Father even in the minor details of life. You will receive guidance and will always instantly get either a yes or a no. You will know in your spirit what you should do (p.137).*

The normal charismatic position is erroneous for two basic reasons:

(1) It assumes that there is a will of God for *each minor detail* of our lives. That God works in all our lives, that *"in him we live and move and have our being"* (Acts 17:28), that he has *"predestined us to be conformed to the likeness of his Son"* (Rom 8:29), that his providence works even through our mistakes, and that he cares about our lives on a personal level, are not to be denied. But where is the proof that God has a "plan" for *every* detail of our lives? (Consider Ecc 9:11!) The scriptural evidence is slim indeed, and the passages that are normally enlisted to support the traditional view are ambiguous at best.

(2) The charismatic position assumes that we can usually trust our feelings, and thus allows complete confusion between God's will and our desires. One corollary of this approach is that, as long as you go by your feelings, you can never be wrong (after all, it was the "leading" of the Spirit that made you do what you did). Ultimate responsibility for your actions thus falls upon God; you are cleared of personal responsibility. One can see why this approach appeals to Calvinists (who believe in predestination, that the Holy Spirit operates apart from the word of God, etc). Not surprisingly, such a philosophy encourages a superstitious approach to life, as the question is always asked, "I wonder what *this* means?"

The Irrational

Reason, logic, even education are to be mistrusted, since they may lead you to wrong conclusions about spiritual reality or the interpretation of the Bible. Instead of logic, science, etc providing evidence of the wisdom, majesty, creativity, and rationality of God, they are opposed to his nature. Rationality is a challenge to the charismatic mind-set.

This anti-rational strain is apparent in most charismatic literature. I cite *The Fourth Dimension*, authored by Paul Cho, pastor of a 400,000 member Yoido Fellowship (Assemblies of God) church in Seoul, South Korea.

In the preface, Robert Schuller, a well known American evangelical, says simply:

> *Don't try to understand it. Just start to enjoy it!*

"Don't try to understand it"? Here is the crux of the problem. Cho is certainly a man of vision, but publishing such an introduction to his book will hardly make the thinking man more receptive to its message! There are some things that we probably need not weary ourselves trying to fathom (Psalm 131:1), but to win someone to your position you don't beg him to take what you say on blind faith.

Another example of this anti-intellectual trend is found in the words of Mel Tari, who advises his readers to "take out that small computer which is your brain and put it in a little box and shoot it to the moon. Then let God use your heart." Incredible! He then generalises:

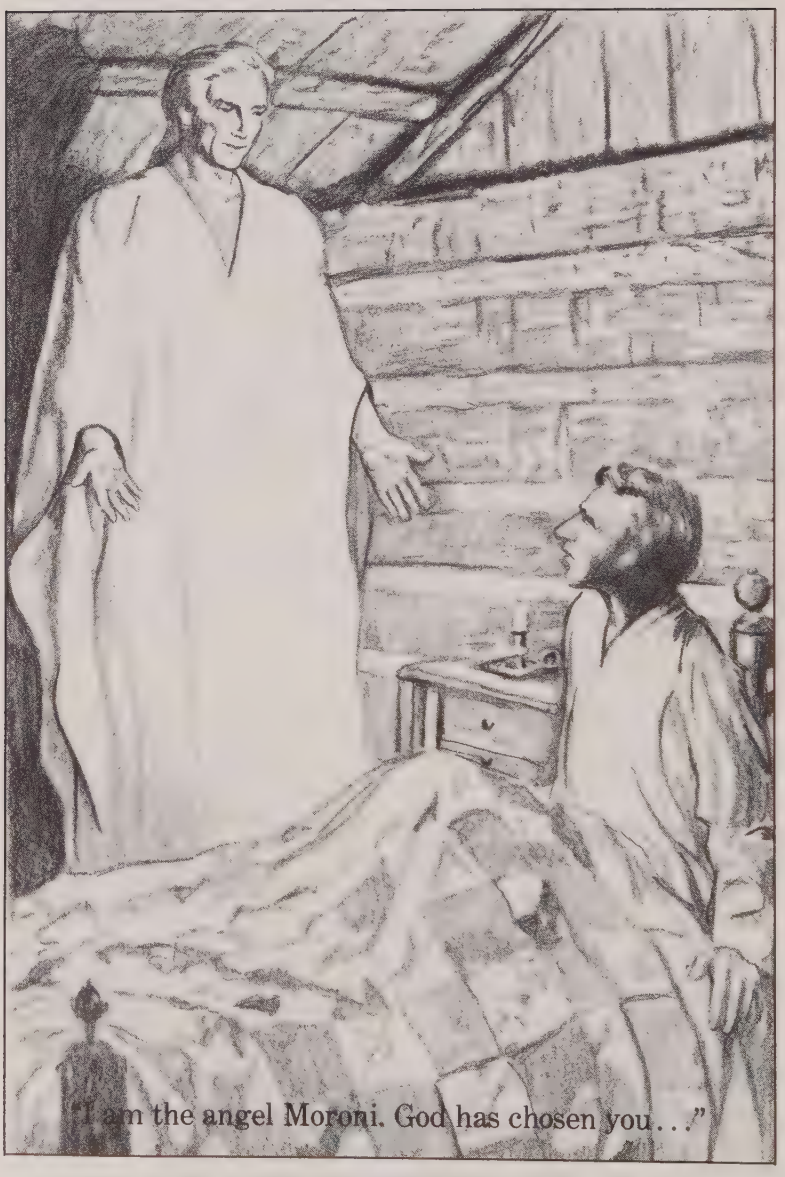
> *The main difference between science and Christianity is this: science we must experience to believe; Christianity we must believe to experience (A Mighty Wind, p.61).*

In other words, for Tari if one will just believe—and please don't ask any questions—everything will become clear. This is the opposite of the biblical approach to faith: we believe on the basis of evidence and testimony. (The gospel of John brings out the importance of this most clearly: 14:11, 5:31-40, etc.)

I recall being dumbfounded as I listened to a do-it-yourself cassette tape on how to learn to speak in tongues. The instructions:

> *Put your brain in neutral, put your tongue in high gear, and step on the gas!*

Brain in neutral? No thank you!



"I am the angel Moroni. God has chosen you . . ."

The standard charismatic approach to the interpretation of scripture is that *as you read the Bible the Holy Spirit reveals the meaning of the passage to you.* If your attitude is right, or you *"have the peace of God in your heart,"* then whatever you sense in your spirit will be trustworthy. This position hinges on a rather dubious interpretation of 1 Cor 2:14, as well as on John 16:13 and 14:26, which, though spoken specifically to the apostles, are wrested from their context and turned into a promise for all believers.

The fruit of such an approach: scriptures are taken out of context, since subjective methods of interpretation are preferred to objective ones. The pastor of a congregation in London had a dream about the "end-times," complete with rapture and tribulation, the conversion of all Israel, the beast from the sea, Armageddon and the Antichrist, political intrigue in the Politburo, etc. How did she know this vision was from God? Because the book of Revelation verifies it. And how did she know that that is what Revelation is talking about? Because God had shown it to her in her dream. Circular exegesis.

I remember one fellow who was visiting the church in Boston. When we tried to point out to him that homosexuality is a sin, he squirmed. Even when he finally agreed that the Bible says it is wrong, he still claimed "But the Spirit is telling me it's okay." Thus the Holy Spirit is put at odds with the Bible; the Spirit is in tension with the word. (Moreover, the *Spirit* does not agree with the *sword* of the Spirit. Does this make any sense to you? It didn't to us, either.) Needless to say, that man did not repent and make Jesus his Lord.

Few charismatics will go so far as to consciously demean the authority of the Bible, though in an unsuspecting moment some will inadvertently reveal such a tendency:

> *You have to realize that it [prophecy] isn't exactly God doing it. It is men doing it by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Anything that man has to do with is not perfect... (Hagin, p.108)*

Summary: The Charismatic Mind-Set

Well, there you have the charismatic mind-set. How are we to communicate effectively with the charismatic and bring him to a more logical and rational position?

Since the early days, the members of the Restoration Movement have been known for their skill with logic and the Bible. (Often members of denominations are warned not to talk with us: "They know their Bible too well." Amen!) Ours is not an emotional appeal, but an appeal to reason. We do not try to make up people's minds for them, but rather bring them through the steps so that any decision they make will be their own personal decision. (This is a significant difference between the Churches of Christ and most evangelical denominations.)

The truth that sets us free (John 8:32) is not an interpretive free-for-all, arrived at emotionally. The truth, though more than just a list of correct doctrines, is *objective* in nature: facts revealed by God, assented to by men, bringing us into the glorious freedom of the sons of God.

In order to bring a charismatic to a knowledge of the truth we must effect a fundamental change in the way he *thinks*. With that in mind, I now offer some advice on how to deal with trends in the three areas we have discussed.

Dealing With The Charismatic Mind-Set

Experience

Cardinal principle: **Never argue against experience.**

Someone tells you, "I was healed. They prayed for me, and my ulcers all went away!" How thoughtless, how insensitive it would be to say: "No, you were *not* healed! You still have those ulcers, and I think you are just

pretending the pain isn't there." Someone shares a bizarre dream she had the other night. You respond, "Oh, no you didn't! I think you're just making it up." How naive, how discourteous to disagree with someone's *experience.* You may disagree with a position, or find fault with an argument, but you cannot argue against an experience. (That is not to say that we may not suggest alternative explanations.)

Besides being rude, it is wrong to argue against an experience because that is what the person *has* experienced! To the best of his understanding, what he reported to you *is* exactly what he experienced. People sometimes exaggerate unwittingly—usually they are trying to be honest. Furthermore, his interpretation of his experience *may* be accurate! Maybe his illness *did* go away, maybe she *did* feel a warm, exhilarating glow on that walk through the woods. Arguing against experience is fruitless, because you cannot *prove* logically that a person did not experience what he says he experienced. Furthermore, such an approach leads to sidetracked discussions and many headaches. Brothers and sisters, *never argue against experience!*

Experiences may in fact be pointers to God's working in our lives. Many non-Christians have had religious experiences at some point in their lives; these cannot all be discounted. For instance, consider the promise *"Seek and you will find"* (Matt 7:7). If a non-Christian begins to seek God, prays for God's guidance, and God begins to work in that person's life in a special way in answer to his prayers, who are we to say that those strange coincidences, those answered prayers, those occasional glimpses of the light that made more and more sense are nothing more than the work of the devil, or merely psychological?

It is more effective to challenge charismatics on their lifestyles; discuss discipleship. In the summer of 1980 I had just graduated from college and was travelling in Scandinavia. I met a Finnish fellow who noticed my

Bible as I walked down the street and invited me to coffee. He said "I feel that the Lord has brought you into my life, Douglas." After we had finished our coffee and a long discussion, he bowed down and started speaking in tongues.

"Well," I said, "what is that supposed to prove?"

"I'm speaking in tongues!" he replied.

"I know," I said, "but there are lots of people who speak in tongues that aren't right with God. Tell me something: how often do you read your Bible? Every day?"

"No, I'm afraid not."

"Then every other day?"

"No."

"Once a week?"

"I try to make time to read, but—" I could see his lack of commitment.

"I think you are right. The Lord *did* lead me to you, and I have a message for you: Read your Bible! Stop basing your salvation on your feelings and read God's word every day!"

He needed that challenge, not an argument on the psychological explanation of tonguespeaking! We must learn to show people that we can have confidence in our salvation because of God's word (1 John 2:3-6, 5:13).

FEELINGS

Cardinal principle: **Point people to the word of God.**

Feelings may change, but the word of the Lord is a constant in the equation of life (1 Pet 1:25). Encourage people to read the Bible.

When I first arrived in London (1982) I met a friendly Australian chap who lived downstairs in the same building I lived in. He was quite religious and very soon

we began studying the Bible together. After a particularly challenging study from Rev 3:14-22, I asked him whether he thought he was right with God. When he smugly replied that he thought he was, I said, "How do you know?"

He said, "I just *know* I am saved."

"Okay, but how do you just know?" I countered.

"I know in my heart."

"But what about the things we just saw in God's word?"

"Now you're judging me! I don't want to talk about it any more."

When a charismatic stakes his eternity on his feelings, and when you point him to the word of God and he is still unwilling to give an inch, there is little you can do. Back up, try again. If he is still adamant, move on (Matt 10:14).

The following excerpt from *The Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan (1628-88) captures the spirit of the discussion perfectly. It is a dialogue between **Christian** (the main character) and **Ignorance** (the stubborn religious person). If you can wade through the Elizabethan English, I believe you will find it an enjoyable piece:

> **Chr**: Come, how do you? How stands it between God and your soul now?
> **Ign**: I hope well, for I am always full of good motions, that come into my mind to comfort me as I walk.
> **Chr**: What good motions? Pray tell us.
> **Ign**: Why, I think of God and heaven.
> **Chr**: So do the devils and damned souls.
> **Ign**: But I think of them, and desire them.
> **Chr**: So do many that are never like to come there; the soul of the sluggard desires, and hath nothing (Prov 13:4).
> **Ign**: But I think of them, and leave all for them.
> **Chr**: That I doubt, for leaving of all is a hard matter; yea, a harder matter than many are aware of. But

why, or by what, art thou persuaded that thou hast left all for God and heaven?
Ign: My *heart* tells me so.
Chr: The wise man says, "He that trusts his own heart is a fool" (Prov 28:26).
Ign: This is spoken of an evil heart; but mine is a good one.
Chr: But how dost thou prove that?
Ign: It comforts me in the hopes of heaven.
Chr: That may be through its deceitfulness; for a man's heart may minister comfort to him in the hopes of that thing for which he yet has no ground to hope.
Ign: But my heart and my life agree together; and therefore my hope is well grounded.
Chr: Who told thee that thy heart and life agree together?
Ign: My heart tells me so.
Chr: "Ask my fellow if I be a thief." Thy heart tells thee so! Except the Word of God beareth witness in this matter, other testimony is of no value.
Ign: But is it not a good heart that has good thoughts? And is not that a good life that is according to God's commandments?
Chr: Yes, that is a good heart that hath good thoughts; and that is a good life that is according to God's commandments: but it is one thing indeed to have these, and another thing only to think so.

(Taken from *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. Copyright 1933, 1961 by the Zondervan Publishing House. Used by permission.)

THE IRRATIONAL

Cardinal principle: **Teach people to be logical.**

To really help someone who has the charismatic mind-set, you must teach him to be **logical**. Help him with his interpretation of scripture. As you study the Bible

together, show him your reasoning as you interpret specific passages, and help him to see that care must be taken when examining a limited portion of scripture. (Do not be guilty of the very thing you are trying to help him to overcome!) When he takes something out of context, do not let it slide by—object! It is only by being firm that you will teach him the importance of considering passages *in their context.*

For example, he says he knows he's saved because he has a warm feeling in his heart and, besides, he's done what God said to do in Rev 3:20—he's asked Jesus to come into his life.

- Show him the context: the verse is written to Christians.

- Explain that for his theory of conversion to be right, he must find *another* scripture that says what he thinks this one says (i.e.,involves conversion of *non-Christians*).

- Explain that if he cannot find that other passage, he has no basis for his conviction.

- Walk him through the steps. Help him not to rush, but to read the Bible carefully, methodically, respectfully.

It was proposed in the previous section that it is generally unwise to *argue* against experiences, but having a logical discussion about the experience can be helpful in teaching people to think rationally. A few years ago my co-evangelist Douglas Arthur came across a woman at Boston University who claimed that she could do miracles. Douglas asked her if she had ever raised a dead person.

> "As a matter of fact, I have," she replied. (Douglas was stunned). "I arrived on the scene of a car crash, and there was this man lying dead on the pavement.

I laid my hands on him, said a prayer, and raised him from the dead."

"Are you certain that he wasn't still alive?" Douglas asked. "People involved in car crashes are knocked unconscious all the time."

"Well, he was definitely dead," she retorted.

"OK. I'm just asking how you could be sure he was dead."

"Oh, I could just sense it," she replied.

"You don't say!" Douglas said. "Do you think you could ever do it again?"

"Sure, if that was God's will."

"I suppose the Spirit would tell you if that's what he wanted to be done."

"That's right—the Spirit would tell me."

Of course, there are some times when you cannot win! But this is the sort of discussion we need to have when it is time to gently encourage charismatics to re-evaluate their claims. We must be logical, firm, and courteous.

Teaching someone *how to think* is not something you can expect to accomplish overnight. But you must make significant progress if you hope to lead to the Lord anyone with a charismatic mind-set. In addition, people who are converted out of such a background will need continued counselling after baptism. Keep working with them, showing them how you study the Bible, correcting them when the old ways of thinking resurface.

To teach people to be logical, you must:

- Listen carefully to what they are saying.
- Correct them when they argue illogically, being sure to walk them through the various steps in your line of reasoning.
- Point out to them when they are following their emotions.
- Be patient.
- Be logical yourself!

Early on in your Bible studies with a charismatic you will find useful a separate study that addresses the charismatic mind-set. The following study I have entitled *Feelings*, and there are many ways to present it. You will probably want to use most of the passages, however, because of their relevance for most charismatics.

As most of the passages speak for themselves, I provide a mimimum of explanation.

Feelings

Prov 3:5 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

Prov 14:12 *There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death.*

Prov 16:2 *All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord.*

Prov 28:26 *He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.*

Jer 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*

1 Sam 13:12 *...I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.*

Sauls acts foolishly (v. 13) because he follows his feeling in the situation.

1 Kgs 13:1ff The story of the young prophet and the old prophet. Particularly useful because it deals with the issue of ultimate authority. So does the following passage:

Gal 1:6-9

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel (which is really no gospel at all). Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

2 Cor 11:3-4

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

Because there are so many valuable points to be made from the following somewhat lengthy passage, I produce it in full:

Jer 23:16ff

16 This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord."

21 "I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have pro-

phesied. 22 But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds."

25 "I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a dream! I had a dream!' 26 How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? 27 They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their fathers forgot my name through Baal worship. 28 Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares the Lord. 29 "Is not my word like fire," declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

30 "Therefore," declares the Lord, "I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me." 31 "Yes," declares the Lord, "I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, 'The Lord declares.' 32 Indeed, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," declares the Lord. "They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least," declares the Lord.

35 "This is what each of you keeps on saying to his friend or relative: 'What is the Lord's answer?' or 'What has the Lord spoken?' 36 But you must not

mention 'the oracle of the Lord' again, because every man's own word becomes his oracle and so you distort the words of the living God, the Lord Almighty, our God."

Points to be made:

1. The false prophets claim to speak from God (v.16).

2. Their messages are of purely psychological origin, not from God (v.16).

3. They water down the word of God (v.22).

4. Their dreams (see Num 12:6) are delusions, merely psychological (vv.25-26), and lessen the commitment of the people by imparting false hope (v.27).

5. Although they fancy God to be speaking his word through them, he is not; their messages have absolutely nothing to do with the word of God (vv.28-29).

6. They borrow "messages" from one another; they exchange "oracles" (v.30).

7. They do not benefit the people (vv.31-32).

8. They do sincerely expect the Lord to speak to them (v.35).

9. They suffer terrible theological confusion as God's word and their word are completely confused (v.36).

10. The end result: they distort God's word (v.36).

Jude 19 These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."*

(Discipleship is more a matter of denying your feelings than following them. Deny feelings, follow Christ. Follow feelings, deny Christ.)

Matt 7:21-23 *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*

This study is a good prelude to the study of *The Word of God*, although in some cases it may be wise to study *The Word* first. The *Feelings* study presents material you will need to cover with almost all charismatics.

This concludes our exposition of the charismatic mind-set, and how to tackle it.

3

Nothing New Under the Sun

MIRACLES OUTSIDE CHRISTIANITY

If Solomon's astute observation (Ecc 1:9) applied in his day, how much more does it apply nearly three millennia later. The lesson of this chapter is that miracles are *nothing new under the sun*—and especially not new with the Charismatic Movement.

As we shall see, there have always been "miracles" outside New Testament Christianity: in the religions of the world through all generations, in the first century Mediterranean world, and in Christendom at large. In this chapter we will make a lightning survey of miracles the world over, and suggest some explanations for these phenomena.

MIRACLES IN WORLD RELIGIONS

As long as there has been religion, men have sought the miraculous. I very much value the opportunity I had to study the world's major religions as I completed my postgraduate work, for I learned that there are charismatics in every significant religion of the world. From Hinduism to Shinto, from the religions of the South Sea Islands to the cults affiliated to Christendom, the miraculous—especially healing, prophecy, tonguespeaking and interpretation—has captured the hearts of men and women from time immemorial.

Let us consider some examples from Indian, Oriental and Middle Eastern religions.



"If all of the great world religions claim miracle
how can we know what is true?"

Hinduism is the oldest continuously existing religion on the face of the earth, if we allow that Judaism, based on the Old Testament Law, begins at least a century later. Miracles have always interested the inhabitants of the subcontinent of India, and stories of the miraculous abound. Modern times prove no exception. Many gurus and spiritual masters hail from India (as those of us living in the West know), where people *expect* wonders to happen. One Indian charismatic sect, the followers of Sai Baba, claims some *fifty million* adherents, and incredible miracles—particularly healings—are reported to come as a result of the power emanating from that man.

In the early period of Chinese religion, we find shamans with remarkable powers. Like those who performed the native American rain dances, shamans were responsible for making rain. In addition, they healed disease and communicated with the gods and with the departed spirits of ancestors. (To this day, ancestor worship is part and parcel of traditional Chinese religion.) Most interesting for our survey, they are known to have worked themselves into frenzied states of ecstasy, opening themselves up to the influence of gods and departed ancestors, who appeared to speak through them (prophecy). They even exorcised demoniacs, who jerked violently and spoke in tongues. And all of this was taking place while the Israelites were still slaves in Egypt (Shang Dynasty, 1766-1122 BC).

There were also shamans in Shinto (the religion of Japan), who communicated with the *kami*, "superior ones" or divinities. [Recall the WW II kamikaze pilots: *kamikaze*, divine wind.] Both male and female shamans danced themselves into a frenzy and thus became mouthpieces for the gods.

Meanwhile in India, after Israel and Judah returned from Babylonian and Persian captivity, the Buddha [563-483 BC] died, and soon thousands of miracles were attributed to him. If they were genuine, he would have been one of the most charismatic men ever to have walked the face of the earth!

Of all the brands of Buddhism I have studied, the most fascinating is Tibetan Buddhism. Holy men using white magic (which is for good purposes, unlike black magic) launched hail storms from their fingertips, flattening the crops of their enemies. They are alleged to have lived in mountain caves with virtually no clothing or food, and to have kept themselves warm by sheer willpower. They also had the ability to fly through the air—to transport themselves here and there by mere thought. (Carlos Castaneda, watch out!) One chap I knew at Harvard, a Tibetan monk, was supposed to be the reincarnation of one of the lamas. (A lama is a holy priest second only to the Dalai Lama, supreme spiritual leader of Tibet.) One day in class I asked him whether he really believed he was that reincarnation; he humbly admitted that he had his doubts!

In Islam [founded in the early 7th century after Christ] there quickly arose the Sufi order. Sufism was originally a reaction against the materialism and theological contortions of mainline Islam, and the Sufis are the mystics of their religion. Union with Allah became a supreme goal, and some Sufis took this so far as to virtually usurp divinity. One Sufi exclaimed, "Glory be to me!" Another less fortunate fellow was crucified in 922 AD after claiming "I am the truth." Sufis are not only the mystics of Islam; they are the charismatics of Islam as well. Supernatural abilities are attributed to the dervishes [Muslim religious men, vowed to poverty] whose physical powers, enhanced in their states of ecstasy, are considerable. Dervishes are known to speak in tongues. The wildest of the lot were the Rifaiya, or "howling dervishes." Working themselves into a frenzy by chanting in a circle and violently jerking their bodies, they demonstrated their faith by eating glass, falling on sharp knives, walking on fire, swallowing red-hot coals and even handling vipers. (Appalachian rattlesnake handlers, move over!) A contemporary order of "whirling dervishes" are famous for the swirling dances by which they bring themselves into a state of ecstasy.

The Major World Religions

Religion	Origin	Founder	Date	Scriptures
Hinduism	India	—	1500 BC	Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita
Judaism	Middle East	Moses	1446 or 1290 BC	Old Testament
Zoroastriansim	Persia	Zoroaster	588 BC	Avesta
Buddhism	India	Buddha	563-483 BC	Tripitaka, etc.
Confucianism	China	Confucius	551-479 BC	Wu Ching, Ssu Shu (incl Analects of Confucius)
Taoism	China	Lao Tse	600-500 BC	Tao Te Ching
Jainism	India	Mahavira	540-468 BC	Angas, Upangas
Christianity	Middle East	Jesus	6 BC-27 AD	Bible
Shinto	Japan	—	?	Kojiki, Nihongi, Yengishiki
Islam	Arabia	Mohammed	570-632 AD	Koran
Sikhism	India	Nanak	1469-1538 AD	Granth

All the major religions of the world claim charismatic happenings, and so do the minor ones. From the tropics of Africa and Melanesia to the frigid climes of the Himalayan hermits and the Hudson Bay Eskimos, men and women prophesy, speak in tongues and claim the miraculous.

How much of it is genuine? That is a question we will attempt to answer shortly, but first a visit to the Mediterranean world of the first century AD.

Miracles In The 1st Century Mediterranean Area

When Paul says to the Corinthians, *"You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to dumb idols"* (1 Cor 12:2), he is alluding to the pagan religious background of the Corinthians. In Corinth, as in all the cities of the Roman world, there were many charismatic cults, and these cults stressed numerous things seemingly within the repertoire of the Corinthian church. They were influenced and led astray because they absorbed the popular religious mentality of the day; in the words of Jividen, "they surrendered their will to an experience" (*Miracles: From God or Man?*, 92).

Let us start with the cult of the god Asklepios, the god of healing. Significant shrines of Asklepios remain at both Cos and Epidaurus [in Greece], and from them we learn much about the approach to healing among the ancient Greek people. People would visit his temple, make an offering and undergo ritual bathing in a sacred stream. Spending the night in the shrine precinct, they would pray for a visitation from the god in a dream (during which the deity advised them of the correct form of treatment). Treatment also included religious rituals and magic formulae, physical and drug therapy, and even sacred drama and music. After devotees had been healed they would give an offering of thanks to the god, usually in the form of a plaster replica of the member of the body that had been healed. The cast would then be attached to

the temple wall. (Not unlike some churches today, where one finds crutches, wheelchairs, etc attached to the wall of the church building!) In light of this, one can see that experiences of healing are nothing new in the religious history of mankind.

We could discuss the charismatic cults of Aphrodite, Attis or Hermes, both long established in Corinth by the time of 1 Cor (55-57 AD). Literature on Dionysus [the god of wine] is always interesting. How do you suppose one went about pleasing the god of wine? Adherents of his cult paid their respects by drinking (and eating) as much as possible, sometimes in wild orgies. States of ecstasy were thus induced. But perhaps the cult of Isis and Sarapis is most interesting for the present study, as this religious group practised tonguespeaking, as well as prophesying and healing, and there were five temples in Corinth alone!

Isis is an Egyptian goddess, whose worship can be traced back to the 4th millennium BC (over a thousand years before the time of Abraham), while Sarapis is a Canaanite deity. As in the case of many Greek religions, the worshipper would fall under the influence of the deity and begin to speak frenziedly in an unknown tongue (known only to the god) but which could be interpreted by a miraculously endowed prophet.

As for the healing abilities of Isis, listen to the statement of Diodorus Siculus, who reports the nocturnal visits of Isis to those in need of healing:

> *...Standing above the sick in their sleep she gives aid for their diseases and works remarkable cures upon such as submit themselves to her; and many who have been despaired of by their physicians because of the difficult nature of their malady are restored to health by her (L.C.L. I.25.5).*

Does this sound familiar? Such claims of healing, as we have been contending all along, are as old as the sun. The charismatic movement is but an expression of the continuing religious impulse of mankind.

In some generations, more than in others, zeal for the miraculous is exceptionally strong. It is in such a climate that Jesus lived, and in such an environment that the missionary church of the first century was planted. If anyone doubts this, let him only take a close look at the pagan mileu of the book of Acts (e.g. see 8:9-11, 13:8-10, 16:16-18, 19:13-16).

Miracles In Christendom at Large

When the apostles died, the gifts of the Holy Spirit passed away as well. That of course does not mean that God never heals anyone in response to prayer; he is sovereign and does whatever he pleases. As we will see in Chapters 8 and 11, early church history indicates that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were not present after the latter part of the first century. By the third century, however, as the message of the gospel became more and more diluted, increasing numbers of people were claiming miraculous experience. Experiences focussed especially on the departed saints, who in time became regarded as suitable intercessors for saints on earth. Eventually an entire pantheon of "saints" was created! With the rise of the cult of relics [sacred objects, articles or scraps of clothing supposedly connected with Jesus, members of his family or other saintly men and women, and out of which magical powers and blessings were said to flow] and the revival of pagan superstition, often under a Christian guise, a rational, common sense religion gave way to an irrational, whimsical and emotional spirituality.

Although there have been cycles of charismatic revival and decline, no generation of Christendom has been without its enthusiasm for the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Instances of prophecy, tonguespeaking and interpretation are too numerous to even attempt to recount. Stories of healings are as commonplace in popular Christianity as they are in the other religions of the world. That miracles are claimed in so many different Christian denominations is no insignificant fact; surely God is not placing his stamp of approval on *every*

conflicting doctrine and practice! Some groups deny the divinity of Christ. Others water down discipleship to little more than pew-warming. Still others disagree on basic moral issues over which Bible-reading believers have no dispute.

It should not be surprising to us to find that the Charismatic Movement has infiltrated nearly every major denomination. A writer speaking of how Roman Catholics came to speak in tongues stated that with some people "the beginning comes quietly, gently and effortlessly; with Tom N., it was as he was finishing his rosary; with Rita M., it was while she was singing a hymn at Mass; with Sister M., it came as she knelt in silent prayer to the Blessed Virgin" (Edward O'Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, Ave Maria Press, 1971, p. 128).

And what about the cults? Many groups outside the orbit of traditional Christendom claim the miraculous. For example, the Mormons speak in tongues, as their scriptures dictate [Alma 9:21, 2 Nephi 32:2].

There are more charismatic cults than most of us have ever dreamed of. In 1986 I was "blitzing" in the streets near our home in Central London when I met a chap who said he was a member of the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star. I had stopped him on the sidewalk to invite him to our Invitation Service [Bring Your Neighbour Day] when he said that he had just left a service in progress and then invited me to come along. I consented, realising that I might well have an opportunity to invite the whole group.

After entering a dilapidated church building, I was led down the stairs into their basement meeting room, and asked to remove my shoes, which I did. I instantly became aware of two significant differences between myself and my hosts: they were, without exception, African or West Indian—I am white; they all wore

shining white robes—I wore a conservative dark English suit. I took a seat, and the group were probably more surprised to see me than I was to see them.

I kept hearing references to a certain "Olumba Olumba Obu," but did not know what they meant. Then the leader of the service shouted, "All give praise!" I was instructed to bow to the ground and knock my forehead three times on the hard floor, which I did (all things to all men)! I turned and asked the woman seated next to me if the group spoke in tongues and prophesied, and received an affirmative answer. After another round of "All give praise" and a few more knocks of my head on the floor (this time I was told to remove my glasses), I heard the reader mention "Father Olumba, the Alpha and the Omega, the supreme head of the universe. All give praise!" (Needless to say, this time I did not go down.) Suddenly the woman on my right sprung to her feet and "screamed in the Spirit," twisting her body violently, her white robe nearly knocking me out of my seat. I asked the man in front of me where "Olumba Olumba Obu" lived. His reply: "Father Olumba lives in our hearts. He also has his headquarters in Nigeria." I was smack in the middle of a cult!

Enduring another twenty minutes of tonguespeaking, dancing, and an appeal for money (of course), I was asked whether I had any words for the group. Indeed I did! I challenged them to study the Bible consistently, to deal with their lukewarmness, and to live as disciples. Then I invited everyone to our Invitation Service. After all, Jesus died for these people. It was the least I could do.

As we can see, neo-pentecostalism has spread into every nook and cranny of Christendom, regardless of the teaching of the denomination. From Catholicism to Orthodoxy to Protestantism to the cults, the Charismatic Movement is here to stay!

THE $64,000 QUESTION

Are we to discount miracles in the various world religions just because they do not acknowledge Christ? And if so, are we to reject the charismatic experiences of the Mormons and the Olumba Olumba Obu sect, who do acknowledge Christ, just because they are heretical in their doctrine? And if we are willing to dismiss the experiences of the cults because they are teaching a corrupted gospel, do we have any more reason to defend the "miracles" in denominational Christian groups?

The $64,000 answer: No, we do not. Charismatic claims are no more legitimate than are the claims of the Hindus or the Mormons. Charismatic experience is essentially the same the world over, regardless of the beliefs of those who seek it.

The point of this chapter: armed with a broad perspective on the religious experiences of man, the claims of the denominational charismatics will neither surprise you nor be difficult to deal with. For once we concede that one must be teaching the truth in order for substantiating experiences to count for anything, we have placed the claims of the charismatics in the same category as the claims of the rest of the groups who are teaching error.

To put it another way, it is quite possible to have miraculous experience without even believing in Christ, and so *charismatic experience in itself establishes nothing.*

SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Having accepted the present analysis of charismatic experience, what is the difference between it and biblical miracles? Or is there any difference? Is one counterfeit and the other genuine? Might not the same arguments used to explain away miracles in other religions and in the charismatic movement be used to explain away the

miracles in the Old and New Testaments?

I see eight crucial differences between charismatic "miracles" and biblical miracles:

1) Biblical miracles were clear-cut and well documented; charismatic stories are not. It is one thing to repeat a story of a healing that someone else told you, quite another to *be* healed, or to perform the healing. It is one thing to babble with syllables that defy analysis, perhaps with the occasional foreign phrase mingled in; it is quite another to speak fluently in a language you have never studied. It is one thing to deliver a vague prophecy that has the general applicability of a horoscope, but quite another to provide accurate and detailed information that is of value to others. I once studied with a man who was convinced he had AIDS—although this had not been verified by any doctor. One day he "felt" God had come into his life—as well as a surge of energy and complete "healing" from AIDS. Hallelujah?

2) In the Bible people were healed indiscriminately. Personal faith was not always *essential* for the healing to take place. Mark 6:5 shows that a faithless religious climate could hinder even Jesus, but we still see many healed in the Bible who are not said to have a personal faith (Luke 13:13, Matt 8:13). Charismatics frequently ascribe a failure to heal to lack of faith on the part of the one in need of healing. Furthermore, in the Bible, people were not first "screened" in order to assess their suitability as candidates. In modern charismatic healing services, ushers "screen out" the hopeless cases: amputees, the mentally retarded, etc. Some "faith healers" go even further in efforts to put on a good show. For example, a well-known TV evangelist, and faith healer, Peter Popoff, was recently "debugged" on national television when it was revealed that his wife was sending him messages from the audience about people's illnesses via FM transmitter—he in turn was "miraculously" diagnosing them on the platform! I also am reminded of a recent scandal that surfaced when a reporter unknowingly

entered the dressing room while the "wheel chair crew" (who were to receive healing later that evening) were all being coached on how to behave.

3) Biblical miracles were carried out in a number of different types of environments; an ecstatic, artificially religious atmosphere was unnecessary. No prelude or patter was needed, and often miracles were performed despite a hostile audience. Today's charismatic revival meetings occur, for the most part, in synthetic, controlled environments.

4) In the Bible, any miracle could occur and did occur. Men walked on water (Matt 14:25,29). Men disappeared and re-appeared (Luke 24:31, Acts 8:39-40). Large bodies of water were rearranged (Exod 14:21) and storms were rebuked into calmness (Mark 4:39). Very large meals were catered for (John 6:1-13). Heavenly limousines were dispatched (2 Kings 2:11). Ears were replaced (Luke 22:51). There were miracles of radical fishing (Luke 5:4-6), radical body-building (Judges 16:30), radical gardening (Mark 11:21) and radical physics (2 Kings 6:6). Miracles of instantaneous transportation occurred (John 6:21, 1 Kings 18:12). Armies were blinded (2 Kings 6:18) shackles fell from the wrists of the saints and iron gates opened of their own volition (Acts 12:6-10). Legions of demons took up new residences (Mark 5:1-13). Any condition was curable, from blindness to leprosy to death itself. Although not all diseases *were* healed, no job was too difficult providing there was a reason in God's economy for the miracle to take place. Charismatic claims pale into insignificance by contrast. They are limited almost exclusively to trivial or unverifiable events: tongue-speaking, cured colds, etc.

5) Healings in the New Testament and the Old Testament were almost without exception instantaneous. (Mark 8:22ff and Num 12:10ff are not the model for progressive healings taking days or even months to happen.) If the gift of healing is still here today, let one who possesses it drop in on a hospital ward and free up

some beds, or visit a cemetery and make the gardener work overtime! It is asked why Jesus said "Lazarus, come out!" in John 11:43. If Jesus had not said "*Lazarus*, come out!" *everyone* in the graveyard would have come out! Not so with the charismatics, who cannot replicate New Testament raising from the dead, as practised by Jesus and the apostles (Matt 10:8, Acts 9:40). Most miracles "happen" only under the most ideal of circumstances.

6) Biblical healings were complete: there were no partial cures, slight improvements, or relapses. Charismatic "healings" are usually one of the above.

7) Biblical miracles (e.g. healings) were effected by men of known integrity. They did not try to milk money from those they helped, nor did they dazzle for their own ego (Acts 8:10-11). Sadly, the same cannot be said of "wonder workers" today.

8) The purpose behind biblical miracles was to bring to man the word of God, to confirm the divine authority of those who spoke it, and to certify their message (Exod 4:1-9, 1 Kings 17:24, Mark 2:10, Mark 16:20, John 20:30-31, Acts 14:3, Heb 2:4, etc).

ACCOUNTING FOR "MIRACLES"

The difference between biblical miracles and the "miracles" of today should be clear. But this still does not account for many phenomena that occur today. Let me offer six possibilities; these are useful to suggest to a charismatic when you are discussing a claim, in this case of a *healing*. Never speak disparagingly or cynically in such a conversation. After all, the charismatics are right when they stress that we need to look to God for healing—whether he chooses to work through physicians or directly. Instead, steer the discussion along the most rational lines possible:

i. The healing could be psychosomatic. Never underestimate the connection between mind and body. About 30% of all medical "cures" are psychosomatic.

ii. It could be a case of fraud (2 Cor 11:13-15), especially where money is involved (2 Cor 2:17).

iii. It could be a paranormal occurrence (an event lying outside of the range of normal scientific investigation) which in time will be capable of explanation.

iv. Exaggeration of claims must always be taken into account. It is good to ask people, "Did you see this yourself, or did someone pass the story on to you?" Claims are not always exaggerated, but this is a common and very human tendency.

v. Satan has the ability to *counterfeit* miracles (Rev 13:13, 2 Thess 2:9). We must understand that God alone causes true miracles (Psalm 72:18, 136:4). Pharaoh's magicians approximated what God did through Moses (Exod 7:12,22), but there were limits to what they could do (Exod 8:19 etc). I hesitate to ascribe claimed miracles to the devil; statements to that effect have a way of alienating you from the charismatic you are trying to convince. Moreover, almost all claims fall into one of the four categories above. There is one final possibility, however.

vi. The miracles may be genuine. What! You heard me. Although in my opinion at least 99% can be explained, not all can, nor is it desirable to put those that cannot in the "paranormal" or "satanic" categories. God *does* hear the prayers of the unsaved (Acts 10:4, 1 Kings 8:43). The prayers he will not *listen to* (answer) are those where deliberate sin is involved (Psalm 66:18, John 9:31).

Some Charismatic Claims Legitimate?

Let us elaborate on possibility (vi) for a moment. There is nothing in the Bible to say that God cannot or will not answer the prayer of a non-Christian. How can God *not* answer the prayer of the sincere person who prays that he can find God? And why wouldn't God occasionally answer a prayer—perhaps a prayer for healing—in order to assist someone in seeking him, or, in the event that the miracle had no effect, to leave him and any witnesses as well without excuse on the last day. It is a starchy mentality that will not allow God to answer some of the prayers of his lost children.

If you are having a hard time with this, consider an analogy which may prove helpful: in a household there is a servant and there is a son. The servant does not belong to the family, and cannot legitimately call the master "father." But he may approach the master with various requests. The father would gladly allow his son to borrow his car, but the servant does not have that privilege. The servant may, however, ask the master for the time of day, or for a cup of water. The master of course would give these to his son as well.

The analogy does not support the idea that non-Christians have a personal *saved* relationship with God; but there is some sort of relationship, and who is to say that it is not personal? Of course if God responded to Solomon's petition (1 Kings 8) that he answer the prayers of non-covenant people so that they could come to know him, that would be nothing new. God's love for individual men and women has never changed. The adage still holds, though in a positive way: there is nothing new under the sun.

The fact remains that we will needlessly offend sincere people and shut the kingdom of heaven in their faces if we insist that all of their spiritual experiences are from the devil. Let us learn some wisdom in this area. (Too much Christian apologetics is a matter of trying to explain away the experiences of others.)

Conclusion

Charismatic claims are not just twentieth-century phenomena; "miracles" of healing and prophecy, tongue-speaking and "interpretation," visitations of angels or of God himself are as old as the sun. Do not be caught off guard! Learn to see things in perspective. Realise that **there is nothing new under the sun.**

4

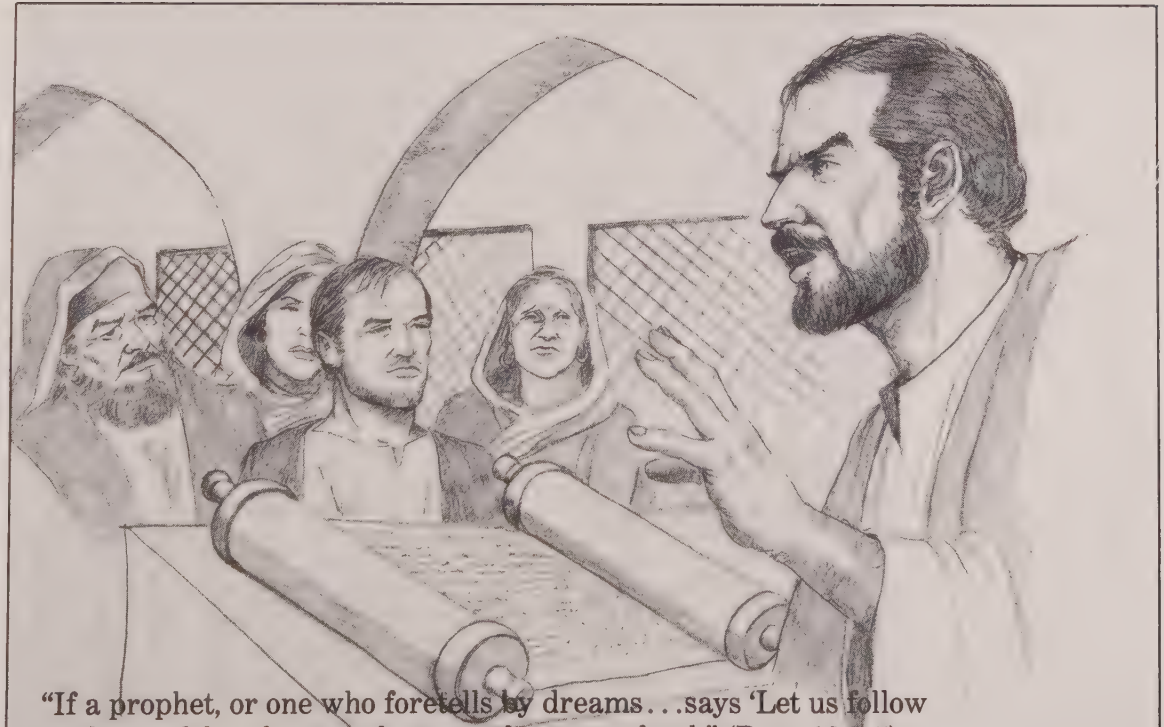
The Holy Spirit Primer

CRUCIAL INSIGHTS FROM THE OT

It is the assumption of this chapter, and indeed of this book, that in order to understand the truth about the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, you need to have a good understanding of the Old Testament. Because there are many insights to be found in the OT [Old Testament] that apply directly to the Charismatic Movement, the OT is truly the **Holy Spirit Primer** for Christians!

We will now explore ten issues relevant to the Charismatic Movement, each point being examined against its OT background:

1. Miraculous activity and salvation
2. Is it really "from the Lord?"
3. Being led by the Spirit
4. Putting out a fleece
5. Men who had the Spirit in the OT
6. Prophecy and visions
7. Laying on of hands
8. Were miracles normal?
9. Function of miracles: confirmation of the word
10. Outpouring of the Spirit in the "last days"



"If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams...says 'Let us follow other gods'...that prophet must be put to death" (Deut 13:1-5).

1. Miraculous activity does not prove salvation.

Contrary to expectation, miraculous activity is no guarantee of a right relationship with the Lord. Men who prophesy or perform awesome signs are not *necessarily* to be trusted. For example, in **1 Sam 19:23** we read about the Spirit falling on Saul. He even prophesied. Does this mean that he was saved? Apparently not. The Lord had already left Saul (1 Sam 16:14), who demonstrated the wickedness of his heart through disobedience to the clear instructions of God. Furthermore, he gave vent to his insane jealousy of David (who was fast rising up to eclipse him), repeatedly attempting to take his life. Even though God had rejected him as king over Israel, he caused the Spirit to fall on Saul, as well as on the three companies of men Saul had sent before him to capture David.

Next, in **1 Kings 13** the young prophet forfeited his life because he chose to treat another man's word as of higher authority than the revealed word of God.

Finally, in **Deut 13:1-5** we find, I believe, the clearest OT passage on the danger of following people merely on the basis of their miraculous activity:

> *If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul . . . That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the Lord your God . . . You must purge the evil from among you.*

Indeed, the Lord may be testing the purity of our hearts and our devotion to him through a charismatic challenge!

(Incidentally, if the counterargument is made that charismatics are not actually advocating idolatry, the best verses to turn to are probably Gal 1:7 and 2 Cor 11:3-4.)

2. Not all situations are "from the Lord."

Many charismatics speak of situations being "from the Lord": "This beautiful girl walked into my life, and even though she's not a Christian I feel I should go out with her. The Lord sent her to me. This was definitely *from the Lord.*" (In Gen 24:12-50 we see the legitimate sense of something being "from the Lord," but this is often abused!)

In **1 Sam 26** Saul's bodyguard let him down. David and Abishai could easily have killed Saul, but instead they only took his spear and water jug. Abishai's interpretation of the situation: "Today God has given your enemy into your hands" (26:8).

Abishai was arguing, in effect, "Look, it's from the Lord; this turn of events reveals God's will for you, David." The man of God, however, knew that a higher principle was at stake.

(A similar situation occurs in 1 Sam 24, where Saul, having entered a cave to relieve himself, was completely off guard, and yet David refused to lay a hand on the Lord's anointed. See 24:6, 26:11.)

It is clear from 1 Kings 12:15 that **"from the Lord,"** here used of the unwise rejection of advice by Rehoboam, does not mean that the individuals involved are following a spiritual course of action. Rehoboam's folly led to the total rift between Israel and Judah, and yet it is described as "from the Lord." A similar instance is found in Judges 14:4, where Samson enters an unspiritual marriage.

No, events are not a trustworthy indicator of God's *will.* Yes, whatever happens God has allowed to happen, and thus is part of his sovereign will, but God tests our motives and actions through events.

My favourite passage demonstrating this important truth is **Num 20:2-12.** Here Moses disobeys the Lord; in anger he strikes the rock instead of speaking to it. As a result water does not come out—or does it?

You see, the ends do *not* justify the means; the outcome does not justify the course of action taken. Many charismatics assume that they have done what is right in God's eyes because their (disobedient) actions have a happy ending. Praise the Lord, he works through all of our mistakes!—but that in no way puts his seal of approval on our moments of rebellion.

3. Being led by the Spirit is not a weird, mystical experience.

We have discussed the charismatic view of being led by the Spirit in Chapter 2. (If you want to brush up on it, go back and read the relevant parts.) But what does the Bible say? **Rom 8:13-14** and **Gal 5:16-18** teach that being led by the Spirit means putting the flesh to death. That is the most common NT meaning of the term. What is the OT background?

Ezek 36:27 shows that the Spirit will move us to *obey God*—assuming, of course, that this is our desire (see Psalm 40:8). The Spirit does not override our free will. My favourite verse on the subject is **Psalm 143:10:**

> *Teach me to do your will, for you are my God;*
> *may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.*

Here we learn that being led by the Spirit is a matter of *discipline.* There are no short-cuts. (How different this is from the charismatic view, where being "led" often means taking the path of least resistance.) Because we are becoming obedient, being led by the Spirit is a *learning process,* not just following hunches and impulses. (See also Psalm 25:5, 5:8.)

An historical illustration is found in Numbers 10. (Let's focus on **Num 10:31.**) The Israelites were led in the desert by a pillar of cloud (or fire, at night). You'd think the direction in which God was trying to lead them would be hard to miss, with that huge cloud out in front, showing the way! So why is Moses so intent on obtaining a good guide? "You can be our eyes," he says to Hobab.

The application: God leads us through the cloud (the general principles of his word, the inexplicable turn of events, his providence, etc), but he also leads us through other people, logic, common sense, and the specific application of the Bible. We must strike a balance between the two, neither relying wholly on man's strength (especially our own) nor floating off into the spiritual ether.

4. It is not advisable to put out "fleeces" to the Lord.

"Fleecing," based on Gideon's action in **Judges 6:36-40,** is putting an ultimatum to God: "God, if this is what you want me to do, give me the sign I'm asking you for; if it doesn't happen, I'll assume this isn't your will."

When I was part of the charismatic movement, my usual "fleece" for decision making was a simple traffic light. "Lord, if it's green, I'll do it, if it's red I won't, and if it's yellow, I'll hold off for now and try later."

Charismatics are always looking for signs of God's will, so putting out a fleece is an accepted and common thing. But is it really a *spiritual* thing to do? Some considerations:

a. Gideon had a weak faith, despite the revealed word of God for his life.

b. He is not commended for his "fleecing." In fact, it is clear from **Isa 7:11-12** that asking for a sign is putting the Lord to the test.

c. Jesus refused to put God to the test in **Matt 4:7.** It must be conceded that in Deut 6:16, which Jesus quotes, the testing was being done from selfish and rebellious motives, which was different to Gideon's situation. Nevertheless, Jesus refused to put the Lord to the test.

d. A major problem with the fleecing approach is that one never knows whether God has opted to play along with the game or not, since the outcome does not provide a definite indication of the will of God. (Even if the light were green, there would always be room to doubt that God was really answering my prayer, or that he considered it a worthy test of his will.)

e. God is in no way obligated to play our games. He is in heaven, and he does whatever *he* wills—**Psalm 115:3.**

[*Fleecing must not be confused with asking for an open door: see Appendix A.*]

5. In the OT men had the Spirit without having the Spirit.

No, that is not a typographical error! The crucial verse to keep in mind is **John 7:39**:

> *By this he meant the Spirit, who those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

Before the NT **indwelling** of the Holy Spirit from Pentecost onwards, some of Bible history's more important men and women had the Holy Spirit in an *external* sense. The distinction is a crucial one to keep in mind when dealing with the charismatic understanding of the Spirit, particularly in the book of Acts. Study the

following pre-Pentecost passages, and decide which ones to use when studying with charismatics:

Num 11:25 (the 70 elders)
Num 24:2 (Balaam)
Judg 3:10 (Othniel)
Judg 6:34 (Gideon)
Judg 14:6,19, 15:14 (Samson)
1 Sam 10:10, 16:23, 19:23 (Saul)
Luke 1:41 (Elizabeth)
1 Sam 16:13 (David)
1 Chron 12:18 (Amasai)
2 Chron 15:1 (Azariah)
2 Chron 20:14 (Jahaziel)
Ezekiel 11:5 (Ezekiel)
Luke 1:15 (Jn Baptist)
Luke 1:67 (Zechariah)

All of these men and women, living before the New Covenant, possessed the Holy Spirit in some way, but none enjoyed the *indwelling* of the Spirit promised to NT believers (Acts 2:38-39, 5:32, Rom 8:9, etc). The full significance of this distinction will be made clear in the following chapter.

6. OT prophecy was normally preaching based on visions.

Consider **Num 12:6b-8a:**

> *"When a prophet of the Lord is among you,*
> *I reveal myself to him in visions,*
> *I speak to him in dreams.*
> *But this is not true of my servant Moses:*
> *he is faithful in all my house.*
> *With him I speak face to face,*
> *clearly and not in riddles;*
> *he sees the form of the Lord."*

A prophet would have a vision of God (Hos 12:10, Joel 2:28, Mic 3:6), usually in a dream while he slept (see Deut 13:1, 1 Sam 3:1,16, 1 Kings 3:5-15, 1 Chron 17:3, and the otherwise enigmatic Jer 31:26). Based on that vision he would preach to the needs of the people. The prophet had time to reflect on the meaning of the vision before preaching, and he was in full control of his prophetic presentation (see 1 Cor 14:32).

Moses was exceptional. With him God did not speak *indirectly*, through visions; with Moses he spoke *directly*, face to face. (This distinction will be important as we consider the meaning of 1 Cor 13:10 in Chapter 11.)

Let's now turn our attention to **Exod 7:1:**

> *Then the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet."*

Moses is like God, and Aaron is Moses' "prophet"; in other words, Aaron is really only a channel for Moses' message. God speaks to men through men (not a bad definition of prophecy).

It is true that prophecy often had a predictive element. Charismatic churches and leaders are well known for their predictions, most of which either are too vague to test or fail to come true. (On a random hit-or-miss basis, a certain percentage of predictions are bound to be "accurate.") In the OT any "prophet" whose "prophecy" came to nought was executed (Deut 18:20-22)! That is how seriously God takes false prophecy. But over-all prophecy in the Bible is far more a matter of *preaching* than of *prediction*, as is clear from **Ezra 6:14** and **Amos 7:15-16**:

> *So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo.*

Haggai and Zechariah (co-workers active around 520 BC) were prophets. What did that mean? It meant they were *preachers*. They spoke to people's needs. They spoke to contemporaries. Rather than writing for a generation yet unborn (which they unwittingly did on occasion), *prophets addressed the present generation.*

> *"But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'*

Now then, hear the word of the Lord. You say, "Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the house of Isaac."

In typical poetic parallelism, prophecy and preaching are seen to be synonymous. Prophetic messages were nearly always *challenging.* How different to the ethereal "prophecies" that one often hears in charismatic churches today!

In closing, it should be said that the OT scriptures are all collectively "prophetic," in the broadest sense, according to Jesus (Matt 11:13). How much the genealogies and a few other types of literature in the OT contribute to the over-all prophetic effect is debatable. The point stands: OT prophecy was normally preaching based on visions.

7. There are several varieties of the laying on of hands.

In charismatic circles, the laying on of hands normally accompanies attempts to heal or to induce the experience of "Holy Spirit Baptism." An understanding of the OT background is helpful:

i. **Gen 48:14** (blessing)
ii. **Lev 1:4** (sacrifice)
iii. **Num 8:10** (ordination)
iv. **Num 27:18/Deut 34:9** (commissioning)
v. **2 Kings 4:34** (healing)

In the NT, only types i, iv, and v are found (Matt 19:15, Acts 13:3, Mark 16:18).

We will return to this in Chapter 10 (The Hands of an Apostle), where we will consider the sixth and final purpose of the laying on of hands: the apostolic laying on of hands for the transmission of a gift of the Spirit.

8. The primary function of miracles: confirmation of the word.

NT miracles are for testimony—for the certification of the speaker and his message (Mark 16:20, John 20:30-31, Acts 14:3, 2 Cor 12:12, Heb 2:4). The same is true of miracles in the OT (**Exod 4:1-9, 1 Kings 17:24**, etc).

Miracles confirmed the *spoken*, never the *written*, word of God. This is a crucial distinction. Once something was written down as *scripture*, there was no need for miraculous confirmation.

In light of this, theological consistency would dictate that charismatics claim fresh revelation from God today—as almost all do! But there *is* no fresh revelation from God today, nor does God's written word require any further confirmation (see Chapters 11 and 12).

9. Miracles were not normal occurrences in the OT.

Charismatics often speak of biblical times as though miracles were happening every day. The New Testament itself can reinforce that impression, especially the gospels and Acts, which record only the *highlights*, compressing into a few scrolls what transpired over a period of many years.

As many scholars have noted, there is a marked decrease in frequency of miracles from the gospels to Acts, and an even greater decrease from Acts to the letters. (I refer interested readers to Jividen's recent work *Miracles: From God or Man?*, ACU, 1987.)

Even in the NT miracles are infrequent. In fact, by definition a miracle is a rare occurrence, something out of the ordinary, a bypassing of the laws of nature by God. Are things any different in the OT?

Although there is the occasional miracle throughout the OT, most miracles are clustered around two events: the Exodus and the rise of the prophetic movement (starting with Elijah and Elisha). One will realise that at these two times God was giving his people revelation: the Law and the Prophets. That is why another burst of miracles was only to be expected in NT times, with the revelation of the gospel.

Many OT passages confirm this view. The withdrawal of God's prophetic Spirit was seen as a sign of judgement. (See Isa 29:10, Lam 2:9, Mic 3:6.) **Psalm 74:9**, written during the exilic period, could apply to many periods of OT history other than the exile:

> *We are given no miraculous signs;*
> *no prophets are left,*
> *and none of us knows how long this will be.*

Notice that prophets (with their revelation from God) and miraculous signs (confirming that revelation) are mentioned together.

Finally, during the "intertestamental" period (c.435 BC—30 AD), the voice of prophecy was stilled. From the last books written during the Persian period (Ezra-Neh and Mal) to the next and final "OT" prophet, John the Baptist, there is an astounding gap of nearly five centuries! This period of prophetic silence is acknowledged in the rabbinic writings (e.g. *T. Sota 13:2*) as well as in the apocryphal books. Consider 1 Maccabees 9:27, written in the period of Maccabean persecution (2nd century BC):

> *A terrible oppression began in Israel; there has been nothing like it since the disappearance of prophecy among them (J.B.).*

Few charismatics are aware of this. The disappearance of prophecy, tongue speaking and healing are unthinkable. But God stopped the prophetic stream on more

than one occasion, and there is reason to believe that he has done it yet again (1 Cor 13:8).

And so we must adopt the attitude expressed in **Psalm 77:11:**

> *I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.*

Certainly for twentieth century Christians, biblical miracles occurred in the "long ago"; this is nothing new from a biblical perspective.

To sum up, (a) Biblical miracles were rare occurrences
(b) clustered around revelational events
(c) for the primary purpose of confirming the spoken word of God.

10. The OT predicted that the Spirit would be poured out in the last days.

The last days? This is an area of tremendous confusion for most charismatics, who tend to be premillenialists. They usually claim that the last days started somewhere in the twentieth century, although pinning people down to exact dates is a tricky business.

The last days, however, began in the year that Jesus sent his Spirit at Pentecost. If you doubt this, read Heb 1:2, Jas 5:3, 2 Tim 3:1, and 2 Pet 3:3, four verses that refute the premillennial view.

When Peter explains the phenomenon of Acts 2:4ff, he refers to Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 2:16-21). It is clear that Peter considers the event predicted by Joel, about 800 years beforehand, to be fulfilled in the pentecostal outpouring or baptism in the Holy Spirit. (**Acts 2:16,17,33.**) Yet Joel was not the only prophet to predict an outpouring of the Spirit in the last days. He is joined by Isaiah (32:15, 44:3), Ezekiel (39:29) and Zechariah (12:10), to name a

few. As a result of this event at Pentecost, we live in the age of the Spirit. (We will have more to say about this in Chapter 6, when we discuss Holy Spirit baptism.)

God did a wonderful thing around 33 AD starting in Jerusalem: he poured out the Holy Spirit, who continues to guide and bless his people. But that does not mean that we have any reason to expect pentecostal outpourings today.

Conclusion

From our study of the Old Testament we can clearly see that the OT is our best "Holy Spirit Primer."

Challenge yourself to deepen your knowledge of the Old Testament, which is rich with insights into the Holy Spirit and implications for the Charismatic Movement.

5

Clearing Up the Confusion

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL RECEPTION OF THE SPIRIT: ACTS 8 & 10

We saw in the last chapter, (Section 5) that before the new covenant there were men and women who had the Spirit (in an external sense) without having the Spirit (in the indwelling sense). Some say that there is an external "measure" and an internal "measure." I prefer not to use this term, since it implies that the Holy Spirit is a substance. Instead I prefer the term **reception.** In the Bible someone could receive the Spirit outwardly (the **external reception**) or inwardly (the **internal reception**). One way to visualise the difference between external and internal reception is to picture a glass of water. Pour some on yourself (externally), or drink some (internally). Although you may be cooled down a bit by the outward application, the inward drink is much more refreshing. In the same way, the inward reception of the spirit changes us from the inside out; this must not be confused with the external reception. Although at first this distinction may be confusing, it is an essential one to keep in mind if we are to avoid some of the more common charismatic pitfalls.

Right now, unless you are already extremely familiar with these two chapters, take out your New Testament and read Acts 8:12,14-18 and Acts 10:44-48. This is where much confusion arises, and your ability to explain these chapters can be crucial in winning the respect—and the soul—of a charismatic.



"Hallelujah, I'm filled with the Holy Ghost!"

Some religious people say that it is possible to receive the Spirit some time after salvation, as in the case of the Samaritans (Acts 8), or even before salvation, as in the case of the Caesareans (Acts 10).

Logically this will not do! After all, what must men receive in order to stand in a right relationship with God? First, forgiveness of sins, since sin is what places man in spiritual darkness (Col 1:13-14). Second, the Holy Spirit, which makes us children of God, guarantees our final redemption, makes us Christians, etc (Rom 8:9).

These two spiritual blessings must be received *simultaneously.* Think about it logically. Let's say that some-

one has been forgiven, but he does not yet have the Spirit. That would mean he is saved, but he is still not a Christian. Or let's say that someone has the Spirit, but he has not yet been forgiven. That would mean he is a Christian, but he is still lost. Both situations are impossible! Again, forgiveness of sins and the Spirit are received simultaneously. According to Acts 2:38, when someone is baptised, he is forgiven and receives the Spirit—*simultaneously.*

In other words, to say that Acts 8 is an exception, and that the people received the Spirit only after they were baptised, is illogical. To say that Acts 10 is an exception and that the people were baptised after they received the Spirit is also illogical.

In the following pages we will make a study of Acts 8 and 10, demonstrating that the charismatic interpretation is incorrect.

ACTS 8

When the gospel of Christ reached Samaria [c.39 AD] through the preaching of Philip the Evangelist, a number of Samaritans were immersed into Christ (v.12). Even Simon the sorcerer became a Christian (v.13).

The sensation this caused back in Jerusalem among the Jewish Christians should not be underestimated. The deep-seated prejudice against the Samaritans dated back to the Assyrian captivity (722 BC onwards), when many Israelites intermarried with Assyrians and produced a race of half-breeds, the Samaritans. It was one thing for a *Jew* to become a Christian, quite another for a *Gentile* to become a Christian (after circumcision, on which many early Christians insisted), but another thing altogether for a *Samaritan* to become a Christian. These betrayers of the nation, these low-down, good-for-nothing vermin deserved no place in the kingdom of God!

Never mind that the disciples were commanded to make disciples of all nations—but was Samaria even a nation? As the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus (c.180 BC) said,

> *There are two nations that my soul detests, the third is not a nation at all: the inhabitants of Mount Seir [the Edomites], and the Philistines, and the stupid people living at Shechem [the Samaritans] (50:25-26).*

Never mind that Jesus reached out to Samaritans, and made them the heroes of his parables. Never mind that Jesus said explicitly that the gospel must be taken to Samaria (Acts 1:8).

You would think that people transformed by the Spirit of Christ would have overcome their prejudice, but that was not the case. In fact, the number one "issue" in the first century church was the "Jew-Gentile Controversy," over the terms on which non-Jews were to be accepted into the church. Must they follow the law of Moses, or not? Must they be circumcised, or not? It was a serious issue, threatening to divide the church, and that explains Paul's alarm as he writes letters to churches involved in the controversy, such as those in Galatia.

In Acts 8 we are standing at an historic juncture. Were it not for the intervention of the apostles, it is quite possible that a separate Samaritan brotherhood would have arisen. What a tragedy that would have been!

> *When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit... (8:14-15)*

Most religious people read this far and jump to the conclusion that they were already Christians, but that God delayed their reception of the Spirit for a special purpose, or that they had received the Spirit and the

apostles were preparing them for "Holy Spirit Baptism." Before we commit ourselves, let's determine which reception of the Spirit is implied by the passage: the internal (indwelling) reception or the outward reception.

> *. . .because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (8:16-17).*

The Spirit had not yet *come upon* the Samaritans. That short phrase shows the sort of reception of the Spirit that occurred in Samaria: an *external* reception.

Compare this phrase with similar terminology in the OT examples we cited of the Spirit coming on people (Chapter 4). In other words, this was *not* the indwelling of the Spirit that was being conferred. No, Acts 2:39 does not allow for such exceptions.

Pentecostals and Catholics alike appeal to Acts 8 to support their doctrine that the Spirit is received in a special way *after* conversion: the former through the laying on of hands to confer "Holy Spirit Baptism," the latter through the laying on of a bishop's hands in "confirmation." Both groups fail to understand that we receive *every* spiritual blessing once we are *in Christ* (Eph 1:3, Rom 6:3).

The Samaritans were baptised "into the name of the Lord Jesus." Which baptism is this? Baptism *in Jesus' name* (Acts 2:38) is normal Christian baptism, bringing forgiveness and the Spirit. They were already saved. The outward reception of the Spirit (visible to Simon [v.18], who *"saw"* something that amazed him) was given by God through the apostles as a sign to the brothers that God had accepted the Samaritans; there was to be no further requirement for salvation.

So we see that Acts 8 is no exception to the rule (Acts 2:38). We also see how important the distinction between *internal* and *external* receptions of the Spirit is.

ACTS 10

Here we have Samaria in reverse, for the audience received the Spirit externally *before* they were saved.

Peter had preached up to verse 43: "All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins *through his name.*" Forgiveness: available only when one obeys Acts 2:38. "Through his name": baptism in Jesus' name brings forgiveness of sins.

At this time a stunning thing happens: God pours out the Spirit on the Caesareans—the first Gentiles to respond to the gospel (with the possible exception of 11:20, a Gentile mission that did not involve the leaders of the Jerusalem church).

> *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God (10:44-46).*

Was this the *indwelling* of the Spirit that was being given? No, for they had not yet been baptised. This was an *external* reception.

Why did it happen? Even a cursory reading of the following verses, and especially 11:1-18, makes it clear that God was making a point. Peter had begun to grasp it (10:35), after three visions from God and a command to preach to the Gentiles, but the others in his company needed some reassurance. After all, allowing Gentiles into the church was a big step. It was one thing to let them attend, submit to circumcision and Sabbath law, and then be immersed, but quite another to bring them into the fold without some indoctrination in Judaism.

God pours out the Spirit not for the benefit of the Caesareans, but for the benefit of the Christians. And even after that miracle there were many offended brothers, much debate, and eventually a whole council to further discuss the issue (Acts 15).

> *Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he commanded them to [or ordered that they] be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ . . .(10:47-48).*

Peter wraps up his sermon, which he had only just begun to deliver (11:15), and gives the "invitation"—in this instance perhaps more of an apostolic mandate! They are then immersed in Jesus' name (clearly the "baptism in Jesus' name" of Acts 2:38) and become Christians.

They had the Spirit (outwardly), but that did not mean that they had the Spirit (inwardly).

There is more to say about Acts 10 in the next chapter, but this brief study should be enough to convince anyone that these people did not become Christians before baptism, nor did they receive the Spirit (indwelling) before obeying the gospel.

CONCLUSION

The vital distinction between the inward and the outward reception of the Spirit is the key to making sense of Acts 8, Acts 10, and many common charismatic arguments against the NT teaching on conversion and the Holy Spirit.

Most charismatics fail to distinguish the inward and outward receptions of the Spirit. This sort of confused thinking is especially apparent in their view on what they commonly call "Holy Spirit Baptism." This investigation we leave to the next chapter.

6

A Warm, Fuzzy Feeling

"Holy Spirit Baptism"?

After I had "received Christ" in January 1976, I began attending charismatic prayer meetings. I attended because there were many friendly people, lots of food, nice girls, and what I felt to be the presence of God. Our group comprised people from all sorts of backgrounds, including Catholics and Jews! A typical meeting began with an hour of song and praise, in English as well as in "tongues," followed by another hour of testimonies or a lesson. The next two hours we would spend talking; it was quite a social affair. I still attended a non-charismatic church; most charismatics encourage people to remain within their own denomination and let their light shine. When anyone asked me what my faith was, I gave the answer most charismatics give: *Christian.*

Anyway, after attending the prayer meetings for a few months, I was invited to a Pentecostal church service. This was more high-powered than anything I had ever attended! Voices (and hands) were raised. A note of near panic was in the air. Many spoke in tongues. The preacher was asking for testimonies, for individuals to share how God had been working in their lives. A woman across the aisle from me was called on; she fainted from the pressure! Then the preacher pointed his finger at me. I was off my guard. My adrenalin flowed, it seemed, in a torrent. Speaking up, I recounted a close brush I once had with death, and how I thought God had saved me. Whew!—I felt fortunate to be able to think on my feet. There were many "Hallelujahs" and "Amens."

A few moments later the woman who was sitting next to me, the leader of our group, asked me whether I had received the Holy Spirit. When I replied that I had not been baptised in the Spirit, she prayed for me. Yet I was never convinced that I had really received that higher dosage of the Spirit of which everyone spoke.

My story is fairly dull compared to those of many who have left the Charismatic Movement. Many of the leaders in the Central London congregation were converted out of the charismatic movement. Most of these previously spoke in tongues. They were converted because people were courteous towards them. We have always made a special effort not to offend religious people, but instead to treat them with respect and avoid arguments over baptism, or about the experiences they have had. This does not mean that the teaching has been watered down—not in the slightest! (Advice on how to bring charismatics around is given in Chapter 14.)

One of the brothers in London recounts his story:

> The church leaders asked me, "Have you received the extra measure of the Holy Spirit?" I said no, and they invited me to a special prayer service happening a few nights later.
>
> That night there were about twenty of us who were being prayed for. We were all "new converts," and hadn't yet received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The leaders began to pray for us, and their voices got louder and louder. When they started screaming, I was thinking to myself, "What is this?"
>
> Five men surrounded me, laid their hands on me, and prayed for me to receive the Spirit baptism. I felt reluctant, sceptical. But soon I felt a warm, fuzzy feeling in me. Their prayers in normal language changed to tongues, and before I knew it I was speaking in tongues, too. I was yelling at the top of my voice. They praised God, and told me that I was filled with the Holy Ghost.

Just minutes later, I was helping them pray for others who still hadn't received this experience. Wow, it was amazing! Soon I got involved in the healing ministry of the church. I was the main person appointed to pray for others to be healed.

When I studied the Bible and found out the truth, I was scared stiff. I knew I was lost, and thought I might be demon-possessed!

I have seen and heard countless similar examples of "Holy Spirit Baptism," and believe that the experience is fully explainable in terms of individual and group psychology. Biblical baptism with the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with a "warm fuzzy feeling." (In fact, the term *"baptism of the Holy Spirit"* never occurs in the Bible, but is a Pentecostal theological abstraction.)

INTRODUCTION TO FOUR MAJOR VIEWS

Jesus' promise *"you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 1:5) is one of the hottest issues in NT interpretation, as well as an area of continual controversy within our brotherhood. The issues involved can be complex at times, and because of the analytical nature of this chapter some may prefer to skim it, relying more on Appendix B, Section 4 for an understanding of Holy Spirit Baptism.

Yes, there is much confusion as to the meaning of H.S. baptism. Some adhere to the broad **Pentecostal View**, as illustrated above. Others limit the H.S. baptism to the apostolic area (the **Limited View**), while still others generalise it, making it equivalent to conversion (the **General View**). Finally, some consider the H.S. Baptism an historic event (the **Historical View**).

I now present four interpretations of the Holy Spirit Baptism. My purpose is not to provide a detailed exegesis of all the passages relevant to each view, but to

present each view simply, *from the perspective of its proponents.* With each view I will offer an extensive critique. The final view presented is my own.

I. THE PENTECOSTAL VIEW

Holy Spirit Baptism is an experience supplementary to conversion which bestows greater commitment, power for witnessing, the initial manifestation of speaking in tongues, and sometimes an additional miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. The largest pentecostal denomination in the world, the *Assemblies of God,* holds this tenet in its *Statement of Fundamental Truths:*

> *The Baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues (§ 8).*

This experience of Holy Spirit Baptism is called the "second blessing," and we are all urged to seek it, although it is not always necessary for salvation. It is an extra.

The hundred and twenty knew the Lord before Acts 2:4, but their lives were powerless. They were missing out on the power of the Christian life. But after they were baptised in the Spirit and received the gift of tongues, God was able to use them in a powerful way. The Holy Spirit is promised to every Christian (Acts 2:39), and when we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit we enter a dynamic new dimension of Christian life.

In Acts 8 the Samaritans were baptised in the Holy Spirit when Peter and John laid hands on them, and they spoke in tongues. Saul was saved on the Damascus road, but was filled with the Spirit only when Ananias laid hands on him (Acts 9:17), and he too spoke in tongues. It is amazing what God can do through someone who surrenders to the Spirit! In Acts 10 the people were baptised in the Spirit and spoke in tongues even before

they were baptised in water, showing that Spirit baptism is more important than water baptism. In Acts 19 the Ephesian Christians received the Spirit baptism and spoke in tongues when Paul laid his hands on them.

Just as in New Testament times, God's will is that all of us have this marvellous experience of Holy Spirit Baptism.

This is the view universally held by charismatics.

CRITIQUE:

1) Support for this view, taken almost entirely from the book of Acts, depends on critical moments in the history of the early church interpreted as *personal experiences* believers should strive to have. In each of the passages chosen, individuals had a special experience only because God was revealing his historical purpose to his people. It seems clear from the book of Acts that all of these are special cases, not the norm. In the letters there is no mention of a "H.S. baptism" (1 Cor 12:13 is a *conversion* passage). Ironically, the Pentecostal View fails to grasp the historical significance of Pentecost: the commencement of the New Covenant.

2) It is doubtful whether the 120 actually received the baptism of the Spirit. The speakers were Galileans (Acts 2:7), and the natural antecedent of "they" in 2:1 is the Twelve (1:26). The apostles seem to be the persons who had the tongues of fire come and rest on them. This in itself does not devastate the Pentecostal View, but points to a lack of appreciation of the unique role of the apostles in the early church.

3) A serious misconception of the Pentecostal View is that the recipients of the Spirit baptism were *Christians* before Pentecost. It is correct that they were in a right relationship with God under the Old Covenant, but the analogy between their lives before Pentecost and ours

today falls down on one rather significant point: the Spirit was not given before Jesus was glorified (John 7:39) and had ascended (John 16:7). Rom 8:9 shows that possessing the indwelling Spirit is an essential requirement for being a Christian. This is well worth emphasising with charismatics, who commonly hold that there were Christians in the gospels.

4) The Pentecostal View creates two types of Christians: those filled with the Spirit and those not. Although to some extent there is truth to this view (Acts 6:3), the NT teaches only one life for the child of God: life in the Spirit (Rom 8:14). Life in the flesh is the alternative! The NT is clear that all Christians possess the Spirit (1 John 3:24); and that spirit is a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline (2 Tim 1:7). Therefore there is no excuse for lukewarmness; you can't just sit around doing nothing, and say, "If God wants to use me, he will."

Paul says in Eph 1:3 that God *"has blessed us...with every spiritual blessing in Christ."* If that is so, why do charismatics encourage us to seek a "second blessing?" Or, as Peter puts it, *"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness"* (2 Peter 1:3). *All* blessings are ours! We received them when we were baptised *into Christ.* We are not lacking *anything.* There is nothing God is holding back from us. What else can there be to receive if we have already received *every* spiritual blessing?

In short, the claim that "Holy Spirit Baptism" and its companion, tonguespeaking, bring great spiritual energy, blessing and renewal is totally without biblical basis. If this were anywhere nearly as important as the pentecostals make it out to be, there would certainly be a command in the scriptures to "be baptised with the Spirit". But there is *not.* The "experience" is an unbiblical requirement.

5) 1 Cor 12:10 and 12:30 clearly teach that not all Christians had the gift of tongues, and thus there is no evidence for the charismatic view that tongues is the initial sign of sanctification.

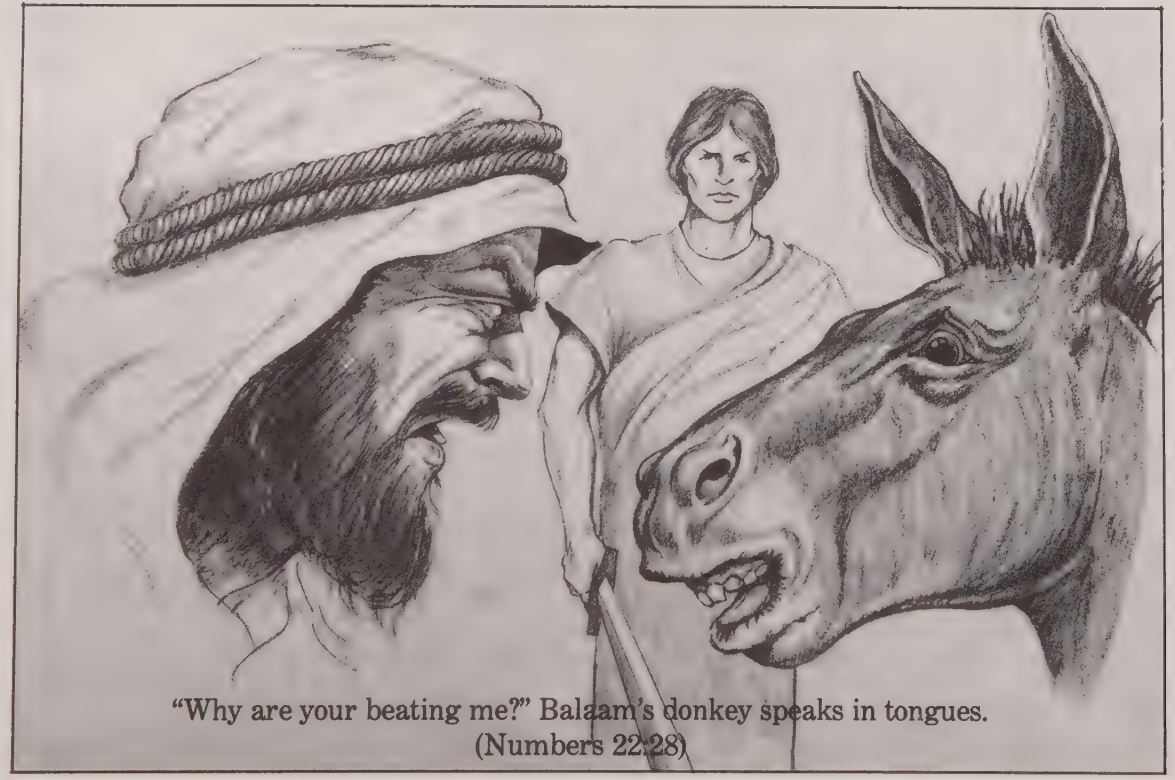
6) The experience of the Samaritans in Acts 8 is never called "baptism of the Holy Spirit," and apart from probable tonguespeaking, there are few similarities to Acts 2. In Acts 2 the Spirit comes direct from heaven; in Acts 8 it is mediated by the laying on of apostolic hands. In Acts 2 it happens to the apostles; in Acts 8 it happens to Samaritans who were already Christians. In Acts 2 there were tongues of fire and a mighty wind; in Acts 8 there were no such signs. (See Chapter 5 if you are still confused about Acts 8.)

7) It is also erroneously assumed that Saul became a Christian before he was baptised. This is clearly wrong (Acts 22:16). Furthermore, Ananias laid hands on him not to baptise him in the Spirit, but to restore his sight (9:12,17).

8) As we have seen in Chapter 5, the Caesareans (Acts 10) were not saved until they were baptised, contrary to the traditional understanding of the passage. Acts 10 is certainly not normative for Christians today. Peter has to think all the way back to Pentecost for a similar event (10:47, 11:15-17)—some eight years previous!

9) The Ephesian disciples (Acts 19) were not even Christians, but disciples of John the Baptist. Paul was not concerned with whether they had received a second blessing of the Spirit; he was concerned with whether they had received the indwelling of the Spirit at all. When he found that they had not, he realised that they were not saved (Rom 8:9, Acts 5:32), and therefore he baptised them. And once again, the Spirit coming on them was not normative; an *apostle* had placed his hands on them (refer to Chapter 10). Furthermore, the *Spirit* is the decisive difference between the Christian ministry and that of John. John's baptism conferred the forgiveness of sins, but *not* the Spirit (Mark 1:4). Because John's ministry overlapped Jesus' own ministry, God is removing all doubt in a potentially confusing situation.

10) Furthermore, charismatic thought equates being "filled with the Spirit" with Spirit baptism. But many were filled with the Spirit before Pentecost: John the



"Why are your beating me?" Balaam's donkey speaks in tongues.
(Numbers 22:28)

Baptist (Luke 1:15), Elizabeth (Luke 1:41), Zechariah (Luke 1:67), and others. There is no connection between being filled with the Spirit, which is a matter of spiritual maturity and Christlikeness, and the ability to work miracles. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit, and yet he never performed a miraculous sign (John 10:41)! Even Jesus, our supreme example, was filled with the Spirit, yet he *never* spoke in tongues! Had they walked into a modern charismatic church, John would have been told he was neglecting his gift, while Jesus' spirituality would have been suspect, since he did not pray in tongues!

11) In each situation in Acts it is claimed by charismatics that the ability to perform miracles, speak in tongues, heal, etc is contingent on having received the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." But the apostles performed miracles—and some fairly impressive ones!—long before Pentecost (Luke 9:2, Matt 10:8). And, if you will allow a little "tongue-in-cheek" humour, even Balaam's donkey spoke in tongues (Num 22:28)! It was a language it had never studied (Hebrew), it spoke the language miraculously, and it was empowered to be a better "witness" (to Balaam). Are we to infer that the donkey had been "Spirit baptised"?

12) Many charismatics teach that we become children of God only after God gives us his Spirit. (This is a Calvinist teaching. Calvinists teach that you have to receive the Spirit before you can believe and be saved.) But the NT says that we receive the Spirit *because* we have become God's sons (Gal 4:6), not the other way around. We hear the gospel and respond to it in faith, and *then* we receive the Spirit as a deposit, not vice versa. And it is obvious from Acts 2:38 that repentance and baptism lead to the gift of the Spirit, and do not come as a result of it.

13) If Holy Spirit Baptism is as indispensable to a mature spiritual life as the charismatics teach, it would surely have been listed in the requirements for elders in 1 Tim 3:1-7. It is not, however. Conclusion: if it is not

desirable or necessary that church leaders have it, it is certainly not desirable or necessary that all church members have it.

The Pentecostal View must be ruled completely out of court.

II. THE LIMITED VIEW

This is the view of the majority of the churches of Christ.

The Holy Spirit Baptism occurs only once or twice in the NT, and does not occur today, as now there is only one baptism (Eph 4:5). It occurred in fulfilment of prophecy and served an historical purpose: the establishment of the kingdom on earth. It was for the apostles, empowering them with infallibility and authority. The experience is therefore not available today.

Acts 1:5 is fulfilled specifically "in a few days" in Acts 2:4, and therefore we must believe that the promise was for the apostles, and not for Christians in general.

Most brothers who hold this view go on to say that although Acts 1:5 indicates that the experience was for the apostles, Acts 11:15-17 implies that Cornelius, his relatives and close friends also shared in this historical experience, thus fulfilling Joel's prophecy that the Holy Spirit baptism would come on "all flesh," both Jews and Gentiles, representatively (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17).

Attention is called to the fact that Luke uses the phrase "poured out" in Acts 10:45, thus implying a recurrence of the Pentecost phenomenon.

The similarities between Acts 2 and Acts 10 are stressed, and on this basis it is concluded that the two events are both baptism with the Holy Spirit. Similarities include:

Characteristics of Holy Spirit Baptism

(Limited View)

i. It came suddenly.	Acts 2:2/10:44
ii. No laying on of hands.	Acts 2:4/10:44
iii. Tongues were spoken.	Acts 2:4/10:46
iv. The prophecy of Joel was (half) fulfilled.	Acts 2:16 (Jews)/10:1, 10:24,44 (Gentiles)
v. It was promised, not commanded	Acts 1:5, 8/11:15-16
vi. It ushered in the church.	Acts 2:6,41/10:48, 11:18, 15:7,8
vii. It did not forgive sins.	Acts 2:38/10:438 (baptism in name of Jesus)

My critique will be limited to the standard Acts 2/10 position. The Acts 2 only position is similar (not to be confused with the Historical View, below).

CRITIQUE:

1) The entire view is artificially constructed. We look for the similarities, ignore the differences, and pretend the two are the same. *Of course* they are going to appear the same—we just eliminated all the differences! Granted, there are many similarities. But the *differences* must be taken into account, too:

i. In Acts 2 the baptism in the Spirit establishes the church, but in Acts 10 the church is already

established. (It is quite possible Gentiles had *already* been converted, and not just the Samaritans. The Gentile mission actually began with the persecution of Acts 8. See Acts 11:20-21.)

ii. There was no mighty wind in Acts 10, unlike Acts 2.

iii. And what about the tongues of fire? They too are missing in Acts 10.

iv. In Acts 2 the apostles receive the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide their minds and make their doctrine binding (John 14:26, 16:13); there is no evidence that the Gentiles "devoted themselves to the Caesarean's teaching..."!

v. Acts 2 fulfilled the promise of Acts 1:5, but Acts 10 did not.

All very well for the seven similarities, but what about the five differences? The point is that the basic approach of the Limited View gives us a general familiarity with the similarities between the two events, which is in its favour. But the differences are ignored, some of which are significant.

Let's say there are two mystery people. They both have two ears, dark hair, and a facial wart. They are both over six feet tall (never mind that one weighs 180 lbs, the other 230 lbs, or that one is only 20 years old, the other 50.). They are both male, phlegmatic with a touch of choleric, and unmarried. They both tend to move suddenly, speak the same tongue, and are ushers in the church. Eureka—they must be twins!

Not necessarily.

2) The Limited View does not square with the promise of John the Baptist (Matt 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33). It is normally claimed that the baptism with the

Spirit refers to the apostles, whereas the baptism with fire applies to judgement.

There is no way we can bend these passages like that! Either the Spirit and the fire apply to the apostles and the apostles only, or to all believers. Let's be consistent! If you doubt that the verse can apply to any but the apostles, take another look at Luke 3:16:

> *John answered them all, "I baptise you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."*

Some believe this to refer to the universal day of judgement, others the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. (Luke says that the axe is already at the root of the trees, implying an imminent judgement. Moreover, Mal 3 and 4 show that the winnowing and the burning are to happen to the Jewish nation. John comes first ["Elijah"—Matt 11:14] and then Jesus [Mal 3:1] before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes [Mal 4:5]. Compare Acts 2:20. Christ purifies the faithful remnant like silver, but the unbelieving Jews he destroys. Look into it!)

The most natural understanding of John the Baptist's promise is that it applies to *all* believers. Some advocates of the Limited View, understanding the difficulty with John's prophecy, say that all men were *representatively* baptised with the Spirit—both Jews and non-Jews. (If you read the Greek, notice the phrase *pasa sarx* [all flesh] in Rom 3:20.)

Either way, whether the fire applies to the final judgement or the judgement of Israel, we agree that its scope is considerably wider than the apostles. In addition, if the baptism with fire indicates an event, should not the baptism with the Spirit also indicate an event? We will have more to say on this shortly.

Some ask whether the baptism in fire could refer to the tongues of fire in Acts 2. Yes, that is possible, if we are willing to allow sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion! The apostles were never *immersed* in fire.

3) Again, if the promise of Acts 1:5 refers only to the apostles, it cannot include Cornelius. This puts some strain on the Acts 2/10 view, unless we widen the application of Acts 1:5 to include all mankind. If that is the case, then all of us could be said to have been baptised in the Spirit, not in an experience supplementary to conversion, but through the Spirit being made available at Pentecost.

4) Luke's use of the phrase "poured out" in Acts 10:45 does not necessarily imply that the Acts 10 experience is the same as the Pentecostal outpouring. Such reasoning would lead us to infer that the Pentecostal experience was the same as the Samaritan experience on the basis of the phrase "come upon" (Acts 1:8, 8:16). It would also lead us to understand that the Samaritans were not saved before Peter and John laid hands on them, on the basis of the word "receive" in Acts 2:38 and 8:15—which we have already shown to be impossible (Chapter 5). Finally, an argument based on similarity of terminology would lead us to deduce that John the Baptist spoke in tongues while an infant, on the basis of Luke 1:15 and Acts 2:4. This fallacy is the downfall of the General View, as we shall see.

5) Like those who espouse the Pentecostal View, most brothers who take this approach assume that baptism in the Holy Spirit was an experience, or only one specific part or "measure" of the Spirit's work. We will take this up under view IV, below.

6) If we assume that John 14:26 and 16:13 are fulfilled for the apostles at Pentecost when they are baptised in the Spirit (John 20:22 would seem to be a piece of prophetic drama), and if we assume that the Caesareans had the identical experience, it is difficult to see why the promises of Jesus in John do not also apply to Cornelius.

I do not deny that Acts 2 and Acts 10 are non-repeatable, historically unique events. Nor do I deny that Acts 2 and Acts 10 are linked in some way and that the term "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is used in connection with both of them. But there are serious problems with maintaining that these two events are "*The* baptism in the Holy Spirit."

Although the Limited View has great explanatory value, under cross-examination some rather serious weaknesses come to light (Prov 18:17).

III. THE GENERAL VIEW

This is the view of many prominent evangelicals, such as Billy Graham, Anthony Hoekema, and John R.W. Stott.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit is identical with conversion. When a man "receives" Christ into his personality, he is thereby baptised with the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the outpouring of the Spirit in the Christian age, a fulfilment of the promise foretold by the OT prophets. Thus, we live in the age of the Spirit. Historically, **the baptism of the Holy Spirit itself is the promise or gift of the Holy Spirit** and as such is an integral part of the gospel. In other words, the baptism of the Spirit is the promise of the Spirit of Acts 2:38 and thus essential for salvation.

Joel's prophecy relates to *all* men, not just to the apostles. Acts 2:1-4 is linked with Acts 2:17,33. Moreover, the "gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38 and 10:45 must refer to the same thing in each case. In Cornelius' case that was Holy Spirit baptism. After all, John the Baptist prophesied that we would all be baptised with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). The key scripture is I Cor 12:13:

> *For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

All Christians have been baptised in the Spirit at the time they became part of the church, in which there is salvation. 1 Cor 12:13 does not necessarily refer to water baptism—since many Christians are saved before that ceremony—but rather refers to the moment of saving faith. The Pentecostal View creates a two-stage salvation or initiation, whereas the NT teaches a single process. This single conversion event is referred to in Titus 3:5-6, where the outpouring of the Spirit and rebirth are linked.

Some proponents add that, on the basis of John 3:5, the one baptism of Eph 4:5 has two components: water and spirit.

CRITIQUE:

The General View correctly criticises the two-stage Pentecostal View. Receiving the Spirit is not our *goal*, but our starting place. Furthermore, it attempts honestly to deal with John's prediction and Paul's words in 1 Cor 12:13. However, the major weakness of this view is that it attempts to equate too many different aspects of the Spirit's activity.

For example, what happened to the apostles and what happened to the 3000 are hardly identical. The 3000 are not said to have spoken in tongues, or received any apostolic prerogatives. If the "gift" and the "baptism" were identical, we would expect identical effects. Why then the difference?

Passages like Acts 4:31 are also difficult to explain, since those who were filled with the Spirit in this case were clearly already saved.

And how about John the Baptist, who is said to have been "filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth" (Luke 1:15). Certainly he was not baptised in the Spirit!

In short, the General View is correct in insisting all believers live in and enjoy the age of the Spirit, but it suffers because it insists on treating as interchangeable terms which, though they may in some instances be treated so, refer to broadly different aspects of the Spirit's work.

2) This view would have the Caesareans being saved before they were baptised, since they would receive the Spirit (Rom 8:9) when they experienced the Holy Spirit baptism. We have already shown, however, that this cannot be the case (Chapter 5).

3) As in views I and II, Holy Spirit baptism, a major historical event, is reduced to just one facet of the Spirit's routine work in the lives of believers.

Although the General View is attractive, and appears at first to be a neater approach than views I and II, it creates too many problems to recommend itself to us.

IV. THE HISTORICAL VIEW

This is the view that a significant number in our brotherhood advocate, for example Richard Rogers and the Sunset School of Preaching.

The weakness of the first three views we have discussed is that they treat the Holy Spirit baptism as only one part of the activity of the Spirit. The Historical View holds that the **baptism in the Spirit was the pouring out of the Spirit on the church, on the Christian age. It was an historic event with continuing effects: the Spirit is still available**, and still leads his people. This is exactly what Peter said, linking what was happening with Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16-17,33).

What happened at Pentecost to the apostles as well as to the three thousand are results of the outpoured Spirit of God. So is what happened to us when we were immersed into Christ; we received the indwelling of the Spirit.

The Spirit baptism was not an *experience;* it was an *event.* The Limited and General views (and certainly the Pentecostal view!) for the most part consider it to be an experience. We could say that those present when it occurred experienced something, or that different people have had different experiences *as a result of* the outpouring of the Spirit. But that in no way means that the Spirit baptism is an *experience* for you and me.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit, as described in Matt 3, Mark 1, Luke 3, John 1, and Acts 1, is the historic event of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

For one thing, this view makes sense of the OT prophets. Joel prophesied (2:28):

> *"And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people..."*

Joel's prophecy makes clear that *all people* are to benefit from the outpoured Spirit. Now this doesn't mean that God pours the Spirit on unbelievers, any more than "therefore all died" (2 Cor 5:14) means that every person is saved by sharing in Christ's death through baptism. Our response is the deciding factor. The Spirit is available.

Isaiah (8th century BC) also looked forward to the age of the Spirit (32:15, 44:3):

> *"till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,*
> *and the desert becomes a fertile field,*
> *and the fertile field seems like a forest.*
>
> *"For I will pour out water on the thirsty land,*
> *and streams on the dry ground;*
> *I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,*
> *and my blessing on your descendants."*

Ezekiel (6th century) had a similar vision (39:29):

> *"I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Sovereign Lord.*

In the late 6th century Zechariah offered the same message of hope (12:10, 13:1, 14:8):

> *"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a Spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child...*
>
> *"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.*
>
> *"On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem."*

And finally John, the last of the prophets of the Old Testament, prophesied the same thing (Mark 1:8):

> *"I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."*

The OT prophets anticipated the age of the new covenant, the age of the Spirit in which we are blessed to live (Matt 11:11). Peter says in Acts 2:16, "*This is* what was spoken by the prophet Joel." Pentecost is to be seen as the fulfillment of the promised outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:33).

Of the four views we have explained, this one makes the most sense of John's prophecy, with the Limited View coming in a close second. We all benefit from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Just as the judgement (fire, Luke 3:16) was for more than just twelve men, so the Spirit is for many men. We are not forced into the awkward position of changing the scope of "you" when moving from Spirit to fire.

Are the baptism and the outpouring identical? No, but they describe the same event from two different viewpoints. From the perspective of heaven, the Spirit was poured out; from the perspective of the earth, there was a baptism in the Spirit. Let me offer a helpful analogy, borrowing from Richard Rogers (*The Holy Spirit of God*, 23):

> Pouring is the event from Jesus' viewpoint. Baptizing is the event from the recipient's viewpoint. A coin placed in a glass is immersed after water is poured upon it. The pouring is not the immersion. It is the water leaving the source. The immersion is not the pouring. It is the result, the covering of the coin. So it is here in this case.

I would add that once the Spirit is poured out, he is not poured out again. It is like a glass of water that has been emptied. Once the Spirit was poured out, that was final. Now the Spirit is here, with us; he is on our level, available for all who are willing to drink (1 Cor 12:13).

Pentecost can never be repeated; it was a once-for-all event. Yes, the Holy Spirit baptism was an *historical event*, but the availability of the Spirit today is a *present reality*.

That the outpouring of the Spirit was a once-for-all event, not to be repeated (e.g. Acts 10) is supported by a study of the verb "has poured out" (Acts 2:33) in the original language. The verb is in the aorist aspect. [Some incorrectly call it the aorist "tense," not realising that the aorist, although usually implying a past action, is tenseless, and draws its time reference from the context. Thus an aorist can operate within any time specification. Many scholars therefore refer to the aorist *aspect*.] What that means is that the outpouring as an action occurred at one specific point in time. It is hard to see how the prophets could even have imagined separate outpourings for Jews and Gentiles, especially as their visions often included the Gentiles anyway (e.g. Isa 26:18, 42:6, 45:22, 49:6, 66:19-21).

CRITIQUE:

1) Isn't the Holy Spirit baptism only for the apostles, according to Acts 1 and John 14 and 16?

If so, it wasn't only Matthias who was missing something; even the apostle Paul would have missed out on the promise. And Cornelius wouldn't have stood a chance! The fact is that Luke 3:15-17 shows that the Holy Spirit baptism was for more than just the Twelve. As I have mentioned before, many advocates of the Acts 2/10 view avoid this snare by never restricting H.S. baptism to the apostles in the first place.

Incidentally although I would not dispute that the apostles received their doctrinal gift at the Holy Spirit baptism, this was not their first promise of *inspiration*; see Matt 10:20.

2) If all of us have been baptised in the Spirit, then all of us should have the miraculous gifts or be able to work miracles.

Such a statement belies a fundamental confusion about the gifts of the Spirit. *Jesus* and Jesus alone is the one who baptised in the Spirit. But he does not confer the gifts. The *Spirit* is the one who gives us gifts and power (1 Cor 12:11). Besides, as we have already argued, the apostles performed miracles long before the outpouring of the Spirit (Luke 9:2).

3) Then you're saying that there are two baptisms! No, I'm not saying that. To begin with, the phrase "Holy Spirit baptism" does not occur anywhere in the Bible. It is clear that John's baptism was something which individual men and women underwent, as is Christian (Acts 2:38) baptism. But who ever said that there was a third *baptismal experience*, "baptism in the Holy Spirit?" If the baptism in the Spirit was the pentecostal outpouring envisaged by Joel, it is non-repeatable.

Also, for what it is worth, some point out that you do not *receive* a "baptism with the Holy Spirit." *Being baptised* with the Spirit is one thing, but *receiving* a baptism with the Spirit? (One doesn't receive the H.S. baptism when the H.S. baptism is a historical event. You can't *receive* the crucifixion of Jesus, but you can be *crucified* with Jesus [Rom 6:6]).

4) What about Cornelius? If Holy Spirit baptism was a once-for-all historical event, why does Peter quote Jesus' words about the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

For the sake of the discussion to follow, let us quote Acts 11:15-17 in full:

> *"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.' So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God!"*

a) Note that Peter never explicitly called what happened to Cornelius a "Holy Spirit baptism."

b) Peter refers back to the beginning because he and the other apostles had a similar experience at that time—and presumably no such experience had happened to anyone since Pentecost. As at Pentecost, the Spirit came suddenly and directly on men. This was most unusual. He says that this event in Caesarea made him *remember* the original Pentecostal event, not that this was a *recurrence* of it. Acts 10 is not the "Caesarean Pentecost," a second outpouring of the Spirit. That was a unng Jewish Christians in Acts 10. In both cases God is making a special point.

c) If the apostles in Acts 2 did not have a "Holy Spirit baptism," but rather experienced the results of it, we

would not be bound to contend that Cornelius and company received the "Holy Spirit baptism," although they certainly felt the effects of it. (Remember, in this view the H.S. Baptism is a historical event, the Pentecostal pouring of the Spirit from heaven to earth, not an experience.)

d) The phrases "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (10:45) and "the same gift as he gave us" (11:17) imply that both the apostles and the Caesareans were "baptised in the Spirit" only if the "gift" is referring to this baptism itself and not to a result or effect of the baptism. There is no way to prove this conclusively from this passage, and so Acts 11:17 is not a valid objection to the Historical View. Moreover, since many people received the Spirit outwardly, through the laying on of hands (see Chapter 10), it is possible that Peter has in mind the manner in which the Spirit came: without human mediation.

e) To sum up, confusion arises when we read Acts 11 with preconceptions about the nature of H.S. baptism. If we take it to be an *event* on the day of Pentecost, most of this confusion will be eliminated.

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL VIEW

The H.S. baptism is to be equated with the historic outpouring of the Spirit in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost some nineteen hundred and fifty years ago. Because of that unique event, the entire NT age received the H.S. baptism. The experience of the apostles in Acts 2 results from that outpouring, as does the experience of the 3000, who received the now available gift of the indwelling Spirit. The spiritual gifts which the church received for its edification are also to be seen as a consequence of the H.S. baptism on Pentecost. Cornelius and the other early Gentile Christians received the Spirit first outwardly, then inwardly in Christian baptism, as a result of that pentecostal outpouring. Finally, today we too benefit from the H.S. baptism, as the Spirit works in our personal lives and in the life of the church.

Which View Can We Accept?

In the final analysis, only the Limited and Historical Views seem to hold water. While there are difficulties in accepting the Limited View that disappear if we accept the Historical View, there are also difficulties with proposing the historical view as the only possibility.

Proponents of both views agree that the H.S. baptism occurred on Pentecost in fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, serving a unique historical purpose. We also all agree that if the H.S. baptism occurred a second time, the tenth chapter of Acts is the only place that could possibly mention it. The two views refuse to entertain the Pentecostal View, because of the great number of contradictions it has with the plain teaching of scripture. One can see that the Limited and Historical Views agree in many more ways than they differ.

PRACTICALS ON STUDYING THE "HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM" WITH CHARISMATICS

In studying this rather complex subject with a charismatic, begin by showing the error of the Pentecostal View, referring to the arguments in our critique above. (Do not make the tactical error of presenting several views and then offering him a choice; that would be confusing, to say the least!) Teach him whichever view most commends itself to you (II or IV), and don't hesitate to add that you have an open mind. Especially emphasise the conclusions, which are the same in either case:

- The Pentecostal View is utterly impossible to support.
- H.S. baptism is not an experience available today.
- In the NT, H.S. baptism serves a unique historical purpose which must be appreciated if we are fully to understand it.

As we will discuss in Chapter 14, it is probably not wise to attempt to cover the Holy Spirit baptism with a charismatic until you are fairly well advanced in your studies with him. Attempts to psychologise his "warm, fuzzy feeling" are always better received if you have shown him he is not a disciple on other grounds first.

7

Beyond a Shadow of a Doubt

CONFIRMATION OF THE MESSAGE

One of the greatest miracles of all time was God's giving us the Bible itself! It is our guide for life, and without it we cannot survive (Matt 4:4). The Bible has been with us for nineteen hundred years, but how easy it is to forget that during a period almost as long, from Moses (c.1500 BC) to the end of the first century AD, the Bible was still in the process of formation.

Most scholars believe that the OT scriptures were not completely collected or "canonised" until the first century AD, while the NT was probably not completely written and collected until some time in the second century AD. (The Muratorian Canon, providing roughly the same list of NT books as we have today, dates from c.180 AD and is the earliest surviving NT canon.)

Imagine being a member of a congregation that possessed the gospel of Mark, one letter of Paul and perhaps a copy of 1 Peter—and nothing else from the "New Testament," which would not be completed for another thirty years! For many of our first century brothers and sisters, the OT was the only scripture they ever knew (2 Tim 3:15).

Because God chose to work through humans and history to bring his word to us, the entire process of inspiration, writing and canonisation took *centuries.* Like many of the finer things in life, the Bible could not be rushed. Solomon's temple took seven years to build, Herod's temple forty-six years, and Noah's ark a hundred. Ask Noah if it was worth all of the time he put into building it! (He had only one chance to get it right!)

Throughout most of the period of recorded biblical history the word of God was in the process of *becoming.* Now it just *is.* But before it became what it is—written, complete, available—it was ever in need of confirmation. Confirmation not for the *written* word, but for the *spoken* word. We have already touched briefly on this in Chapter 4 (sections 8 and 9), but it is well worth establishing further, particularly as there is so much evidence we haven't yet considered.

The thesis of this chapter is that the purpose of biblical miracles was *to bring us the word of God.* Yes, of course they were for confirming the word, and I understand that to be the primary function of miracles, but it took many miracles just to produce the scriptures: miracles of inspiration, for example. God's Spirit worked in the OT writers. 2 Pet 1:19-21 discusses the inspiration of the OT prophets. Eph 3:5 talks about the inspiration of the NT apostles and prophets (2:20, 4:11). If we understand the thesis, we will have a totally changed perspective on miracles.

If there were miracles of *inspiration,* there were also miracles of *certification.* Not just anyone could proclaim the word of the Lord—although many tried, as we read earlier (Jer 23). True prophets and apostles required credentials to estabish their authority to speak for God, or to put it another way, to confirm their word.

Confirming The Law And Prophets

In the OT both the Law and the Prophets received certification. When Moses was a bit nervous about becoming God's spokesman, God showed him a clever trick with his staff. Moses didn't quite understand what God was up to, so God told him:

> *"This," said the Lord, "is so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you" (Exod 4:5).*

The miracles Moses performed—and there were *many* during the forty years he led Israel—were to establish his authority. During these years the Bible was just beginning to be written. It had been a long time since God had last spoken, maybe centuries, and it is easy to see the vital role the miracles would play in convincing the people that the words Moses spoke had the full authority of the Lord God behind them. And if anyone dared challenge that word—watch out (Num 16:28-35)! Often the miracles associated with Moses were done by God himself (Exod 20:18-19). Miracles also served to convince outsiders (those of them who were open to believing) that the God of Israel was the true God and his servants should be heeded (Exod 7-14).

As for the prophets, miracles are associated with the rise of the prophetic movement more than with the later stages. Elijah was a man with a lot of spark. Who could forget the way he outran the wicked Ahab's chariot for 30 miles (1 Kings 18:46), or the way he used miracles to call Israel back to God (1 Kings 18:21-39)? Perhaps the widow of Zarephath put it best:

> *Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth" (1 Kings 17:24).*

When the Law and the Prophets were committed to writing, there was no need for further substantiation.

Do you remember the rich man's plea to Abraham to send Lazarus back to his brothers? They would repent, so he reasoned, if only they could see a miracle. Yet they already had the scriptures (Moses and the Prophets), which should have been enough. The rich man failed to appreciate this—as do many today—and actually had a disagreement with Abraham:

> *Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."*

"No, father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."

He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:29-31).

Confirming The Gospel

Jesus' miracles were what convinced Nicodemus that he was a teacher sent from God (John 3:2). When John the Baptist was having problems with his faith, what did Jesus encourage him to consider? His miracles (Matt 11:4-5). Jesus' challenge to all of us comes ringing through his words to Philip:

"Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves" (John 14:11).

The miracles of Jesus were not primarily to meet people's physical needs—for if that were the case, all Jesus needed to do was snap his fingers and every lame person in Palestine would have been healed. They were not even primarily a demonstration of his love, which was pre-eminently shown in his service (John 13:1) and especially in his crucifixion (Rom 5:8). No, the signs Jesus did were to leave no doubt as to his authority (Acts 2:22)—and no excuses, either!

The conclusion of the gospel of John presents a profound and most important truth:

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (20:30-31).

The miraculous signs of Jesus point to his authority, to his Lordship, and back up the message of the man whose life already perfectly embodied that message.

The apostles were *all* accredited by miracles which is one reason why Paul lays emphasis on his own miracles as a witness to his apostolic authority, since he was not one of the original number (Rom 15:19, 2 Cor 12:12).

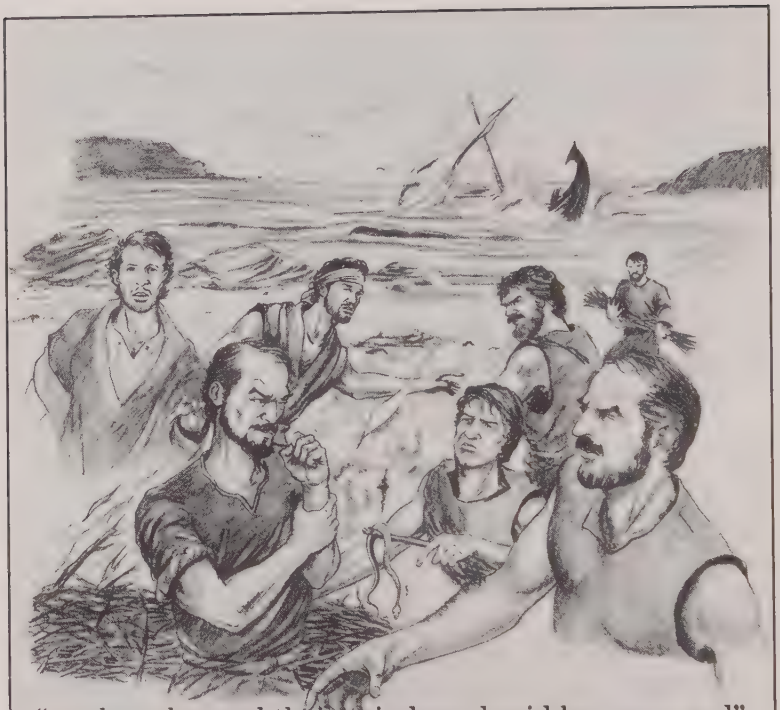
Look through the book of Acts, and realise that most of the wonders there were effected through the apostles or those on whom the apostles had laid their hands. Miracles performed by the apostles themselves are found in Acts 2:43, 3:7, 5:12, 5:15,16, 9:34, 9:40, 13:11, 14:3, 14:10, 15:12, 16:18, 19:6, 19:11-12, 20:10, 28:8,9.

Why was this so important? The early church devoted itself to the *apostles'* teaching. Imagine what would have happened if just anybody had been accepted and followed, an uninspired man in an age when God's inspired word was still not complete (1 Cor 13:10). In fact, this happened in some congregations (2 Cor 11:3-6, 12:11-12). In these passages Paul affirms his apostolic authority, particularly on the basis of his ability to work miracles.

Pay special attention to Acts 14:3:

> *So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time [at Iconium], speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.*

What was the reason God enabled them to perform miracles? To encourage Paul and Barnabas? To impress people? Was it not so that the message they preached would be accepted as the word of God? And what were they preaching? Can you imagine Paul saying, "Turn with me to Luke chapter 9, verse 23, and we will begin our lesson today?" They weren't preaching out of an NIV Bible! Today we are blessed by God to have his



"...they changed their minds and said he was a god" (Acts 28:6)

completed and complete word for teaching the lost and each other; we have need of *nothing* beyond this (2 Tim 3:16-17), including miraculous confirmation.

Also helpful for our study are Mark 16:19-20 and Heb 2:2-4, which speak of the miraculous confirmation of the word of God.

> *After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it (Mark 16:19-20).*

> *For if the message spoken by angels [the OT] was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will (Heb 2:2-4).*

There is no excuse for ignoring the word of God. As the Hebrew writer argues, the message of salvation was announced by Jesus, then confirmed by the apostles. The confirmation has *already* taken place. And although the past tense is not conclusive, the implication is that the age of miracles is past.

CONCLUSION

We have seen the central role of miracles in confirming the word of God, and that it was always the *spoken* word of God that received confirmation, not the *written* word (scripture). John 20:30-31 shows that once the miracles were written down, just *reading* of them should be sufficient to bring us to faith in Christ.

But most charismatics do not understand this. They reason that there have to be miracles today for people to turn to God. The strange thing is that, like the rich man (Luke 16), this is how many unbelievers also reason. People are always saying things to me like, "If there really is a God, then let him make a special appearance to me. I'm an open-minded person." According to John 20, however, even if Jesus came back to visit a devout atheist, and performed before his very eyes every miracle he had ever performed during his life on earth, that would make no difference!

Make no mistake about it: the charismatics today have really missed the boat when it comes to understanding the purpose of miracles. Paul Cho of Seoul, one of the foremost charismatic leaders and opinion-makers in the world, says "Without seeing miracles people cannot be satisfied that God is powerful" (*The Fourth Dimension*, 64). How different to Abraham's words, which have a common sense and wisdom lacking in most charismatic pulpits:

> *"If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead!"*

The purpose of biblical miracles was to bring the word of God to man. Now there is a back cover to the Bible, and so they have served their purpose: we have the complete Bible. As we have stated before, this does not mean that God's hands are tied, or that he does not answer prayers for help, healing, etc, only that there is no *need* for miracles today in the way that there was in the first century.

The miracles served a great purpose, in confirming the message of the preacher beyond a shadow of a doubt. And once the word of God had been confirmed, there was no need of further confirmation.

8

Tongues of Angels and Men

Basic Questions on Tonguespeaking

It is very well to say that miracles fulfilled their historical purpose, and thus aren't necessary today. And yet charismatics point to events and experiences which they claim to be authentic and to prove their position. One of the most universal charismatic "miracles" is tonguespeaking, and so the next two chapters are devoted to exploring this phenomenon.

Tongues is the miraculous gift of the Spirit most often claimed by charismatics. This chapter will answer ten basic questions regarding tonguespeaking. (The next will offer a complete exposition of 1 Cor 12-14.)

1. What is "glossolalia?"
2. Is tonguespeaking really only psychological?
3. Is tonguespeaking a Christian phenomenon only?
4. What is the nature of biblical tongues?
5. Are there "angel languages?"
6. What was the purpose of biblical tongues?
7. Were tongues an ecstatic language of prayer?
8. Does Mark 16 teach that all believers should speak in tongues?
9. Did tongues ever die out?
10. Is it a sin to speak in tongues?

1) What is "glossolalia?"

Glossolalia is the technical term for tongue-speaking. The word is compounded from the Greek words *glossa* (tongue, language) and *lalia* (speech). It may refer to a wide range of psychological phenomena as well as to genuine biblical tongues. In this book we confine ourselves to the simpler "tonguespeaking." (Not to be confused with *glossalgia* [endless chattering]!)

Tonguespeaking, or glossolalia, requires "interpretation" to become intelligible. The same tape-recorded tonguespeaking has elicited widely different "interpretations," depending on who was asked to interpret, as the interpretation tends to be as subjective as the tongues. Once I was listening to a "message" in tongues and its "interpretation." The meaning given to the tongues was far longer than the original "message" itself. I pointed this out to the interpreter, who admitted that she had taken some liberties with her interpretation, and suspected that I might have the true gift of interpretation!

2) Is tonguespeaking really only psychological?

It is my conclusion that tonguespeaking is *purely* a psychological phenomenon. It is common among people who internalise their problems instead of bringing them out into the open and dealing with them. People with unresolved tension (due to persistent sin, lack of prayer, lack of evangelism, etc) are prime candidates.

> *The drawing power of the glossolalia movement among present day intellectual types is the unconscious need all people have to solve their personality conflicts, to shed their feelings of inadequacy and guilt (Bergsma, Speaking with Tongues, 16).*

Tonguespeaking has been analysed in the laboratory as well as on site in many denominational settings, and has *consistently* been found to be linguistically meaningless. When analysed it has been shown to resemble infantile speech, and to comprise syllables and sounds predominantly from the tonguespeaker's own language or language group. A Chinese tonguespeaker will sound entirely different to a German tonguespeaker!

Occasionally a "sentence" in tongues may incorporate a foreign phrase, either by accident or through a phenomenon called "cryptomnesia," where the speaker has unconsciously recalled words in another language which he has heard at some point in his past. Although this is rare, it has been proved to occur, especially among people who at some time have lived in a linguistically plural environment (home, city, etc).

One would think that the many claims of tonguespeakers, especially those of speakers who believed they were speaking in actual foreign languages, would have been submitted to experts in the linguistic field for analysis. And so they have! A few years ago I made my own study of the subject, reading ten books and quite a few scholarly articles on tonguespeaking, most of which were authored by psychologists who were interested in studying the phenomenon for other than religious reasons. (I found this study extremely useful in answering specific questions I had on tonguespeaking, as well as tying up loose ends from my charismatic days.)

One such article is E. M. Pattison's "Behavioral Science Research on the Nature of Glossolalia" in the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* [1968], which concluded:

i. Tonguespeaking is not foreign language.
ii. It is acquired behaviour, and perfected with practice.
iii. It can be simulated, and tonguespeakers cannot discern this from charismatic tonguespeaking.
iv. It has characteristics of infantile speech.

If you want to further your knowledge of the subject I recommend that you avail yourself of the *Psychology of Religion* section of any good university library, where you will probably find more literature on the subject than you will be able to read.

3) Is tonguespeaking a Christian phenomenon only?

No, tonguespeaking is a religious phenomenon world-wide. Most relevant for our understanding of tongue speaking in the NT is the tonguespeaking of the various Greek religions of the Mediterranean world in the first century. For further information, consult Chapter 3.

4) What is the nature of biblical tongues?

The Greek word *glossa*, like its English counterpart, means *tongue* or *language*. Glossa carries no more connotation of a mysterious language than the English word *tongue*.

Much confusion has been caused by poor translation from Greek into English. The translators of the King James Version (tr. 1605-1611) inserted the italicised word *unknown* before *tongue* in 1 Cor 14:2,4,13,14,19,27. This word is not actually part of the Greek text. They were only trying to be helpful, but ended up lending credence to the charismatic interpretation of *tongue* as something otherworldly. (By the way, most charismatics will admit that the interpolation *unknown* is foreign to the original text, so this point will usually be conceded without debate.)

Normally a book written nearly four centuries ago would have minimal influence on the present generation, but the KJV's enduring popularity makes the "tongues" issue a continuing debate. Many Christians believe that the KJV is the only "authorised" English Bible. Their attitude: "If it was good enough for Jesus and the

apostles, it's good enough for me!" (Never mind that the KJV was never officially "authorised.") Many other English versions, particularly free translations and paraphrases, commit similar errors.

Why should we even call tongues *tongues* when the original word means language? To most English speakers it suggests the organ of the mouth more than a language. (Yes, it can mean *tongue*, too.) An important principle of translation is to select a common word in the translation language to represent a common word in the original language, and to choose a rare word in the translation language to represent a rare word in the original. That is the only way to keep a translation fresh, understandable, and relevant. *Glossa* was a common word in first century Koine Greek; *tongue* (meaning language) is a fairly rare word in twentieth century English. Of course most charismatics prefer not to update the translation of this word, since they would seem to be ceding ground to the non-charismatics.

Other versions over-interpret *glossa* and depart from sound translation: "language of ectasy" (NEB), "strange tongues" (TEV).

When we turn to the Bible, we find no evidence at all that *glossa* is anything but an actual human language. The *glossai* (languages) spoken at Pentecost were actual languages: Latin, Arabic, Cretan, Parthian, etc (Acts 2:6-11). In fact *glossa* is used interchangeably with *dialektos* in verse 6. *Dialektos* simply means a regional language, a *dialect*. There is no hint here of a mystery language! Luke introduces Christian baptism to us in Acts 2, and as a result it is safe to assume that whenever someone is baptised, Acts 2:38 describes his conversion. In the same way, Luke introduces tongues in Acts 2, and there is no reason to assume that its nature changed afterwards. *Glossai* in Acts and in the rest of the NT are actual foreign languages.

By the way, when studying the Bible with charismatics, do not try to impress them with your knowledge of Greek. You may have noticed that nearly every argument

advanced in this section can be made with an English Bible alone. It is not fair to "snow" people with arguments from the Greek, since they are not in a position to respond, even if their position were correct. And for most of us, if they happened to know the Greek, we wouldn't be able to respond—isn't that right?

It is also clear from 1 Cor 14 that tongues are languages:

> *Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me (14:10-11).*

Actual languages are what Paul has in mind—foreign languages. Any language is a foreign language to someone who does not speak it. For example, to the vast majority of readers Mongolian is a foreign language. But not to a Mongolian!

These tongues, or languages, were miraculously acquired foreign languages. The tonguespeaker never studied them. With translation (interpretation) they became intelligible, as with any foreign language today. I am confident that all of you are well able to understand Icelandic. With a translator, of course!

5) Are there "angel languages?"

Common sense would lead us to postulate that if angels, being non-physical beings, communicate in languages, they would not consist of the sounds and sound waves human languages are made of. You might as well ask what language God speaks! Some, however, feel strongly that there is a heavenly language. I am reminded of fundamentalist Muslims I have met who insist, as the Koran teaches, that God's native tongue is Arabic!

There is only one passage that could lead to the impression that angels have languages which humans might speak, and that is 1 Cor 13:1:

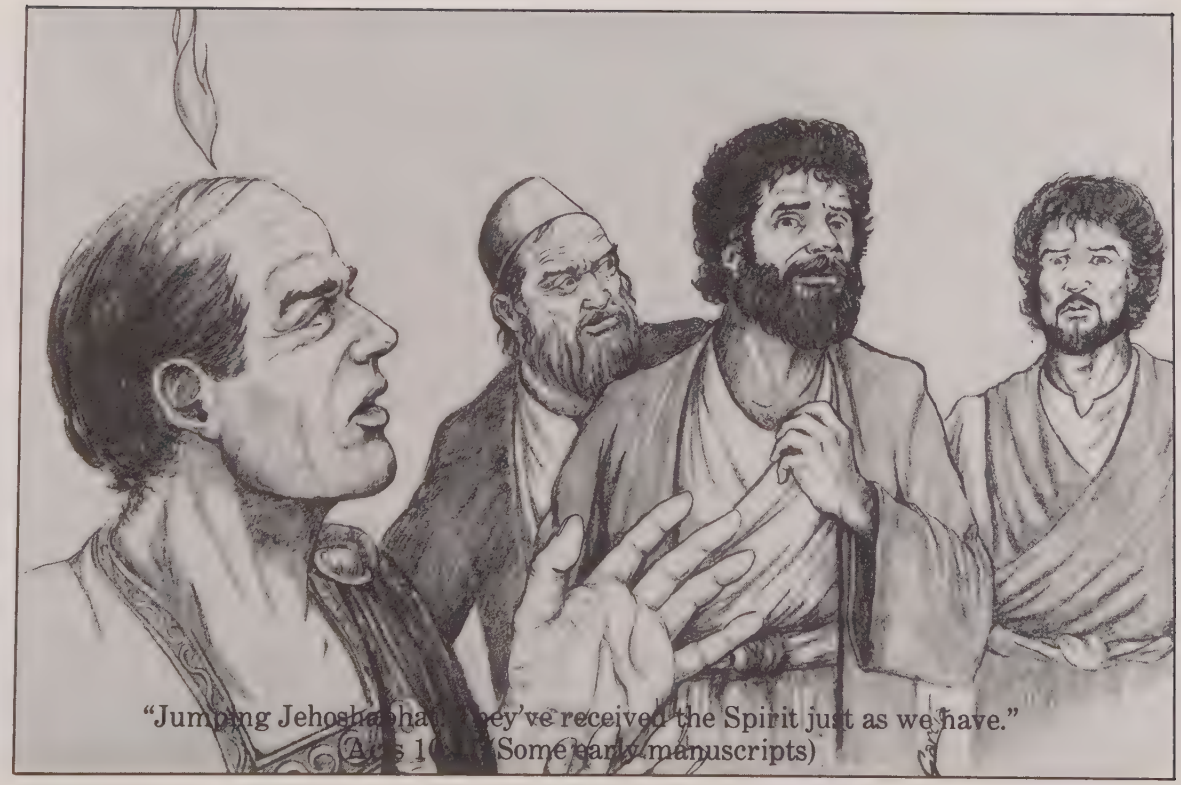
If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

The passage says, "*If* I speak in the tongues of...angels," not that angel languages actually *exist.* But even if we *could* speak in the angelic language, that would be worthless without love—a point often missed by charismatics. More will be said about this in the commentary on 1 Cor 13 in the next chapter.

6) What was the purpose of biblical tongues?

a) A common pentecostal view is that tongues are evidence of salvation. As we have discussed, that is an impossible purpose of tongues (Chapter 6—The Pentecostal View). Pentecostals also claim tongues as a private language of prayer; we will answer this claim under Question 7, below. Most charismatics hold that speaking in tongues is the gateway to greater power and service in the kingdom. If you can just receive this gift, they argue, you can really begin to experience the blessings of the Christian life. And until you receive it, you will flounder around in mediocrity. However, few tonguespeakers are disciples; openness to discipling, serious study of the scriptures, and lifestyle evangelism often fall by the wayside. Thus, this "short-cut to power" short-circuits the will of God.

b) Tongues are also claimed to have been for missionary work. They were given, many argue, so that missionaries would not have to study the languages of the peoples they evangelised. Although this particular interpretation did not arise until the third century, it is certainly possible. (But you would think that such a use of tongues would have been mentioned in the book of Acts!) Perhaps tongues were being used to reach people who could not understand the speaker, and we have no record. In Acts 2 the audience, despite having their own national languages, spoke the same language as Peter. Further,



"Jumping Jehoshaphat! They've received the Spirit just as we have."
(Acts 10:47) (Some early manuscripts)

the actual sermon Peter preached was not delivered in tongues. Moreover, as a result of the efforts of Alexander the Great [356-323 BC] to forge a world culture, Koine Greek became the common language of the entire Mediterranean world. Thus it is unlikely that the early Christian missionaries were unable to find translators amongst the people they evangelised.

c) In 1 Cor 12:7, 14:5,26 etc we see that tongues were given for edification. Edification for the church was possible only with translation. (The individual since he understood the language in which he was speaking, edified himself.) While one could conceivably dazzle a congregation with his linguistic prowess, t is unlikely he could truly edify them, since they would be taking away with them no more than a feeling, rather than "solid food."

d) In 1 Cor 14:22 we read that tongues were a sign for unbelievers, a *negative* sign, a sign of rejection by God. This fact is appreciated by few Christians, let alone charismatics. (For clarification, see the commentary in the next chapter.)

e) Finally, tongues were for *confirmation* of the gospel message, according to Mark 16:17,20. (See Question 8 for an explanation of Mark 16:17-20.)

7) Were tongues an ecstatic language of prayer?

I imagine that certain Corinthians were using their gift of tongues at home for their personal devotions, but it is not my opinion that there would have been anything wrong with this. This may in fact have been edifying (1 Cor 14:4).

(There was a time when I thought I would join a mission team and go to South America. In preparation I began having my quiet times in Spanish. I read my Spanish Bible, and attempted to pray to the Lord in my "tongue." That was different, edifying!)

Exactly why is the gift of tongues considered by charismatics to be a *private*, personal language of ecstasy and praise?

Partly it is because of their interpretation of 1 Cor 13:1, which is erroneous. But there are other verses in 1 Cor 12-14 which seem to support their view.

1 Cor 14:2 provides two lines of reasoning for the charismatic:

> *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.*

It is claimed that the language of praise is private and not meant to be interpreted. But the rest of the chapter assumes that untranslated tongues are useless! There is no support for the idea that some tongues are foreign languages, and that others are heavenly languages incapable of translation.

The same claim is made on the basis of the word "mysteries." But a mystery ceases to be so when it is unravelled; likewise a tongue ceases to be unintelligible once it has been interpreted. The word "mysteries" does not prove the charismatic position.

Another passage used to promote the charismatic position is 1 Cor 14:14:

> *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.*

It is argued that Paul is *advocating* such prayer. As we will see in the commentary (next chapter), that is not likely, and certainly cannot be proved. The assumption is that it is actually desirable to have an unfruitful mind. (Remember the advice to put your brain in a box and shoot it to the moon?)

Finally, 1 Cor 14:28 can be interpreted as saying that we ought to pray in tongues in our personal prayers:

> *If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.*

Certainly Paul is not forbidding private prayer in tongues. He is saying that it is generally out of place in the assembly. Yet whether or not one may pray in tongues depends wholly on whether one possesses the genuine gift of tongues! That is the real issue. My position is that tongues are no longer present.

8) Does Mark 16 mean that all believers should speak in tongues?

A good question, and more easily dealt with if we have carefully considered the passage:

> *16 "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."*
>
> *19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.*

On first inspection "whoever believes" (v.16) and "these signs will accompany those who believe" (v.17) seem permanently linked. We would not want someone ignoring our verse 16, the charismatic says, so why should we ignore his verse 17?

It does not seem valid to claim that the miraculous promises still apply today, for a number of reasons:

a) Those signs *did* accompany those who believed in the first century. From the book of Acts we know that all except the drinking of poison happened, and we know that that happened too because Jesus said it would.

b) The purpose of the signs was the confirmation of the word, as we have already discussed (Chapter 7). The word has been confirmed, and does not require re-confirmation, and so the reason for the miracles has passed away.

c) If this is a universal promise, why is it that charismatics do not take it at face value? Few indeed have the courage to handle snakes, and I haven't yet heard of anyone who attempted to drink poison (except the unfortunate residents of Jonestown). In other words, charismatics pick and choose.

d) If miraculous signs were to accompany all who believed and were immersed, why is it that the Samaritans had to wait until the arrival of the apostles before they received miraculous abilities themselves, even though the gifted Philip was in their presence? The fact is that their outward reception of the Spirit was conditional upon the presence of another man—an apostle. Thus the promise appears to be limited in scope, at least limited to fulfilment in the presence of someone who can convey the miraculous gifts.

e) Verse 20 is written in the *past tense*. Although this is not a strong argument against the charismatic interpretation, it is worth taking into account. A similar passage which looks back on confirmatory miraculous activity is Heb 2:4.

f) In Matt 28 Jesus explicitly said that he would be with his disciples until the very end. In Mark 16 he does not explicitly promise that the gifts would be with us until

the end. It is quite possible that the confirming signs were never intended for more than the first generation or two.

g) If Mark 16 were the only passage we had on the gifts, we would probably put forth an argument from experience: Why is it that God has not put demon-possessed people in our lives, given us new tongues, etc? The charismatic response is always that we are not *open* to these things happening, and so God cannot use us. That response does not really explain why these things are not happening in our congregations, since when it comes to raw *faith* and *commitment* many churches of Christ are miles ahead of most charismatic groups. But our argument would not be terribly convincing to one who was sure he had experienced these things. We are not compelled to make such a weak argument, however, since there are so many other passages that help us in our interpretation of passages like Mark 16.

9) Did the gift of tongues ever die out?

It certainly did; Paul's prophecy (1 Cor 13:8) was not proved wrong. The only second century occurrence of tonguespeaking is in connection with the Montanist heresy (c.157). Eusebius, a fourth century church historian at the court of Constantine (306-337) speaks of Montanism:

> *A certain recent convert to the faith named Montanus . . . gave the adversary a passage into his heart; and . . . moved by the spirit he suddenly fell into a state of possession, as it were, and abnormal ecstasy, insomuch that he became frenzied and began to babble and utter strange sounds, that is to say, prophesying contrary to the manner which the church had received from generation to generation by tradition from the beginning . . . (Eus. H.E. v.16.6ff.)*

Three observations are to be made:

(i) This charismatic revival, which sounds remarkably like most charismatic groups today, was rejected because of the disorderly manner in which the Spirit was being alleged to take control.

(ii) It would appear that there had been no charismatic activity for quite some time.

(iii) The babbling of strange sounds was rejected; it was not considered to be genuine speaking in tongues.

Once we move beyond the second century, there are more references to the gifts of the Spirit, but they do not help the charismatic case. We will first cite Origen (d.254 AD), discussing a charismatic heresy of his day, who refers to heretical tongue speaking as:

> *...strange, fanatical, and quite unintelligible words, of which no rational persons can discover the meanings—for they are so obscure as to have no meaning at all; but they afford every fool or impostor the opportunity to apply them to suit his own purposes.*

John Chrysostom of Constantinople, writing late in the fourth century, seems to have been the first to refer to the cessation of the gift of tongues. He is discussing 1 Cor 12-14, and this is certainly one of the best known excerpts from the Ante-Nicene fathers:

> *This whole passage is very obscure; but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, since they used to take place then but now no longer occur.*

Finally, the words of Augustine (354-430 AD) sum up the perspective of the early church:

In the earliest times the Holy Spirit fell on those who believed, and they spoke in languages which they had not learned, as the Spirit enabled them. These were signs adapted to the time, for there had to be that sign of the Holy Spirit in all languages, to show that the gospel of God was to spread in all languages throughout the whole world. That was done as a sign, and it passed away.

Tonguespeaking has recurred in the Middle Ages, during the Reformation, and in every century since—infecting even the roots of the Restoration Movement in the 19th century. None of this should surprise us; there is nothing new under the sun, and every generation of has had its tonguespeakers.

The beginnings of the modern charismatic movement are usually traced to Topeka, Kansas, where an outbreak of tongue speaking occurred in 1900. After World War II the rise of neo-pentecostalism brought the Charismatic Movement into almost every denomination.

So, to answer the question, "Did tongues ever die out?" we must reply *"yes and no."* Yes, the genuine gift of tongues passed away, but no, there have always been individuals and sects who have practised "tongue-speaking."

10) Is it a sin to speak in tongues?

No, tongue speaking is not a sin *per se.* Those who practise it do so in ignorance, but tongue speaking should be seen for what it is: a psychological phenomenon, not of the Holy Spirit.

However, it is absolutely certain that untranslated "tongues" in an assembly of Christians is forbidden by God's word. (As we shall see in our commentary on 1 Cor 14 in the next chapter.)

Some say that tonguespeaking is from Satan. Although there is no doubt that Satan uses this practice to deceive and to divide, there is no proof that tonguespeaking is caused by evil spirits, etc. Satan uses many things that are not intrinsically sinful to divide believers and give religious people false hope of salvation. The practice of tonguespeaking becomes sinful when it leads to division in the body of Christ, which it is virtually certain to do, as it has in every generation that men have insisted on following their feelings rather than the word of God.

So much for our introduction to tonguespeaking. In Chapter 9 we will tackle the modern phenomenon from the vantage point of a true NT charismatic church. On to Corinth!

9

Going For the Jugular

EXPOSITION OF 1 CORINTHIANS 12-14

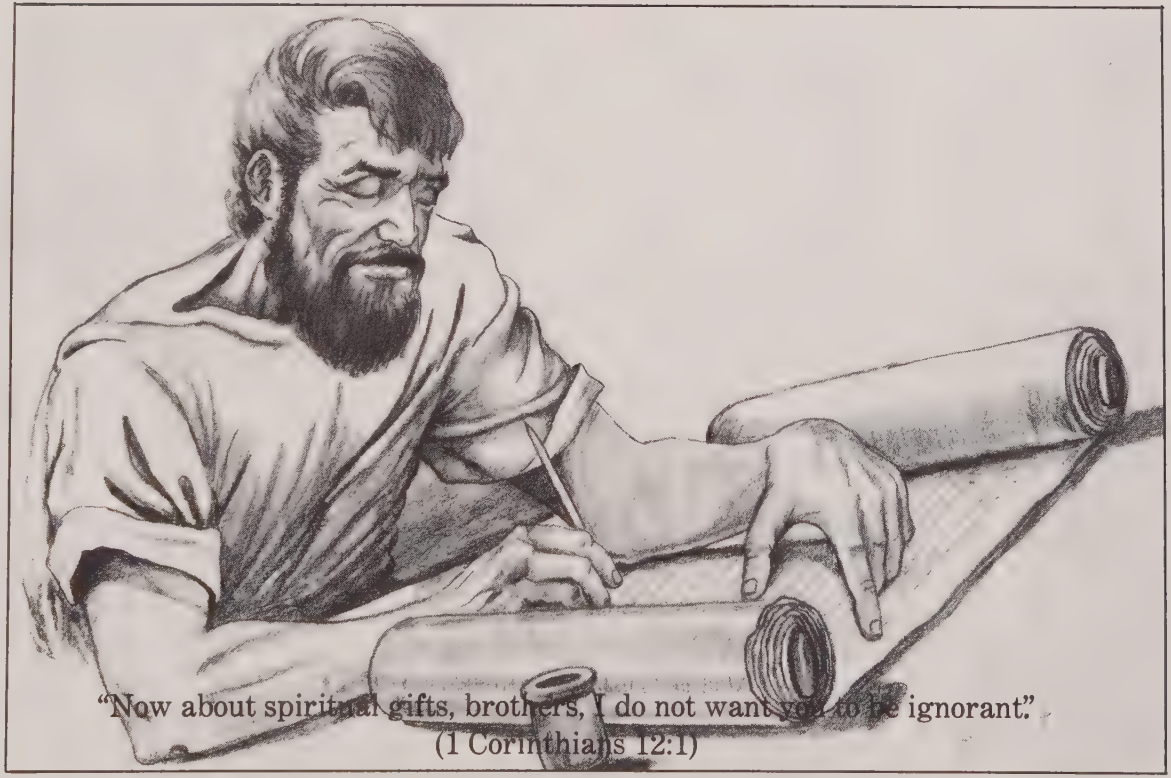
There is more material on the gifts of the Holy Spirit in these chapters than in all the other passages of the Bible on this subject put together. Although we must strain to understand what Paul is saying, this is indeed the "jugular vein" of teaching on the Holy Spirit in the NT. Eventually every one of us will have to answer difficult questions from 1 Cor, and the best way to be confident of our ability to answer them is to saturate our minds with Paul's words. Let's "go for the jugular!"

At the outset let me say that I firmly believe that the church at Corinth was a charismatic church. Not charismatic in the sense in which I have been using it in this book so far, but in the sense of truly possessing the *charismata.*

The Greek word charisma (plural *charismata*) means "gift." (It is derived from the word *charis,* which is translated "grace.") So we see that "charismatic" means pertaining to the gifts of the Spirit, God being the giver and men the recipients. I have been using the term loosely to refer to the gifts as seen in the New Testament as well as to the broad range of religious phenomena which resemble the NT *charismata.*

By way of introduction, let us consider 1 Cor 1:4-7:

> *4 I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. 5 For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all*



"Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant."
(1 Corinthians 12:1)

your speaking and in all your knowledge—6 because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. 7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

God's grace (*charis*) had been given to the Corinthians, and not just grace in justification (Titus 3:7), but the grace of the gifts (*charismata*) of the Spirit. Their enrichment was in the area of speaking (tongues, prophecy, etc) as well as in the area of knowledge (wisdom, knowledge, discerning spirits, etc). Notice that Paul says they do not lack *any spiritual gift.* Why? Because the testimony Paul gave was *confirmed.* Confirmed how? Through miraculous gifts. And when did they receive these gifts? The strong implication is that they received them (the supernatural ones) while Paul was in Corinth (Acts 18), a sojourn of 18 months—plenty of time for Paul to impart the gifts to many members of the Corinthian congregation. Paul alludes to this in 1 Cor 2:4-5.

Not only the Corinthian congregation, but I believe most of the early Christian churches possessed the miraculous gifts. (Gal 3:5, Eph 1:17, 1 Thess 5:19, 2 Tim 1:6, etc), and others would as soon as an apostle could visit them (Rom 1:11). I mention this not to divert us from our commentary on 1 Cor 12-14, but to disarm any who may have the attitude I had shortly after my conversion and exit from the Charismatic Movement: that the Corinthians for the most part did not actually speak in tongues, but Paul was too tactful to tell them outright.

It is almost certain that there were some within the Corinthian community who counterfeited the real gift of tongues, just as many do today, but that by no means implies that the genuine gifts of the Spirit were not present in Corinth!

CHAPTER 12

v.1: *"Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant."*

The implication is that they *are* ignorant. For even though the Corinthians have been spiritually enriched (1:4-7 etc), Paul cannot commend them as a *spiritual* congregation. In 3:1 he says,

> *"Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ."*

In many of their practices and notions they were still infantile. The gifts were present in Corinth, but their management had become an area of confusion. This was the result of an overwhelming lack of rationality, orderliness and, above all, love.

v.2: *You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to dumb idols.*

Here is a clear allusion to the pagan background of the Corinthians. In Corinth, as in all the cities of the Roman world, there were many charismatic cults, and these cults stressed numerous things seemingly within the repertoire of the Corinth church. We have discussed these cults at some length in Chapter 3. (Interestingly, even Plato wrote, "It is through *mania* that the greatest blessings come to us" and "No one in possession of his rational mind has reached divine and true exaltation"—*Phaedrus, Timaeus.)*

Paul reminds the Corinthians of their pre-Christian experience, when they surrendered their rationality and even their wills to the emotional subjectivism of the Greek religious cults.

That Paul doubts the genuineness of the Corinthians' pre-Christian experience is implied in his phrases *"somehow or other"* and *"led astray."* We must remember, however, that the gifts of the Spirit *were* present in Corinth, and that Paul is chiding them not for their enthusiasm but rather for their misplaced emphases. In view of this, we can still learn much from 1 Cor that applies to the modern Charismatic Movement.

Yes, Paul dismisses the experiences of their heathen days, and with them the **central charismatic fallacy**: that spirituality is to be equated with *feeling* the divine, rather than *obeying* the divine. In the past, they had been "led"—led astray! Now it would seem that the same psychological mechanism had carried over into their Christianity. Similarly, today in charismatic circles being "led by the Spirit" has taken on a sense wholly alien to the biblical definition. (See Chapter 4, Section 3.) To be led by the Spirit is not surrendering our intelligence to our emotions, but aligning our mind and life with the will of God, as expressed in the scriptures. Can we afford *not* to be led by the Spirit?

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

For many this is a confusing passage, and so it is not surprising that there have been several suggestions as to its meaning.

One suggestion often put forward is that the Corinthians were under extreme persecution (7:26) and being pressured to renounce Christ. To illustrate, in the early 2nd century (112 AD) Pliny, Roman governor of Bithynia, wrote back to the emperor Trajan (98-117 AD) about the Christians in his province, "Some who were or had been Christians...invoked the [pagan] gods and cursed Christ...which...it is said genuine Christians cannot be compelled to do" *(Epistles 10:96).* This view rests on the assumption that in times of duress the Holy Spirit comes to believers to give them words to speak—miraculously. (That is inherent in Paul's phrase *"speaking by the Spirit of God."*) To be sure, Jesus did make such promises in Luke 21:15 and Matt 10:19-20, but to apply this to Christians generally would be to wrest those passages from their contexts, as they apply to the apostles.

A second proposal is that here we find a reference to the *"good confession"* (1 Tim 6:12, Rom 10:9). In fact, most scholars consider this to be the earliest baptismal confession. However, the suggestion that we can make the confession only by the power of the Spirit can also be ruled out, since one could not speak by the Spirit (i.e. through a miraculous gift, since this is what Paul is discussing in verse 3) without first having the Spirit, which is received only when one obeys Christ and becomes a Christian (Acts 5:32). Since the confession is a pre-requisite for salvation, the time sequence is violated if the good confession is what Paul has in mind.

A third possibility is that Paul is countering the teachings of a heretical Christian sect. For example, much later there arose the Gnostic Ophites, whose members were asked to curse Jesus! (Origen, *Contra Celsum 5:1:28*). Obviously they were not even *Christians* if this was the case. Why would Paul find this relevant to the Corinthians?

A fourth possibility—that Paul means that anyone who parrots the words *"Jesus is Lord"* must be saved—is clearly to be eliminated (Matt 7:21, Luke 6:46). What then?

Here Paul furnishes a criterion for ascertaining whether one is speaking by God's Spirit: the *content* of what is said. If the *content* contradicts the scriptures, or is contrary to reason, we can safely dismiss the "message." (See also 1 Cor 14:29, 1 Thess 5:19-22.)

Imagine the scene: one of the Corinthians stands up in the middle of the service and begins to give a free demonstration of his language gift. (Don't you know some people who are always showing off their language skills?) He raises his voice, and let's say he's speaking in Chinese. And what is his message? *Jesus be cursed!* The only problem is that no one knows that he has been cursing Christ! That's the danger of letting the gift of tongues loose in the fellowship, without a translator.

The lesson of verse 3 concerns true prophecy: does it lift up Jesus as Lord? Does it point to our need to obey him as Lord?

vv.4-6: *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.*

The disunity of the congregation over the issue of the gifts is apparent. (See the approximate parallel in Eph 4:4-6.) Paul is attempting to show that since there is but one God behind the manifestations of the Spirit, he cannot be the one responsible for diverging tendencies —for the chaos, lack of love, etc that were turning the gifts into a curse in Corinth.

v.7: *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

The gifts were given for the common good, not for personal edification. The Corinthians had lost sight of this fact, though doubtless Paul had stressed it often during his 18-month sojourn in Corinth (Acts 18:11). Paul had confirmed his testimony by distributing miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit to various members (1 Cor 1:4-7, 2:4-5, 2 Cor 12:12). This was effected by the laying on of his hands. (See Chapter 10 of this book.)

Paul is saying that when he imparted the miraculous gifts to the Corinthians, he had not intended to drive a wedge into the congregation, between those who had them and those who did not, or between those who had the more sensational gifts and those who had the less noticeable ones. Paul had intended that all the gifts be appreciated and used to the glory of God, the edification of the community, and the conviction of unregenerate men. But what a travesty it turned out to be!

Notice that Paul said "to each one" a manifestation of the Spirit was given. Charismatics often counter our position

that the miraculous gifts are no longer present by pointing out that this verse seems to indicate that all Christians possess spiritual gifts. Do not disagree if this is said! Indeed, the fact that the *miraculous gifts* have ceased does not mean that *all* the gifts have ceased. More will be said on this in Chapter 13.

vv.8-10: *To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits; to another the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.*

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to define each gift, though it seems that most of them are miraculous. Again, Paul stresses that the "same Spirit" orchestrates all these gifts in a harmonious fashion.

v.11: *All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

The gifts were distributed according to God's will (Heb 2:4). One could not simply *decide* which gift he would receive and then receive it; God gave men the gifts in accordance with *his wisdom*, not their *whims*. (See Chapter 10 on the transmission of the gifts.)

vv.12-27: This long section will be familiar to most readers as one of the great passages on the church. Its immediate context, however, is the use/misuse of the spiritual gifts. Evidently there was a lot of selfishness in the way the Corinthians exercised their gifts—much independent spirit. That is precisely why the passage is so applicable today, even out of its immediate context. Has the problem of the independent spirit ever ceased to cripple the unity of a congregation?

Of particular interest is v.13:

For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Some see here a reference to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, an occurrence explicitly designated as such only in Acts 2, and possibly in Acts 10. The English versions are quite right in commenting in a footnote that the Greek preposition may be rendered "with" or "in" just as easily as "by" (as in Mark 5:2) but regardless of how one translates this one word, Paul's point is not that all the Corinthians experienced the H.S. baptism, and therefore should be unified, but rather that they have all been added to the same body (by the Spirit, naturally, since events like this are effected in the heavenly realms) and so should exhibit a mutual concern (see esp. vv.25-26, also Rom 12:5). The reference is to their conversion, not some supplementary experience. Being *"given the one Spirit to drink"* may be a reference to (1) tasting of the Holy Spirit (see Heb 6:4-5) in Christ, or (2) being given the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, Gal 3:26-27, 4:6).

v.28: *And in the church God has appointed first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.*

Paul clearly places a much higher premium on the teaching gifts than on the more visible gifts, e.g. tongues and healing. (See parallels in Eph 4:11.) Paul's emphasis in this catalogue is the opposite of the Corinthians': Notice where tongues is placed: *last.*

vv.29-30: *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?*

The answer to each one of these rhetorical questions is an emphatic "No!" Yet there are many groups today that

consider regular speaking in tongues evidence of salvation, and even more who believe that every Christian must speak in tongues initally, at the movement of conversion.

Interestingly enough, in the Arndt-Gingrich Greek Lexicon the first meaning of the word translated "interpret" in most versions is "translate"—which would eliminate a lot of charismatic confusion. Still, "interpret" is technically correct, and need not cause any problems as long as we hold to a biblical definition of tongues.

v.31: *But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.*

Are we to understand that the "greater gifts" *are* the most excellent way? Are the "greater gifts" those of apostleship, prophecy, and teaching, or are they faith, hope, and love? If you look ahead to 14:1, it seems that the greater gifts are indeed those gifts which involve teaching, and therefore "the most excellent way" is "the way of love."

In our discussion of 1 Cor 12 these are our conclusions thus far:

- The Corinthian church was legitimately charismatic. Paul had imparted miraculous gifts to them during his 18-month stay in Corinth.

- The Corinthians were allowing their charismatic background and assumptions to influence their lives as Christians. In their subjective religious past, they surrendered their rationality—a dangerous trend if unleashed in the church.

- The spiritual gifts were not for personal edification, but were given for the common good. The Corinthians were using their gifts selfishly, resulting in disunity and one-up-manship.

- The teaching gifts were of far more value than the more visible gifts.

- Tongues was the *most overvalued* and *least valuable* gift.

- The Corinthians were creating a spiritual elite within the congregation, based on their charismatic experiences.

- "The most excellent way" is "the way of love." This way of love, as we shall see in our analysis of ch. 13, has nothing to do with the more sensational gifts.

But what exactly is this way of love? And why does Paul place his eulogy of love in the middle of his discussion on the spiritual gifts?

CHAPTER 13

vv.1-3: *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

Paul discusses the possibility of speaking in the tongues of men and of angels. Some of the more modern versions give "languages" as an alternative translation for the Greek word *glossa*, commonly rendered "tongue" in the older versions, such as the KJV. "Languages" is a common English word for what was a common word in Greek, and therefore a better translation of the original word.

We must remember that when the first English translations were being made (starting in the 14th century), "tongue" meant "language." Today, as it has for the most part gone out of use, it tends to be shrouded in mystery in connection with the charismatic movement. This is probably a deliberate archaism lending greater credence to the charismatic interpretation.

Charismatics and others base their belief in angel languages on this lone verse. The pseudepigraphal *Testament of Job* says that Job's daughters spoke in the languages of angels (T. Job. 48-50), so the idea that humans can speak in angelic tongues is nothing new. But *are* there angel languages? *"If I speak in the languages...of angels"* does not necessarily prove that they exist, any more than *"If I go up to the heavens"* (Psalm 139:8) proves that the psalmist was secretly an astronaut. It is mere hypothesis, and in fact in this case turns out to be a good example of hyperbole (exaggeration for effect), which must not be taken literally. Perhaps some of the Corinthians claimed, in their attempts to outdo one another, to be speaking in angelic languages. Veneration of angels was not unknown in Paul's churches (Col 2:18).

In v.2 Paul gives another exaggeration for effect; who can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge? No one! Similarly, which mountains have been literally moved by men of faith since Jesus uttered Mark 11:23? None! And v.3 is also to be understood as hyperbolic. Paul is saying, "Even if you *could* speak in angel languages, or fathom every mystery, or move mountains by your faith—wonderful as these things might be—they would be worthless indeed if you did not have love." And that is precisely where the Corinthians fell short. In all their enthusiasm for the gifts, they were failing to exercise Christian *agape* [love] in their relationships with one another. That is why Paul had to pen 1 Cor 13.

Without love, the gifts were nothing, regardless of how spectacular they might have been. The core of true religion is practical (see James 1:26f), entailing love of man and love of neighbour, and never the peripheral manifestations of God, or the experiential aspects of faith.

vv.4-8a: *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of*

wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

In their relationships many Corinthians apparently were failing to exhibit love in its various forms because they had become so puffed up over their spiritual gifts. The verb *physioo* appears here in "it is not proud," as in Col 2:18, and also in 1 Cor 8:1, where knowledge is said to puff up. *Physioo* means puff up, inflate, "get the big head." It never fails to astound me how so many are keen to relate their experiences of the Holy Spirit and their speculations about God—and yet have utterly failed to take the basic biblical step of repentance, or to obey the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20)!

The Corinthians had lost sight of the goal; they had ceased to live a life of love (Eph 5:1-2). The same will happen to us whenever we allow ourselves to get sidetracked from the central thrust of Christianity: love for God, love for his people, love for the lost. Let us learn the lesson from the Corinthians.

Yes the Corinthians had lost sight of the goal: *"faith expressing itself through love"* (Gal 5:6). In chapter 13 Paul contrasts the gifts, which are temporary, with love, which is eternal.

v.8b: *But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.*

Prophecies, tongues and knowledge, Paul says, will pass away. The OT also prophecies the cessation of miraculous gifts. Daniel 9:24 indicates that after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which occurred in 70 A.D. Vision and prophecy would be sealed up. Yes, miraculous gifts were to come to an end. But love will *never* come to an end! As Paul says, *"He agape oudepote piptei!"* (Love *never* fails/falls.) Of course the debate centres on *when* the miraculous gifts end—whether at the end of time or at some point before Jesus comes again.

v.9: *For we know in part and we prophesy in part.*

To put it another way, we prophesy in part because we do not know in full. Our understanding of God's will comes through knowledge plus prophecy. What may not have been known (ie, via scripture) could be known through inspiration operating in the lives of individuals in the Corinthian community. But was this always to be the situation?

v.10: *But when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.*

The key term is "perfection" (*to teleion*). *To teleion* means that which is perfect, perfection; that which is mature, maturity; that which is complete, completion. When perfection comes, the imperfect (literally, the partial) disappears. Love is already here. So is "the perfect" to be equated with heaven? With the 2nd coming? With the church? With love itself? All of these have been suggested as possibilities.

Many have tried, through conjectures based on the gender of the Greek *to telion*, to rule out what the phrase *doesn't* stand for and to show what it must mean. The following chart lists some of these suggestions:

The Meaning of To Teleion

To teleion = neuter

GREEK TERM	GENDER	MEANING
ho ouranos	masculine	heaven
ho Iesous	masculine	Jesus
to biblion	neuter	Bible
to soma	neuter	body
he ekklesia	feminine	church

These attempts are destined to failure. For example, if "the perfect" means "the perfect gift," then any one of those suggestions is possible. If "perfection" is a state resulting from something else (the thing whose gender scholars gingerly try to determine), then the underlying noun could be just about anything! If we really expect to win charismatics over to our position, we must have the integrity to give up all weak arguments, pseudo-Greek arguments, etc.

Teleios is used 17 times is in the NT, but never of heaven. And as perfection/completion is the subject of these verses, the complete (perfect) scriptures, i.e. the OT and the NT, seem the best option. After the apostles had died, and their writings were collected and disseminated, strictly speaking there would be no more need for knowledge to be gathered through the medium of prophecy.

Perfection would then be perfection of *quantity* more than perfection of *quality*. Playing on the ambivalence of the word, Paul slides into another, more immediately relevant, meaning of the word: *maturity*. He is speaking in terms of spiritual maturity. Not so much personal maturity (lest 14:18 show Paul to be a spiritual toddler!) as collective maturity—the maturity of the early church. The apostles are like guardians, and as soon as the church is able to stand on its own two feet, they disappear from the scene.

We no longer need apostles today. Apostles set up the process of discipleship, which is self-perpetuating. They also taught authoritatively and infallibly, insofar as we have their writings in the NT. In addition, they were eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection, establishing that beyond dispute (1 Cor 9:1, Acts 1:21-22). Finally, the apostles confirmed the apostolic message with apostolic miracles, as we have seen. Indeed, there is no need for the apostles today.

v.12: *Now we see but a poor reflection, then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

The *"poor reflection"* is literally "through a mirror in a riddle." This does not necessarily show inaccuracy of revelation, as though our Bibles were insufficient to tell us truly about God. Seeing things through a mirror is only *indirect*, like using a periscope. The process of receiving, hearing, assessing and interpreting a prophetic message just isn't the same as reading a passage of scripture and making the direct application. (Incidentally, people often insist that mirrors in antiquity were of poor quality, and thus would yield a poor image. NT research indicates the opposite, esp. for Corinth, which was renowned for its mirrors of fine quality!)

Seeing "face to face," a common metaphor in Greek, need not mean that Jesus' face is what is beheld. It implies rather a greater directness of revelation. Knowing "fully" does not have to refer to heaven, since we can know fully through the scriptures (2 Tim 3:17, Jude 3).

Our understanding of this passages is boosted considerably if we look at Num 12:6b-8a:

> *When a prophet of the Lord is among you,*
> *I reveal myself to him in visions,*
> *I speak to him in dreams.*
> *But this is not true of my servant Moses;*
> *he is faithful in all my house.*
> *With him I speak face to face,*
> *clearly and not in riddles;*
> *he sees the form of the Lord.*

The normal way that God spoke to the prophets (see Chapter 4, Section 6) was *indirect*. It was an indirect method because a prophet's spiritual perception was limited to the vision (dream) he'd had from God. Like a periscope, it was a roundabout way of discerning God's will. But with Moses God spoke "face to face," not "in riddles." (See also Exod 33:11, Deut 34:10.) The literary similarity to 1 Cor 13:12 is more than coincidence!

When *the perfect* came, men no longer required the indirect methods of prophesying to ascertain God's will. Now men were able to look into God's perfect word themselves, without having to rely on what others said, without getting bogged down in the interpretation of prophetic messages (1 Cor 14:29, 1 Thess 5:19-22, 1 John 4:1).

Knowing fully meant that there would be no more need for prophecy, and that is why prophecy passed away with the coming of the completed NT. Knowing fully cannot be taken to mean knowing everything about everything, since that is only for God, and there is no promise in all of scripture that we will be omniscient in heaven.

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

These three outlast the spiritual gifts. But when do the gifts vanish? With the 2nd coming? No! There is no faith in heaven (2 Cor 5:7), nor hope (Rom 8:24), though love will be found there. Therefore any interpretation making "perfection" (v.10) the perfection at the end of time would seem untenable.

Perfection rather applies to the maturity of the early church (see Eph 4:11-16) as well as the completion of the NT canon. These two really should not be viewed separately, however, since one depends on the other.

CHAPTER 14

Chapter 14 is the richest array of teaching on the gifts of *prophecy* and *tongues* in the NT. Much misunderstanding has been caused by a lack of familiarity with the biblical concepts of prophecy and languages, especially the OT background. Before we can begin to mine this incredibly rich source of teaching material we must understand the basic meaning of the terms.

Prophecy, from the Greek words *pro* (before/for) + *phemi* (speak), means to speak *before* (in advance of the event predicted), or, more commonly, to speak *for* (God). We have already discussed prophecy in Chapter 4, Section 6.

As we saw in the last chapter, tongues (*glossai*) are literally *languages*, and so are intelligible only if the hearer understands the language being spoken, or if the language is translated into a tongue known to the hearer. Although charismatic tongue speaking is gibberish, biblical tongues were actual languages!

v.1: *Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.*

The prophetic, or teaching, gifts are placed on a plane far above tongues (see 12:28). The verb could be rendered "be eager for," and so the second clause of the verse could be translated "and especially be eager to prophesy." (i.e. those who have this sort of gift should be eager to exercise it—to "excel" [v.12].)

vv.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. But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.*

Untranslated tongues benefit no one. They are "mysteries" because no one else knows what is being said. Naturally, God understands, since he is master of every tongue, but no one else is edified. Edification is possible only when there is an intelligible message—like a good sermon.

Are we to believe that Paul actively encouraged Corinthian disciples to sit at home and pray in various languages? Who would benefit from it? Only the one who exercised the gift. It's like someone with a teaching gift studying and organising his material into lectures which he prepared only for himself. Or someone with the gift of

encouragement being warm and encouraging to himself but not to others. Or like someone blessed by God with money spending it all on himself! Our gifts are not to be lavished on ourselves, but on others.

v.5: *I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.*

Even though Paul expresses his wish that all speak in tongues, this is hypothetical, and surely not possible (12:10-11, 30). Prophecy is clearly given preference over tongues. The exception of course is tongues with translation. From this we derive the simple equation:

Tongues + Translation = Prophecy

Keep this important principle in mind as you study the following paragraphs.

vv.6-9: *Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air.*

Evidently some Corinthians were spouting off in "tongues" in the assemblies of the church. Paul insists however that tongues are utterly useless if not translated!

When I was a little boy, I had a blue toy piano. I banged away on it, not knowing what I was playing, and not particularly caring, either. When a young child does

such things, we smile and may chuckle. But when a grown man does the same thing, we pity him; no one would give a penny to hear him banging randomly on a piano. Paul is saying that that is precisely what the Corinthians were doing by irrational use of their gift of tongues.

vv.10-11: *Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me.*

Tongues are actual foreign languages. The only passages in the Bible shedding light on the nature of tongues are Acts 2 and 1 Cor 14. The tongues of Pentecost are actual languages, as no reader can fail to notice. Similarly the reference here is to actual languages, as is that in v.21. The word foreigner *(barbaros)* also translates *barbarian,* the term Greeks used of people who did not speak Greek. It is the word one would normally use to describe someone who spoke a foreign language. The point? The analogy implies that tongues are actual languages. More important, it shows that tongues makes us *barbaroi,* strangers to one another. Fellowship is meant to be unifying, not alienating!

v.12-13: *So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church. For this reason the man who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says.*

Note Paul's emphasis on edification. Paul states unequivocally states that tonguespeaking does not edify the church.

vv.14-17: *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say*

"Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.

Is *unfruitful* good? No—it means unproductive (Titus 3:14, Mark 4:19). God wants us to be productive (fruitful) in everything (Col 1:0), so why put yourself in a compromising position? We should pray with our spirit (i.e. enthusiastically and earnestly), but also with our mind (i.e. understanding). That is also the way we should sing (vv.15-16). Praying in the spirit (Eph 6:18) therefore cannot mean praying in tongues!

Many readers automatically assume that tonguespeakers in the Bible had no idea at what they were saying unless someone translated their tongue. But why should we assume that? Because normally babbling *would* require a miracle in order to become intelligible! But tongues were not babbling; they were *languages.*

For tongues to be fruitful, or productive. They had to be understood by the hearers? Someone needed to give the translation—whether the speaker or someone else who could concentrate on the message while offering a good translation.

vv.18-19: *I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.*

Paul not only spoke Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, and possibly Latin, but also possessed the miraculous gift of speaking in some languages he had never studied. It is possible that his command of languages could have been tremendously helpful on his missionary journeys, but not in the church! Paul is emphatic that five intelligible words are worth a whole sermon in tongues!

v.20: *Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.*

Recall the central charismatic fallacy: that spirituality is to be equated with *feeling* the divine, rather than with *obeying* the divine. The Corinthians tonguespeakers were behaving childishly, using their gifts in the assembly and trying to outdo one another. True religion is sensational, yes, but never sensationalist. In their approach the Corinthians were childish, selfish, turning the worship of the church into a funfair.

Paul continues his instruction on the use and abuse of the gifts of the Spirit, and now turns to the OT to shed light on the subject.

v.21-22: *In the Law it is written: "'Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,' says the Lord." Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers.*

Paul gives an example of tongues: Assyrian (technically, *Akkadian*), an actual language. Yes, the language of the cruel Assyrians—study Isaiah and you will see that "tongues" for the Israelites were a sign of divine judgement. Numerous OT examples of tongues show that they were a bewildering sign of judgement for unbelievers (Isa 18:2, 28:11, Deut 28:49, Jer 5:15, Lam 1:14, etc).

The *"men of strange tongues"* are Assyrians, sent by God to punish Israel. The unbelievers in this case are therefore the Jews . Unfaithful people! When they heard the sound of foreign tongues, it would not be very edifying! It would signify that their end had come.

Imagine waking up one morning, tuning in the radio, and hearing nothing but Russian being spoken! You go outside and, much to your dismay, Soviet soldiers are everywhere. Your homeland has been invaded. The "tongue" is Russian. Not very edifying, is it?

Because of our cultural and temporal separation from the events of the OT, we can easily fail to appreciate the biblical significance of "tongues": judgement!

Incidentally, the glossolalia at Pentecost would have signified not only that all nations would take over the inheritance of the Jews, but also that the Jewish nation stood under the judgement of God for rejecting the Christ. (The prophecy of Joel 2:28ff, which Peter cites in Acts 2, occurs in the context of divine judgement.) Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21), a prophecy that was fulfilled about 40 years after Pentecost [70 AD]. Many see in this a sort of "grace period," or last chance to repent; the 40-year period would parallel the 40 years of wandering in the desert. Thus the pentecostal glossolalia heralded imminent doom for the Jewish people.

vv.23-25: *So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"*

Since tongues are a sign of judgement, a frightening and bewildering sign, it is not the sort of thing you want to be heard by visitors to the church services (particularly if everyone is doing it at once). It could well drive them away, convinced that you are mad! But prophecy (because of its preaching quality) will convict the sinner and effect repentance. Paul is continuing to urge the Corinthians to use their gifts in moderation and with sensitivity, and once more he plays down the role of tongues. Why? Because Christians have been given the commission to bring sinners to repentance, not to dazzle them with their gifts. After all, the word is what brings people to faith, not miracles (Luke 16:31).

vv.26-27: *What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret.*

Paul now returns to his discussion of the exercise of tongues in the assembly of the church. He lays down certain procedural regulations:

- There should be a maximum of 2 or 3 tongue-speakers.
- Speakers must speak consecutively, not simultaneously.
- Tongues must be accompanied by interpretation.

Yet evidently the Corinthians were being disorderly in their services. There were numerous persons who tried to speak in tongues during a single service. Often the speakers used their gifts at the same time, causing confusion and cacophony! And worst of all, the tongues were not translated; no one benefitted.

It is interesting to observe similar confusion today in groups that covet the Corinthian experience. I remember when the charismatic movement hit the youth group of my old (Episcopalian/Anglican) church, and all the kids were busy trying to discover the gifts they had. When a time of prayer in the service became a time of tongue-speaking, everyone starting singing in tongues at the same time ("singing in the Spirit"). It made my spine tingle, but I knew this wasn't right, so I interrupted the group, had the leader turn to 1 Cor 14 and showed him what the Bible said about having only one speaker at a time. Several in the group agreed with me. But within seconds, the entire room had returned to its "singing in the Spirit"!

v.28: *If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.*

If an interpretation just "came" to someone in the assembly, then this warning would be unnecessary. But in fact certain individuals had the gift of translating certain languages. One could *know* whether the translator was present, and hence whether a message in a foreign language might be beneficial (i.e. translated). All this underlines the fact that these "tongues" were actual languages. Paul does not discourage private tongue-speaking, which may have been quite edifying at a *personal* level. (That of course assumes that the tongue-speaker was able to understand his own tongue—and thus get some fruit from it.)

vv.29-36: *Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to enquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?*

Here are procedural regulations for prophesying in the church:

- **There should be a maximum of 2 or 3 prophets speaking.** This rule is stricter than the OT, which often allowed group prophecy (1 Samuel 19:20).

- **The prophetic messages must be weighed, or tested,** by the listeners, not just superficially or automatically accepted. It was no offence to God to wrestle with the message until the meaning (or validity) was clear. See 1 Thess 5:18ff.

- **The speaker should not let himself be carried away with his prophecy.** A spiritual gift is not something that just takes control of you. You control it! Principles of rationality and discipline must be followed. Compare Paul's wisdom to the teaching of the heretical Montanus (see Chapter 8, Section 9), who claimed "Man is like a lyre and I [the Spirit] rush upon it like a plectrum." Another Montanist leader claimed "The Lord...has compelled me, willingly or unwillingly, to learn the knowledge of God" (Epiphanius *Haer 48:4.1, 13.1*).

- **Women are not to participate in the testing of the prophecies**, since that would put them in the position of challenging men's authority.

After issuing a warning to those who might challenge his apostolic authority (vv.37-38), Paul concludes (vv.39-40). Paul's emphasis is clear: although (translated) tongues may be of benefit, prophecy (preaching) is of paramount importance. Moreover, services must be conducted with propriety and order.

Conclusion

Although many charismatic groups exclaim, "We want to be just like the Corinthian church!" they do not realise how far off the mark that church had gone. The Corinthian church put top priority on the fairly insignificant gift of tongues, and grossly underrated the most important gifts, the teaching gifts. They exalted the ego and made it grow big with "spiritual" experiences, while the heart was starved for the word of God (prophecy) and starved for fellowship (as each member did his own thing). Moreover, they had let their pagan backgrounds get the better of them—at least the Corinthians who came from such a background—and surrendered their minds to an experience. They were always trying to outdo one another, lacking the love that is so central to the true Spirit of Christ. They were disorderly! And this is the congregation charismatics look to for an example?

Rather than view 1 Cor 12-14 as a set of *instructions* for a spiritual congregation that needed to make use of its gifts, see it as a set of *corrections* for an unspiritual congregation that was misusing its gifts.

I Cor 12-14 is at the very heart of pentecostalism. Read these chapters, study them, do not be intimidated by them. **Go for the jugular!**

10

The Hands of an Apostle

How The Gifts Were Transmitted

Just as we saw in Chapter 3 that modern charismatic "miracles" are nothing new under the sun, so we have seen in the previous chapter that modern charismatic have "tongues" bear little resemblance to NT languages. Now let us shift our focus from the nature of the miracles to the way NT miracles were received or transmitted.

The thesis of this chapter is simple: that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were transmitted through the laying on of the hands of an apostle. If it is correct, the implications for the whole charismatic movement are drastic.

Apostolic Miracles

Throughout the NT you get the impression that whenever a miracle happens, the apostles are close by; in fact, the chances are high that it is an apostle who is doing the miracle. As we have observed before, most of the miracles in Acts have to do with the apostles. Luke certainly leaves us with the impression that it was God's will that the apostles perform miracles:

> *Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles (Acts 2:43).*

> *The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people . . . (Acts 5:12).*

If miracles were commonly performed by all Christians, why does Luke emphasise the apostles' miracles and play down everyone else's?

Paul mentions the "marks of an apostle" in 2 Cor 12:12:

> *The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance (2 Cor 12:12).*

If the average Christian of the first century had the power to perform miracles, why are miracles said to be a prerogative of the *apostles*? Remember that not anyone could be an apostle: an apostle was a *witness* of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:22, 1 Cor 9:1); the Christians devoted themselves to the *apostles'* teaching (Acts 2:42, Eph 2:20), as Jesus promised that the Spirit would equip the *apostles* to recall Jesus' teaching and lead them into all truth (John 14:26, 16:13); and it was for the *apostles* to confirm the gospel through signs (Acts 14:3, Heb 2:3).

The obvious implication is that most first century Christians did *not* perform miracles, for miracles were apostolic.

How Were the Miraculous Gifts Distributed?

Heb 2:3b-4 provides a clue:

> *This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him, God also testifying to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

The passage shows that the gifts were distributed according to God's will (1 Cor 12:11), but notice what is

said first: the word was confirmed by "those who heard [Jesus]"—most likely a reference to the apostles (Gal 1:11-12). How else was it confirmed? Through recipients of the miraculous gifts. Allow me the liberty to rewrite the passage, in the light of what we have already agreed:

> *This salvation...was confirmed to us by the apostles, God also testifying to it by the marks of the apostles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

It would be no surprise if there were also some apostolic factor associated with the distribution of the gifts: the laying on of apostolic hands.

But is there any evidence that this was how the gifts were transmitted? Indeed there is!

> *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands (2 Tim 1:6).*

Timothy had received a miraculous gift through the laying on of the hands of an apostle: Paul. The normal interpretation of the verse would be that Timothy would not have had the gift apart from the laying on of Paul's hands. Moreover, the gift was not something that Timothy could ever have achieved on his own, even though he was personally acquainted with Paul (Acts 16:1). God gave him his gift through the laying on of the hands of an apostle.

More evidence for this view is found in Acts 19:6:

> *When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them [external reception], and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.*

Tongues and prophecy were gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:10). Again, they were received only at the laying on of the hands of an apostle.



"Father, grant Philip the power to heal, to work wonders . . ." (see Acts 6:6,8; 8:6)

The clearest illustration of the doctrine is found in Acts 6 and 8:

> *This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them (Acts 6:5-6).*

Notice two of those on whom the apostles lay their hands: Stephen and Philip. (We hear nothing else of the others henceforth unless the Nicolaitans of Rev 2:6,15 are followers of an apostate Nicolas.)

> *Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people (6:8).*

Stephen was filled with the Spirit (6:3,5) even *before* the apostles laid their hands on him, so that does not account for his miraculous ability. (Remember that even John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit: Luke 1:15/John 10:41.) It seems that his miraculous power resulted from the apostles' laying their hands on him. But the evidence mounts even higher:

> *When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, unclean spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed (8:6-7).*

Here Philip, another of the men on whom the apostles laid their hands, demonstrates his miraculous ability. Is it mere coincidence that these two men, Stephen and Philip, are recorded as doing miracles after the apostles laid their hands on them (but not before)? Is it not probable that, like Timothy and the Ephesian disciples, they received the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit only *because* the apostles laid hands on them?

The clincher is found in the events surrounding the conversion of the Samaritans (see chapter 5). You will recall that the Samaritans had been baptised in Jesus' name, receiving, according to Acts 2:38-39, the forgiveness of sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They had not, however, received the Spirit in any *external* way. Confirmation was given because a new frontier was being crossed, and God wanted there to be no doubt that their past national unfaithfulness was not to hinder their full acceptance as believers is Christ.

Was Philip able to transmit the miraculous gifts of the Spirit to the Samaritans, thus proving their acceptance by God, and so drive the nails into the coffin of the anti-Samaritan prejudice? And if he was, why did he delay? It would appear that he had no authority to transmit the gifts. Let's pick up the narrative in Acts 8:14:

> *14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of the Lord, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, 19 "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."*

We suspect that Philip was not able to transmit the gifts for the following reasons:

i. He made no effort to transmit the gifts to the Samaritans, even though that was precisely what was needed to settle the imminent controversy.

ii. The Samaritans received the Spirit (outwardly) only when the apostles Peter and John placed their hands on them.

iii. Simon, who saw a chance for financial gain in this ability to transmit the Spirit, offered money to the *apostles.*

Verse 18 is the most succinct statement of our position in the NT: "the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands." In other words, the miraculous gifts were passed on only at the imposition of the hands of an apostle.

Finally, if our position is correct, it would explain why Corinth, where Paul had spent quite some time, lacked no spiritual gift (1 Cor 1:7), whereas Rome, which he had not visited, possessed only the non-miraculous spiritual gifts, assuming prophesying is non-miraculous (Rom 12:6-8). It also makes good sense of Paul's statement at the beginning of Romans:

> *I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong (Rom 1:11).*

His personal presence would have been required if they were to receive some spiritual gift(s).

CRITIQUE

Is this line of reasoning absolutely conclusive? No, it is not. Is the argument sound? Yes, it is. Let me present the pro's and con's.

Like all arguments from silence, the argument would weaken considerably if we found even one verse that proved that the gifts could be received apart from the laying on of the apostles' hands. Taking Acts 2 and 10 as historical exceptions, there is no conclusive evidence weighing against the argument.

1 Cor 14:1 says that the Corinthians should be zealous for the gift of prophecy. Eager to have an apostle visit them again? This does not seem likely. "Eagerly desire" could be an admonition to eagerly use the gifts that they had. It could also be referring to the non-miraculous spiritual gifts (see chapter 13). 1 Cor 14:13 says that he who spoke in a tongue should pray that he might interpret what he was saying. Again, this passage also is inconclusive, since (a) the gift of interpretation could be given to some Christians along with their gift of tongues (the NT does not say that Christians could possess only one gift, and records several men who had two or more), and (b) the ability to translate could be developed by the speaker (a person's ability to understand the spoken language would be enhanced when he himself spoke that language fluently!). Both 1 Cor 14:1 and 14:13 are thus inconclusive on this point.

Is Ananias (Acts 9:17-18) an exception? We will never know, since little is known of his association with apostles—although it would be strange if the Syrian disciples had no contact with the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. The miracle of Acts 9:18/22:13 has nothing to say for or against the doctrine that the miraculous gifts were transmitted by apostolic hands.

Is 1 Tim 4:14 proof that non-apostles could relay the gifts? Not at all, since (a) the reference is almost certainly to the same gift mentioned in 2 Tim 1:6, as Timothy has to be reminded again in Paul's second letter not to neglect it, and if Timothy had more than one gift it would not be obvious which gift 2 Tim 1:6 referred to. and (b) it is unlikely that Paul, Timothy's mentor and immediate superior, would not have been present at his ordination, or whatever event was attended by the body of elders. Nor does 1 Tim 5:22 present any problem for our view, since Paul does not specify what the purpose of this laying on of hands was. (It would seem, in the light of 3:6, that Paul is talking about appointing people as evangelists or sending them out into the ministry before they are ready.)

And what about the NT prophets, such as Agabus and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 11:28, 21:9)? There is no indication whatsoever of *how* they acquired these gifts. It could have been at the laying on of the apostles' hands; it could have been in some other way. Since the scriptures do not say one way or the other, neither should we.

Finally, is the Rom 1:11 argument really conclusive? It certainly seems to support our position, even if "prophesying" in Rom 12:6 is miraculous, since there is no reason to think that Rome must have been completely cut off from any apostle, or that there could have been no one on whom an apostle had laid hands who later moved to Rome.

To sum up the weight of the objections, there is no passage which is conclusive against our thesis. The major weakness in the argument is that it is based largely, but not completely, on the silence of the scriptures.

On the pro side:

1) The interpretation that the gifts were passed on through the laying on of apostolic hands is the obvious and natural interpretation of the passages which refer to this subject.

2) In particular this conveys the face value of Acts 8:18.

3) If God wanted our generation to be able to understand how the gifts were transmitted, this is the only theory that suggests a method of transmission.

4) This has great explanatory value for the 20th century situation among the churches of Christ: for why NT Christians do not have the gifts today. (See next chapter.)

5) This thesis is consistent: it contradicts neither the external evidence of the scriptures nor itself.

6) This interpretation makes sense of all the passages we have examined.

In the light of the evidence, it can be said that the theory is the best explanation we have of how the gifts were passed on. Although the case is not air-tight, it is certainly very strong. When teaching charismatics, I have no hesitation in teaching that the miraculous gifts were passed on only through the apostles.

Implications

The implications of this doctrine are clear enough: after the death of the last apostle, the gifts were no longer transmitted. And after the death of the last person still to possess a miraculous gift—if not before—the gifts died out altogether.

If this is true, then charismatic claims to possess various miraculous gifts of the Spirit are either fraudulent or wishful thinking.

The issue of the passing away of the supernatural spiritual gifts will be taken up in the following chapter.

11

The Ebb Tide

PASSING AWAY OF MIRACULOUS GIFTS

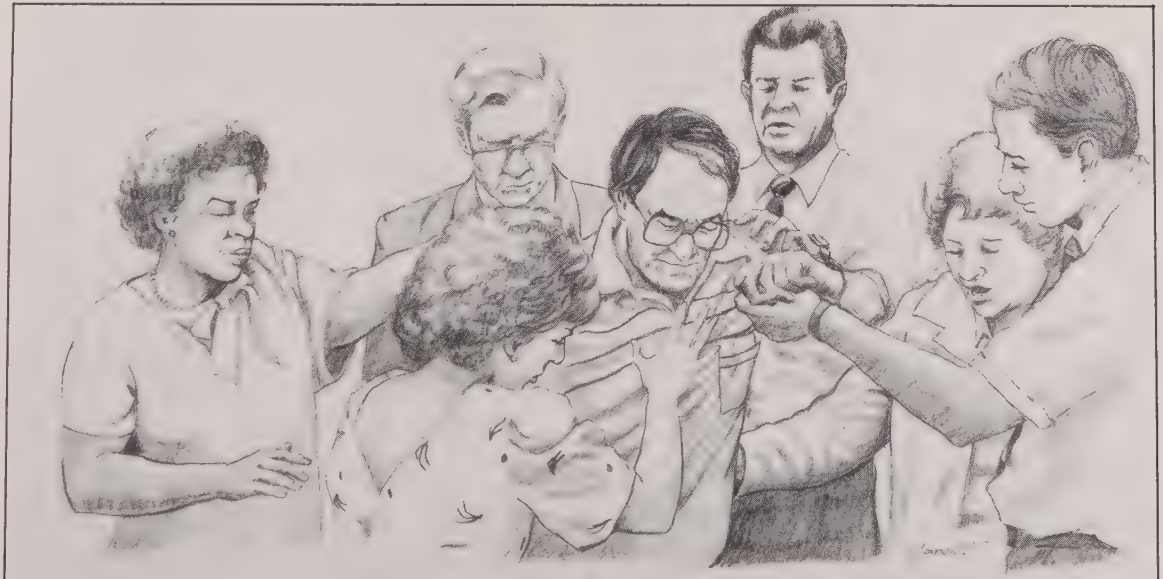
When God's Spirit was poured out on the NT age, many miraculous events occurred, many miracles were performed and many miraculous gifts were transmitted.

God's Spirit has never left us. He is still with us in a powerful way. But that does not mean that the tide of miraculous spiritual gifts has not returned to its source. It is the contention of this chapter that the miraculous tide has returned to the sea.

I advance five arguments for the passing away of the *miraculous* spiritual gifts. (As we will see in Chapter 13, there is good reason to believe that the non-miraculous spiritual gifts are still with us!) Most of these lines of reasoning have already been extensively developed in the preceding chapters.

1) THE LOGICAL ARGUMENT

In the light of what we have studied in the previous chapter, logic would dictate that sometime shortly after the death of the last apostle, the spiritual gifts ceased to be a normal feature of the NT church. If the gifts were passed on at the laying on the apostolic hands, there is no getting around this.



"Although they prayed for him for six hours, Herbert's ulcers still would not go away."

2) THE SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT

As we learned in Heb 2:4 and many other passages (see Chapter 7), miracles and gifts of the Spirit were for the purpose of bringing the word of God to man. Once the oral word of God had become *scripture* and was delivered to the saints, there was no more need for confirmation, and thus no necessity that the miracles continue. Again, now that the *spoken* word of God has become the *written* word of God, requests for miraculous confirmation are unreasonable (Luke 16:29-31 etc).

Eph 2:20 shows that the church is built on the *foundation* of the NT Apostles and NT prophets. (Eph 3:5 also shows their unique role.) Once the foundation is laid, however, what need is there for it to be laid again? There is absolutely no need for apostles or prophets today!

3) THE OBSERVATIONAL ARGUMENT

Look around you. Do you see the miraculous gifts of the Spirit in the church of the 20th century? The argument is that simple! We don't *observe* the gifts, so they must not be here.

(By the 20th century church I do not mean the denominational Charismatic Movement, but only the church that teaches what the Bible says is necessary for salvation.)

Of course the fact that we don't observe the gifts today is not proof positive that they could not occur among us, but it would certainly be unusual if they existed and yet we did not receive them—we are a people continually praying for the courage to follow the light wherever it may lead.

4) THE PROPHETIC ARGUMENT

As we expounded the scriptures in chapter 9 we saw that God's word actually *prophesied* the passing away of

the miraculous spiritual gifts (1 Cor 13:8-13). Some brothers and sisters do not believe that the 1 Cor 13 case is convincing, yet very few have carefully examined the evidence—NT and OT. Personally I find the prophetic argument very convincing.

5) THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT

As we saw in Section 9 of Chapter 8, *history* records the disappearance of the gifts. To call up our fourth century brother John Chrysostom from the dead once again:

> *[1 Cor 12-14] is very obscure; but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, since they used to take place then but now no longer occur.*

The miraculous gifts were prophesied to cease; they ceased; history recorded their cessation. This is not to say that God never performs miracles today in answer to prayers of faith. Nor is it to deny that the charismatic movement has undergone revivals among the various sects and world religions from time to time—there is nothing new under the sun. But the authentic gifts, history shows, are no longer among us.

CONCLUSION

These five arguments together prove that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit have passed away. But are we really missing them? Do we really need the gifts to get the word out in our generation?

Consider the advantages we have over our first century brothers:

- Quick travel nearly anywhere on the planet.
- Nineteen centuries of history and men's mistakes to learn from.

- The printing press. (At present, the Bible has been printed in *thousands* of different languages.)
- A reading public, especially in the West.
- The telephone—excellent communication.
- Radio and television.
- The completed New Testament.
- Religious freedom, at least in the West.

Besides the occasional miracle, what did they have?

- Slow travel by camel or on foot. (And what if your camel got sick?)
- A dismal legacy of failure under the Old Covenant.
- No printing press; manuscripts that had to be painstakingly copied.
- Widespread illiteracy.
- No telephone—poor communication.
- No radio or TV technology.
- The completed Old Testament *only*, which few were privileged to possess.
- Open persecution.

When you think about it, it is obvious that God has blessed those of us living in the 20th century with many advantages our first century brothers and sisters did not enjoy. Take your choice. As for me and my house, I'll take the 20th century any day!

The ebb tide of the miraculous is a *fact*—supported by logic, scripture, observation, prophecy and history.

12

No Sign will be Given!

JESUS—PLAYING DOWN THE MIRACULOUS

At this point in the book, you may be thinking, "Why did Jesus do so many miracles anyway, if they weren't really necessary?" Now we never said that they were not necessary. For one, the word of God had to be brought to men, and we see the valuable role the miracles played, both in inspiring and in confirming the word. Also, the miracles were a demonstration of God's character and will. Furthermore, they had to be performed to fulfil what the scriptures had predicted about Christ, and so that we would have a solid basis for our faith. Do remember, however, that once the miracles were recorded, there was no need for an encore (Luke 16:31).

Some are discouraged with this conclusion. "Wouldn't it be more exciting if we had miracles? Wouldn't we be able to get more visitors to our services? Wouldn't it advance the kingdom more in the long run if we had the miraculous gifts?"

There's no denying that things would be more sensational if we could perform miracles, especially considering present trends in church growth. And no one but a fool would deny that attendances would increase significantly. But is that what it's all about? Normal Christianity is quite exciting in itself, and attendances are not the best indicator of how a congregation is doing, as important as they are. Conversions, long-range retention, spiritual maturity and the multiplication of leaders are surely more important considerations.

Think about it: how many loyal followers did Jesus have at the end of his own ministry? One hundred and twenty. How many had seen his miracles? Many of the crowds that assembled to hear his teaching numbered in the *thousands* (Luke 12:1). How many people did Jesus preach to in his lifetime? A few hundred thousand? Or several million? Brothers and sisters, let's be *realistic!* The deciding factor in the effectiveness of a ministry could never be miracles; it is the hearts of the lost and the zeal of the labourers.

We mustn't look for short cuts to numerical growth. Look what happened in the fourth century when the Roman Empire decided that Christianity was to be the *official* religion (381 AD): the pagans poured into the church! Attendances were at an all-time high, as the heathen temples emptied in favour of the Christian churches. But there was a heavy price to pay: all the worldliness of the pagans was imported wholesale into the church; teaching before baptism was watered down; the whole situation became very political. The church never recovered from the blow.

No, there are no short-cuts. The only way to build a dynamic and expanding ministry is *hard work.* Yet how easy it is to be unrealistic about the whole thing, to think that miracles would really significantly improve our evangelistic thrust! We can end up reasoning as Jesus' brothers did:

> *Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." For even his own brothers did not believe in him (John 7:3-5).*

If Jesus really knew what he was doing, so they reasoned, he would use the miracles to build up his image, to gain notoriety for his work. But the point of the

ministry is not publicity; it is to save souls. His brothers' philosophy was worldly, unrealistic and selfish. Jesus would have nothing to do with it! But Jesus knew exactly what he was doing. Often we read of his refusal to grant a sign, for he knew the hearts of men. It is abundantly clear that Jesus discouraged the sign-seeking mentality. Let's look at seven reasons why Jesus was so reluctant to play to the crowds:

1) People would follow him from wrong motives.

Jesus knew that it is much easier to get caught up in the excitement of miracles than in the excitement of repentance. When the crowds followed him in John 6, Jesus challenged their motives:

> *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life..." (John 6:26-27a).*

Whereas the miracles should have convicted them of their need to become committed disciples, instead their self-interest was the main reason they were following Jesus. Even after this stiff challenge they remained unrepentant:

> *"So they asked him, 'What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?" (John 6:30)*

And this was after he had miraculously fed many of them (John 6:1-15)! Things come to a head later in the chapter, after they realise what sort of commitment Jesus is expecting. Their response:

> *"On hearing it, many of his disciples said, 'This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware*

that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you?..." From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him" (John 6:60-61,66).

Their motivation was sinful from the beginning. Such people can be persuaded to associate themselves with Jesus as long as there is something they think they can get out of it, but, as the saying goes, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

2) Miracles do not guarantee future faithfulness.

Experiencing great miracles does not guarantee long-term fidelity. It's like a close brush with death—how many people are significantly changed by it? While I was a charismatic I had two very close calls: once I nearly drowned in the ocean, and the other time my bicycle was snapped in two when a car struck me. When things like this happen it is easy to become "religious" for a time, but how quickly the effect wears off! Jesus knew that there is no connection between a momentary conviction based on circumstances or feelings and the lasting commitment of a solid decision. Jesus saw this in his ministry over and over again.

Sadly, even the people of God are not innocent of such selfish forgetfulness of what the Lord has done (2 Pet 1:9). Is this not a lesson taught us time and time again throughout the wilderness period of Israel?

They forgot what he had done,
the wonders he had shown them.
He did miracles in the sight of their fathers
in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.
He divided the sea and led them through;
he made the water stand firm like a wall.
He guided them with the cloud by day
and with light from the fire all night.

He split rocks in the desert
and gave them water as abundant as the seas . . .
But they continued to sin against him,
rebelling in the desert against the Most High.
(Psalm 78:11-15,17)

Jesus knew that the hearts of men and women needed to be won to him not on the basis of unusual events they had witnessed, but on the basis of an appreciation of God's love for them in sending Jesus to die for their sins (John 12:32).

3) The scriptures are sufficient.

As we have repeatedly discussed already, the scriptures are all we need to have a solid faith in God. Abraham tried to enlighten the rich man on this point, who had a difficult time grasping how a stunning miracle would not create a moral change in the hearts of his family members. How much more does this apply when the scriptures record miracles! If we want to be impressed, all we have to do is read the Bible. If that does not impress us, it is not too likely that witnessing a bona fide miracle would bring about a profound change in our heart and conduct.

4) Not even "doubters" have need of signs.

Some try to use Gideon or Thomas as justifications for their own weak faith and commitment. The astute reader will notice that Gideon was not commended for his procrastination, nor was Thomas commended for his sceptical attitude concerning Christ. He had no excuse for his doubts, for he had seen countless miracles at the hands of Jesus, and Thomas was present when Jesus on several occasions prophesied his resurrection. How did Jesus deal with "doubting Thomas?"

> *Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe' (John 20:27).*

No, Thomas is not commended for his "scientific" attitude; he is rebuked! Nor is it suggested that he work through his doubts; he is *commanded* to stop doubting. (Now are we becoming irrational? No, because for Thomas this did not even come close to a leap in the dark. He had seen plenty of evidence!)

There was a woman in London with whom Joyce Arthur studied the Bible about five years ago. Things seemed to be going well, until what seemed to be a total impasse. Despite all the evidence she had by that time seen in the scriptures, the woman was saying that she wasn't sure she could accept the whole Bible after all, had never really believed in the devil, and wasn't sure sin was "sin."

Joyce's response: she challenged her to be reasonable, to stop doubting and believe. "How mindless of Joyce," I thought at the time; "Joyce should have given her a book on evidences, encouraged her, suggested a few useful passages to read." (God has shown me many things about the ministry since then!) The woman was baptised just days later.

Most of the would-be Thomases of today have no need of miracles. What they need is a good challenge to repent! However, when someone's faith is weak, undeveloped, and legitimately needs time to grow, what is the biblical solution? *Get them into the word.* The word produces faith (Rom 10:17). My Bible doesn't say anything about miracles in that passage!

5) The hard-hearted are not affected by the miracles anyway.

The human mind is capable of the most incredible rationalisations. I recall the haunting words of Goering:

> *"I have no conscience...The name of my conscience is Adolf Hitler. My job is not to practise justice; my job is to destroy and to exterminate, nothing more."*

As with Pharaoh (Exod 7:13), Jeroboam (I Kings 13:4-6, 33), and Goering we find a significant hardness of heart among the Jews of Jesus' day. After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, the leaders of the Jews saw the truth; they did not deny the miracles. But they had no effect on them at all, except to accelerate their murderous hatred of Jesus:

> *Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation" (John 11:47-48).*

Not all the leaders were this way, fortunately. Some, like Nicodemus (John 3:1ff, 7:51), had the integrity to acknowledge the truth when they saw it. But for the most part the Jewish people remained obstinate:

> *Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him (John 12:37).*

The point: miracles today would not make one whit of difference for people whose minds are already made up.

6) Jesus does not want to short-circuit our free will.

What would happen if, every time we were about to make a wrong decision, God himself appeared to us, coaxed us into doing what was right, and disappeared until our next moment of weakness? Personal responsibility and free will would go out the window!

God respects our own decision making ability, even if we misuse that faculty for selfish ends. That is why Jesus said,



"This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign,
but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah" (Luke 11:29).

"If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (John 7:17).

Having experienced a miracle is not the fundamental requirement for finding out whether Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Nor is it having God work in your life in some mystical or awesome way. The fundamental requirement is *personal willingness to follow the truth.* That is the *only* way to decide correctly whether Christianity is true. (No, this is not a "Catch-22," since Jesus is not asking for blind faith, only for reasonableness. My challenge to non-Christians is never to "make believe" that Christianity is true, but rather to be willing to follow the truth, wherever that may lead them.)

Like the parable, which does not force its truth on the hearer, the ministry without miracles avoids the extremes of sensationalism, emotionalism and quick but shallow decisions. (This is not to say that miracles would be a hindrance, only that they are not as helpful as many would have us believe.)

7) Jesus wants us to base our faith on reason.

In the gospels we see Jesus calling people to reason again and again (Luke 20:17,27-40,41-44, etc). We must teach people to *think.* If Jesus granted every request for a sign, what would that teach the people? It would teach them to insist on a sign whenever faced with an important decision. It would teach them not to think for themselves, but to ask the Lord to give them the answer, and then give the praise (or the blame) to God. The charismatic approach sounds so spiritual, doesn't it? This would be the death of personal Bible study, for why put in the hours when God can speak the truth directly to your heart? This would be the death of Christianity.

CONCLUSION

Jesus discouraged the miracle-seeking mentality, and so should we. One of the most illuminating passages on the subject is Luke 11:29-32:

> *As the crowds increased, Jesus said, 'This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. The Queen of the South will rise at the judgement with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.*

The Ninevites repented because Jonah preached the word to them. They had no need of a miraculous sign—and yet how strong the argument for their need of a miraculous sign could seem: Jonah was a foreigner, he was alone, they probably had never heard of him, his religion was different to theirs, they were a military people who could easily have destroyed Jonah without remorse (Nahum 3:19). Jonah performed no miracle, and yet the entire city repented (Jonah 3:5)!

The Queen of the South (1 Kings 10:1-13) responded favourably to Solomon, even though he performed no miracles for her. She listened to his wisdom, and was moved to praise the God of Israel (1 Kings 10:9).

In both cases the response was not effected through or conditioned by miracles. Neither the people of Nineveh nor the Queen of Sheba received a miraculous sign—and yet they moved by God's word. How little excuse Jesus' generation had compared with these believing foreigners!

And "the sign of Jonah?" For the purposes of our preaching the resurrection is the central miracle (1 Cor 15:12-19). Does God re-enact the resurrection every time a non-Christian gets to the appropriate stage in his search for God? No, like everyone else the one seeking God must read about the resurrection. And there is just as much reason to believe in Jesus because of the resurrection today as there was two thousand years ago—no more, no less.

For all intents and purposes, Jesus' response to his generation fits our own perfectly: **No sign will be given!**

13

Enough About What He Doesn't Do!

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT AND GIFTS TODAY

In our discussions on the Charismatic Movement, we ofter assume such a defensive posture that we speak a lot about what the Spirit *doesn't* do, and very little about what he *does* do! In fact, up to this point in the book most of our energy has been devoted to showing the *error* of charismatic teaching and practice. This is not just intriguing study, but also practical, since it equips us to show our charismatic friends where they have strayed. But even more worthwhile—and personally exciting—is to study the power of the Spirit in our lives as disciples.

This chapter is meant to tip the scales, so to speak, and to provide a picture of what the Holy Spirit *does*. This will prove invaluable in your discussions with charismatics, who sometimes correctly point out the lack of emphasis on the Spirit in our congregations.

In this chapter we will explore several areas of the Holy Spirit's activity.

THE SPIRIT GIVES US POWER

The Spirit gives us strength and power. This is not to say that he miraculously builds up our muscle tissue! Rather, the Spirit strengthens us *in our inner being:*

> *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being (Eph 3:16).*

Just as this was Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, so too this can be our own prayer: that God give us the strength to keep going. Indeed, God is our strength! (Psalm 18:1)

The indwelling Spirit gives us power (2 Tim 1:7). Those who "have a form of godliness but deny its power" are to be completely rejected (2 Tim 3:5). They are not exerting themselves to be led by the Spirit; they are too distracted by the flesh and the material world (Rom 8:12-14).

God wants all of us to lead *dynamic* Christian lives, for that is the only way we will persevere in our mission and evangelise the world. Furthermore, lives that are not dynamic stagnate, and those who lead them tend to fall away from the faith.

In your heart do you really desire a powerful Christian life? That is one of the main activities of the Spirit. Challenge your charismatic friends on this; very few of them are leading dynamic lives at all, and so will be convicted of their need to be disciples. Remember, it is much easier to be enthusiastic about feelings and experiences than it is to truly repent.

THE SPIRIT GIVES US GUIDANCE

The Spirit leads Christians, as we have studied in Chapter 4, Section 3. Guidance comes through the word, since all scripture is inspired by the Spirit of God. Thus when we resist the plain teaching of the Bible, we are resisting the Spirit. This is a very practical point to make with charismatics who are having a hard time with some of the challenges you may have given them. Ask them directly, "Do you realise that you are resisting the Spirit by not putting this part of God's word into practice?"

Many charismatics say that the Spirit convicts people apart from the word. Often this is said in self justification. ("When the Spirit shows me that what you say is

right, then I'll change.") But the scriptures teach that the Spirit convicts us *through* the word. Consider the following passage:

> *When [the Counsellor] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement (John 16:8).*

At first glance it appears that the Spirit convicts men whether or not the word has been preached. But this is not so! Often the word of God is what is said to convict men (Jer 23:22), or to lead them to faith (Rom 10:17). Neh 9:20/30 shows that the Spirit spoke to people in the OT—through the prophets. The chief flaw of the false prophets was that they did not convict people of their sin (Lam 2:14). So we see that when we are convicted about our need to change things, the Spirit has been working on our hearts through the word of God. I praise God for the powerful sermons and direct challenges from men and women who love me. I *need* the challenge! And when we change, God is glorified.

That men must hear the word in order to come to faith is clearly spelled out in Rom 10:13-17. From these passages is established the following sequence:

> Word preached—hear word—believe word—call on name of the Lord—receive salvation.

This is important because many charismatics believe that you can be saved without hearing or really understanding the gospel. I once read in a book by Malcolm Smith, a charismatic author, the following sentence:

> *John 3:16 is all one needs to know to find the Lord; many have been saved on less.*

It would be almost impossible for anyone to be born again on the basis of one verse of scripture! (What are the chances someone would figure out the authority of the Bible, his need to repent, the scriptural terms of

salvation, etc, by reading John 3:16?) This may be in line with the irrational approach of the charismatics—where experiences count for more than belief in the gospel and true discipleship—but it is certainly not in line with the word of God.

The positive lesson from all this is that the Spirit today imparts faith and creates conviction, which is the first stage of his guidance of individuals.

Yes, guidance comes through the word, but in a broader sense the Spirit leads us through the entire obedience process, as we saw in Psalm 143:10, Ezek 36:27, etc. The Spirit is at work in our lives, in God's providence, in ways we do not understand. The analogy of the guiding cloud (Num 10) is a good one to keep in mind as you consider the human and divine side to God's leading of his people.

THE SPIRIT GIVES US SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Well, shiver me timbers! I bet you didn't expect that statement to come from the pen of a former charismatic! This is one of those frontiers of restoration that many shrink from.

There are three positions on the gifts:

- All the gifts have passed away; none remain.
- None of gifts have passed away; all remain.
- Some of the gifts have passed away; others remain.

The first position is that of many non-charismatics. The second is that of nearly all charismatics. The third possibility is the one I believe in, and for which I present a rationale.

What is the NT evidence? There are five listings of spiritual gifts in the NT:

Rom 12:6-8
1 Cor 12:28
1 Pet 4:10-11
1 Cor 12:8-10
Eph 4:11

The total number of gifts represented is at least twenty! And this ignores several other spiritual gifts mentioned in the OT (e.g. Exodus 31:3-5).

But aren't spiritual gifts *miraculous?* Not necessarily. The phrase "miraculous gifts" appears nowhere in the NT. It is our term, not a biblical one. The problem is that we equate the miraculous gifts with *all* the spiritual gifts, not realising that spiritual gifts aren't necessarily miraculous.

The NT Greek word for gift, *charisma*, does not necessarily denote anything miraculous. Paul uses *charisma* when discussing his gift of celibacy (1 Cor 7:7). Who would say that this was "miraculous?" Certainly not Paul! It is the word in connection with eternal life in Rom 6:23. It is also the word in Rom 12:6 referring to a host of things that everyone agrees are not miraculous. Is encouraging "miraculous?" How about giving generously? Leadership? (How many of you full-time workers would say that you have been "miraculously" suited for your vocation?) Putting it all together, we see that spiritual gifts include both miraculous and non-miraculous gifts. The distinction between the two is useful, however, for any analytical study.

It is possible that all of the gifts mentioned in 1 Cor 12:8-10 are miraculous, but it is unlikely that all of the gifts in 1 Cor 12:28 are miraculous. Look at them yourself! As for Rom 12:6-8, with the possible exception of prophesying, all of the gifts mentioned there are non-miraculous—but

they are gifts all the same! Eph 4:11 is a different sort of passage, since all the gifts there are *teaching* gifts. 1 Pet 4:10 is a passage for all Christians:

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

It is the assumption of these passages that *every* Christian possesses at least one gift (Rom 12:6, 1 Cor 1:7, Eph 4:7, 1 Pet 4:10). I do not believe that every first century Christian possessed a *miraculous* gift, but I do believe that every Christian in any century has received some spiritual gift. It is obvious, as we look at our local congregations, that some people are better suited for some things than for others. We all have different talents and abilities; this is a fact, whether or not we choose to give God the credit for the various gifts. Again, **every** disciple has at least one *charisma*, or gift.

I believe that we err when we say that all of the spiritual gifts were *miraculous*. I cite John Partington, one of the top British experts on the topic, and who has significantly influenced my thinking on the subject:

> Firstly, we must be clear on what we mean by "miracle" or "miraculous." A miracle is an extra-ordinary event which is a departure from God's normal and natural ways of working. If miracles were to become commonplace, they would cease to be miracles. Not all of God's workings among men can be classed as miraculous. In fact the opposite is true. God works primarily in nature, not in supernature—in history, not in miracle. The living God is active and working among us, and we need to have a sense of his ceaseless working, but we do not refer to this working as miraculous. The miraculous is when God does something that is not "normal," but is out of the ordinary.

> For example, if God gives a person the ability to learn a new language, that may be a divine gift, but we would not call it a miracle. But if the person suddenly begins to speak in a new language without having learnt it, we would say that it was a miracle. We thus note that some of the spiritual gifts were clearly miraculous—gifts such as healing, prophecy and speaking in languages. But it is just as clear that others are not miraculous at all: giving money, showing mercy, service. Though it may be argued that all were miraculous gifts, it would seem to be a misuse of the word "miraculous," since it is God's normal way of doing things—i.e. giving gifts to his redeemed people (*The Holy Spirit*, 3, 4:5).

In fact, we all acknowledge the presence of the gifts when we speak of a person as being "gifted," or say that God has given him a special ability in a particular area. As James said,

> *Don't be deceived, my brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of the heavenly lights . . . (1:16-17).*

How then do we receive our gifts? Does God give some of us special gifts at baptism? Does he begin to give others gifts even before they are in a right relationship with him? The insights of John R. W. Stott (*Baptism and Fullness*, 93ff) are to the point:

> . . .Is it not *a priori* unlikely that God will give a spiritual gift of teaching to a believer who in pre-conversion days could not teach for toffee, or a spiritual gift of encouragement to a brother or sister who by temperament is unsympathetic and unfriendly? It would not be impossible to God. But would it not be more in harmony with the God of the Bible, whose plans are eternal, to suppose that his spiritual gifts dovetail with his natural endowments? And that (for example) a "son of encouragement" such as Barnabas (Acts 4:36), who exercised

his particular ministry both by generous giving (verse 37) and by personal friendship (e.g. Acts 9:26,27; 11:25,26), was already that kind of person, at least potentially, by creation?

In this case we must look for the peculiarities of the spiritual gifts of teaching and encouragement in the heightening, the intensification, the "Christianizing" of a natural endowment already present, or at least latent. Thus, a man may be a gifted teacher before his conversion, and may after it be given the *charisma* of teaching to enable him to expound with insight, clarity and relevance. Or he may have a sympathetic disposition by nature, but after conversion be given the spiritual gift of "encouragement" to enable him to exercise a specifically Christian ministry of "encouragement in Christ" (Phil 2:1)... (*Excerpted with permission from IVP.*)

Looking at things from the eternal perspective, we see that it is no less a gift of God just because it is not bestowed at conversion. In fact, like Jeremiah (Jer 1:5), Paul was prepared by God for his ministry from birth! (Gal 1:15-16). In the final analysis it would be difficult to prove that someone received a particular gift at conversion, since undiscovered talents may be discovered at almost any time. Once again, the distinction between natural gifts and supernatural ones is not a biblical one. A gift is no less from God just because it isn't miraculous (James 1:17).

This view of the spiritual gifts puts 1 Cor 12:12-26 in its proper context. Each member has a different gift (function). This is not to say that evangelism is a gift; Eph 4:11 says that God gave some *evangelists* as gifts to the church. Not all are evangelists, but all are to be evangelistic. No disobedience to a command of God can be excused with a "that's not my gift" attitude.

For the church to be all that God intends it to be, we must all utilise our gifts. God has left no one empty-

handed, and there are ways in which all of us can contribute to the kingdom. Determining your gift(s) should not be terribly difficult; most of our gifts God has made obvious, and other people will be able to help you identify those that are hidden.

To sum up, my position is that the spiritual gifts are still with us, even though the miraculous ones, having fulfilled their purpose, have run their course. (Notice that 1 Cor 13:8 refers only to the miraculous gifts.)

Such a view, rather than discouraging personal growth and evangelism, should stimulate it. Furthermore, it will not hurt our cause to concede that the charismatic claim that the gifts are present is, at least partially, correct.

The Spirit Transforms our Personalities

The fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) are nothing other than the basic traits of the personality of Jesus Christ. The Spirit creates or develops these fruits in our lives, and thus transforms our personalities to be Christlike. Yet often the concept of the fruit of the Spirit is not exciting to disciples, even though it should be, as this is the only way to be happy as Christians. I remember when I was a young Christian my attitude was, "The fruits of the Spirit aren't really that important. They're good, but there are more important things in life, like winning souls!" Now I see that the two go together; one is hardly likely to be effective if he is nervous, depressed, introverted, etc. Moreover, most people who say that in John 15:8 the fruit of the Spirit is all Jesus had in mind, lack it!

The Spirit gives us *love* (Gal 5:22, 2 Tim 1:7). He also gives us *joy* (Gal 5:22). One way in which the Spirit gives us joy is through the growth of those we are striving to mature in Christ (Luke 10:21). Joy as a fruit of the Spirit must not be confused with the general joy that God gives



"Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious":
Paul boldly addresses a meeting of the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-34)

to all men through the circumstances of life (Acts 14:17). Personal *peace* (Gal 5:22, Rom 14:17) is yet another tremendous blessing, and one which we must seek if we are to make Christ real to our fellow man. Peace at a church level is linked with numerical growth in Acts 9:31. The Spirit also gives us *hope* (Gal 5:5, Rom 15:13, 5:5), and many other qualities could be added to the list. In short, the Spirit is helping us to become more and more Christlike.

How can we become more Christlike? We must understand the battle between flesh and Spirit that rages in each of us as we struggle to pray "Not my will but yours be done." There is a real battle going on! (Gal 5:16-17) The lifestyle of the flesh is lazy, selfish, undisciplined and inward focussed. But the lifestyle of the spirit is hard-working, giving, disciplined and evangelistic.

There is a real war being waged. But the good news is that we can be more than conquerors if we yield our wills to the Spirit. This sort of transformation is liberating:

> *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17-18).*

If we are not more Christlike now than we were six months ago, we have stopped growing. If this is the case, be assured of one thing: the Spirit is being grieved, for he desperately desires our spiritual maturity in Christ.

THE SPIRIT HELPS US IN EVANGELISM

As someone has said, "The Spirit of Christ always insists on making Christ known." Well put, and that is the key to understanding the plan of the Acts of the Apostles,

sometimes named "The Acts of the Spirit." In our lives we have no more powerful advocate in our evangelism than the Holy Spirit himself.

My favourite verse on the subject is 2 Tim 1:7:

> *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

As for timidity, this has never been the way of the Spirit! The Spirit will help us to change, from the inside out, in any area of our life necessary in order for us to become effective evangelistically.

Power: Do you have a powerful evangelistic lifestyle? Do others perceive you as *dynamic?* If not, this can change through the Spirit of God.

Love: Do you evangelise out of duty, or do others sense the love of Christ in you? Without love, a show of power is harsh, noisy, unattractive.

Self-discipline: Is your life disciplined enough to back up the message of surrender to God that you preach? In the final analysis, you will be discredited if you are unable to control yourself. God is a God of order (1 Cor 14:33); do we reflect that in our lives?

These three form the magic combination if you want to win friends and influence people—for Christ.

Have circumstances got you down? If so, claim the power of the Spirit as the early Christians did when they were under great pressure:

> *"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness" (Acts 4:29).*

Was that prayer ever answered? Would God let any prayer like that go unanswered?

> *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly (Acts 4:31).*

A miracle? Perhaps. (The shaking is immaterial.) They sincerely desired boldness, prayed a prayer for boldness, and emerged from that prayer meeting bolder than ever! Coincidence? Hardly! God is waiting and willing to fill with his Spirit any of us who need to grow in the area of boldness.

Evangelism is the top priority of the Spirit, who wants as many to know God and go to heaven as possible. Jesus would have it no other way.

Conclusion

Well, we have only touched the hem of the garment. The aim of this chapter: to show that the Spirit is involved in every aspect of our Christian lives, and to counter the charismatic claim that we are "quenching the Spirit" by not speaking in tongues, going by our feelings, etc. Those miraculous manifestations are trivial in comparison with the work of the Spirit in empowering his saints, guiding them, giving them his gifts, transforming their personalities into the image of Christ, and equipping them for evangelism.

Considering all the things the Spirit gives us power to do, let's close with five challenges for our charismatic friends:

- Are you living a dynamic Christian life, or are you denying the power of God?

- Are you resisting the Spirit by ignoring the clear teaching of the scriptures?

- Are you excusing yourself from evangelism, claiming that it is a *gift* instead of a *command*?

- Are you the same as you were six months ago, or has your character really changed?

- Do you think spirituality is a matter of experiences and feeling good, or is spreading the word your top priority as a disciple?

14

The Wrong Side of the Boat

How to Study With Charismatics

Having spent the last thirteen chapters delving into the Charismatic Movement, it is finally time to offer practical guidance on how to convert the charismatic. In this chapter I share lessons I have learned through my own personal experience in studying with charismatics. Some of these principles are common sense; many came through the "school of hard knocks." I have made many mistakes, and I do not desire that you repeat them. Perhaps you will benefit from the lessons of John 21.

"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus.

He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

"No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some" (John 21:3-6a).

Hasn't this been the experience of many of us fishermen? We have worked hard all night, but when it comes to bringing in the charismatics, we have little if anything to show for our labour. Jesus' advice to them: *"Throw your net on the right side of the boat."*



"So what if you did speak in tongues?
How on earth can you be saved if you're not a disciple?"

Could it be that we are casting our nets on the "wrong" side of the boat? *All* of us can improve our approach: in our sensitivity, conviction, teaching and love. If you want to be effective in reaching charismatics, consider the following advice carefully.

1. GOING ON THE DEFENSIVE

Many times Christians on the defensive when talking with charismatics: our adrenalin surges, our voice level rises, our arguments become hurried and emotional—in short, we come on far too strong.

We may behave this way because we lack experience in handling these situations, or because the charismatic's questions seem impossible to negotiate, or because we feel personally threatened. Perhaps we are unsure of the reality of the Spirit in own own lives, or are nervous because we have never really mastered the Bible's teaching on the Holy Spirit.

Charismatics usually sense such intimidation. It does not give the impression that we are confident of our position, and this can easily give the charismatic a false sense of security.

The solution: **know your Bible, relax, be friendly, and trust God.** Realise that God is on your side.

The charismatics are lost, on account of false teaching on repentance and baptism. Don't kid yourself; sincerity does not make one justified in God's sight (1 Cor 4:4). If a person has not met Jesus on Jesus' terms of salvation, he has no hope. But we do have the truth—so why be on the defensive? Why be intimidated? It makes no sense whatever, and is likely to hurt the charismatic's chances of becoming a Christian.

2. AVOIDING THE CARDINAL INSENSITIVITIES

In our attempts to be confident, it is easy to be insulting. This is not a wise tactic, nor will it commend your position to the charismatic.

Here are some of the major "cardinal insensitivities":

a. Arguing against experience

This is not only insulting, but also illogical, since there is no way to prove that someone has not really had the experience he claims. The interpretation of the experience may be open to debate, but never the experience itself.

b. Making fun of the charismatic position

Comments like, "If you are supposed to be charismatic, how come you still wear glasses?" are not likely to win points. Moreover, there were a number of people in the NT whom God did not allow men with the gift of healing to heal. Paul left Trophimus sick in Miletus (2 Tim 4:20), told Timothy to drink wine for his stomach illnesses (1 Tim 5:23), and himself had a thorn in the flesh which God would not remove even after three prayers for healing (2 Cor 12:8).

c. Sarcastic comments about the charismatic's views

Sometimes believers bring out of the arsenal such retorts as: "You people are just like the Jonestown group. They were so gullible, they would believe anything. And look where they are now—the same place you're going!" Other times over-generalisations can be just as damaging: "Hey, remember that vision of the nine-hundred feet tall Jesus Oral Roberts saw and told him to ask for more money? I bet your church just wants your money, too!"

d. Prematurely telling a charismatic he is not a Christian

Informing someone of your assessment that he is lost before you have had a number of Bible studies together and have a good relationship is a common but foolhardy move. Firstly, it is likely to backfire. Secondly, you have no right, especially in his eyes, to say such a thing to a fellow believer who has neither been tried nor found guilty. Thirdly, you will undo all the good you may have done and will prejudice him against the things you still plan to study out.

e. Denying the work of God in his life.

God works in the lives of *everyone*, whether or not they are true disciples. One of the worst errors we can commit is to ascribe good deeds and sincere religious experience to the devil. One of my most haunting memories is turning away a sincere charismatic from baptism. He had come to the mid-week service with a towel and change of clothes. I asked him whether he still thought God had been working in his life. He replied, "I know I'm lost, but I just can't believe that God never had anything to do with me." David would be a disciple today if I hadn't turned him away with my judgmental, *too* black and white attitude. God *can* and *does* work in everyone's life—even in non-Christian's lives. (Matt 7:7, Acts 14:17, 2 Kings 5:1-15.) David, forgive me.

Let us realise that, in the face of the insincerity of the religious world, we have more in common with many charismatics than we do with most other religious people. This kinship, so to speak, should be capitalised on. Remember, *"reckless words pierce like a sword" (Proverbs 12:18).* At all costs, **let us avoid the cardinal insensitivities.**

3. THE FRIENDSHIP FACTOR

Without a solid friendship, you will convert only the most pure hearted charismatics. Unfortunately, most charismatics are not "Ethiopian eunuchs." The truth is hard to swallow, especially when your entire approach to spirituality is wrong and all of your friends are lost. Love and gentle instruction go a long way (2 Tim 2:25). We need to apply verses like 1 Thess 2:8 to charismatics as much as to anyone else. (How do we ever think we will win charismatics for Christ in the Iron Curtain countries, where they have more strength than traditional religions, when we cannot even win their friendship in the free West?)

Friendship begins with mutual respect. You are likely to be respected for your commitment to Christ, and you should respect particulary the "hot" charismatic for his commitment as well; but even if the charismatic's commitment is not respectable, you should respect him as a human being. For example, ask him to tell you about his religious experiences (meanwhile making careful mental notes for future Bible studies). Ask him to share in a prayer at the end of your study; there is no harm in your praying together, and it is likely to draw you closer.

Work on the friendship, balancing serious studies with more relaxed outings together. Eat together, stay in good touch, and allow the friendship time to grow. You will be surprised at what good rapport you will be able to develop after only the first meeting or two, as your relationship is based on mutual respect, love, and (increasingly) Christ.

As with most evangelistic studies, it is wise to have three-way studies with charismatics, the older Christian leading the studies, the younger one observing and assisting. In this way the charismatic has another relationship in addition to the person leading the studies, which allows things to go more smoothly, and is a great learning opportunity for the less experienced Christian.

Finally, introduce your charismatic friend to Christians in your congregation who were converted out of a charismatic background. It will be conducive to their conversion and long-term stability to have more than one good relationship, and the ex-charismatic will be able to help them through any difficult patches which may arise during the course of your studies or afterwards.

If you want your studies with charismatics to be fruitful, and not just an exchange of disagreements, **remember the friendship factor.**

4. NO "ONE-SHOT" APPROACH!

The traditional "one-shot" approach of bombarding someone with the "whole counsel" (Acts 20:27, RSV) has an abysmally low success rate. We must discipline ourselves not to rush in our Bible studies with charismatics, but rather be patient. Most likely it will take a number of studies to bring a charismatic to an accurate understanding of the truth. (The one-shot approach does not allow him time to internalise the new concepts or process the far-reaching implications which will dawn on him. See Acts 17:2.)

The actual studies and the order in which they are done varies from ministry to ministry. This is good, for there is no virtue in uniformity of approach above the congregational level, though there are many advantages at a local level. In London the usual course (which we call "Guard the Gospel") consists of the following studies:

Seeking God—getting serious about finding God
The Word of God—its absolute authority
Jesus Christ—his character and dealing with people
Discipleship—with special emphasis on evangelism
Sin—specific sins and separation from God
The Cross—the motivating power in the Christian life
Repentance—a radical change in life
Baptism I—an introduction to NT baptism
Baptism II—the implications and false doctrines
The Church—the need to be totally involved in the body

Most of the above studies are completed before the point of baptism. Often there are additional studies, depending on the situation of the person being studied with. Additional studies include *Faith and Works*, *The Resurrection*, *The Judgement*, and of course *The Holy Spirit*. The order of the units varies slightly from person to person, and more mature Christians often create new studies to meet special needs of particular non-Christians.

The one-shot approach has done as much as anything to give some of our congregations a bad name. Keep in mind the following principles if you want to be effective in your studies with anyone, and especially with religious people:

a. **patience**: allowing time for concepts to sink in

b. **logical flow** of the progression of the studies

c. **flexibility**: selecting studies that address the person's individual situation

5. PILOT STUDIES

How many of us have experienced heartache after heartache because we judged people we were studying with to be open, even to be progressing, yet in the home stretch they refused to see the light? This heartache can largely be avoided if we develop the perception and wisdom not to start sharing the whole counsel with those who are not really open.

A "pilot study" is undertaken to ascertain whether or not someone is open to the gospel. The theory is that if someone is unwilling to change his mind on one subject, he is even less likely to change it on a more challenging one. Thus his response to a pilot study is a fairly good indication of his openness to becoming a Christian. The idea is to avoid wasting time with people who are not serious about following Christ—a practical implementation of the Matt 7:6 principle.

For pilot studies choose clear-cut biblical subjects. Avoid fine doctrinal issues. *(Is justification antecedent to sanctification? Do pets go to heaven when they die? Is only the Church of Christ saved? How did all the animals fit into the ark?)* Select issues that will be personally challenging. Useful pilot studies include topics like *Seeking God* or, for religious people (including charismatics), *Once saved, always saved?* or *Hot-Cold-Lukewarm* (Rev 3).

Pilot studies can prove particularly useful with charismatics who enjoy playing at Christianity but are not serious about making Jesus their Lord.

Some words of caution: A pilot study is not a twenty-minute exercise to decide whether to continue reaching out to someone or to write him off for eternity. All the study shows is whether at the *present* time the person is open to changing his mind about eternal issues. Often, through events God brings into their lives, friendship with Christians, or as a result of your prayers people who are closed today may be open six months from now, so never write anyone off completely. Moreover, a pilot study is intended to streamline our evangelistic strategy, not offer a short-cut to personal fruitfulness. Finally, we should never judge our brothers and sisters by their positions on matters of opinion (Rom 14:1). The *shibboleth* (Judges 12:6) stance many brethren have assumed is offensive not only to man but also to God.

Rather than share all the new insights you have gained from this book with the first charismatic who walks by, why not do an initial pilot study to see whether it will be worth your time? Jesus encouraged us to focus on the most open people (Matt 10:11). Although a number of charismatics are in this position, many are not.

6. DEALING WITH RELIGIOUS PRIDE

As with all religious people with whom we study the Bible, pride must be confronted. I am referring mainly

to their general pride in believing that they are enlightened children of God, which is greatly intensified in charismatics, who take great stock in their "experiences" of God. Sensitivity and perception will go a long way in dealing with religious pride. Some important advice:

a. **Be firm.** Jesus was more direct in dealing with proud religious people than he was with "sinners" (John 8:1ff, Luke 7:36ff).

b. **Temper challenge with friendship** (relaxed time together).

c. **Play a sport or game with him.** This can be very helpful in dealing with pride: Either it provides an *opportunity* to humble him (in something at which you are reasonably good), or an *outlet* for his pride (assuming he can beat you)! Play it by ear.

d. Initially it will probably be best to **offer to disciple the religious person.** Teach him what you know about evangelism. Take him under your wing and begin a discipling relationship with him, teaching him the basic studies. As the studies progress, he will realise that he has more need of the studies than he thought!

e. Offer to **take him evangelising with you.** (No need to insist that he share with everyone; just watching you in action will probably be enough to convict him and break down his pride.) For charismatics who already do evangelise, there is always room to challenge them on their consistency, intensity, etc.

f. Go through **a Bible study on self-righteousness** with him. Useful passages are Luke 3:7-11, 5:31-32, 7:29-30, 18:9-14 and 2 Tim 2:19.

7. THE ISSUE: REPENTANCE

Did you know that there are more people in the world who have been immersed for the forgiveness of sins than have scripturally repented? Many groups teach immersion for the forgiveness of sins, (e.g. Christian Church, Apostolic Church, Mormons, Church of Christ, some Independent Baptist Churches, and a number of independent evangelical fellowships), but hardly anyone teaches commitment the way the Bible does. Rather than be known as the church that insists on baptism for salvation, we should be known as the church that insists on real repentance for salvation.

Repentance is the main issue with any non-Christian, no less so with a religious person, and certainly charismatics are not an exception to the rule. Repentance has been watered down in the religious world, and sometimes even in our brotherhood repentance is little more than feeling sorry for sin and expressing a desire to do better. Biblical repentance, however, is a radical decision leading to a radical change in one's lifestyle.

People who have repented are eager to know God, eager to spend time with others who know God, and eager to help others to know God. If a charismatic claims to be saved but is not devoted to God, committed to reading the Bible, active in sharing his faith, etc, he has not repented. We must not water down the message!

In light of these things, and because this is what the Bible clearly teaches (Matt 3:8, Acts 26:20, etc), in your studies with charismatics **make repentance the issue—for it is!**

8. NO BAPTISM WITHOUT REPENTANCE

A classic mistake young Christians make is "blowing away" their friends and family with the NT teaching on baptism. Such tactlessness seldom bears fruit, usually

hurting the victims' short-term chances of turning to God, and cultivating the habit of using the Bible as a hack-saw instead of the fine sword of the Spirit that it is. We strongly urge young Christians not to make this common mistake, and most learn the lesson in time.

But many not-so-young Christians make the identical mistake! The mistake, yet again, is the premature study of baptism. The power is not in the plan of salvation; the power is in the cross of Christ (1 Cor 1:17), so unless the message of repentance is clearly understood and responded to first, the biblical teaching on immersion will most likely fall on deaf ears. Moreover, studying baptism with people who have not repented is giving ammunition to people who may never repent, ammunition which they may well use to slander your congregation. (Why distribute that piece of information, which helps no one?) And on top of all this, by inoculating them against the truth, you make it even less likely that they will ever come to Jesus on his terms.

And so a fundamental principle emerges:

> **Avoid the study of baptism with people who have not repented!**

9. NO HOLY SPIRIT WITHOUT BAPTISM

Despite the temptation to enter into an involved study of the Holy Spirit with a charismatic in the early stages of your studies with him, *don't!* In fact, avoid studying the H.S. material until he understands that he is lost.

(The *Feelings* study [see Chapter 2] is an exception, but then it does not address most of the charismatic issues. Also, adapt your studies to charismatics, sharing verses or points that will be helpful in the future, once he realises he is lost. Instil *principles*, but do not attack the major issues too early.)

The main reason for this advice is that you will probably only confuse him otherwise. I used to think that his willingness to give ground on charismatic issues was a pre-requisite to studying baptism with him. Although I was able to help a few charismatics become Christians with this approach, God was able to work through me much more when I learned the lesson: **cover baptism first.**

I am *not* saying that we should hastily study repentance in order to reach the baptism material. If the repentance study has not got him doubting his salvation and understanding that his fellow charismatics are also lost (because they have not repented), it is even less likely that the baptism study will shake him. He will fall back on his experiences, ask his superiors in his charismatic fellowship for their opinion, and that will probably be the end of your influence with him!

For several weeks Douglas Arthur and I, along with Douglas Blough, studied the Bible with Mohan Nanjundan. Mohan, who lived upstairs from me in my dormitory, was a very knowledgeable charismatic. He spoke five languages fluently—as well as "tongues." He was also a postgraduate student in economics at the University of London, and he wanted *answers.* The three Dougs and Mohan met for twelve hours of intense study on the Holy Spirit, but Mohan still remained unconvinced.

One day he walked into my room and asked me if I would like to hear him speak in tongues.

"Sure," I said, "go ahead."

Mohan used his prayer "language," hoping to convince me. "Is that supposed to prove to me that you are saved?" I asked.

"Oh, you're just not listening!" a frustrated Mohan said.

"Do you want to hear me speak in tongues?" I asked.

"Go ahead," replied Mohan.

"Korobka dvyer karandashkuya, boomaga okno," I mumbled some random words of Russian.

"Was that really tongues?"

"More so than what you just demonstrated," I replied.

Was this the turning point? No! Hours of Bible study on the Spirit did not do the trick. Nor did impugning his tongue-speaking ability. (I was still learning about the cardinal insensitivities!) What made all the difference? Going back and nailing down the fact that, according to what the Bible teaches on salvation, he was not a Christian. Two days later Mohan, today evangelist in Bangalore, India, was baptised into Christ.

The moral of the story is simple: establish the fact that someone is not a true Christian *before* you dive into a study on the Spirit. Otherwise, if he still thinks he is a Christian, he will not be able to make sense of his charismatic experiences. (And don't expect him to jettison them all at once.) Once he has accepted his own lostness, he will be looking for—and will need—answers to his questions. Tie up all the loose ends *after* you have covered baptism.

10. ORDER OF STUDIES

Studies with charismatics, as we have shown, should follow your regular pattern until after the baptism study, when it will be time to tie up the loose ends. The *Feelings* study is good to cover early, but apart from that there will be little need to cover the peripheral Holy Spirit topics.

After discussing baptism, one or two studies on the Spirit will be necessary. With more involved charismatics, expect more than two additional studies. One of the most useful studies is that on the *Baptism of the Holy Spirit* (see Chapter 6). It is useful because all charismatics claim or covet the experience. Come to your own

conclusions on the matter, and assemble a simple and yet conclusive study. You may find Appendix B, Question 4, a suitable presentation of the Holy Spirit Baptism.

A study on *The Miraculous Gifts*, along with a special explanation of the role of apostles in transmitting the miraculous gifts, is another helpful study, and you will want to study this with most charismatics. A suggested study is found in Appendix B (see Questions 5, 9 and 10, and read the final comment in the appendix).

Many pentecostals will need separate studies on topics like tongue-speaking, the purpose of first-century miracles, or other themes or difficult passages in the Bible. The more familiar you are with the material in this book, the more easily you can construct studies to meet special needs like these. Chapter 9, the exposition of 1 Cor 12-14, contains a lot of useful information, as does Appendix A, which deals with difficult questions often asked by charismatics.

For your convenience I have put together a comprehensive study on the Spirit, covering the Holy Spirit Baptism, the Miraculous Gifts, and several other topics. You will find it in **Appendix B**.

Here I share some typical study sequences with four charismatics. The first (Mr Breeze) is interested in little more than the good feeling he thinks the Holy Spirit can give him. The study series is as follows:

Discipleship

Is that all? Yes, for it turned out that Mr Breeze refused to admit that he was not a true disciple. He became very uncomfortable when he read the verses on evangelism and saw that he hadn't ever really given his life to Jesus. In fact, in the middle of the study Mr Breeze felt led to leave the room, and was never heard from again. (Not all people sort themselves out so easily, however, as we shall see.) For all intents and purposes, the *Discipleship* study was a *pilot* study (see Section 5, above).

The second (Mr Gust), is impressed by the Bible knowledge of the Christian, and after admitting that he "could be doing more" to spread the word and live as a disciple, consented to study the Bible. Here is the series covered with Mr Gust:

Discipleship
The Word
Feelings
Sin
Repentance

Alas, things were going well, but Mr Gust refused to see that he (and his charismatic friends) were not true Christians. In fact, at the end of the *Repentance* study he saw that he himself was lost, but became completely silent as the implications dawned on him. Then he changed his mind and said he was saved after all. He heartily thanked the Christian for helping him to grow spiritually so much, and said he would like to continue the studies in the future—which he has yet to do. (The Christian wisely resisted the temptation to study baptism with Mr Gust, who would have made that the bone of contention instead of repentance, and gone away feeling justified.) From time to time they pass each other in the street, and their relationship is cordial. Perhaps one day Mr Gust will sober up and seek out the Christian again.

The third charismatic, Mr Wind, initially got caught up in the excitement of speaking in tongues, but having been a charismatic for nearly a year, has started to have some doubts. As far as he can see, however, there is no alternative to his charismatic fellowship, which has far more to offer than the dead denomination in which he was brought up. He met the Christian while the Christian was inviting people in the streets, and was interested in getting to know him better. These are the studies the Christian covered with Mr Wind:

The Church
The Word of God

Feelings
Sin
Repentance
The Cross
Baptism I
Baptism II
The Holy Spirit (comprehensive)
Discipleship

As you have supposed, Mr Wind became a Christian after about three weeks of studying the Bible. The Christian started with *The Church*, making the study very convicting, and challenging the charismatic to get involved in a church where everyone seriously studied the Bible and shared their faith. From then on Mr Wind started attending all the services of the local church of Christ, which significantly accelerated his decision for Christ.

After the study of *The Word*, Mr Wind was still talking about what he *felt* the Spirit was saying to him, and so the Christian thought the *Feelings* study would be appropriate. After *Sin* and *Repentance*, Mr Wind realised that he was lost, and so the coast was clear to proceed towards Baptism. To make sure his motivation was pure, however, the Christian first studied *The Cross* with him. *Baptism* was a welcome solution, and after one long study on *The Holy Spirit*, and another on *Discipleship* as a wrap-up, he was immersed. Now the Christian and Mr Wind are doing some more in-depth study on the Spirit, so that Mr Wind will be able to reach his charismatic friends.

The fourth charismatic is Mr Gale, who, shall we say, has been strongly influenced by the charismatic ideology. He speaks in tongues, believes that he has been healed of a tumour, and is thought to possess the gift of prophecy, which he exercises on occasion. Mr Gale actually invited the Christian to consider Christ! They hit it off from the start, but it was clear that Mr Gale was not going to be easy to convince. These were the studies Christian and Mr Gale covered over a two-month period:

Discipleship
Feelings
The Word
Faith and Works
Sin
Repentance
Baptism I
Baptism II
Holy Spirit Baptism
The Miraculous Gifts
The Church
Speaking in Tongues
The Cross

From the very start, the studies were challenging. There was no tip-toeing around, because Mr Gale was very serious about his commitment to Christ. It wasn't until the *Faith and Works* study, which cleared up a lot of misunderstandings in Mr Gale's mind, that he was prepared to visit the church of Christ. (He was involved in his own church five evenings a week, and felt that, even if they were drooping in their discipleship, they needed him and that was where the Lord wanted him.)

Mr Gale really appreciated the thoroughness of the *Sin* study. When the time came to study *Repentance*, however, the Christian was afraid that because he was so committed, he would not be able to see that he was not saved. But Mr Gale had a pure heart, and thought that although he had not fully repented, he very much wanted to and asked the Christian to pray for him. After the *Baptism* study everything fell into place; Mr Gale did not put up any fight.

That is not to say that he had no questions, though! It took three more studies on the Spirit to satisfy his curiosity and to make it clear to him why the experiences he and his friends had claimed were not proof of salvation. (After the *Repentance* study, Mr Gale realised that most of his charismatic friends were lost, but there were a few who were very committed, and he was not so sure about these.)

The final study, on *The Cross*, helped Mr Gale to be urgent in finalising his decision, and he was baptised the very next day.

Although Mr Gale would have been an intimidating fellow to many Christians, he was reached because someone saw in him a great potential and cared about him enough to spend hours and hours every week with him. (In the last week of their studies, Mr Gale and the Christian studied nearly every day. Some of those studies on the Spirit lasted two or three hours!) Praise God that the Christian shared his faith with Mr Gale, because already Mr Gale has helped three of his charismatic friends to become Christians, and will soon be leading his own group Bible study!

What we must understand is that, although most charismatics are like Mr Gust or Mr Breeze, there are a great number like Mr Wind and Mr Gale. If we don't know the Bible, or if we are not willing to make them our friends, they will die separated from God.

For further information on how to study with people see Shining Like Stars, CLCC, 1987. Consult bibliography.

Conclusion

Returning to our weary fishermen, Jesus has just advised them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. What I have been suggesting in this chapter is that we haven't been effective in reaching charismatics because our approach has been wrong. Many of us will need to change our tactics before we can expect to be fruitful in the ministry of reaching charismatics. And what happened when the disciples took the Master's advice?

> *He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish (John 21:6).*

I am convinced, from my observation of others as well as from personal experience, that we can expect similar results today. And we will barely be able to haul in the nets!

There is no magic formula for converting charismatics, but a working knowledge of the scriptures, a good measure of common sense, a lot of love, and much prayer can make all the difference.

APPENDIX A

Have you enjoyed the book? Don't stop here! Go on and have a look at this Appendix. Chances are that if you grasp most of these questions, you will be able to reassure the charismatic greatly that there *are* answers to his questions. The appendix will also round out your own understanding of the Spirit. Section I is fairly basic; Sections II & III will prove more useful for fielding questions you are likely to be asked.

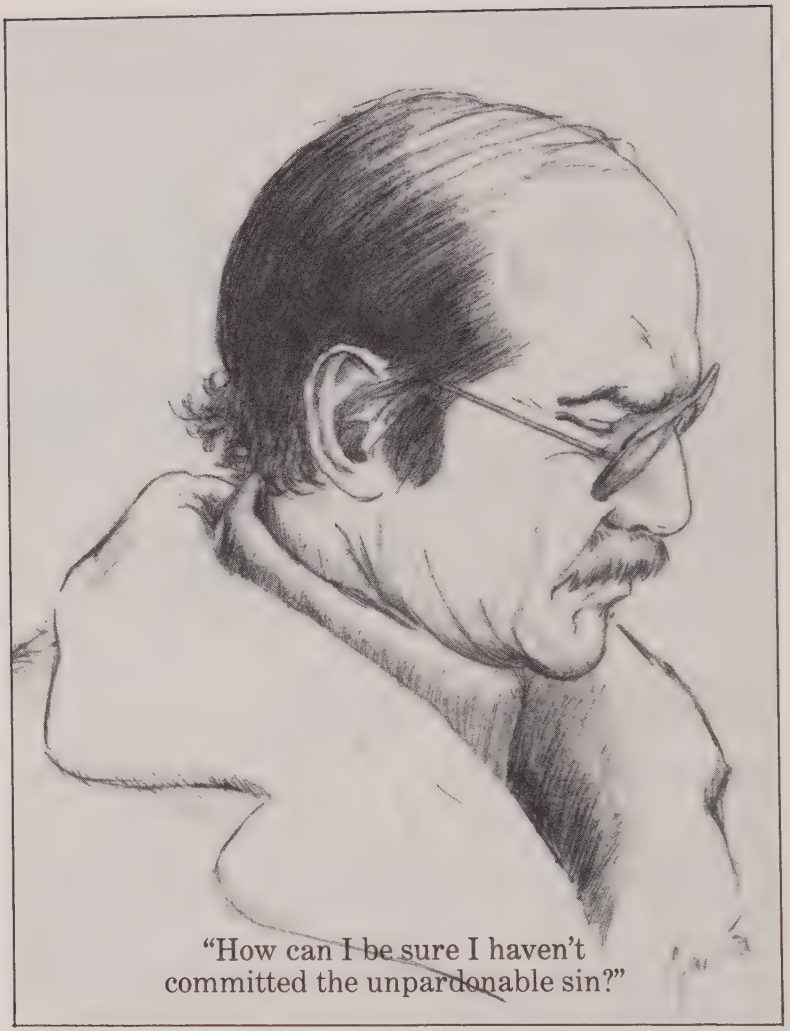
This appendix will address (1) general questions relating to the Holy Spirit, (2) difficult scriptures, and (3) miscellaneous matters.

SECTION I — GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is the Holy Ghost?

The Holy Ghost was the normal Elizabethan term for the Holy Spirit; *spirit* was the term we would use nowadays for *ghost*. Thus in the King James Version, when the disciples saw Jesus walking on water, they cried out in terror, "It is a spirit!" Before his ascension he instructed that people be baptised in the name of the Father, Son and Holy *Ghost*. In modern English, the meanings of the terms are reversed.

In the Greek of the NT, as well as in the Hebrew of the OT, the word translated *spirit* also means *breath* or *wind* [Heb. ruach, Gk. pneuma]. The exact translation must be determined by the context.



"How can I be sure I haven't committed the unpardonable sin?"

What is the difference between *Spirit* and *spirit?*

None at all, in the original texts. Capitalisation is at the discretion of the translators of each version of the Bible. However, convention dictates that *Spirit* refers to the Holy Spirit, and *spirit* to our own spirit. Consult the glossary (Appendix E) for further details.

He, she or it?

Traditionally we in the churches of Christ have had as much of an aversion to calling the Spirit "he" as we have towards calling one another "Spirit-filled." The pronouns in the NT used to refer to the Spirit are masculine; the Spirit is a "he." Using "it" terminology only reinforces the mysterious, weird ideas many have about the Spirit, while distancing God from us.

The Holy Spirit has mind, will and affections (Rom 8:27, 1 Cor 12:11, Rom 15:30). He speaks, teaches, and leads (1 Tim 4:1, John 14:26, Acts 16:6-10). He can even be resisted, grieved, blasphemed or lied to (Acts 7:51, Eph 4:30, Matt 12:31, Acts 5:3). None of these things would be possible if the Spirit were not *personal.*

Furthermore, the Spirit is omniscient, omnipresent and eternal (1 Cor 2:10, Psalm 139:7-10, Heb 9:14)—in short, **divine.**

He is more than just an influence, or an impersonal force like gravity or magnetism; he is a divine person, and a member of the trinity.

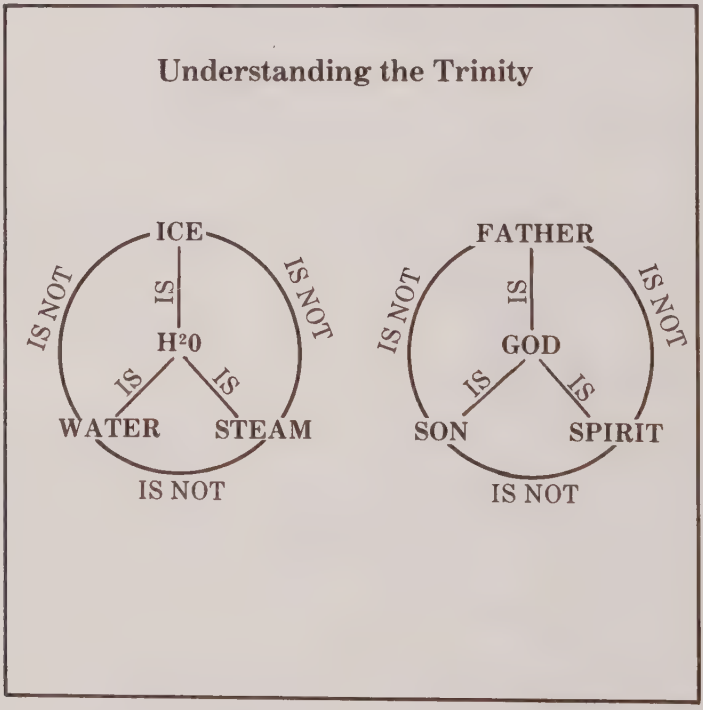
What about the trinity?

Many reject the term trinity as unbiblical. It is true that the term never appears in the Bible, and is an abstraction of third and fourth century theology. (Our early brothers in the Lord spent generations hammering out the doctrine of the trinity, investigating the intricacies of the Spirit.) Comprehending the relationships between Father, Son and Spirit is challenging, to say the least, but unfortunately many vociferously denounce the trinity because they find it hard to grasp the nature of an infinite God. I rarely use the term *trinity,* but I do believe it gives as good an explanation of the nature of the godhead as anything man has ever come up with.

Often the Father, Son and Spirit are mentioned together in the NT (2 Cor 13:14, Matt 28:19, John 14:17-23, etc). There are many infallible proofs to show that each member of the trinity is divine. Father, Son and Spirit are each God (in essence), but none can be identified with the other. In other words, we can say that the Father=God, but not that the Father=Jesus.

The analogy I most often use to explain the trinity is the analogy of the amorphous forms of water.

Ice=water, liquid water=water, and steam=water (in essence), but you can't say that ice=steam, etc.



Other analogies I have heard are those of *time* (past, present and future) and even an *egg* (shell, white and yolk).

What is the "indwelling?"

Many NT passages testify to the fact that the Spirit lives in our hearts (Rom 8:9, 1 Cor 6:19, 2 Tim 1:14, etc). God lives in us by the gift of the Spirit that all receive at baptism (Acts 2:38-39). This living in our hearts on the part of the Spirit is called the *indwelling*, since the Spirit dwells *in* us.

Does the Spirit live and work in us only through the word?

There is a school of thought that claims that the Spirit does his work in us only through his representative, *the word*. It is denied that the Spirit personally lives in our hearts.

Although there is a link between the Spirit and the word of the most intimate kind, I believe that it is difficult to argue that the Spirit works only through the word, or the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17). Acts 2:38 would be reworded, in principle at least, to read "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven. And you will receive the word of God." This is certainly not the natural reading, as even advocates of the view will admit. Acts 2 refers to the promised Holy Spirit several times (vv.17,33,38,39). Furthermore, the natural reading of such verses as Acts 5:32, 1 John 3:24, and John 14:16-23 is not that God has given us his representative, but his personal presence.

Even so, there is much to be said for this view, and certainly much that those of us who do not hold the "word only" view can learn. For example, many things that are normally attributed in the Bible to the Spirit are also attributed to the word:

The word quickens us (Psalm 119:50).
The word strengthens us (Psalm 119:28).
The word sanctifies us (John 17:17).

The word gives us wisdom (2 Tim 3:14-15).
The word enlightens us (Psalm 119:130).
The word lets us share in the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4).

It would seem more accurate to say that the Spirit in our hearts does his work through the word (the sword of the Spirit); God is able to work in us to the extent that we surrender to his word.

In closing, the fact that we can only know the Holy Spirit as he reveals himself through the word is accepted, but it has no bearing on *how* the Spirit dwells in the Christian.

Can you *feel* the Spirit in you?

Aren't there some days when you feel spiritually stronger than on others? Is this not the working of the Spirit in your heart (Eph 3:16)? To deny that we can feel God's Spirit in our hearts—or the effects of it—is to over-react to the charismatic view. This is not to encourage the "warm, fuzzy feeling" mentality, but only to offer an explanation for the everyday reality of the feeling of spiritual strength or weakness (cp. Psalms 32 and 38 with 18:28ff). However, there is no concrete evidence for the charismatic claim that the Spirit gives us personal direction(s) through our feelings.

Can you ever lose the Spirit?

No passage of scripture says that the "deposit" (2 Cor 1:22, 5:5) is withdrawn if we lose our faith. We may live in a state of grieving the Spirit (Eph 4:30), but no one needs to be baptised *again* to receive the Spirit. When Simon's heart became evil, he was not told to consider a second baptism, only to *pray* to God for forgiveness (Acts 8:22).

SECTION II — DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES

The following scriptures are not covered in the main text, but are discussed here as I have found questions on them are frequently asked. (Look up the passage before reading the text!)

Gen 1:2 (Is "the Spirit of God" the Holy Spirit?)

Probably not. The Spirit of God cannot be equated theologically with the Holy Spirit in every instance in which the phrase occurs. Moreover, there is a point of translation to consider. In Hebrew, the construction *X-God* can be translated the *X of God*, but it can equally well be translated *a great X*. For example, in Gen 23:6 *nsy' 'lhym* is translated *mighty prince*, and not *a prince of God*. Similarly, in 1 Sam 14:15 *lchrdth 'lhym* is translated *a terrible panic*, although it could be rendered *a panic of God*, or *a panic sent by God*. Jonah 3:3 should clinch the argument, for there *'yr-gdwlh llhym* is translated *an exceedingly great city*, and not *a great city of God*, for if that were true there would have been no need for Jonah to go and preach to it! Thus there emerge six possible translations for *rwch 'lhym* in Gen 1:2: *Spirit of God, mighty spirit, breath of God, mighty breath, wind of God, mighty wind.* We cannot therefore dogmatically identify "the Spirit of God" with the Holy Spirit.

1 Sam 16:23 (the evil spirit from God)

Two observations should be made. Firstly, the fact that something is attributed to God does not necessarily mean that God is the *direct* cause of it, for God *allows* many things to happen, and such things are part of God's sovereign will, whether or not he is the *direct* cause. Yet such wording is all the more appropriate in this instance, where it is because Saul has fallen from favour with God that God has allowed the spirit to come. Secondly, very little is revealed about Satan in the OT. In fact, except for Gen 3, which doesn't even explicitly identify the

serpent with Satan (that identification is not made until Rev 12:9) and the book of Job, there is no revelation about Satan until the Persian period (539-333 BC, during which 1 Chron, Zech, etc were written). Interestingly, whereas in 2 Sam 24:1 David's ordering of the census is attributed to God's anger, in the later book of 1 Chron the cause is attributed to Satan (1 Chron 21:1). Both accounts are correct, since God was *indirectly* responsible in 2 Sam 24 and Satan is responsible in 1 Chron 21. To sum up, Saul's evil spirit was allowed by God, but God no more personally dispatched it from his presence than God created Satan evil.

2 Chron 16:12 (relying on physicians)

Asa, 6th King of Judah, wavered in his faith near the end of his life. Although his disease was severe—he should have turned to God (2 Cor 1:9)—instead he put his trust in men. The phrase "only from the physicians" does not mean that it is a sin to accept medical care, as some charismatics claim, but only that it is unspiritual to rely on doctors without any thought for God.

Isa 30:21 (the guiding voice)

Some charismatics consider this passage to prophesy the direct leading of the Spirit, or "inner voice," in the age of the Spirit. An examination of the context, however, proves otherwise. The "teachers" of v. 20 are the spiritual teachers or true prophets, hidden from the time of the wicked Ahaz, 14th king of Judah. In saying that they "will be hidden no more" Isaiah is prophesying the return of actual human teachers—not the whispering voice of the Spirit. The "voice" of v. 21 is *the voice of the prophets* (cp. Neh 9:20,30). In the OT "turning neither to the right nor the left" means keeping God's commands, as opposed to some internal personal guidance mechanism (Deut 28:14). The "voice" behind them is the true prophet's voice, leading to repentance (v.22—cp. Lam

2:14), as opposed to the subjective message and religion of the false prophets (Jer 23:26). Furthermore, the charismatic interpretation is over-literal, as a reading of v.26 will show, since in the age of the Spirit the luminosity of the sun and moon is unchanged.

Matt 12:32 (the blasphemy against the Spirit)

A highly debated passage, Matt 12 reveals the hardness of heart of the Pharisees, who could not see the truth in front of their eyes. Attributing the work of God to Satan was not the thing for which Jesus said that they stood condemned and without hope of forgiveness. Nor was it their bad logic, in attributing to Satan something that would have undermined Satan. Their *hardness* of heart is what provoked Jesus to say that they could not be forgiven. Rather than looking for a specific sin and trying to identify that with the blasphemy against the Spirit, consider the unforgiveable sin to be *the sin which cannot be repented of.* Indeed, *any* sin can be forgiven—murder, rape, even cursing Jesus. But *a sin not repented of is a sin not remitted.*

If you find yourself wondering whether you have committed the unforgivable sin, it is virtually certain you haven't: if you had, your conscience would hardly trouble you!

Mark 9:38-40 (the man driving out demons in Jesus' name)

The disciples wanted to stop the man from his activity. Jesus' reply, "Whoever is not against us is for us," *may* mean that the man is saved, or at least saved under Judaism, but it need not be taken that way, insofar as it is possible for a non-Christian to promote the work of Christ. For example, in London we often take our non-Christian friends out evangelising with us. Furthermore, consider the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-16). These

Jews tried to drive out demons in Jesus' name, but were unsuccessful. The fact that this exorcism attempt came after the abolition of the Jewish legal system must be taken into account, as must the possibility that their efforts sprang from less than pure motives. When all is said, Mark 9:38 is inconclusive, and it certainly does not imply that charismatics are saved because of their miraculous activity (Matt 7:22!).

Mark 16:9-20 (is this text authentic?)

The ending to Mark's gospel is not found in some MSS (manuscripts), most notably Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (both dating from the fourth century), and so it is considered to be spurious by a number of scholars, who prefer to include the passage in a footnote, or dispense with it altogether. It is important to consider whether it belongs in the NT, because it is a crucial passage for charismatic theology, especially vv.17-20, which say that certain miraculous signs will accompany believers. Some brothers find the easiest solution to deny that it is part of the gospel of Mark, but this does not seem wise. Firstly, many other ancient MSS do have this ending (Alexandrinus, Beza, etc). Secondly, it was not uncommon for ancient MSS to develop *lacunae* (gaps due to moths, rot, erasure, etc), or to lose some of their leaves. Thirdly, it is quoted from by several early Christian writers (e.g. Justin Martyr, writing in the mid-second century), and so was surely known at an early date. Fourthly, even if someone other than Mark wrote the passage (and that is possible), that would not invalidate the passage as a legitimate portion of scripture. Many books of the Bible are of compound authorship (e.g. Psalms and Proverbs). Fifthly, with the possible exception of drinking poison, everything mentioned in this passage happens in the book of Acts, and so there is in no sense any "addition" to the word of God, even if the passage is not original.

Summing up, it must be said that we cannot *prove* one way or the other whether Mark 16:9-20 is authentic, but the weight of the evidence indicates that it does belong in our NTs. (For a discussion of the meaning of the passage, see Chapter 8, Question 8.)

Luke 11:13 (the Father giving the Spirit to those who ask him)

Some evangelicals use this verse to support the innovative conversion doctrine of "pray Jesus into your heart," and a number of charismatics claim that this passage says we should ask God for the H.S. baptism.

What does it mean? To begin with, even if it *is* discussing conversion, it does not specify *how* one receives the Spirit, and so certainly is not in competition with Acts 2:38. Secondly, we know that a simple request is not enough to acquire the Holy Spirit because Acts 5:32 says that *obedience* is essential. Thirdly, it is possible that the passage, which is discussing God's willingness to bless us and answer our prayers, cites the Holy Spirit as an example of the *greatest* gift that God will give us. (This would be an *a fortiori* argument: if God is willing to give us *the Spirit*, there isn't *anything* that he will hold back from us if we ask in the right way.)

A comparison of this passage with the parallel in Matt 7:11 shows that "good gifts" may be the best interpretation. The Greek phrase *pneuma hagion* (holy spirit, as opposed to *the* Holy Spirit) may suggest that it is not the Spirit himself that is referred to but rather some gift, aspect or manifestation of the Spirit. (However, the anarthrous noun phrase *can* occasionally be used with the same force as a noun with the article.) Some have suggested that "the Spirit" in this passage is *being filled with the Spirit*, as in the sense of Acts 4:31. If that is the case, it would mean that God is more than willing to give us spiritual power (Eph 3:16), as we yield our lives to him.

To sum up, the passage is inconclusive, but there is no way that it can be made to support the charismatic theory that the "H.S. Baptism" is available for the asking.

Luke 21:15 (divine inspiration when brought to trial)

The passage seems to indicate that God will give us inspiration when we are "under the gun." Considering the passage in context, however, we see that Jesus is addressing apostles. They certainly had a guarantee of inspiration. There is therefore no weighty reason why the scope of the promise should be extended to all believers. However, there is another way of looking at it: Jesus may be promising that God will give any believer assistance when he is in dire straits, for example when forced to speak on trial. But it should be noted that the parallel passage in Matt 10:19-20 makes this interpretation less likely.

John 3:8 (the wind blows where it pleases)

The analogy between the wind and the Spirit (recall that *pneuma*, spirit, also means wind) is taken by some to support the mysterious leading of the Spirit in the charismatic sense. But when Jesus says, "So it is with everyone born of the Spirit," he is referring not to miraculous leading, but to the new birth, as even a cursory scanning of the passage makes clear. What Jesus means is that, just as you cannot understand the wind merely by looking at it (although you can certainly see its effects), so you cannot understand the nature or source of the new birth with human eyes alone.

John 6:63 (Jesus' words are spirit and life)

The word of God is powerful (Heb 4:12). The Bible is not just literature, but a penetrating sword, with life-giving

force. Here it does not seem that Jesus is equating the word with the Spirit; he is only saying that the word is spiritual—having effects in the spiritual realm. God communicates with us through his word (Heb 1:1-3), not, as charismatics claim, through mysterious spiritual influences—a notion which John 6:63 cannot be made to support.

John 14:12 (greater things than these)

Is Jesus saying that those who came after him would do greater *miracles* than he did? Certainly not, for even the miracles of Peter and Paul are less sensational than those of Jesus—the most that can be said is that occasionally they are equally sensational. So how can we do "greater things"? Charles Spurgeon, the captivating preacher for London's Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle, who regularly drew Sunday crowds of 6000 over a century ago, commented *"It is true that we can work no miracles, yet...we can work spiritual miracles. Today, can we not stand at the grave of the dead sinner, and say, "Lazarus, come forth"? And has not God often made the dead to rise at our word, by the power of the His Holy Spirit?"* (C.H. Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, Vol. XVIII, p. 185).

The "greater things" then is not referring to the miracles of v.11, but to the *ministry potential* of the church. Through Jesus' ministry actually only a very small number of men and women became believers. He was greatly restricted, since he had to return to the Father (v.12). The number of his disciples was very small indeed compared with the figures in the book of Acts (2:41, 4:4, etc). The "greater things" have no reference to miracles, as charismatics claim, but rather refer to the amazing ministry potential we enjoy—the opportunity to win millions to the cause of Christ.

John 20:22 ("Receive the Holy Spirit")

Jesus breathed on the disciples as he uttered these words, a prophetic illustration of the coming Pentecostal baptism with the Spirit. Some brothers, however, believe that this was the time when the apostles received the Spirit. Actually the passage is inconclusive. The word *labete* (receive) can be translated *receive!* (imperative), *you are receiving* (present indicative progressive) or possibly *you are going to receive* (as in English we might say *I am going* away for a few days, whether we leave today or not. I interpret this action of Jesus as a symbolic act, reminiscent of Gen 2:7, Ezek 37:9, etc.

Acts 18:24ff (Apollos)

Was Apollos baptised again or not? Acts 19:1-5 make it virtually certain that he was, since those men too had received only the baptism of John, and so did not have the Spirit (Rom 8:9). Furthermore, his baptism in Jesus' name is strongly implied by 18:26. Some say that his great fervour (v.25) indicates that he possessed the Spirit. (The Greek *could* be translated "fervent in the Spirit," but that is highly unlikely. That is surely not the natural reading of the passage. Moreover, even if he were speaking in some way through the assistance of the Spirit, that would not prove his salvation, any more than Cornelius' salvation was proved by the Spirit's action in Acts 10:44. See Chapter 5.

Acts 19:1ff (Ephesian disciples)

Notice Paul's line of reasoning: as soon as they admit that they have not received the Spirit, Paul deduces that they have not been baptised in the name of Jesus. John's baptism was defunct, and these disciples (disciples of John the Baptist) were not saved. Paul then places his hands on them, and they receive the gifts (or manifestations) of tongues and prophecy, thus settling the

matter: Jesus' baptism and Jesus' baptism alone is the way to be saved. Thus, Acts 19, like Acts 8, shows an *external* reception of the Spirit after an internal one.

Incidentally, these men are not as ignorant as we suppose. *"We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit"* (v.2) could be translated *"we have not heard that the Holy Spirit is available,"* as Michael Green suggests (*I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 135). After all, is it reasonable to believe that disciples of John, who spoke of the coming Holy Spirit baptism in all four gospels, would have missed this major emphasis in John's ministry?

Rom 8:16 (the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit)

Charismatics claim that the *feeling* that we are saved is proof that we possess the Holy Spirit. This is not very likely, in the light of other things that Paul has said (e.g. 1 Cor 4:4), *and* in the light of the clear teaching of other parts of the NT (e.g. 1 John 2:3-6). Some say that if we feel saved in our own spirit and if the Spirit (through the word—i.e. NT teaching on conversion and discipleship, etc) agrees, then we know we are God's children. This view has much to commend it. Another possibility is that the Spirit testifies through the lives we live that we are Christians. Some have even suggested that "our spirit" is the *corporate* spirit of the church in worship, yet another possibility that is hard to prove. All told, this is not one of the clearest Pauline passages, but the charismatic interpretation finds no support here.

1 Cor 13:8 (did "knowledge" cease at the completion of the NT?)

It is argued that "knowledge" will not cease, hence neither will the miraculous gifts. There are two problems with this view. Firstly, the term "knowledge" has been misunderstood. Paul refers to it as a gift of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:8), one which will be unnecessary at the time that

prophecy is no longer present. It cannot be equated with general knowledge. Secondly, general knowledge will *never* pass away, even in heaven—hence the knowledge Paul has in mind must be something special (the miraculous gift of knowledge). So we see that the charismatic argument does no damage to our position that perfection/completion/maturity was reached through the apostolic age.

2 Cor 12:2 (the third heaven)

Since Paul speaks of the man caught up to the third heaven in the *third person,* many do not realise that he is speaking of *himself.* Speaking of oneself in the third person is common in the Bible, as when John refers to himself as merely "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Moreover, the context demands that the passage is referring to Paul since the "thorn in the flesh" (vs.7) was given to prevent *Paul* from becoming conceited. *Paul* was the one who received *"these surpassingly great revelations,"* of which he is so hesistant to speak (vs. 4).

Just where, or what, *is* the third heaven? Many explanations have been offered, and I do not know which one I believe, but it is not essential to answer the question. Many, in the spirit of Col 2:18, have fancied themselves to have been caught up to heaven. A charismatic woman told me of blissful feelings she had after losing all track of time as she sat in her living-room easy chair. Some two hours had elapsed, and afterwards she felt so refreshed! Was she in heaven—or in a heavy sleep? God only knows! Experiences are too subjective, and too hard to assess. Mystics and charismatics in many religions have claimed a direct encounter with God. We would be well advised not too make too much of such experiences.

1 Tim 2:8 (the lifting up of hands)

Many charismatic fellowships practise the lifting of hands during prayer. This custom may be unsettling to some, but there is ample scriptural warrant. The practice is extremely common in the Old Testament. For example, consider the references in Psalms alone (28:2, 63:4, 77:2, 88:9, 134:2, 141:2, 143:6). The New Testament carries on the lifting up of hands in prayer, as we see in 1 Tim 2:8.

If it is argued that "men" (*andres* = males, in the Greek) is not generic, but applies to males only, it could be counter-argued that the injunction to modesty (vs.9) is not for women *only*. It is a universal principle. Therefore women (as well as men) ought to dress modestly, and similarly men (as well as women) ought to lift up holy hands in prayer.

There are many prayers in the Bible when hands are not lifted—as in Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane—so it is certainly not *essential* to lift hands while praying. In summary, the custom is not a *sin*, but neither is it absolutely *essential*.

Heb 6:2 (the laying on of hands)

Why would this be listed in a series of *fundamentals?* As we have seen in Chapter 4, Section 7, there are many varieties of the laying on of hands. Perhaps to clarify the function of the apostolic imposition of hands, especially against the rich background of laying on of hands in the Jewish tradition, the Hebrew writer lists it here. The charismatic interpretation, that it is referring to the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is not possible, for H.S. Baptism in the NT was never accompanied or conferred by the laying on of human hands. My conclusion after writing a research paper at Divinity School on the text is that the exact meaning of the passage is obscure, but I welcome any suggestions as to its meaning. My favourite

is that the Hebrew writer is discussing advancing Christians to leadership—surely a vital need if we are to evangelise the world in our time. Paul warned Timothy not to be too hasty in appointing leaders (1 Tim 5:22—see 3:6).

James 5:14-15 (anointing with oil)

Spiritual men accomplish great things through their prayers. That the elders should be chosen for the honour of praying for a healing may be a mystery for us, until we realise the high qualifications for the eldership laid down in the NT. Elders were men who truly led the congregation, in character, hard work, love, evangelism, etc. They were not just a "board of directors."

But what about the anointing with oil? The usual brotherhood position is that the oil was *medicinal*, and there is evidence that olive oil, for example, was used in this way. Furthermore, it is pointed out that the verb for "anoint" is not the usual *chrio* (as in *christos* [Christ, anointed one]) used for the anointing of prophets, priests and kings, indicating a special calling or action of God, but the general word *aleipho*, which means "to oil." The distinction noted in the Greek is valid, but does this explanation really explain the passage? Is it convincing?

Consider the following passages on the use of oil: Ruth 3:3, 2 Sam 14:2, Dan 10:3, 2 Sam 12:16,20, Matt 6:17, Isa 1:6, Ezek 16:9, Mark 6:13. It becomes evident that the use of oil was routine practice in biblical times. In fact, oil was used when one was in a normal state of health or disposition. It was not used when one was mourning, fasting, or ill. (Jesus told his followers to use oil when they fasted, lest people detect that something was abnormal and realise that they were fasting. Surely he would not instruct them to do this if miraculous healing were smeared all over their faces!) Is it not likely that people were anointed with oil as *an expression of faith* that they would recover and rejoin the mainstream of

life? The anointing has no connection, then, with the healing, but is done *in anticipation of* the healing. This interpretation does justice to the many passages on anointing in the Bible, and reveals sound principles for cultural sensitivity in biblical interpretation.

(The question is not completely clear-cut, however. Lev 14:18 (see LXX) seems neither medicinal, setting apart to a special service, nor an expression of faith. In this case the leper has *already* been cleansed, and is anointed only *after* purification. In the absence of a definitive explanation, let us avoid dogmatism (and also superstition).

1 Pet 3:18-20 (Jesus preaching to the spirits in prison)

Did Jesus, at some time between his death and resurrection, preach to the lost souls in Hades, as many demominations assert? It is highly unlikely, first because there is no indication in the Bible that men have a second chance to make peace with God. Secondly, there were ways to be saved before the New Covenant; it is clear that Noah was justified, yet Christ is not said to have preached to him. Thirdly, the Spirit of Christ was in the OT prophets (1 Pet 1:11), and presumably Noah was no exception (2 Pet 2:5). Christ preached *through Noah* to those souls who refused to follow God—not thousands of years after their death, but in their generation.

1 John 4:1 (test the spirits)

Why does John urge us to test the spirits? *"Because many false prophets have gone out into the world."* It is my position that the *spirits* refer to *prophetic messages*, or the spiritual dynamics behind a prophetic message. While the gift of prophecy was still present (which would seem to be the case when 1 John was written), there was a constant need to *assess*, to *weigh* what the prophet said. This explains Paul's instructions in 1 Cor 14:29 and 1

Thess 5:19-22, both of which deal exclusively with the testing of prophetic messages. Moreover, the term rendered "prophecy" in 2 Thess 2:2 (NIV) is actually the Greek word *pneuma* (spirit, which is retained in some translations). *Spirit* then (as strange as it may seem) is a synonym for *prophecy* or prophetic message. Testing the spirits in 1 John 4:1 simply means testing prophetic messages—the same advice given to the Corinthians and the Thessalonians.

SECTION III — MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Is demon possession possible today?

Claims of demonic possession are by no means limited to Christendom, but are worldwide. Some of these claims are frightening and difficult to explain away. Others, like a report in the *St Louis Star* (1925) are easy to rationalise:

> A large man industriously rubbing the head of a smaller man at Broadway and Market Street attracted the attention of Detective Sergeant Behnken.
>
> "Do you feel relief?" asked the large man. The small man announced that he did not, and in addition demanded help, aid and succor.
>
> "What is this?" inquired Behnken.
>
> "Very simple," said the large man. "This poor fellow has demons. I am taking them out of him."
>
> "Have you got demons?" asked Behnken.
>
> "I have not," said the small man. "This bird grabbed me as I was walking down the street and began to rub my head."
>
> Behnken settled the matter by giving the demon hunter a swift kick.

There are reasons for believing that demon possession cannot occur today. Basically, being taken over by a

demon would mean loss of one's free will, and hence a diminishing of one's personal moral responsibility before God.

You may have noticed that demon possession is almost unheard of in the OT, even though the neighbours of Israel widely believed in demons. (Was God protecting his people, or were the beliefs of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Canaanites, et al, mere superstition?) Even in the NT almost all of the references are in the gospels. There are occasional references in the 2nd century (e.g. Justin, *2nd Apology*, 6), but soon Christianity ceased to record demon possession and exorcism. The implication: Satan and his demons became especially active around the time the gospel was preached—not today. Why? That is a matter for speculation. If you are interested in pursuing the subject, I advise you to obtain a copy of John Clayton's cassette lesson *Demonology and Exorcism*, which is available from *Does God Exist?, 17411 Battles Road, South Bend, Indiana 46614 USA*. Brother Clayton has studied the topic extensively, and his material is well worth getting hold of.

Was demon possession in the NT just mental illness?

Although some cases of demon possession seem to have been rooted in actual physical illness, or *vice versa* (e.g. Matt 17:14ff, cp. Mark 9:14ff), accounts of demon possession cannot be rationalised as a supernatural explanation for physiological or psychological disorders. Psychological abnormalities do not drown two thousand pigs (Mark 5:13)!

Is it wrong to dabble in the occult?

The occult is condemned in the OT (Lev 19:31, 20:27, 1 Sam 28) and in the NT as well (Acts 19:19, Gal 5:20, Rev 21:8). It could be deadly to "dabble." We should not consult mediums (Isa 8:19), nor should we even consider

Satanism—whose 15,000 followers far outnumber members of the churches of Christ in the UK! Satan is real; let's keep at a safe distance! But some things are condemned as being satanic which are in a different boat altogether. Astrology? If that is the occult, then it is wrong to celebrate Christmas—and even to use the (pagan) names of the days of the week. My opinion: astrology is for the gullible, for the birds. Do I sin if I take a peek at the "Leo" report for the day? It wouldn't seem likely.

Can our spirits be reincarnated?

Heb 9:27 is enough to answer that question: "man is destined to die *once*."

Is it wrong to ask God for an "open door?"

Asking God to open a door is *not* the same thing as "fleecing" (see Chapter 4, Section 4). The difference is this: if you try to "put out a fleece," you are free to do whatever you wish regardless of the outcome, since the fleece is not directly related to the course of action you are considering. If God does not open a door, however, you are *not* free to do what you please, since your decision hinges on God's changing the situation by opening the door. (You can walk through an open door, but not through a fleece!) There is absolutely nothing wrong with asking God for an open door (Col 4:3).

What about charismatics who seem to have the fruit of the Spirit?

Love, joy, peace etc (Gal 5:22-23) are indeed the fruit of the Spirit—characteristics of the personality of Christ which we take on increasingly as we follow Him and are transformed into his likeness (2 Cor 3:18). However, if these qualities were available *only* if someone was a

Christian, then logically *no one* would be loving, joyful, at peace, etc. When we look at the world, however, we find *many* people who love. I have met atheists who are more loving than many Christians I know. There are multitudes who, consciences seared and affections dead towards God, are at peace. Even pagans have a God-given joy (Acts 14:17).

But it is objected that the loving, joyful charismatic is no atheist, nor immoral, nor a pagan. We must understand that the more people practise Christian principles, *whether or not* they honour the one who gave those principles as Lord, the more smoothly their lives will function. That is as much a law of the universe as the law of gravity! So when people seem to possess some of the fruit of the Spirit, that means only that they are reaping the benefit of following God's moral, social, or spiritual laws—nothing more.

How should we answer the question, "Is your church charismatic?"

I try to be honest. I emphasise that the Spirit is really "moving" in our fellowship: souls are being saved, people are striving to serve one another, God's word is seriously studied, etc. Those things in and of themselves are quite convicting to a charismatic, most of whom do not belong to fellowships that insist on evangelism. Now, in the truest sense we *are* charismatic, since we do believe that the (non-miraculous) spiritual gifts are present. (Recall our discussion in Chapter 13.) So I also say that we *do* believe the gifts are here, but not necessarily the gift of tongues, for example. By portraying our congregations as Spirit-filled fellowships, charismatics will feel more comfortable with the idea of visiting our churches. When they do, they almost always acknowledge that God is moving in our congregations— even if in ways quite different to their own.

What can we say when told that we are "quenching the Spirit?"

The reference (1 Thess 5:19) concerns treating prophetic messages with contempt. Charismatics often will try to say that churches of Christ are quenching the Spirit, since they are not charismatic. (Sometimes they will even accuse us of the unforgiveable sin, since we do not recognise their tonguespeaking as from God!) The best way to answer this kind of allegation is to emphasise that the primary work of the Spirit is to make Christ known. Make sure that you put the accent on evangelism, quoting 2 Tim 1:7. Who, after all, is quenching the Spirit: those who seek experiences at the expense of evangelism, or those who take the Great Commission seriously and play down the value of experiences for salvation? Explain how involved the congregation is in aiming to restore NT Christianity, supporting missions, evangelising the city, etc. If a respectful response does not follow, the person who made it probably won't be willing to visit your church, anyway.

APPENDIX B

Appendix B brings together the main points of every chapter in one comprehensive Bible study. This is not to minimise the importance of reading the book, but only to make compact and convenient what we have taken a couple of hundred of pages to explore.

The *Comprehensive Study* raises and answers ten elementary questions related to the Holy Spirit, and can be done in one sitting (if the person you are studying with has little charismatic background), or broken into two or more segments.

I. Does miraculous activity prove your salvation?

Deut 13:1-5	Miracles are not proof of salvation. God may be testing your devotion to him.
1 Sam 19:18ff	The Spirit comes even on men who aren't right with God.
Rev 13:13	Some "miracles" are of the devil.
2 Thes 2:9-11	We must really *love* the truth to *see* the truth.
Acts 19:13	Some Jews were casting out demons.
Mark 13:22	False Messiahs performing "miracles."
Matt 7:21-23	Doing the will of God, not miracles, is what authenticates your salvation.

For further material, consult Chapter 4, Section 1.

II. Is Christianity the only religion that claims miracles?

What religion doesn't claim miracles? Review Chapter 3 and come up with a list of your favourites. Mine include:

Montanism	Second century charismatic sect, denounced as heretics by the church.
Mormons	Speak in tongues, claim fresh revelation (viz three inspired books in Mormonism besides the Bible).
Sufis	Muslims who speak in tongues.
Isis	First century Egyptian cult: tonguespeaking and prophecy.
Asklepios	First century Greek cult. Asklepios is the god of healing.

III. Did people receive the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament?

John 7:39	No, the Spirit was not given in the *indwelling* sense until NT times.
Judg 3:10	But yes, the Spirit fell on many people in the OT—they possessed it in the external sense. (Refer to Chapter 4, Section 5 for other instances.)
Acts 2:38	Indwelling Spirit received at baptism.
Acts 5:32	Only received by people who obey God.
Rom 8:9	Essential for salvation.
Acts 8:16	When Samaritans received the Spirit after the apostles laid hands on them, this was

only an *external* reception. We know they already had the indwelling Spirit, because they had been baptised *in Jesus' name* (Acts 2:38). Further information in Chapter 5.

Acts 10:44 — The Caesareans received the Spirit *externally* before saved. Not baptised into Jesus' name until Acts 10:48. Further information found in Chapter 5.

IV. What is the Holy Spirit Baptism?

We have already discussed this extensively in Chapter 6. Whichever view you hold, the teaching points for charismatics are virtually identical. One approach is to teach what it *was*, then what is *was not.*

What it was:

- The outpouring of the Spirit as prophesied by Joel (Acts 2:16-17, Joel 2:28-32).
- A sudden and unpremeditated event (Acts 2:2, 10:44).
- A promise, and not a command (Acts 1:5,8).
- Accompanied by speaking in actual foreign languages (Acts 2:4, 10:46).
- For the purpose (now historically fulfilled) of establishing the church in the age of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:6,41, 11:1-18, 15:7-8).

What it was not:

- Christian conversion. Acts 2:38 cannot be Holy Spirit Baptism, because Acts 10:47-48 identifies

Baptism in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38) as *water* baptism. (Most charismatics make the distinction between water baptism and Spirit baptism. Both are deemed important, but neither is deemed essential for salvation.)

- To confer miraculous abilities. Apostles did miracles even before they received the Spirit (Luke 9:2).

The same thing as the occurrences of Acts 8, 9, or 19.

- Accompanied by the laying on of hands.

- Administered by man. In the NT it was not received through special services or crusades.

- The means whereby Christians received the gift of tongues. Not all Christians in the first century could speak in tongues (1 Cor 12:10,30).

- An experience creating a second order of Christians. There is only life in the Spirit and life in the flesh (Rom 7-8).

- What makes Christians Spirit-filled. Many were Spirit-filled (e.g. John the Baptist, Luke 1:15) before Pentecost.

- An event which can still occur today, since it fulfilled the OT prophecies of the outpouring of the Spirit:

According to the Limited View, in Acts 2 and 10.
According to the Historical View, in Acts 2.

This segment of the Comprehensive Study may be done on its own. If so, ask your charismatic friend to read carefully Acts 10:1-11:18 before you meet to study the H.S. Baptism. Spend time with your friend in a careful, thorough study of Acts 10 and 11, helping him to understand God's historical purpose in the event of Acts 10:44.

If the charismatic is deeply indoctrinated in charismatic teaching, it will probably not be wise to attempt to cover much more than the H.S. Baptism in one session. Allow time for key concepts to sink in!

V. How did people receive the miraculous spiritual gifts?

See Chapter 10 for the discussion on the apostolic laying on of hands.

Acts 6:6	Apostles lay hands on Stephen and Philip.
Acts 6:8	Stephen has the ability to perform miracles.
Acts 8:6	Philip has the ability to perform miracles.
Acts 8:14ff	Philip does not lay his hands on the Samaritans, for he does not have the ability to transmit the gifts. The apostles must be called in.
Acts 8:18	We see that the miraculous gifts were passed on through the laying on of apostolic hands. (Mention that the non-miraculous gifts have not ceased, but are still present.)
2 Tim 1:6	Timothy received his miraculous gift through the laying on of the apostle Paul's hands.
Rom 1:11	The Romans would receive miraculous gifts at Paul's visit.
1 Cor 1:7	The Corinthians, on the other hand, had already received the gifts, presumably when Paul spent 18 months in Corinth (Acts 18:11).

The logical conclusion is that the miraculous gifts are no longer available, since the apostles have all died.

VI. What does it mean to be "led by the Spirit"?

Prov 14:12 — It is not "reading your feelings." See also Jer 17:9, etc.

Gal 5:16ff
Rom 8:1-16 — It is triumphing over the flesh by the power of the Spirit.

Psalm 143:10
Ezek 36:27 — It is a learning process, and there are no short-cuts. For more information, see Chapter 4, Section 3.

VII. What does it mean to be "filled with the Spirit"?

It means:

(a) to be a spiritual person (obedient to God and using the power that God has made available—2 Tim 1:7) and

(b) to receive more power from the Spirit in response to a specific need or request.

Acts 4:31 — The Christians pray for boldness, and God answers their prayer. How many charismatics pray for boldness in their evangelism? At any rate, filling with the Spirit is not equated with baptism in the Spirit.

Acts 6:6 — Stephen and Philip were Spirit-filled *before* they had miraculous abilities.

Luke 1:15 — John the Baptist was Spirit-filled before his birth, and yet he never performed a miracle. (Jesus was spirit-filled, yet he never spoke in tongues.)

Eph 5:17ff
Col 3:16 — Being filled with the Spirit means putting the word of God into our lives.

Being Spirit-filled is not an option, but the natural result of following the Spirit in our lives instead of the flesh. It

is not a one-time event, but rather the challenge of every new day.

VIII. Does God heal people today?

- Few have actually witnessed healings. Most reports come from second-hand information.

- Most "healings" are frivolous (colds, undiagnosed "cancers," etc).

- Many healings are psychosomatic. Positive attitudes effect or speed up the healing process. Many illnesses are psychosomatic.

- God may still answer our prayers for healing, even though the gift of healing has passed away.

- Furthermore, God's usual way of working in this world is through natural processes. When your body heals itself, God should receive the thanks.

Consult Chapter 3 for eight closing observations.

IX. What was the purpose of biblical miracles?

We have discussed this extensively in Chapter 7. Select just a few passages to illustrate the thesis that biblical miracles were to bring us the word of God.

Exod 4:5	Moses' miracles were so that the people would believe that God had sent him.
1 Kgs 17:24	Elijah's miracles were for the same purpose.
Mark 16:20	Signs to confirm the gospel message.
Acts 14:3	God confirmed the message via miracles.

Heb 2:4 God certified the message through miracles.

Miracles confirmed the *spoken*, never the *written*, word. In other words, scripture has no need of further confirmation.

Once the NT was completed and certified, there was no further need for confirming signs. Moreover, Paul prophesied the passing away of the gifts (1 Cor 13:8). I usually do not try to prove this point from 1 Cor 13, however, because the argument is fairly involved and there is a good chance it could confuse the charismatic. Rely rather on the Observational Argument or the Scriptural Argument (see Chapter 11).

X. Are miracles necessary today?

As we have already seen (Chapter 7), the historical purpose of miracles has been fulfilled. The biblical viewpoint is that miracles are not necessary for producing faith; that is accomplished by the word of God (Rom 10:17).

Luke 16:19ff If they don't listen to the word, they won't believe even if someone rises from the dead. (In other words, if their heart is not right even the most impressive miracle would make no difference.)

John 20:30f The *recorded* miracles in scripture are sufficient; no more are needed.

CONCLUSION

This Comprehensive Study presents a number of options for studying the Holy Spirit with people:

i. A study of Holy Spirit Baptism (Question 4).

ii. A study of the Miraculous Gifts (combining Questions 5, 9 and 10).

iii. An integrated study, covering all ten questions.

iv. Other combinations of questions, to best meet the needs of the individual with whom you are studying.

APPENDIX C

Following is a listing of the major church groups which are pentecostal in theology and practice. As you can see, there are scores of charismatic churches and para-church organisations all over the world. Also remember that, as the Charismatic Movement has infiltrated most mainline non-Pentecostal denominations, there are thousands of local congregations charismatic in practice but non-charismatic in theology. These cannot be listed here.

Amana Church Society
Apostolic Christian Church of America
Apostolic Church
Apostolic Faith
Apostolic Overcoming Church of God
Assemblies of God
Bible Way Church, Worldwide
Brotherhood of the Cross and Star
Calvary Pentecostal Church
Celestial Church of Christ
Christian and Missionary Alliance
Christian Catholic Church
Church of Cherubim and Seraphim
Church of Christ (Holiness) USA
Church of Christ (Temple Lot) Inc
Church of God
Church of God (Apostolic)
Church of God and Saints of Christ
Church of God by Faith, Inc
The (Original) Church of God, Inc
Church of God in Christ
Church of God in Christ (International)
Church of God of Prophecy
Church of God (Seventh Day)
Churches of God, Holiness
Church of Jesus Christ
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)

Church of the Nazarene
Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc
Congregational Holiness Church
Elim Fellowship
Emmanuel Holiness Church
Fire Baptized Holiness Church
Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International (FGBMFI)
Holiness Churches
Ichthus Fellowship
Independent Assemblies of God International
Independent Church of the Four-Square Gospel
International Pentecostal Assemblies
Kenneth Hagin Ministries (RHEMA Bible Church)
Logos International
Maranatha Fellowship
Mormons (Latter Day Saints)
National David Spiritual Temple of Christ Church Union (The Universal Christian Spiritual Faith and Churches for all Nations)
New Apostolic Church of North America
New Testament Church
New Testament Church of God
Oral Roberts Ministries
Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc
Pentecostal Church of Christ
Pentecostal Church of God
Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church
Pentecostal Free-will Baptist Church, Inc
Pentecostal Holiness Church
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)
RHEMA Bible Church (Kenneth Hagin Ministries)
Rock Church
Seventh-Day Adventists
Tabernacle of Faith
United Apostolic Faith Church
United Holy Church of America, Inc
United Pentecostal Church International
Wesleyan Holiness Church
Worldwide Church of God
Yoido Fellowship (Pastor Paul Yonggi Cho)

If you have noticed that a church or para-church group has been overlooked—and certainly dozens have!—please write to me and we will include your entry in the next edition.

APPENDIX D

There are many ways to teach *The Powerful Delusion* as a class series. Below is the class syllabus sheet for a recent offering of the *The Powerful Delusion*. (In London the course is offered every other year.) As you can see, requirements for leaders are much more demanding than for others. It is my conviction that our leaders and assistants need to *master* the subject. Hence leaders' quizzes (offered in leaders' meetings) and exams are more challenging than the general quizzes and exams.

THE POWERFUL DELUSION:

How to Study with Charismatics and other Religious People

COURSE TEXT: *The Powerful Delusion:* CLCC, 1987. Through the series we will read most of the book.

SESSIONS: 8 class sessions in all, each lesson (except the first) started with a 5-question quiz.

QUIZZES: Each quiz will count for 5 points. As there are 7 in all, max quiz points = 35. The quizzes will count for 25% of your mark, and to earn a full 25% you need to accumulate a total of 25 quiz points/35.

READING: should be done *in advance of* each session. Most weeks there is 10-20 pp due. An (*) indicates chapter to be *skimmed.*

SCRIPTURE MEMORY: Each week there will be a new scripture to memorise, *in advance of* the session.

THE FINAL EXAM: a 10-question test, covering the basic concepts of the course. (The leaders' exam will be more lengthy.) Exam will also include quiz composite, whether all reading completed, and feedback on course.

Class Schedule

Week	Subject	Reading	Pages	Memory	Leaders
1	Charismatic Mind-set	Intro, 1*, 2	20	Jer 17:9	Appx. B.I "Feelings"
2	Background (O.T.)	3*, 4	12	Dt 13:3	Appx.B.II
3	Receiving the Spirit	5, 6*	7	Jn 7:39	Appx.B.III,IV, VIII
4	Purpose of Miracles	7, review chs 2,4,5		Lk 16:31	Appx.B.IX,X
5	Tongue-in-cheek?	8, 9*	15	1 C 14:19	Read 1 C 12-14 Read Chapter 9
6	Miraculous gifts: Deceased & Defunct	10, 11, 12	25	Ac 8:18	Appx.B.V
7	Power of the Spirit	13, 14:1-5	20	1 Pt 4:10	Appx.B.VI,VII
8	Converting Charismatics	14:6-10 Appx.B*	11	1 C 1:17	Appx.B. Concl. 10 point of Chapter 14
9	Q/A Session Short Exam*				

LEADERS: Bible study leaders and assistants will be asked, in addition to the above requirements, to learn Appendix B by heart, as well as the *Feelings* study (Chapter 2) and the 10 points of Chapter 14. Leaders need to *set the pace* in their proficiency at studying with charismatics.

APPENDIX E

Angelic Languages
The claim is often made that tongues are heavenly or angelic languages, based on a dubious interpretation of 1 Cor 13:1. See Chapter 8, Question 5, and the relevant commentary in Chapter 9.

Anointing with Oil
A daily custom in biblical times, normally followed except in times of mourning, ill health, or fasting (Matt 6:17). In connection with miraculous healing, performed in anticipation of a recovery to a state of full health. See entry in Appendix A.

Aphrodite
The Greek goddess of beauty [Roman *Venus*]. Her cult was one of many charismatic sects in the first century Mediterranean world.

Apocrypha
[Gk. "Hidden things"] Jewish religious writings dating from c.200 BC to 100 AD, never received as scripture by the consensus of the church. The Apocrypha contain many historical contradictions and unscriptural teachings. They were not officially accepted by the Roman Catholic Church until the Council of Trent in 1546, being considered part of the Bible.

Apostle
In the strict sense, an Apostle [*Gk. apostolos*, "sent one"] was one of the closest disciples of Jesus (Mark 3:14), an eyewitness of his resurrection (Acts 1:22, 1 Cor 9:1), and miraculously empowered (2 Cor 12:12). The Apostles' teaching has been authoritative ever since Pentecost (Acts 2:42), in fulfilment of Jesus' special promise to the

Apostles (John 14:26, 16:13) that he would guide them into all truth. In the general sense, an apostle is any missionary (Rom 16:7).

Asklepios
The Greek god of healing. A charismatic cult centred around him, the two main centres being at Epidaurus and Cos, where many people went to be "healed." See Chapter 3.

Augustine
An early Christian theologian (354-430 AD), Augustine noted that the age of the miraculous gifts had passed. See Chapter 8, Question 9.

Baptism
A transliteration of the Greek word for immersion [*baptisma*].

Blasphemy against the Spirit
A state of such hardness of heart that one cannot repent and acknowledge the plain truth (Matt 12:22-32).

Buddhism
A religion originally denying personal individual existence, founded in India by the Buddha (563-483 BC). Popular Buddhism propagated countless miracle stories, both of the life of the Buddha as well as of the Buddhist "saints."

Calvinism
A theological system emphasising the sovereignty of God at the expense of man's free will. Calvinism asserts *total depravity* (every thought and action of unregenerate man is sinful), *unconditional election* (God chooses who will be saved), *limited atonement* (Jesus died only for the "elect"), *irresistible grace* (once God starts drawing someone to Christ, there is no saying "No"), and *perseverance of the saints* (the impossibility of falling away).

Canon
A list of genuine sacred books. E.g. the NT canon is: Matt, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, etc. The earliest NT canon of which we have record is the Muratorian Canon, dating from the second century (c.180 AD).

Charismatic
[*Gk. Charisma*, "gift"] Believing in divinely conferred powers. Charismatics practise their religion worldwide, among most of the world's religions. See Chapter 3 for examples. In Christendom, one believing in the presence of the miraculous spiritual gifts. Charismatics are scattered among many denominations, while some denominations are completely charismatic (e.g. United Pentecostal Church, Assemblies of God, Maranatha). The modern charismatic movement traces its roots to Topeka, Kansas, in the year 1900. The resurgent influence of the Charismatic Movement began in the US in the 1950s.

Christendom
All denominations "Christian" in the broadest sense, regardless of doctrinal soundness.

Christian
One who possesses the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9); a disciple of Christ (Acts 11:26) ; one in a right relationship with God (Rom 8:1). There are two essential things the Christian possesses: (a) forgiveness of sins and (b) the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Chrysosandaliaimopotichthonia
Greek divinity, "blood-sucking goddess of the underworld who wears golden sandals." One of the longer Greek words found in ancient magical papyri.

Chrysostom
John Chrysostom was a late 4th/early 5th century church "father" and intellectual. He noted that the miraculous gifts had passed away after the time of the apostles (Chapter 8, Question 9).

Confirmation
Miraculous certification of a message as being from God. Jesus said (Mark 16:20) that when the gospel was preached, miraculous confirmation would back up the message. The *spoken*, never the *written*, word requires confirmation. See Chapter 7.

Demon
A malignant supernatural being, subservient to Satan himself.

Dervish
A Muslim religious man vowed to a life of poverty. Many dervishes practise ecstatic dancing and speaking in tongues. See Chapter 3.

Dionysus
A Greek nature god, worshipped through sensuality, esp. drunkenness [Roman *Bacchus*].

Ecstasy
[*Gk. ekstasis*, being put out of place] Exalted state of feeling, rapture; trance; poetic frenzy. In ecstasy, one normally "loses himself," relying more on the emotional than on the intellectual faculties.

Eusebius
(c.260-339 AD) Prolific writer and church historian at the court of the Roman Emperor Constantine (ruled 306-337 AD). His Ecclesiastical History is our chief primary source for the history of the church down to c.300. He records the activities of the heretical second century charismatic sect of the Montanists (*H.E. V.16.6ff*). See Chapter 8, Question 9 for an excerpt.

Evangelical
A Protestant who has a belief in the Bible as God's word and insists on a conversion experience before one is a "true" Christian. *Evangelical* does not necessarily mean *evangelistic* (spreading the gospel), as few evangelicals are evangelistic disciples.

Exorcism
The expulsion of a demon (e.g. from a person) by the invocation of a holy name. Claims of exorcism have been made for thousands of years, most of which have no connection with Christendom.

Filled with the Spirit
Spiritual; controlled by the Spirit, esp. with reference to boldness or evangelism; putting the word of God into one's life. It is possible not to be completely filled with the spirit and yet be saved—the clear implication of Acts 6:3 and Eph 5:18. In charismatic lingo, having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or in tune with the "leading" of the Spirit. See Chapter 6, I, 10.

Fleecing
Gideon (Judg 6:36ff) put out a fleece, testing God to find out whether he expected obedience or not. In charismatic terminology "fleecing" is asking God to use an event to point to his will in order to provide guidance for a decision, generally asking for a "yes" or "no" answer. The "fleece" is usually unrelated to the decision. See Chapter 4, Section 4, and entry "Open Door" in Appendix A.

From the Lord
Of an event or situation, from the Lord and hence supposed to be indicative of his will. See Chapter 4, Section 2 for explanation.

General View
(Of the H.S. Baptism) The view that the H.S. Baptism is equivalent to the indwelling of the Spirit, and hence necessary for salvation. See Chapter 6, Section III.

Gentile
A non-Jew.

Gift of the Spirit
In Acts 2:38, the Holy Spirit itself. Elsewhere, a spiritual gift, which may be miraculous (supernatural) or non-miraculous (natural). Charismatics claim that nearly all the gifts are still present. Some non-charismatics argue that none of the gifts are present, others that only the non-miraculous ones are present.

Glossolalia
[*Gk. glossa*, "tongue" = *lalia*, "speech"] The technical term for speaking in tongues. With the exception of first-century biblical tongues, glossolalia is a psychological phenomenon, classified as gibberish. See Chapter 8, Question 1.

Healing
Restoring to health; curing. Charismatics believe in the presence of the miraculous gift of healing. Some charismatics, in the spirit of 2 Kings 2:21, use the term to refer to the restoration of non-humans. (E.g., "The pastor laid hands on my car and healed it.")

Hermes
A Greek god whose worshippers constituted one of many charismatic sects in the Mediterranean world of the Roman Empire [Roman *Mercury*].

Hinduism
The principal religion of India, founded c.1500 BC. Popular Hinduism boasts tens of thousands of miracle stories, as well as a number of charismatic sects.

Historical Argument
(For cessation of the miraculous gifts) The argument that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased, based on the observations of early Christian writers that they had ceased long before their day. See Chapter 11 for details.

Historical View
(Of the H.S. Baptism) The view that equates the H.S. Baptism with the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, as prophesied by the prophet Joel (2:28-32). The historical view considers the H.S. Baptism less an *experience* than an *event*. See Chapter 6, view IV for clarification.

Holy Ghost
The Holy Spirit, in the Elizabethan language of the King James Version (tr. 1611). See entry, Appendix A.

Holy Spirit
The active personal presence and agency of God; the third person of the trinity. See entries, Appendix A.

Holy Spirit Baptism
The event prophesied in the OT and by John the Baptist, fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Charismatics claim that the H.S. Baptism is an experience supplementary to conversion, and desirable for a greater measure of power to witness, fight sin, live the Christian life, etc. See Chapter 6 for a detailed explanation.

Indwelling
The presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; the internal reception of the Spirit. See entry, Appendix A.

Intertestamental Period
The historical period between the latest recorded section of history in the OT and the earliest in the NT. Actually a misnomer, since the Old Covenant was nullified by the New Covenant, and was in effect all the way till Christ's death. During this period there was no revelation (scripture) from God, and miraculous activity ceased. It was during this period that most of the OT Apocrypha was written.

Irrational
Unreasonable, illogical, absurd; opposed to or apart from reason. The opposite of rational.

Isis and Sarapis
Isis (Egyptian) and Sarapis (Canaanite) were deities whose worship constituted a charismatic sect. Adherents practised speaking in tongues, prophesying, ecstatic trances, etc. One of many first century charismatic cults. Five temples of Isis and Sarapis existed in Corinth alone. See *Apuleius, Metamorphoses II*, or consult Chapter 3 for further information.

Islam
The youngest of the major religions of the world, founded by Mohammed (570-632 AD) in the early seventh century in Arabia. Islam is based on Judaism

and Christianity, and was historically a reaction against the corruptions of Arabian polytheism and decadent Judaism and Christianity. The Sufi sect of Muslims are charismatic. See Chapter 3 for further information.

Jew-Gentile controversy
The major issue of the first century church—namely, whether a Gentile had to submit to circumcision and obey the law of Moses in order to become a Christian.

Kami
Japanese word for a divinity. Shinto shamans communicated with them by dancing themselves into a frenzy and becoming mouthpieces for the kami. See Chapter 3.

Laying on of Hands
Practised for a blessing, ordination, commissioning, healing, sacrifice, or transmission of miraculous spiritual gifts. See Chapter 4, Section 7 and Chapter 10 for explanation.

Led by the Spirit
Learning to obey the will of God through following the precepts that have been revealed to us by the Spirit. In charismatic teaching, mysteriously guided by the Holy Spirit, even in the insignificant decisions of life. See Chapter 4, Section 3 for further explanation.

Limited View
(Of the H.S. Baptism) The view, commonly held in churches of Christ, that the H.S. Baptism occurred in Acts 2 or Acts 2 and 10, and was received by the apostles, or the apostles plus the Caesareans. See Chapter 6, Section II for a detailed presentation.

Logical
Not contravening the laws of thought; deducible; defensible on grounds of consistency; capable of correct reasoning.

Logical Argument
(For the passing away of the miraculous gifts) The argument that the miraculous gifts have ceased because the transmitters of the gifts (the apostles) have deceased. See Chapter 11.

Measure
The traditional term for a way to receive the Spirit. The implication of this term is that the Spirit may be subdivided, or parcelled out, and hence is subpersonal. In this book we have abandoned the term for the more technically correct *reception.*

Miracle
Marvellous event due to supernatural agency; a contravening of the laws of nature; anything that lies outside the normal sphere of cause and effect in the physical world. Especially an action by God to give his approval to a message or the speaker of the message. Sometimes the Bible calls events "miracles" to which we would hesitate to ascribe the term (Job 5:9-15, e.g.).

Montanism
Mid-second century (Phrygian) charismatic cult denounced by the church. For details, see Chapter 8, Section 9.

Montanus
The founder of Montanism.

Mormonism
A nineteenth century American religious cult, which believes *The Book of Mormon* (1827), the *King James Bible, Doctrines & Covenants,* and *The Pearl of Great Price* to be inspired. Mormonism practises prophesying and speaking in tongues, and has "apostles"—and so is the most consistent charismatic group today. See reference in Chapter 3.

Mystical
Esoteric, mysterious and awe-inspiring; believing that through contemplation or meditation one can obtain absorption into the Deity; affirming the spiritual apprehension of truths beyond rationality.

Neo-pentecostalism
Contemporary charismatic religion, pentecostal in theology, prevalent in almost all major denominations. The movement in which Pentecostal teachings and practices have spilled over into non-Pentecostal churches.

Objectivity
Understanding of actual facts without emotional or personal bias; ability to see issues in focus, from the viewpoint of others, or as they really are.

Observational Argument
(For cessation of the miraculous gifts) The argument that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased, based on their non-occurrence among churches today. See Chapter 11.

Open door
An opportunity for specific action, provided by God in answer to prayer or through providence. See entry, Appendix A.

Outpouring
The release of the Holy Spirit on the Christian age, occurring at Pentecost. See Chapter 4, Section 10 and Chapter 6, Section IV.

Paranormal
Beyond the explanatory capability of contemporary science. Not to be confused with *miraculous*, which is wholly outside the realm of scientific inquiry.

Pentecost
A Jewish festival, the fiftieth day after the second day of Passover (Lev 23:15-16), when the Spirit was poured out, the church began, the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled, and the Christian age was inaugurated.

Pentecostal
Advocating the doctrine of the Pentecostal Church. Broadly speaking, espousing charismatic teaching and practice.

Pentecostal View
(Of the H.S. Baptism) The view that the H.S. Baptism is a second blessing given to Christians at some point after their conversion. In the Pentecostal View, the H.S. Baptism is always accompanied by the outward sign of speaking in tongues, and is the gateway to receiving the spiritual gifts.

The Perfect
The state of completion (of the scriptures) and maturity of the early church as a result of the working of God through the apostles. *To teleion* is the Greek phrase for completion, perfection, maturity; the complete, the perfect, the mature.

Praying in the Spirit
(Eph 6:18, Jude 20) Claimed by charismatics to be praying in "tongues," biblically the phrase indicates powerful, specific, spiritual prayer in expectation of God's hearing the request.

Premillennialism
The doctrine that asserts that Christ's second coming will precede his literal thousand-year reign on the earth. Premillennialists try to find support for their views by taking literally many passages that are metaphorical in nature, mainly from the OT prophets, Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matt 24/Mark 13/Luke 21, and (especially) Revelation. In this view, the church is not equated with the kingdom of God, which is yet to come. Most charismatics are premillennialists.

Prophecy
[*Gk. pro,* "for" or "before" + phemi, "speak"] Speaking on behalf of God, or speaking before (an event). Prophecy is almost always directed to the generation contemporary with the prophet. For further information, see Chapter 4, Section 6. Not to be confused with prophesy, to exercise a prophetic gift.

Prophet
One who speaks for God, sometimes in advance of an event.

Prophetic Argument
(For the cessation of the miraculous gifts) The argument that the miraculous gifts have ceased based on Paul's prophecy of their cessation in 1 Cor 13:8-13, and possibly Eph 4:11-13.

Providence
God's beneficent action in individual lives and history, not considered to be miraculous, based on his foreknowledge of events.

Psychological
Pertaining to the function, nature or phenomena of the mind.

Psychosomatic
Of mind and body; caused or aggravated by mental stress.

Rational
Reasoning; reasonable; rejecting what is unreasonable and cannot be tested by reason in religion.

Reception
The term adopted in this book, in lieu of the traditional "measure," for the external or internal way in which the Spirit may come upon or indwell a human being. Rationale for the distinction is furnished in Chapter 4, Section 5, and Chapter 5.

Rifaiya
"Howling dervishes," Muslim holy men who work themselves into a frenzy and demonstrate their "faith" by swallowing red-hot coals, eating glass, walking on fire, etc. See Chapter 3.

Sai Baba
A well-known fraud, the leader of some fifty million devotees, primarily in South India, where he is based. Countless miracles are claimed as a result of Sai Baba's miraculous powers.

Scriptural Argument
(For the cessation of the miraculous gifts) The argument that, since the purpose of the miraculous gifts was to provide and confirm the word of God (scripture), they are no longer needed, and hence defunct.

Scripture
The *written* word of God, as opposed to the spoken word.

Second Blessing
In charismatic terminology, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Shaman
A priest or witch doctor of class claiming to have privileged contacts with the gods or spirits.

Shinto
The native religion of Japan. There is a charismatic element in Shinto—see Chapter 3.

Sign
A miraculous event whose meaning is to be found in that to which it points. I.e., Jesus did not perform miracles simply to impress people; God worked signs through Jesus to point to his purposes and will, and to accredit Jesus to the Jews and to the world (Acts 2:22).

Sign of Jonah
(Luke 11:29-32) Jonah's three-day stay in the belly of a great fish (Jonah 1:17), pointing to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. See Chapter 12.

Singing in the Spirit
In the charismatic interpretation, singing in "tongues." Biblical singing in the Spirit is *spiritual* singing, or singing which focuses on or incorporates the word of God.

Slaying in the Spirit
In charismatic jargon, being knocked to the ground by the "power" of the Spirit. May be accompanied by miraculous healing. Once at an F.G.B.M.F.I. (Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International) meeting I witnessed dozens "slain in the Spirit." (I was next in line before the "slayer" halted the exhibition!)

Spirit
The animating or vital principle of man, the intelligent or immaterial part of man. *The Spirit* is the Holy Spirit. A prophetic message may also be referred to as a "spirit"; see entry in Appendix A under "Testing the Spirits."

Subjectivity
Distortion in one's perception of reality due to one's own feelings or limited capacities. The opposite of *objectivity.*

Sufis
Muslim charismatics; see Chapter 3.

Testimony
In charismatic and broader evangelical circles, a "testimony" is one's story of how God has worked in his life, brought him to faith, worked a miracle, etc.

Testing the Spirits
Weighing prophetic messages—see entry in Appendix A. In charismatic thought, the God-given ability to discern whether a person, message or event is from Satan or from God.

Theology
The study of God or things relating to him, including religion.

Tongues
Foreign languages. In charismatic terminology, usually a mysterious personal heavenly language of praise, for use in private prayer as well as corporate worship.

Charismatics expect to receive the gift of tongues at their "H.S. Baptism"—although some charismatic groups (such as The Way International) offer instruction in tonguespeaking, charging exorbitant fees for the courses! See Chapters 8 and 9 for a full discussion.

Tonguespeaking
Speaking in a "tongue." I use the term in this book to refer mainly to the extra-Christian phenomenon of glossolalia.

Trinity
The Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Entry in Appendix A.

Unforgiveable Sin
Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, "unforgiveable" because it cannot be repented of.

Vision
A glimpse, view, panorama, or apprehension of spiritual truth or reality, or of a future state of events. Visions may come by day (in a trance) or by night (in a dream). *Vision* and *dream* are synonyms. The standard means by which God communicated with the prophets (Num 12:6). See Chapter 4, Section 6 for more information.

Witch doctor
A tribal priest or magician of primitive peoples.

Postscript

Now that we have finished the book, our challenge is to strive to become proficient in teaching others about the Holy Spirit. It is fine to learn from others, but it is even better to *teach* others. Make it your goal to come to grips with all the concepts in this book, and then to teach the insights you have gained.

Learn the material! Then there will be no need to burden ministers and others who are adept with studies on the Holy Spirit, for you will be able to study the Bible effectively with charismatics yourself. As the apostle Paul encouraged the Roman Christians,

> *I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another (Rom 15:14).*

With the word of God we are competent to instruct others. Never forget that our competence comes from God (2 Cor 3:5). And how can we develop competence? Is there any *easy* way? No, for this will take discipline, but the rewards will be well worth the effort.

I would appreciate your feedback on the book: general reactions, assessment of strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for the third edition. Please write to me in London at:

56-A Heathfield Road
London W3 8EJ
England

And don't stop reading now. Let's give ourselves fully to this vital study of the Holy Spirit, and continue to learn.

Take it higher!

Aland, Kurt et al, **The Greek New Testament**, New York: UBS, 1975.

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilbur Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature**, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Arthur, Douglas, and Douglas Jacoby and James Lloyd, **Shining Like Stars**, London: CLCC, 1987.

Barclay, William, **Flesh and Spirit**, London: SCM Press 1962.

Barclay, William, **The Promise of the Spirit**, London: Epworth Press, 1960.

Beasley-Murray, G.R., **Baptism in the New Testament**, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962.

Bergsma, Stuart, **Speaking with Tongues**, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965.

Black, Garth, **The Holy Spirit**, Abilene, Texas: Biblical Research Press, 1966.

Boles, Leo H., **The Holy Spirit**, Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1956.

Bowman, J. W., **"The Three Imperishables: A Meditation on 1 Cor 13,"** Interpretation 13:433-443, April 1959.

Bridge, D. and D. Phypers, **Spiritual Gifts and the Church**, London: IVP, 1973.

Bruce, F.F., **The Book of the Acts** (The New International Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

Bruner, Frederick Dale, **A Theology of the Holy Spirit.** London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970.

Budgen, Victor, **The Charismatics and the Word of God**, Welwyn, UK: Evangelical Press, 1985.

Bunyan, Paul, **The Pilgrim's Progress**, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967.

Campbell, Alexander, **"Essays on the Work of the Holy Spirit," in** The Christian Messenger and Reformer I: 19-24, 50-55, 80-94, 181-188, London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co. 1838.

Cavendish, Richard, **The Great Religions**, London: W.H. Smith, 1980.

Chadwick, Henry, **The Early Church**, New York: Penguin, 1981.

Chantry, Walter J, **Signs of the Apostles**, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973.

Cho, Paul Yonggi, **The Fourth Dimension**, Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1979.

Clayton, John, **"Demonology and Exorcism," (cassette lesson), South Bend, Indiana**: Does God Exist?, 1978.

Conzelmann, Hans, **A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians**, tr. J. W. Leitch (Ed. G. MacRae), Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

Dodds, E. R., **The Greeks and the Irrational**, Boston: Bacon Press, 1957.

Du Plessis, Paul Johannes, **Teleios: The Idea of Perfection in the New Testament**, Kok: Kampfen, 1959.

Dunn, James D. G., **Baptism in the Holy Spirit** (Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series), London: S.C.M., 1970.

Foster, Scott A., **Speaking in Tongues: A Survey of Biblical Tongues and the Charismatic Movement**, Grove City, Pennsylvania: Covenant Ministries, 1985.

Gill, D. H, **"Through a Glass Darkly,"** CBQ 25:427-9, April 1963.

Graham, Billy, **The Holy Spirit**, Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1978.

Green, Michael, **I Believe in the Holy Spirit**, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975.

Grudem, Wayne A, **The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians**, Washington DC: University Press of America, 1982.

Hagin, Kenneth, **You Can be Led by the Spirit of God**, Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, 1981.

Hall, Robert, **Receiving the Holy Spirit**, Miami: Church of the Holy Comforter, 1964.

Hargreaves, John, **A Guide to First Corinthians**, London: SPCK, 1978.

Healey, Tim (Ed.), **Strange But True**, London: Octopus Books, 1983.

Hering, Jean, **The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians**, London: The Epworth Press, 1962.

Hoekema, Anthony A, **Holy Spirit Baptism**, Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1972.

Hoekema, Anthony A, **What About Tongue Speaking?**, Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1966.

Houghey, Hal, **"Some Questions About Speaking in Tongues,"** Koinonia, March 1970.

Hurd, John Coolidge, **The Origin of First Corinthians,** London: SPCK, 1965.

Jacoby, Douglas A, **"The Charismatic Movement: The Spiritual Gifts," in** Advanced Christian Training, London: CLCC, 1986.

Jarrell, James R, **"Glossolalia,"** North Atlantic Christian, September 1964.

Jividen, Jimmy, **"Ecstatic Utterances or Languages?",** Firm Foundation, Austin, 18 February 1969.

Jividen, Jimmy, **Glossolalia: From God or Man?,** Fort Worth: Star Bible Publications, 1971.

Jividen, Jimmy, **Miracles: From God or Man?,** Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 1987.

Johannson, N, **"1 Cor 13 and 14,"** N.T.Stud. 10:383-92, March 1964.

Kee, Howard C, **Miracles in the Early Christian World,** New York: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1984.

Leonard, Leslie, **"Determined to Speak in Tongues,"** Firm Foundation: Austin, 12 July 1966.

Lewis, C. S., **Miracles: A Preliminary Study,** New York: Macmillan, 1978.

Mankamyer, Orlin L, **The Holy Spirit: His Office and His Work,** Phoenix, Oregon: Mankamyer Publications, 1951.

McGarvey, J.W., **Commentary on Corinthians,** Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co, 1916.

McGuiggan, Jim, "**Anointing With Oil,**" The Living Word (Ed. Tony Coffey), Dublin, 1985.

McRay, J. R., "**To Teleion in 1 Cor 13:10,**" Restoration Quarterly 14:168-83, 3rd/4th qtr. 1971.

Martin, R.P., "**A Suggested Exegesis of 1 Cor 13:13,**" Exp.Times 82:199-20, March-April 1971.

Miguens, E, "**1 Cor 13:8-13 Reconsidered,**" CBQ 37:76-97, January 1975.

Minestroni, Italo, **La Buona Notizia**, Pordenone, Italy: Chiesa di Cristo, 1978—present. (Many excellent articles on the Charismatic Movement)

Morton, T. Kelsey, **Tongue Speaking: An Experiment in Spiritual Experience**, New York: Doubleday, 1964.

Morris, Leon, **Spirit of the Living God**, London: IVP, 1960.

Moss, F. V., "**I Cor 13:13,**" Exp. Times 73:93, March 1961.

Moss, J, "**I Cor 13:13, nuni de menei...**" Exp. Times 73:253, August 1962.

Nichols, Gus, **Lectures on the Holy Spirit**, Mainview, Texas: Nichols Bros. Publishing Co., 1967.

Partington, John, "**The Holy Spirit**" (series of twelve lessons), London, 1979.

Pattison, E. Mansell, "**Behavioral Science Research on the Nature of Glossolalia,**" Journ. Amer. Sci. Affil. 20:3:74, September 1968.

Pearson, Birger A, **The Pneumatikos-psychikos Terminology in First Corinthians,**" University of Montana: Scholars Press, 1973.

Robertson, Archibald and Alfred Plummer, **The First Epistle to the Corinthians (ICC)**, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914.

Rogers, Richard, **The Holy Spirit of God**, Lubbock: Sentinel Publishing Co., 1968.

Sanders, J. T., **"I Cor 13: Its Interpretation Since the First World War,"** Interpretation 20:159-87, February 1966.

Schubert, Joe D, **"Tongue-Speaking in the New Testament"** (series of four articles), Jacksonville: San Jose Church of Christ.

Sherrill, John L., **They Speak with Other Tongues**, Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming Revell, 1964.

Simon, W. G. H., **The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Creed and Conduct**, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1959.

Smith, Joseph (Tr.), **The Book of Mormon**, Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1980.

Spittle, Russell (Ed.), **Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism**, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976.

Stevenson, J (Ed.), **A New Eusebius**, London: SPCK, 1980.

Stott, John R. W., **Baptism and Fullness**, London: IVP, 1975.

Swete, H. B., **The Holy Spirit in the New Testament**, London: Macmillan and Co, 1931.

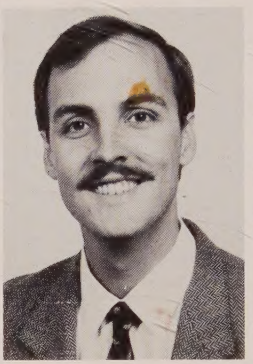
Tari, Mel, **A Mighty Wind**, Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, 1972.

Thomas, J. D., **The Spirit and Spirituality**, Abilene: Biblical Research Press, 1966.

Thomas, R. L., "**Tongues . . . will cease,**" Journ. Evang. Theol. Soc. 17:81-9, February 1974.

Winkler, Wendell (Ed.), **Difficult Texts of the NT Explained**, The 4th Annual Fort Worth Lectures, Hurst, Texas: Winkler Publications, 1981.

About the Author



The Charismatic Movement has had an unparallelled impact on the religious world. This book attempts not only to warn of the dangers and imbalances of this movement, but also to give practical guidance on how to bring charismatics to Christ.

Douglas Jacoby graduated Valedictorian of his high school class, attaining many honours in Latin and Mathematics. He attended Duke and Oxford University on academic scholarship. Having received his B.A. in History from Duke, he went on to take an M.T.S. in New Testament from Harvard Divinity School. In addition, he is quite a linguist (with a reading knowledge of eight languages).

Douglas' fluency in Greek and concise writing style provide a lucid commentary on the Charismatic Movement. His greatest asset in this book, however, is personal experience. Douglas was involved in the Charismatic Movement during his teens, and since has helped many charismatics to become disciples. This personal insight, along with his scholarly approach, provides one of the most valuable books yet written on this crucial subject.

Douglas was an original team member of the London church planting, sent out by the Boston Church of Christ in 1982. Douglas serves the Central London Church of Christ as an Evangelist, and Vicki, his wife, as a Women's Counsellor.

Douglas has published four books in his first year as an author: *Advanced Christian Training, Shining Like Stars, I Was Hungry!* and *The Powerful Delusion.*