

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

October, 2003

God's Spirit, His Truth, and Our Churches Today

In [Christ] you have been **enriched** in every way -- in all your **speaking** and in all your **knowledge**....

Therefore **you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.**

1 Cor 1:5-7, NIV

"All Word and no Spirit, **we dry up.**

All Spirit and no Word, **we blow up.**

With the Spirit and the Word, **we grow up.**"

--Donald Gee

* * *

"Today many of our churches are **orderly**

because they are asleep,

and with some it is the sleep of *death*.

After all, it is no great thing to

have order in a *cemetery*."

--James Packer, regarding 1 Cor.14:40,

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

Points to Ponder:

The LORD and His Gifts

“We need to keep reminding ourselves that without the Lord we can do nothing. It needs to become a habit of mind with us to tell the Lord as we tackle each task, ‘I can’t do this without your help, please help me,’ and then to expect to be helped because we have admitted our helplessness, given up self-reliance, and are now looking to Him. Self-reliance is a great evil.... **But when we rely on the Lord, the Spirit will empower us to do what otherwise we couldn’t do.**”
- James Packer

* * *

“Too many Christians today focus on a cosmetic view of Christianity in which they see themselves in self-improvement programs. ‘Come to Jesus and get your marriage fixed. Come to Jesus and become prosperous. Come to Jesus and get this or that blessing or thing.’ We emphasize strongly to **come to Jesus because he is worthy to be worshiped -- whether or not he fixes our marriage or heals our bodies or gives us new cars.**” --John Wimber

* * *

“Our concentration is too often on **getting a gift** rather than on **meeting a need.**” -- Kenneth Kantzer

* * *

“I would encourage people to use their gifts, and one of those gifts is helping others. That’s a great gift. **We should not minimize those less spectacular, ordinary activities of the exercise of gifts.**”
--Charles Ryrie -- [All the above are excerpts from a discussion held by *Christianity Today*, 3-19-90.]

* * *

“David Wilkerson in his tract, *A Christless Pentecost*, stresses that the Lord Jesus becomes a stranger among His own people when they give the Holy Spirit preeminence over Christ ... and when they seek Christ’s power rather than His purity. In his analysis, **‘The upper room must never overshadow the cross.’ In short, the giftings of the Holy Spirit are to do away with self and to bring the Lord Jesus into greater view.** If they are not doing that, then there is good reason to question their source.” --Frank Viola

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

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Don't Demand, Don't Deny

Alex V. Wilson, and also D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (!)

Maybe you, like me, are wondering if W&W is spending too much time, paper and ink on the subject of spiritual gifts – and especially the gift of prophecy. What's the use of all these articles?

Will anything come of it, or have you quit reading already?

Whatever, the gifts must be important, based on the number of passages devoted to them. One such passage is that foundational scripture which Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost when the church began. Let's consider again Joel 2 and Acts 2, in detail. Peter says,

These men are not drunk, as you suppose...

16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

17 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says,

'That I will pour out My Spirit upon all mankind;

And your sons and your daughters shall **prophecy,**

And your young men shall see visions,

And your old men shall dream dreams;

18 Even upon My bondslaves, both men and women,

I will in those days pour out My Spirit

And they shall prophecy.

19 'And I will grant wonders in the sky above,

And signs on the earth beneath...

20 'The sun shall be turned into darkness,

And the moon into blood,

Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come..

21 'And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved'....

33 Exalted to the right hand of God, **[Jesus] has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.**

Notice 4 main points. 1st, on that day--the church's birthday--God **"poured out" His Spirit** in abundance. This was a fulfillment not only of Joel 2:28-31, which Peter quotes, but of other prophecies too: Isaiah 32:14-15 & 44:3; Ezek. 39:29, also see 36:26-27. Everyone knows that the Lord foretold He would send *the Messiah* to His people. But another basic part of His promised salvation was that He would pour out *His Spirit*. And He did.

2nd, Joel foretold the outpouring would be **all-inclusive**. In Old Covenant times the Holy Spirit was alive and well, but He limited His working to a few people (mostly prophets, but some rulers, warriors, etc.), all of them Israelites. Then through Joel the Lord revealed that at a future time the Spirit would come not only upon a few privileged people, in Israel alone, but "*all mankind*" – that is, "*everyone who calls on the Lord.*" He would come upon **all** His people, of both genders ("sons" but also "daughters"; note also "both men and women"), and all ages ("old men" but also "young men"), and all social classes (even upon "bondslaves" – "menservants and maidservants").

3rd, the **main result** of the outpouring of God's Spirit (at least the main one mentioned by Joel) would be **increased communication with the Lord**. His people would see visions and dreams, and two times it is stated **they "shall prophesy"** (17, 18).

4th, Joel seems to strongly imply that **such prophecy would continue throughout this future age he is foretelling**. At least he does not mention nor even hint that it would soon die out. Rather, after mentioning the widespread use of prophecy he goes right on to mention the endtime "signs" and "wonders" that will transpire before the Day of the Lord at the close of this age. (Compare what Christ said about this: Matt. 24:29-31.)

As I again pondered the question of whether prophecy and other spiritual gifts were to cease when the writing of Scripture was completed, I noticed not only the above passage but also what Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 1:4-7: "I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been *enriched in every way - in all your speaking and in all your knowledge* - because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore **you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.**" Does that not sound as though Paul expected the *charismata* to continue till Christ returned? He mentions two characteristics of this period between Jesus' first and second comings: 1) God bestows spiritual gifts. 2) We eagerly await Christ's return.

Then, still examining this matter, I noticed a book of sermons by the late Martyn Lloyd-Jones, which for years sat unread in my bookcase. As I perused it recently while studying for this issue, I was heartened to see that his view seems identical with the one presented in the past three *W&Ws*. In short, he too took the "middle approach" to supernatural gifts and workings: "Deny Not, Demand Not."

Here are some excerpts from a sermon in that book, *The Sovereign Spirit -- Discerning His Gifts* (Harold Shaw Publishers). The

preacher ministered for years at Westminster Chapel in London, England, where he succeeded G. Campbell Morgan. Lloyd-Jones was one of the greatest preachers in the 1900s, renowned for his expositions of Scripture and his wide knowledge of church history as well. These sermons were preached in 1965, about five years after the Charismatic Movement began. He sought to correct two extreme sorts of believers: those “becalmed in a dead orthodoxy divorced from any real Christian experience”; and, on the other hand, “feeling-oriented evangelicals who were now going overboard on charismatic concerns.”

Here are the excerpts:

As the Holy Spirit Wills

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

“One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually *just as He wills.*” 1 Corinthians 12:11, NAS

[Regarding] the gifts of the Spirit, we must not say “*only*” for New Testament times nor must we say “*always.*” The answer is, “*as he wills,*” as the Spirit wills. It is always right to seek the fullness of the Spirit -- we are exhorted to do so. But the gifts of the Spirit are to be left in the hands of the Holy Spirit himself....

The New Testament nowhere tells us that sickness must always be healed, and always be healed miraculously. Some people who claim miraculous healing today go so far as to say a Christian should never be ill and that he should always be healed miraculously. The other extreme is to assume that the fact that [Timothy, Trophimus and Epaphroditus] were not immediately healed is proof that the miraculous was immediately withdrawn.

Both these views are guilty of the same error, which is to assume that in the New Testament any Christian taken ill should be healed miraculously. But the New Testament never teaches that. A miracle is an exceptional thing, which only happens sometimes. The miracles were always something *occasional, determined by the Spirit.* It did not happen automatically that every Christian was immediately healed. Some were healed, some were not. God has a purpose in all these matters. All these gifts are under the sovereignty of the Spirit. He decides when and how and where....

But I also want to say this. It is historically true that as you read the history of the church in the first five or six centuries you find less and less evidence of these supernatural powers. And inevitably the question arises, “Why was that?” [Some] people assume, “Obviously,

they were withdrawn [by God]; they were not meant to continue.” I suggest to you that there is a much better answer, which lies in what happened to the life of the church herself The Emperor Constantine decided to become a Christian and to bring the Roman Empire into Christianity. The church now became an institution, where everything was controlled.... In other words, the church by the end of the third or fourth century was a church that one simply cannot identify with the church of the New Testament. Not because God had withdrawn the gifts but because man had taken charge of the church and the Spirit was not given opportunity but was being quenched....

[His conclusion:] You must not say, “The manifestations of the power of the Spirit *never* can happen, they were only for the New Testament church.” Nor must you say they should *always* be present in their fullness. But they are *always possible!* And therefore when we are confronted by something that claims to be a revival or a new giving of such gifts, we must not reject it out of hand, but we must prove it, we must test it. [End of quote from Lloyd-Jones]

Could this be Prophecy?

by Edward Fudge

Condensed from a chapter in his book,

The Sound of His Voice:

Discovering the Secrets of God's Guidance.

The move to Texas [*where he had been asked to start a newspaper*] in 1982 was exciting and frightening at the same time....

While I had always tried to minister God's word honestly and with integrity, new understanding gained over the past decade made me regret some teaching I had done on various topics in earlier years.

Within six months after we arrived in Houston, Sara Faye and I "plugged in" at the Bering Drive Church of Christ and soon were heavily involved in its various ministries. Unlike some congregations which select elders for life, Bering elders serve limited terms. In the Spring of 1983, I was one of three new men elected to the eldership. [*He had already been a Bible teacher and minister for some years.*] Bering also ordains its designated servants-- ministers, elders, missionaries -- in a formal ceremony which includes Scripture readings, prayers, responsive promises and commitments, and the laying on of hands.

A phone call from Kerry.

Two weeks before my ordination as elder, I received a phone call from a long-time friend named Kerry, a Dallas-area businessman and elder in the Mid-Cities Chapel in Arlington, Texas. "A brother will be ministering here Thursday and Friday nights of next week," Kerry told me, "and I wish you could be present. I believe he exercises a prophetic gift."

Like Amos in the Old Testament, I was neither a prophet nor the son of one. Not only that, I had never witnessed any contemporary pronouncement that seemed to me to measure up to biblical criteria for prophecy, and I was highly skeptical of anyone who claimed to have that gift. But I also knew the Mid-Cities Chapel which Kerry led, and I highly respected his own biblical knowledge and spiritual maturity.

Several energetic Christian families had formed this congregation a few years before, after the elders of an "anti-institutional" Church of Christ in Arlington fired their preacher for proclaiming Christ in a manner that showed us totally indebted to God's grace and which eliminated all reliance on imperfect human knowledge or obedience.

From the beginning, the brothers and sisters at the Chapel loved each other dearly and eagerly shared Christ with their neighbors. Their joyful lifestyle soon attracted non-Christian seekers, as well as believers from a wider Christian spectrum. As they sought God's presence and studied the Bible together, the Chapel members became increasingly open to the Holy Spirit, and God continued to bless them individually and as a body.

I had been privileged to preach Christ during special meetings at both congregations -- first at the original "anti-institutional" church, then at Mid-Cities after its formation and at regular intervals throughout its development. Under Kerry's leadership, the Chapel members focused on Christ and emphasized practical obedience and witnessing, while they incorporated a constructive use of whatever spiritual gifts God saw fit to bestow. Because of Kerry's faithful ministry and credibility, he seized my attention immediately when he telephoned me that Spring evening in 1983.

"Who is this man?" I asked.

"His name is Bill Roycroft." Kerry said. "He lives in Canada, where he operates a Christian outreach for troubled teens. Once or twice a year, he travels through Oklahoma and Texas and speaks at a few congregations with whom he is acquainted. He has been to Mid-

Cities Chapel several times now, and I believe you will be blessed by coming."

A flying, turn-around trip.

My calendar indicated a busy Friday that next week. I could make this fast trip, but it would mean flying to Dallas after work on Thursday for the evening service and catching the "red-eye" return flight home. I booked my flight and entered the next week with great anticipation.

Thursday afternoon arrived and Kerry met me at the Dallas airport. We grabbed a fast bite en route to the church and arrived just before the evening service. When the time came to begin, the announced speaker still had not arrived, and the presiding brother suggested that we extend our period of praise. We had sung a half-dozen songs of worship when the front door opened and the scheduled guest came in. His car's transmission had broken as he drove through Oklahoma, he explained, and he had spent half a day arranging repairs.

Kerry said a few words to introduce Mr. Roycroft and sat down. The speaker was conservative in both style and appearance. "Please turn with me to Genesis," he began, "as we look together again at the familiar story of Joseph." In the conversational tone of one accustomed to small audiences, Mr. Roycroft read excerpts from the Old Testament text, applied a few points to our circumstances, and exhorted us to live faithful lives before our faithful and all-knowing God.

Simply encouraging one-on-one.

Then he began speaking to specific people in the assembly. Just calmly talking, as if one-on-one. He did not announce what he was about to do -- or say what he had done when he finished. He never used the word "prophecy" and he did not claim to be a prophet. He simply spoke to various individuals, men and women, of different ages and races and circumstances -- encouraging this one, consoling another, building them all up in the Lord.

Mr. Roycroft did not know these people and he had not talked with them in advance. He arrived at the meeting after the service had begun. Still he spoke intimately, as if he knew the secret struggles and hidden burdens of each heart, yet carefully, to protect the confidence as a sacred trust. "You, the brother on the right with the red tie," he might say, "you wonder how you can continue to serve the Lord and carry the weight you have had to carry these past years. The Lord would say to you that he knows what you have borne, and he will al-

ways be with you. Have courage and continue as you are doing, and God will never leave your side. Live in his strength."

He addressed no one judgmentally but spoke with great compassion to all, delivering kind words in a tender manner. "The Lord would say to the sister in the front row with the blue dress," he began, "you are in great confusion as a new believer, because you feel pulled in opposing directions in your life. God has given you your shepherds in the church. Listen to their wisdom and receive their guidance. They care for your soul and love you in the Lord. Trust their loving leadership as one would trust a father."

Among those present were the Church of Christ preacher who had been fired years before for faithfully preaching the grace of Christ, and his hard-working and sacrificial wife. Mr. Roycroft spoke to them both in turn, and each wept tears of joy and great release.

"You have worked very hard for God," Mr. Roycroft told the minister's wife. "You have often given and given to others until you had nothing left to give. You have great reward in heaven, and God will strengthen you now with his daily power for each task that he places before you."

He also encouraged her husband. "You have been abused and persecuted," he acknowledged, "and the Lord would say to you that you have suffered for him. He first suffered for you, and he suffers with you when you suffer in his name." He said more, and these are not his exact words, but they were such words as these.

He talked for about 30 minutes to ten or twelve people in the same manner, and then he stopped. There were no final words to the audience this time. We were almost eavesdroppers. The last half hour had been intended for the specific individuals who had been addressed; the blessing we received was real but secondary. Someone led a benediction and we were dismissed.

I had wept, too, as he spoke to my minister friend and his wife. I knew their histories, though Mr. Roycroft did not, and I sensed divine knowledge and empathy in his words to them. The entire experience had moved me deeply. But now I was terribly disappointed as well. He had not spoken to me.

"Why did he turn off the faucet?"

I made my way through the audience and found Kerry. "Why did he turn off the faucet before everyone got watered?" I asked. Kerry smiled. "Sometimes he has more to say later. Stand here and I'll ask if he does tonight." He walked over to Mr. Roycroft and apparently

asked a question. Then, turning toward me, he motioned for me to go into a classroom. Kerry and his wife Kara followed. They brought three other people with them. The first was a young Nigerian student who was attending university in Arlington. The other two were my friends Mary and Randy, a married couple who were leaving the next day as missionaries with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Mr. Roycroft also came into the classroom.

"Sometimes there is more ministry after the larger group is dismissed," Kerry said simply. "I have asked our brother if he has anything further to say."

He did have more to say, first to the Nigerian student, then to the Bible translators. I did not know their hearts or private spiritual journeys, of course, but they each did. Like the others before them that evening, they responded as if the words spoken met them exactly where they were.

Finally this quiet and unpretentious guest speaker looked at me. "The Lord would say to you," he began, "that as you enter into a new area of ministry, the Lord has gone before you and prepared the way. You do not need to repeat words to your people," he continued. "They have heard so many words their hearts are like a well-worn path. The Lord has given you a listening heart, and he would have you to listen and to love, to minister and to care."

He also spoke about my past. "Do not be concerned for those you have left behind," he encouraged, "for the Lord is also with them, and he will carry out his plans for each of them just as he has purposed. And do not be anxious concerning teaching you have done in years gone by," he said, "for the Lord would say to you that he knows your heart, that you have walked in sincerity before him, and that you have given to others the truth which he had given to you. Now the Lord would encourage you to continue to speak the truth that you know, and to leave the seed you have planted to his care."

Someone took me back to the airport and I returned to Houston, carrying a cassette tape Kerry had made for me as Mr. Roycroft spoke. I was so awed I could barely sleep. I wanted to share details with Sara Faye but, knowing how even the mention of certain spiritual gifts instantly aroused her fear and anxiety, I hesitated to tell her what had actually occurred. When I left for work Friday morning, I placed the tape on the kitchen counter. "This is what the man told me," I said to her. "I don't know if you want to hear it or not, but if you do it is here."

When I returned home that evening, she brought up the subject. "I listened to the tape," she said. "It was beautiful. I cried all the way through it. He talked as if he knew everything that is going on in your life."

At this point I still had one nagging unanswered question. I picked up the telephone and called Kerry. "Please don't be insulted." I said, "but I have to ask you one question."

He chuckled. "I know what it is," he replied. "It's the same question everyone asks. But go ahead and inquire for your own peace of mind."

"What did you tell Mr. Roycroft last night about me?" I inquired. "I want to know exactly everything that you said."

"Just a couple of sentences," Kerry replied. "I told him that you were from Houston and that you had to return that night. And I asked him if he had anything to say to you before you left. That is all I said."

That Sunday at Bering Drive, three of us were ordained as elders. All the present and former shepherds placed their hands on us and offered prayers on our behalf. Throughout the service, I thought of the passage in Timothy which says: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy and by the laying on of hands of the presbytery." I marveled at God's graciousness. "Prophecy on Thursday night, and the laying on of hands on Sunday," I reflected. "What a responsibility I have to fulfil this charge!" I asked God for strength and faith for the task he had given me to do.

What is Biblical prophecy, anyway?

Was Mr. Roycroft exercising the spiritual gift of prophecy? If "our God is in the heavens and he does whatever he pleases" (Psalm 115:3), that is a question I must ask. What is "prophecy" anyway? Does it mean telling the future? Does it always, or even usually, result in new books of the Bible? As I search the Scriptures, I must answer "No" to both questions.

As frequently noted, the Biblical word "prophecy" does not mean "fore-telling" but "forth-telling." Prophecy is simply a direct message from God, spoken through some individual he sees fit to use. Both Old and New Testaments mention many people who delivered God's word -- usually to a particular person or group, for a definite purpose, under specific circumstances. Although their messages were inspired by God, they were not intended for general distribution. Often we do not even know what they said. The Bible records some of these utterances and omits others. Scripture also includes stories and words of many

people who never communicated a message directly from God. The Bible simply does not equate the gift of prophecy with the creation of new Scripture.

If prophecy is not intended to result in new Scripture, what is its purpose? The 14th chapter of First Corinthians says more about prophecy in the church than all the rest of the Bible combined, and it identifies three goals of this grace-gift. The person who properly exercises the grace-gift of prophecy edifies, exhorts and consoles. Or, to put it in regular language, he or she "*builds up*" others to Christian maturity, "*stirs up*" someone to godly action, or spiritually "*binds up*" a person who is weak, broken, or torn down.

Does God still speak through people?

But whom does God use to deliver such a word? The answer must surely be, "Whomever he pleases to use." Moses once expressed a wish that all God's people might prophesy, but in his day prophecy was very limited. Yet God apparently intended to reveal his word more widely at a later time, according to the text of the first Gospel sermon recorded in the Book of Acts. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter begins his remarks by quoting Joel's prophecy concerning the "last days." At that time, God promised to "pour out his Spirit on all flesh." When that happened, Joel predicted, "your sons and your daughters will prophesy." Peter informed the astonished crowd that those "last days" had now begun. That was why Peter could now promise that "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The New Testament identifies certain individuals as "prophets," some of whom also wrote Scripture. But it also mentions other ordinary men and women who prophesied, who are not called prophets and who never wrote any Scripture. Before Jesus was born there were Elizabeth and Zachariah and, during Jesus' infancy, holy Simeon in the temple. God can even speak through his enemy, as shown by the high priest Caiaphas who prophesied concerning Jesus' death.

The Book of Acts introduces us to Agabus, Judas, Silas, and Philip's four daughters, who were known to be prophets. But it tells us of others, such as the twelve Ephesian disciples, who were never recognized as prophets although they prophesied on some particular occasion. Paul places prophecy at the top of the list of ministry gifts to be desired, even as he insists that not all believers will ever prophesy. It is all in God's own sovereign hands, who distributes different gifts to various believers just as he pleases.

But what did the biblical gift of prophecy look like? How can we recognize it if we see it today? Does Scripture provide us any guidelines or tests for assessing a prophecy? Here we need to forget the spe-

cial effects of Hollywood and focus instead on the Word of God. Throughout Scripture, the person giving God's word is not usually frenzied or in a trance. He or she is not emotionally overwrought or out of control. That may characterize false prophets and pagan revelations, but it does not usually describe genuine prophetic ministry in biblical times or today. The prophetic word is a straightforward human word in every mechanical sense, but it is revealed directly to the speaker by God himself.

Negatively, the apostle Paul warns us not to quench or extinguish the Spirit, or to regard prophecies lightly. On the positive side, he commands us to examine everything, then to retain what is good and reject evil in every form. There are many false prophets in the world, John warns. Christians are not to be gullible or naive. We are to test the spirits -- and any message that purports to originate with God.

The Bible provides many tests.

John tells us in the last book of the Bible that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." When the Spirit comes, Jesus had said, "he will glorify me." The grace-gift of prophecy will always exalt Jesus Christ and inspire greater faith in him. Anyone speaking by the Spirit of God will say "Jesus is Lord." Whoever says otherwise is a false prophet.

True prophecy always agrees with God's revelation given in Scripture. Any so-called prophecy which contradicts the Bible is wrong. It is as simple as that! We need not fear being misled by a David Koresh, whose early teachings directly opposed God's clear and unequivocal commandments, clearly marking him as a false prophet.

A word inspired by God is also known by its effects. As we have already seen, its purpose is to build up, stir up and bind up the body of Christ. This grace-gift is not for chastising or condemning, or for issuing new commands which the recipient did not already know. Most modern "prophets" fail this test as soon as they start speaking, including all those who say: "God told me to tell you to send me money!" An early disciple in the second century said that anyone who asks for money is a false prophet.

Do we quench the Spirit?

Scripture encourages us to hospitality by holding out the possibility that we might entertain angels without knowing it. In a similar way, I believe we ought always to speak godly words, with the realization that some of them might spring directly from God. How often have you thought of some word of encouragement, exhortation, or sol-

ace, which you felt you should say to someone else -- then you quenched the Spirit by never communicating the word? How frequently have you been encouraged by the well-spoken word of another person at the moment you needed to hear it most? How many times have you found new strength from a timely word of exhortation, to keep going when you thought you couldn't take another step? Or felt your heart rise with new hope, from the depths of depression, when someone said just the "right" word? Where did those godly words originate? Why were they so effective in Christ's service? Might they not have been, without our knowing it, words of prophecy?

Spanning two decades in my own life, God used two Christian ladies -- Mary Alice Ciampa, in St. Louis, Missouri, and Maude Miller, in Athens, Alabama -- to encourage me with such specific words. These godly women, mothers of faith, rekindled my hope in many dark hours, as they repeatedly assured me that God had a future for me which could be neither understood in the midst of, nor ultimately hindered by, the circumstances then present. I will not be surprised if, in glory, God informs me that both ladies were exercising a prophetic ministry. I do not know if they would be surprised by that or not.

One thing is sure. When Jesus returns, prophecy will end. There will be no further need for it then, since we all will speak with him face to face. Until then, even our lips, consecrated to God, may be "filled with messages" from the loving heavenly Father. If you feel you have a good word for someone -- say it! Who knows but that God has given it to you for them? After all, "our God is in the heavens, and he does whatever he pleases."

Some Excerpts from the booklet,

Prophecy -- A Gift for the Body of Christ

by Michael Harper of England, 1964

**The Bible --Written and Complete--
and the Ongoing Gift of Prophecy**

In Old Testament times "God's law is fixed, and it was to be taught to all generations. But in addition to the teaching of God's law, there was provision for the direct inspirational ministry of the prophet, with his 'thus saith the Lord.' So we read in the New Testament of 'the Law *and the Prophets.*' Now some of these prophecies were written down and recognised in the Canon of the Old Testament. It is important, however, to realize that not all prophecy was recorded in the

Old Testament. We only have a part. [There were] utterances which never found their way into the pages of the Bible. These utterances also would have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, and had a part to play in the life of God's people."

Continuing his point of the preceding paragraph, Harper mentions instances such as the 70 elders of Israel plus Eldad and Medad, who all prophesied in the time of Moses (Num.11: 25, 26); a "band of prophets" (1 Sam. 10:10); "the prophets" over whom Samuel was "head" (1 Sam.19:20); etc. The writer then continues, "The words spoken in such prophetic activity never found their place in the Bible, but they would have been truly inspired by God. The point that is being made is this -- prophecy in the Old Testament was not limited to the Canonical Prophets -- nor was it in the New Testament. *We need not suppose then that there is no place today for prophecy because the canon of scripture has been completed.*" [emphasis added throughout --avw]

"Perhaps the crux of opposition to the continuance of prophecy is fear that this may become a substitute for or addition to apostolic doctrine and the sole authority of the scriptures. This fear is very understandable It is always necessary to 'contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3). *Scripture is as final and finished as Christ's work upon the Cross. All prophecy must be brought to the judgment of the scriptures. The Holy Spirit who moved men to write the scriptures (2 Pet. 1:21) will never move anyone to contradict them*"

"Prophecy will never be used to make fresh disclosures of Christian doctrine. But just as we can benefit from the reading of Christian biographies and the books of devout people, and they may help to strengthen our grasp and enlarge our understanding of the doctrine which comes to us from the Word of God -- so through the gift of prophecy we may learn more of 'the depths of God' which the Spirit searches and which must, therefore, conform to the Word of God. (See 1 Cor.2:6-13.)"

"Larry Christenson has put it, 'The cure for abuse is not *disuse* but *proper* use.' There have been cranks who have claimed to know the time of the Return of Christ. But we do not reject the doctrine of the Second Coming because of their parody of it. Neither should we neglect one of the gifts of the Spirit because of its misuse in the hands of deluded people and charlatans."

When Regulations are Needed

"Because some of the gifts were being abused, the Apostle issued certain rules, which we do well to heed. But it needs to be said that the

rules are of no use *if the gifts are not operating*. What we need today, for the most part, are not rules to save the gifts from being abused -- but the apostolic injunction 'so, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.' The Highway Code [of laws] is valueless if the car stays in the garage. But it becomes a most important document when we are on the road."

"As we examine the lists of spiritual gifts and offices in the Epistles there is no indication given us that some were to be withdrawn and other persist. If 'teachers' persist, why not 'prophets'? (1 Cor.12:28). If "service," "exhortation," "acts of mercy" persist -- why not "prophecy"? (Rom. 12:6-8). How can we accept some gifts of the Spirit for today, and throw the rest back to the early church?....

[*Comment by avw*: I find much that is Biblical and exceedingly helpful about spiritual gifts in Michael Harper's writings, so I have quoted from this good brother a number of times. We have much to learn from the Charismatics' teachings and experiences with spiritual gifts. But I definitely disagree with several of his ideas on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, (not quoted above!) and would warn against those ideas rather than endorse them. Fairly often my disagreement with charismatics' writings is not over their *experiences*, but their *interpretations* of those experiences. These are sometimes inaccurate, it seems to me, and occasionally very harmful. Some charismatics try to make their personal experiences a norm for all other believers. They, *and we too*, should avoid this error.

After saying all that, I believe the above quotes from brother Harper are right on target. And we should deplore any attitude that is overly-picky about what to *call* certain experiences. It's better to have a valid God-given experience but mis-name it, than to use correct terminology but not be filled with the Holy Spirit! Of course it's even better to have both.]

"Not all are Prophets".... but "All may Prophecy" Did Paul contradict himself?

Alex V. Wilson

On the one hand Paul wrote, "*All are not prophets*, are they?" (1 Cor.12:29). On the other hand he commented, "*You can all prophesy*" (1 Cor.14:31), and "If the whole church comes together and . . . *everybody is prophesying*" (23-24; throughout the article the italics are mine). How can we put those verses together? Doesn't the first one contradict the latter two?

Maybe not. A solution to the dilemma may be found in this view set forth by a number of Bible expositors: *Even non-prophets might prophesy occasionally*. And all believers have that potential.

“A non-prophet might prophesy?! Wouldn’t that make him a prophet?”

Not really. A brother who lacks the ability to preach God’s Word on a regular basis might nonetheless bring a very helpful message once in a great while. A Christian who feels she lacks the gift of teaching might yet be willing to fill in once in a while to fill a temporary gap. And in the same way a non-prophet might prophesy if God moves him. In other words, there’s a difference between *the Gift of Speaking a Prophecy* and *the Ministry of Being a Prophet*.

Let’s examine what several teachers have said about this matter. Arnold Bittlinger writes, “Besides those who received the **charisma of prophecy**, there were also those Christians in the early church who had the special **office of prophet** The difference between the gift of prophecy and the office of a prophet consists in the fact that the one who possesses the office receives *an enduring commission* (compare the Old Testament prophets who were called specially by God), whereas the gift of prophecy is *only given now and then* to any of the Spirit-filled church members.”

If that is so, it resolves the dilemma between “not all Christians are prophets” and yet “you can *all* prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted” (14:31, NAS). And it throws a different light on Paul’s regulation that only “two or three prophets should speak” in any one meeting (v.29). That seems a bit puzzling, since he also said 2-3 people may speak in tongues (if someone interprets). In the light of his great preference for prophecy over tongues-speaking (14:1,19, etc.), it would seem he would allow far more of the former than the latter. Well -- he does, **if** in addition to two or three prophets speaking, some other believers who do not hold the position of prophet may yet prophesy occasionally, as they are moved.

Studies in the GIFT of Prophecy:

by Edward Fudge in GracEmail

[Brother Fudge usually writes and sends out 3-4 "GracEmails" weekly, to literally thousands of readers worldwide. We have formerly reprinted a number of them in W&W. (If you wish to receive them, see his helpful multimedia website at www.EdwardFudge.com.) Usually they answer questions sent him by others. But sometimes, as in the following, he gives a series of lessons on some Biblical topic. Though these six studies will overlap some with other articles this month and last, he also makes a number of additional points. Even the repetition can prove helpful, since this subject is not widely studied by many believers. --avw]

1. A SIGN OF THE TIMES

It is the Jewish Feast of Weeks (also known as Pentecost), a festival celebrating the harvest's firstfruits and also the giving of the Law. Some 120 of Jesus' disciples are together, expectantly waiting the coming of God's Spirit as Jesus had recently promised before he ascended to heaven. Suddenly supernatural manifestations fill the room -- a sound like a mighty wind, fire-like phenomena that separate and spread upon them all.

Jesus' followers begin to speak in languages they have never learned, reciting the mighty deeds of God. Word spreads and a huge crowd quickly gathers. Some say these people are tipsy with wine. No one has seen or heard anything like this before. No one here is drunk, says Peter, speaking for the apostles. This is the fulfillment of ancient Hebrew prophecy. Centuries before, God had spoken through Joel of a time when he would pour out his Spirit on all humankind. Then, he said, "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Servants will participate alongside their masters; men and women of all ages will prophesy together. When God pours out his Spirit, Joel continued, "every one who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Acts 2:1-21). That time has now arrived, announces Peter. The "last days" have begun and salvation is offered through the crucified, risen and exalted Jesus Christ.

To appreciate the lavish generosity of God's outpouring, we need only remember how limited prophecy had always been among his covenant people. But there had been hints that that would change. In Moses' day, God once placed his Spirit upon 70 Jewish tribal elders and they prophesied. Two others also prophesied who were not assembled with the elders, and someone suspiciously reported them to Moses. "Would that all God's people were prophets," Moses responded, "that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num.

11:24-30.) That time will surely come, said Joel, centuries after Moses.

Now that day has finally arrived. God pours out his Spirit on all his people without distinction. Men and women alike. Young and old. Indentured and free. They all will prophesy as God sees fit. This spectacular day marks the beginning of the Christian era, the age of the Holy Spirit -- what Joel called the "last days." This era will continue until Jesus returns. It is the day of salvation. According to both Joel and Peter, ordinary Christian prophecy will be a sign of these times.

2. THE END OF A GOOD THING

Ordinary Christian prophecy is a hallmark of the Christian era and a particularly desirable gift (Acts 2:16-21; 1 Cor. 14:1). Yet when prophecy has fully served its purpose, it will come to an end. The Apostle Paul explains: "We know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. . . . 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" (1 Cor. 13:9-12).

One day, when Jesus returns, God's plan will reach its full and perfect goal. Meanwhile, as Paul notes early in this same Epistle, God gives his people spiritual gifts to equip them as they wait for Jesus to come again (1 Cor. 1:5-7). The final goal is not the completion of Scripture but the completion of Jesus' people. The purpose of Christian prophecy is not the production of a Bible but the encouragement and building up of each local church. Prophecy helps move God's people to maturity, until we attain to "the full measure of perfection found in Christ" (Eph. 4:13). We have not yet reached perfection, as those who are truly mature will quickly acknowledge (Phil. 3:12-15).

When perfection comes, then "we shall see face to face." We "shall know fully" even as we are fully known (1 Cor. 13:12). To see "face to face" means that we will see God directly and personally (Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:11; Deut. 34:10; Ezek. 20:35). When Jesus returns, we will see him "as he is" (1 John 3:1-3). Then, in the new heaven and new earth, we will see God's face (Rev. 22:4). Now we know only partially. Any man who thinks otherwise "does not yet know as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2). Then, when perfection comes, we will know as fully as God already knows us. God is faithful and he will keep us strong until that time (1 Cor. 1:7-9). Ordinary Christian prophecy -- properly understood and properly used -- is one of his gifts for accomplishing that result (1 Cor. 14:3).

3. THE BIBLE IS NOT 'PERFECTION'

We will see later that ordinary Christian prophecy is fragmentary, time-oriented, specific and local. For all those reasons it is "in part,"

and it will cease "when perfection comes." Then we shall "see face to face" and "know fully" even as we are fully known (1 Cor. 13:8-12). Some believers think this text refers to the time when the last New Testament book was written and the Bible was completed. However, we have seen that "perfection" here refers to the fullness of God's saving purpose and the complete maturity of Christ's people when Jesus returns. Even if we did not know that, there are numerous other reasons why "perfection" here does not refer to the completion of the New Testament books.

First, no one living then could have pinpointed such a date, for our Bible of 66 books was not identified until much later. Second, ordinary Christian prophecy has nothing to do with writing Scripture, as we will see later. Third, Paul is not discussing the completion of the New Testament in this passage or in this epistle. Fourth, Paul's point in this text makes no sense if "perfection" means the writing of our 27 New Testament books. Revelation, the last of those books, was penned within 35 years after Paul wrote First Corinthians 13. It is not saying much to say that love is greater than prophecy because love will endure more than 35 additional years.

Fifth, "perfection" here contrasts with something that earlier was "in part." Christian teaching was complete in Paul's day and believers already possessed "everything we need for life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). The purpose of Christian prophecy and knowledge is not to gradually reveal Scripture or the contents of what we now recognize as Scripture. It is to strengthen, encourage and comfort the people of God (1 Cor. 14:3).

Sixth, if "perfection" here means the finished New Testament, the most immature Christian now would know more than Paul did when he wrote First Corinthians, for he then knew only "in part" and we would now know fully "even as we are fully known."

The early church fathers uniformly understood "perfection" in this passage to refer to the time of Jesus' final return. They also reported the ongoing exercise of ordinary Christian prophecy for hundreds of years after the last Apostle had died and the New Testament was fully written. The notion that spiritual gifts (or miracles) would end with the first century seems to have begun after the Reformation when certain Catholics asked why Protestants did not have miracles such as the Catholic Church had always claimed.

Instead of giving the biblical answer that such matters are in God's sovereign hands to do as he sees fit, some beleaguered Protestants replied that such supernatural activity ceased with the infancy of the earliest church. We should now discard that notion once for all. It is against Scripture, history, experience and common sense.

4. HEBREW PROPHETS AND CHRISTIAN APOSTLES

Ordinary Christian prophecy comes through ordinary Christian people -- "your sons and daughters," to use Joel's words which Peter quoted on Pentecost (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21). As we learn more about ordinary Christian prophecy we will learn also not to confuse this kind of revelation with the "Thus says the LORD" messages given through Moses, Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah. The great prophets of the Old Testament spoke authoritatively and delivered the precise words of God (Jer. 1:9).* What they predicted would certainly come to pass (1 Sam. 9:6).* What they commanded, God's people were expected to obey. What they announced was to be accepted without hesitation and received without question (Deut. 18:18-22).* We will later see in detail that those comments do not describe ordinary Christians to whom God gives ordinary Christian prophecy. But there is a group of New Testament spokesmen which these comments do describe. [*See verses written out at the end of this lesson.]

These comments do describe the apostles of Jesus Christ, the New Testament counterparts to the authoritative prophets of the Old Testament. Jesus himself placed the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles side by side as God's unique and special messengers (Lk. 11:49-51). God's authoritative, enduring, normative message came through the "holy prophets" of the Old Testament and the "apostles" of Jesus Christ in the New Testament (2 Pet. 3:2). As it happens, the apostles were also prophets, but only a few Christian prophets have also been apostles of Jesus Christ. Paul the apostle was also a preacher and teacher -- but most preachers and teachers have not been apostles (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). The apostle Peter was an elder -- but most elders have not been apostles (1 Pet. 5:1). The ministry of the prophetic apostles was indeed foundational: the "apostles and prophets" are probably the same group of men when mentioned in that regard (Eph. 2:20; 3:5). Like the Old Testament prophets, Jesus' apostles spoke the very words of God (1 Cor. 2:12-13). Their message is authoritative and beyond question (Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Thes. 3:14). Even a person with the gift of ordinary Christian prophecy must yield to the command of an apostle of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 14:37-38). When the church eventually recognized the 66 books of Scripture which we call the "Bible," they did so in large part based on the prophetic origin of Old Testament books and the apostolic origin or connection of the books that compose our New Testament Scriptures. That process of recognizing certain writings as authoritative Scripture began during the first century, and it acknowledged Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles even then (2 Pet. 3:1-2, 15-16). Ordinary Christian prophecy has nothing to do with writing Scripture. Let there be no doubt: the Bible is complete. Until Jesus comes again, it will remain the standard by which ordinary Christian prophecy is always to be measured and tested.

***Scriptures Referred To Above [all from NIV]**

Jer 1:9-10, Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth."

1 Sam 9:6, The servant replied, "Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let's go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take."

Deut 18:20-22, A prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death. 21 You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.

Luke 11:49, . . . God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.'

2 Peter 3:2, I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

Eph 2:20,...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

Eph 3:4-6, The mystery of Christ...was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

1 Cor 2:13, ...We speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit...

Gal 1:8, 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!

2 Thess 3:14, If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.

1 Cor 14:37-38, If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. 38 If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.

2 Pet. 3:15-16, ...Our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.... His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures....

5. WHAT PROPHECY IS NOT

According to both the Old Testament (Joel) and the New Testament (Peter), one manifestation of God's Spirit in this messianic era is

the widespread gift of prophecy -- not through a select few as in past ages but through God's children in general -- men and women, young and old, servant and master alike. Because God bestows this gift so indiscriminately, I refer to it as "ordinary Christian prophecy." Before we try to describe ordinary Christian prophecy in a positive way, it is helpful to note some things it is not.

First, it has nothing to do with producing new Scripture. The Bible is complete and it will never be enlarged. **Second**, ordinary Christian prophecy does not mean predicting the future. Sometimes it involves a revelation of future events (Acts 11:28; 21:11) but that is not its primary purpose or nature. Its purpose is to strengthen, encourage and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). Whether it reveals future events or not is really beside the point. **Third**, ordinary Christian prophecy is not a means for revealing new doctrine or giving divine commands. All the doctrine and commands we need are found in the Bible, and it is complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

Fourth, ordinary Christian prophecy is not an infallible word from God. We are told to evaluate, weigh or test such prophecy whenever it is given (1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thes. 5:21). This clearly shows that ordinary Christian prophecy is not on a par with the word of Old Testament prophets or New Testament apostles. Ordinary Christian prophecy originates in a divine "revelation," as we will see later, but it is expressed in uninspired human words. Sometimes the person giving the prophecy misunderstands the revelation, for it is "in part" and not always crystal clear. (Compare the details of Agabus' prophecy in Acts 21:11 with the actual events as described in verses 30-33.) **Fifth**, ordinary Christian prophecy is not preaching or teaching. Strictly speaking, the content of preaching is the gospel. Teaching is an exposition, explanation and/or application of Scripture. The content of ordinary Christian prophecy is not the gospel itself or an explanation of Scripture, but a specific message designed to strengthen, encourage or comfort a specific audience in a specific time at a specific place. One who teaches or preaches studies and prepares the message. The person who ministers ordinary Christian prophecy simply relates a divine insight he or she has received from God (1 Cor. 14:30). Prophets and teachers are equally God's ministers but they are two separate categories of ministers (1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11). Prophecy and teaching are both spiritual gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit, but they are different from each other (Rom. 12:6-7; 1 Cor. 12:4-6).

6. WHAT ORDINARY CHRISTIAN PROPHECY IS

We have seen that ordinary Christian prophecy does not result in new Scripture, new doctrine or new commands from God. It does not necessarily mean foretelling the future. It is not an infallible word from God. It is not the same ministry as preaching or teaching. If it is not all these things, just what is ordinary Christian prophecy -- that gift which Paul says we should especially desire and which Peter says

God gives to his people in general during this era of messianic salvation and the Holy Spirit?

As presented in the New Testament, ordinary Christian prophecy is a message that encourages, strengthens or comforts a specific Christian believer or group of believers, relating in fallible human language what God has directly impressed on someone's heart or mind. Paul calls this impression a "revelation" (1 Cor. 14:30; see also Eph. 1:17-19; Phil. 3:15). Such divine illumination may come as specific words, a picture or vision, or as a general sense. Sometimes ordinary Christian prophecy includes personal details which the one prophesying does not naturally know. Such prophecies create a sense of awe through the awareness that God is really present and involved (1 Cor. 14:25). I have experienced this on at least three separate occasions myself -- this is not mere hearsay. Although the impression (or "revelation") comes from God, its meaning and application are not always clear. It is "in part"; it is sometimes like a "poor reflection" in a mirror (1 Cor. 13:9, 12). We see this illustrated in the story of Paul, as he made his way to Jerusalem near the end of Acts. Some Christians at Tyre urged him "through the Spirit" not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4). Undoubtedly they received a revelation concerning the troubles that awaited Paul in Jerusalem, but they seem to have misunderstood the implications. They thought Paul should not go, but Paul had a mission from Christ which required him to do that very thing.

Similarly, a prophet named Agabus told Paul that the Jews in Jerusalem would tie his hands and feet and deliver him over to the Gentiles (Acts 21:10-11). In fact, we learn in Acts 21:30-33 that the Jews did not deliver Paul to the Romans (Gentiles) at all, but rather that the Romans rescued Paul from a Jewish mob. And it was the Romans, not the Jews, who bound Paul with a chain. Agabus had an inspired revelation, perhaps a picture of Paul standing bound in chains and a mob of angry Jews surrounding him, but his interpretation of that revelation was less than fully accurate. Even then, we may be sure that Paul was encouraged and comforted by the ministry of these brothers or sisters who prophesied to him.

God's people can always use a word of encouragement, of strengthening, of comfort. We can give such words without exercising the gift of prophecy. But ordinary Christian prophecy -- reverently received and reported, and faithfully evaluated -- also provides those same blessings in an awesome, special way from God himself. No wonder that Paul tells us not to despise this gift (1 Thes. 5:19-22). No wonder he encourages us to "eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy" (1 Cor. 14:1). No wonder he exhorts us to "be eager to prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:1, 39).

(For a detailed study of this subject, Brother Fudge and I both recommend *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, by

Wayne Grudem, published by Crossway Books, a division of Good News Publishers. It was first published in 1988, then enlarged and re-published in 2000. Dr. Grudem wrote 2 magazine articles we reprinted in last month's W&W. He is a professor of theology, formerly at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and now at Phoenix Seminary, Arizona. --avw)

(End of series by Edward Fudge. See his other article this month.)

Quotes from a Valuable Book:

Charisma vs. Charismania

by Chuck Smith

“There must be a middle position between the Pentecostals, with their over-emphasis on experience, and the fundamentalists, who, in their quest to be right, in too many cases have become **dead** right.... This book will seek to present a Scripturally balanced position between the detractors who say ‘The devil makes them do it’ and the fanatics who say ‘The Holy Spirit made me do it.’”

* * *

“When we are talking with people who have just committed their lives to Jesus Christ, we seek to emphasize the importance of learning about Jesus. Jesus said three things: ‘Come unto me’; next, ‘Take my yoke upon you’; and then, ‘Learn of me.’ Salvation is more than just coming to Christ: it is taking His yoke upon us; it is submitting our lives to the mastery of Jesus Christ; it is turning the reins of our life over to Him. But then if I am to grow, I must learn of Him.”

* * *

“Recently a young man came up to me and said, ‘I accepted Christ several years ago, but I was never too excited about it. I found reading the Bible uninteresting. In fact, my mind would wander, and I couldn’t really concentrate on the Word. I never really knew what it was to worship God, and my prayer life was erratic. But since I was filled with the Spirit a few months ago, my life has completely changed. I have a great love for the things of God. I can’t seem to get enough of the Word, and now I love to fellowship with the believers. What a great change has happened in my life since I was filled with the Spirit!’

* * *

“...It is God’s desire that the Spirit flow forth from your life. It really makes little difference what you term it. Some call it the baptism of the Holy Spirit, some call it the filling of the Holy Spirit, and some call it the empowering by the Holy Spirit. It really does not matter what you *call* it; what is important is that you *have* that glorious outpouring of the power of the Spirit flowing forth from your life God desires to do a work **in** you and **for** you in order that He might work **through** you to touch others. We are **more than vessels** to contain the Spirit of God. God desires that we might be **channels** through which His Spirit might flow.”

* * *

[We have copies of this book available @ \$5.00. It has 146 pages, paperback. Last month’s W&W told how Chuck Smith’s ministry was transformed after the Lord foretold that fact through a prophetic message. By the way, we don’t sell books just to make money for W&W’s ministry, but to help disciples.]

Another helpful book --

THE THIRD VIEW OF TONGUES

by Neill Foster

What we have called “the in-between view” about supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit is presented with great clarity, faithfulness to God’s Word, and also interesting incidents in David Howard’s **The Power of the Holy Spirit** (quoted on pages 210-211 of the July issue and also in the September issue). Other fine presentations of this position are two books by Donald Bridge and David Phipers -- **Spiritual Gifts and the Church**, and **More than Tongues can Tell**. Plus George Mallone’s **Those Controversial Gifts**. But alas! -- all those books are now out of print and hard to find in 2nd-hand bookstores (though they are worth searching for).

However, there are several excellent books still in print which I recommend highly. Elsewhere in this issue is a review of Chuck Smith’s **Charisma and Charismania**. Others include **Baptism and Fullness** by John Stott. And Michael Green’s **I Believe in the Holy Spirit**. Also **Your Spiritual Gifts can help Your Church Grow** by Peter Wagner.

And you may be able to get a copy of **The Third View of Tongues** -- but only if you *hurry!* The Word and Work office has only 2 copies left for sale @ \$10 (plus postage); and it seems these are some of the last ones available from the book distributors-- unless the publisher decides to reprint it.

The author, Neill Foster, has been an agent of God to bring spiritual awakenings in several places. One such revival in the southern Philippines impacted our congregation in Manila back in the '70s. His evangelistic ministries have taken him to more than 20 countries. In fact, while writing this book he was engaged in evangelism in the Dominican Republic, Chile, and Zaire, besides his own country of Canada. He wrote it in 1975; this is its 3rd printing. Its sub-title is "Calm for the Charismatic Controversy." I find his insights very profitable while not agreeing with every detail he teaches (and that's true of the books mentioned above too).

Here is an overview of this 160-page book: Foster begins by acknowledging that many godly believers take the no-tongues-today position, and many others take the pro-tongues view. He then supplies "excerpts from a book on each side," giving substantial quotes from the contrasting Biblical interpretations of Merrill Unger and then of Dennis and Rita Bennett.

Next he looks at what he calls the "experience books," which present testimonies by people who had charismatic experiences and were blessed by them. His verdict is, they were "true but not complete" -- not the whole story. "I find the accounts fascinating. But what is left unsaid?" Such books "generally leave the impression that speaking in tongues is the key to the fullness of the Holy Spirit." But other Christians "have come into the experience of the fullness of the Holy Spirit and great fruitfulness apart from speaking in tongues and apart from the charismatic movement. The Experience Books are injurious in that they do not say these things. Worse, there are other equally reliable and sincere Christian people who can recount cases where demonic tongues have had to be cast out...." "Conviction must be based upon the Word of God."

The author then looks at the early church's experiences in the book of Acts. He concludes (long story short), "There is something more for believers" -- that is, the Spirit's fullness. But, "sometimes when people are filled with the Holy Spirit they speak in tongues. Many times they do not. The important thing is to be filled with the Holy Spirit -- and know it."

Later he expounds on the church as Christ's body: "To insist or imply all must speak in tongues is to disfigure the body. There are six places in the New Testament where Paul lists spiritual abilities. In each case there is a context relating to the body of Christ. To magnify one gift is like having a nose a yard long, or an ear draping on the ground.... [Also] each of the six lists of spiritual gifts basks in a context relating to love."

I wish the book's title was *The Third View of Miraculous Gifts*, for it is not exclusively about speaking in tongues. In five brief chapters Foster explains 24 or so charismata named or at least implied in the N.T. But since the gift of tongues has been the main bone of contention, he deals with it more than the rest. He will displease no-tongues-now folks when he writes, "I do certainly believe and have seen that there is a beautiful, wholesome, scriptural, Christ-adorning gift of tongues."

But pro-tongues folks may get upset by his writing that *some* people's tongues-speaking is "only fleshly" and in some other cases is even demonic in origin. He knew personally a preacher who spoke in tongues. Later his marriage, ministry and morals all deteriorated. Finally he sought help from a group of ministers. Eight demons were expelled from him, some of them related to his "gifts," including tongues. In a chapter on "false gifts," Foster says,

Thank God for this scripture: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he ... give him him a serpent?... How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:11-13). But can [that passage] be claimed as certain assurance that those who insist upon a tongues experience **contrary to scriptures** will never get a stone or serpent? [my emphasis] To teach that all believers must or could speak in tongues carries the Christian off biblical ground and opens the door to stones and serpents.

He elaborates, "Spiritual gifts are not to be demanded. God divides 'severally as he wills.' [1 Cor.12:11, KJV; the NIV says the Holy Spirit "gives them to each one, just as he determines." -avw] To demand what may not be God's will draws the believer off the security of biblical ground and allows the enemy to substitute the false and demonic. And let there be no doubt that this happens especially with the gift of tongues, which many tend to demand." He tells of ways to test whether gifts are genuine or false, and gives some personal examples of using such tests. Here is one:

Recently I was called upon to test a tongue. Prior to the application of the test commanded in 1 John 4:1-3, the young man and I prayed. And I sensed within me that the tongue we were about to test was genuine. Then the verbal test confirmed to my heart what I already knew. The incident was extremely interesting because about 18 months previously two tongues-speaking demons had been exorcised from the same young man.

Just in case you wonder -- after reading the preceding few paragraphs -- let me assure you that this book is not written in a wild, sensationalist manner. Obviously it mentions demons and exorcisms, but these are not at all its main thrust. It is about spiritual gifts, and our

need for them, and our need for balance. The bottom line, as Foster sees it, is this:

It is a deep pain to me that the polarization and separation among evangelicals on the spiritual gifts has produced in most cases either a harsh denunciation of all that is supernatural or an unhealthy fixation upon one miraculous gift.

“Seek not, forbid not,” as some are saying, is good biblical advice. And in essence, this is the “third view” of tongues.... Let us suppose: If a believer who has never been exposed to the modern tongues controversy were exposed to 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14 for the first time and then asked to summarize Paul’s feeling about tongues, what would he say? I believe he would say something like this, “Paul was trying to restrain tongues, to put the brakes on them, without stamping them out or denying their validity” Paul was definitely not tramping on the gas. He was hitting the brakes, carefully but firmly.

Follow after love and desire spiritual gifts (1 Cor.14:1). You need both. It’s like the two tracks of the railroad. Tear up one track and you will wreck this train.

An Invitation to Participate

Friends, we realize we’re dealing with complicated subjects here. Some of you may have helpful insights from Scripture or your experience that would be valuable for all our readers to see. And some of you may even disagree with us! That’s your privilege, it’s part of our freedom in Christ. So, after the October issue, we’ll take a break from the 4-month themes of spiritual gifts in general and the gift of prophecy in particular. Then we’ll revisit the subjects, hearing from you. Feel free to send us feedback: short observations or testimonies, or regular articles written either by you or someone else.

In January 2004, Lord willing, we’ll have a 5th issue related to these subjects, **with your input put in!** You need not agree with us, *but you may!* So long as what you send is based on the Bible, and is not written in a cantankerous manner, we’ll consider running it -- or parts of it. We reserve the right to condense, especially if several writers cover the same ground in similar ways. Also, if for important reasons you prefer to write anonymously, you may do so. In such a case, inform the editor of your identity, but add “Keep this anonymous.” If the article is worthy of being published, we’ll do so but respect your confidentiality.

Let us hear from you. “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Prov.27:17).

Worth the wait: Former missionary looking forward to celebrating her 100th birthday

By BETTY RATLIFF SMITH, *Winchester Sun* Staff Writer

She's not famous like Mother Teresa or Bob Hope, but she has lived 100 years, has a good sense of humor and has brought hope to many people. That's the way Carolyn Loveland describes her mother, **Dollie Garrett**, College Street, who will celebrate her 100th birthday Friday.

Mrs. Garrett was born Aug. 29, 1903 to Perry and Anna Adamson who were homesteading in Oklahoma. She credits her parents' sacrificial encouragement and her own hard work and determination for being able to finish high school and take some college classes at a Christian school. While at college, she met her future husband, S. Dewitt Garrett, and in 1930 they became missionaries to Africa. While rearing their family of six children, they ministered to residents of Southern Rhodesia, which is now Zimbabwe.

Following the death of her husband in 1972, Mrs. Garrett remained on the mission field for several years before returning to America and Winchester where she has lived with her son, Cecil, and his wife, Betsy.

Recalling memories of earlier years, Mrs. Garrett said that one time following a giant hailstorm the ground was covered with hunks of ice. "I sent the children out to gather it up and we made homemade ice cream." In early years, very few of the African women could read, so Mrs. Garrett had them memorize passages of Scripture in their language, such as the Beatitudes and John 3:16.

In recalling 1 Corinthians, "Love is Patient" and "Love Bears All Things," Mrs. Loveland said her mother called on her patience many times through the years. "During the depression of the 1930s, monetary support failed. However, people sent them clothing which they sold to get money to buy food. Mother planted flowers and vegetables to sell when she could and they moved from rental house to rental house until finally they were able to buy a lot and build their own home."

The three oldest children were boys, keeping life exciting for Mr. and Mrs. Garrett. One broke a wrist doing a "high jump" in the yard. Another broke his elbow when he fell off their home-made slide, a

slippery construction pole that was leaning against a tree. The boys climbed the tree, carrying a gunny-sack to sit on as they slid down their improvised slide. Mrs. Loveland remembers her mother telling the story of the time the two older boys were arguing over who had the biggest biceps. They were approximately 6 and 8 at the time. "Mother settled the argument when she called them to her, rolled up her sleeve, flexed her arm and showed them her biceps, the biggest of all," Mrs. Loveland said.

Numerous childhood illnesses struck the family, including some tropical ones, and Mrs. Garrett herself has been through tick fever, been struck by lightning, lost sight in the left eye in 1964 and more recently in her right. "Her hearing is impaired, but not her spirit," Mrs. Loveland said.

"Mother can still quote poems she learned years ago. The other day, while taking her vitamins, she came out with "I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink when I'm dry, and if these pills don't kill me, I'll live 'til I die!"

In addition to giving food and making clothes for some in need, Mrs. Garrett grew flowers and made bouquets for church weddings. She taught the women the Bible and how to sew, knit and crochet, by which they could gain a little income. She was always available to teach Scripture classes in the public schools for as long as the government allowed, Mrs. Loveland said.

At the age of 65 she entered into a new ministry when a children's home was built. The Garretts moved in and soon had 16 orphans to care for. She supervised meals and laundry and sewed school uniforms and clothing. Through the years she has kept up with several of the children from this second family, one of whom recently wrote, "I thank God always that He put you in my life and am so thankful for the lessons you taught me, both about Christ and about life. They say that we parent the way we ourselves were parented and I truly hope I am doing as good a job with my two as you did with us. I have so many fond memories ... I remember you saying, 'If a job is worth doing, it's worth doing well.'"

Mrs. Garrett has often expressed her thankfulness that each of her own children are Christians and rejoices in the fact that the son who almost died in infancy is continuing the mission work begun 73 years ago. She now has 21 grandchildren and 54 great-grandchildren.

"Mother often expresses her appreciation that Jesus used her and Dad to plant early seeds in Zimbabwe and that the crop continues to grow year after year, down to the third and fourth generation since

they began teaching," Mrs. Loveland said. "Her faith remains strong, just as it has throughout the years. And her wit has never wavered. When asked if she was tired of waiting for her birthday, she replied 'Yes, it's taken me a hundred years to get here.'"

--From the *Winchester SUN*

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

New Address / Phone No. for S.B.S. It was announced already that back in June the **School of Biblical Studies** moved from its Portland "campus" to the Buechel Church of Christ (also in Louisville). Its mailing address is 2105 Buechel Bank Rd., Louisville KY 40218. It's phone no. (& answering machine) is 502: 499-2702. Moving there has provided more space and classrooms for SBS, & also for PCS. (SBS is still run under PCS' auspices.) And we're thankful to say that SBS' enrollment has increased slightly this semester.

Please pray for these schools, and encourage folks (even yourself!) to take some subjects at SBS. Our students range from a young man fresh out of high school to a veteran disciple in her 80s.

A Hymn A Day A subscriber to W&W, friend of PCS, former missionary to Japan, & longtime student of hymnology (that's not 4 people, but one!) has written a 99-page book on the history of 91 familiar hymns. *A Hymn A Day* by Graham McKay is \$10.00 (including shipping). Contact Graham by email at McKay4fish@aol.com, by telephone (931-388-1759), or by post (2255 Clara Mathis Road, Spring Hill, TN 37174).

We look forward to Bro. McKay's presenting stories of Fanny Crosby & her songs at the 5th-Sunday singing meeting to be held at Portland Church of Christ (Louisville) on Feb. 29, 2004.

Common Ground -- It might come as a surprise to some on both sides to hear it, but *Calvinist/Reformed Christians and Arminian/Wesleyan Christians actually share much common ground* regarding their understandings of the atonement and salvation. Read the details in Edward Fudge's article, first published in *Christianity Today*, titled "What Calvinism and Arminianism Have in Common." This fascinating article is located at www.edwardfudge.com/written/article1.html

Hmmm... Makes you think: "I know I'm supposed to be humble, but what if no one notices?" --John Ortberg (with tongue in cheek)

Don't Say We Didn't Tell You, Early! The **SBS Spring Seminar** is planned for March 19-20. Bill Flatt from Harding Graduate School will speak on "Overcoming Worry and Depression."

The 2004 Ladies Inspiration Day will be at LaGrange (Ky.) Church of Christ on April 3. Its theme will be **Pray**.

Locust St. - Johnson City, TN
Revival with Don McGee on November 2-5.

Pray re: the Church Turmoil
Speaking of the Episcopal Church USA & its recent official backing of an openly practicing gay bishop, *World* magazine says, "By some accounts, conservative churches make up 1/3 of ECUSA's 7,364 congregations but account for 70% of ECUSA's income." A number of dioceses have protested the action, threatening to withhold funds or even withdraw from the ECUSA. One rector said, "The gay issue is not the real issue. The real issue is: *Does the Bible mean what it says, or can you make it mean whatever you want?*"

She Changed her Mind about Abortion Kathy Ireland is a well known actress and supermodel. Also a former pro-choice advocate. She says, "I was once pro-choice, and the thing that changed my mind was, I read my husband's biology books, medical books, and what I learned [was that at] the moment of conception, a life starts. And this life has its own unique set of DNA, which contains a blueprint for the whole genetic makeup. The sex is determined. We know there's a life because it's growing and changing." --*The New American*, 6/16-03

How Important is Prayer to You? (adapted)

There are many organizers,
but few agonizers.

Many who pay, but few who
pray.

Many are entertaining, but few
intervening.

Tithes may build a church,
**BUT TEARS WILL GIVE
IT LIFE!**

SUPPLY PREACHING? Bro. Rex Prather is available to fill in for your church and perhaps give your minister some time off. You can contact him at (502) 266-9168.

Things that are going on in the world that often don't make headlines:

Doctors Pass Pro-Life Resolution. A national physician's group has approved a pro-life resolution at its annual meeting, stating the doctors' Hippocratic oath does not allow them to perform abortions. The American Association of Physicians and Surgeons, at its 60th annual meeting in Point Clear, Ala., last month, adopted a platform that "clearly opposes" the procedure and recognizes the "teachings of the major religions of the world have (also) opposed abortion of a developing human child until very recent times."

"Even if religion is removed from the issue of abortion of a human child, without life as the ultimate ethic, no objective ethical standard remains," said the resolution.

"Be it resolved the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons supports the right to life of human beings from the moment of conception to natural death," the resolution concludes.

Supreme Court Rejects Educators' Attempt to Censor Bible Club. The Supreme Court last month turned aside a fight over a Bible club given permission by a lower court to meet in a government school during classtime. Attorneys for a school superintendent in the state of Washington argued that a federal appeals court was far out of bounds when it ruled in favor of the Bible club last year. The 9th

U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals held that the club, called World Changers, should be treated the same as other school clubs and allowed to use school space and supplies.

The school noted that the club's stated goals include a pledge to "Evangelize our campus for Jesus Christ," and to "teach students that Jesus Christ is the answer to the confusion, pain, and uncertainty this world offers."

5 Dimensions of Church Growth
(Purpose Driven Church by Rick Warren) Churches grow:

Warmer through Fellowship
Deeper through Discipleship

Stronger through Worship
Broader through Ministry
Larger through Evangelism

These 5 principles are taken right out of the Book of Acts chapter 2:42-47.

Annual Thanksgiving Day services will be held on Thursday, November 27 at the Atherton High School auditorium. A special program is being prepared which include the Portland Christian High School Chorus. Services begin at 11:00 a.m. The Missions Around the World Prayer/Praise booklet will be handed out.

VOICES From The FIELDS

James Ashley

Texas!

Sept. 26, 03

Karen, Susan and I returned to the States in early July, just in time to join in the celebration of my parents' 50th wedding anniversary. It was a fantastic time with my whole family – and many friends – gathering together to honor Dad and Mom. They have been terrific parents to me and my siblings, and they continue to be an inspiration and encouragement to all who know them. [For some years they were missionaries to Muslims in the Philippines. --avw]

So our furlough started fantastically, and it wasn't long until Kent added even more joy by announcing that he and his fiancé Natalie McDonald would be getting married soon in Natalie's home town of Prestonsburg, Kentucky. Natalie is a Bible major that Kent met at Bryan College (a good place to find a soulmate!). They are getting married midway through Natalie's final semester in college, and together they hope to test the old adage that two can live as cheaply as one.

In the meantime we have been doing all the various tasks involved in establishing a home base here in the Dallas area: house-hunting, moving, cleaning, unpacking, starting school for Susan, renewing friendships, and contacting churches. We have also begun dialoguing with the publishing department about typesetting the Sa'a New Testament, and will begin concentrating on that task when we return from Kentucky in late October.

[James & Karen Crowder Ashley serve with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Having just finished the N.T. in the Sa'a language, they plan to return next year as translation advisors for the entire Solomon Islands. Their furlough address is 2770 Lakeview Rd., Midlothian TX 76065. Tel.: (972) 296-8060. Email: j-k_ashley@sil.org]