

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



# *The Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

JANUARY, 2004

## **GOD'S GOOD GIFTS, and Our Responses**

"When the New Testament describes the disciples as ordinary, uneducated people, afraid and often lacking understanding, is it not telling us that participation in mission does not depend on being talented and well educated (Acts 4:13)? Does it not prove that any success they enjoyed was not due to them but to God? If there was greatness in the disciples, surely it was not their ability but their openness to the Spirit. This reminder can help us deal with our own feelings of inadequacy in the face of [our] task. **What a relief to know God uses weak people! This underscores how crucial it is to maintain a good relationship with the Spirit. . . .**

"The church lives out its witness in concrete historical situations, waiting for God to lead. There is a role for thinking about what to do next, but this thinking should be always done in the context of waiting on God. Prayer is evidence of dependency on God. In prayer we envisage a new future, and we protest the world order as it is. We stand against darkness and invoke God's light. **History belongs to intercessors, because history belongs to God.**"

-- Clark Pinnock in *Flame of Love --  
A Theology of the Holy Spirit*

# Helpful Insights on Spiritual Gifts

Paul Estes

[The following observations were made in expositions on spiritual gifts, some years ago, at the Central Louisiana Christian Fellowship in Glenmora. They are quoted from a paper Brother Estes distributed at that time. Thus they are not made in response to recent *Word and Work* articles.]

God will never reveal to you His unrevealed will if you are not willing to do His revealed will.

A spiritual gift is a divine motivator. It is easier to get someone to use the gift God gave them than to try to fit them into a slot they are not suited for.

A spiritual gift divinely influences one's motives. Understanding this about people explains why the person interested in church work-day projects is not necessarily interested in foreign missions or teaching a class, etc. Such a one will be at the building Saturday to paint but may not show any interest in VBS programs. [Or vice versa. - avw]

Such gifts affect the way we think and the things we push for in church business meetings. Understanding people's motivation can help eliminate many church squabbles and false judgments of their character.

For too long many people have felt guilty because they never had the gift of evangelism or teaching. *Although everyone can be a witness, not everyone is an evangelist. God has called some, not all, to the work of evangelism. However, everyone has a gift that directly or indirectly works toward the fulfilling of Christ's Great Commission. A team ministry concept involves everyone using their gift towards that end.* Everyone is equally responsible and everyone equally shares in the victory of someone coming to Christ. Understanding one's gift and how it is vital in accomplishing Christ's purpose for His church should produce a sense of joy and enthusiasm. It should also release us from the false guilt felt because of our inability to be the door-to-door evangelist we thought we were supposed to be.

# 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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# Disagreeing Agreeably

Alex V. Wilson

A very perceptive editorial once appeared in the Christian magazine *HIS*. The writer's main thesis plus two examples are seen in the following paragraphs:

In the midst of our differences (of beliefs) we need to distinguish between two levels of discussion. As a Christian group we can all accept the plain statements of Scripture, but **many of our convictions are derived from Scripture or even derived from something else that is itself derived from Scripture.** For example, I would say both pacifism and the just-war theory are **not presented in chapter and verse in the Bible;** they are **inferred from Biblical material.** Notice the two levels.

Of course there is nothing wrong with deriving our ideas from Scripture. We must do so. The point is that we are entitled to less certainty and more tolerance for such secondary knowledge. As another example, Scripture does not anywhere say that all Christians must have an experience of speaking in tongues or that no Christian today can speak in tongues. Both of these positions are developed out of Biblical material, and the arguments can get quite convoluted, but they do not possess the certainty often claimed for them. --Stephen Board, Nov. 1972 *HIS*

The crux of his view is that not all of the Bible's teachings are equally clear. Some doctrines - the main ones - are obvious and undeniable to any open mind: God created the universe; in Jesus Christ dwells all the fullness of deity bodily; He is the only mediator between God and men; the same Jesus who walked and talked with His disciples will come again in the same manner as He ascended; etc.

But other teachings of God's word are not stated so obviously nor experienced so fully: whether a Christian should be a conscientious objector or a combatant in his country's armed forces; whether present-day speaking in tongues is always good, always bad, or somewhere in between. Other examples include the exact meaning and length of the "days" of creation in Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, etc. Also the identity of the rider on the white horse in Revelation 6:2. Brother Chambers thought this rider is Christ; Brother Boll thought he is not. Each of them could give evidence to support his view, but neither could definitely prove it because the Bible nowhere states, "The rider on the white horse in Revelation 6:2 is ...."

In this area of not-so-clearly-explained teachings, we are "entitled to less certainty" of conviction and thus should exercise "more tolerance" towards those whose interpretations differ from our own. We need not become alarmed if we do not all see eye-to-eye on all points. "Each person should be convinced in his own mind," but at the same time not pass judgment on his brother (Romans 14:5b, 4, 10).

Let's look at one more example where our beliefs must be based on various Scriptural assumptions rather than on clearcut statements. Donald Gray Barnhouse wrote regarding the book of Revelation, "The major portion of this book belongs entirely outside of the age of the Church. Regathered Israel is the center of the scene, and the Church does not even appear in the discussion" (after chapter 3, he means). Many Christians agree with this view. Many others do not. And neither side can prove its view absolutely, beyond the shadow of a doubt. Why? Because nowhere is there a plain statement, "Christ returns to rapture the church at the beginning of chapter four," or, "The rapture does not occur till after the persecution by the Beast. "

Yet each side can present evidence to support its position. Those who believe that the Church, will *not* be on earth during the events described in Revelation chapters 4-20 point out that the words "church" and "churches" are used nineteen times in chapters 1-3 but not even once in chapters 4-20. Also, 7:4ff. mentions "every tribe of the sons of Israel," and probably the woman in chapter 12 represents Israel (though that again is an assumption, not a clearly-stated fact). On the other hand, those who believe that the Church *will* be on earth during the reign of the Beast point out that the Beast makes war against "the saints" (13:7), and that the term "saints" is used over forty times in Acts and the epistles to mean Christians, members of the Church. The term appears thirteen times in Revelation, and in 19:7-8 it refers to the Lamb's bride at His wedding-supper. Though this passage does *not* call the bride the Church, but *does* call her "the saints," everyone agrees that she is the Church. So if "the saints" are the Church in 19:8, why are they not the Church in 13:7 (i.e., the ones persecuted during the Beast's reign of terror)? In that case, the persecuted Church would *include* all the Jews (both the regathered and the still scattered) who will turn to Jesus. So we see that each side has some Biblical reasons for assuming its position, but neither position can be proved by clear, unequivocal statements.

In such matters we must keep studying and praying and examining the reasons put forward to support various viewpoints. It is healthy to hear views divergent from our own. I remember Brother Frank Mullins saying he didn't believe in reading books only by those whose interpretations were identical with his. His study was stimulated by reading those who differed from him.

I'm very thankful that most readers of W&W are folks who indeed agree to disagree agreeably. We've had a few people through the years who cancelled their subscriptions early, but nobody's ever sent me a letter-bomb! We hope that our recent issues regarding spiritual gifts [July-Oct. 2003] -- especially the gift of prophecy in the church -- have stimulated prayerful, careful study and action. We have not received as much written feedback as we expected. But this month we share most of that which came, plus some responses of ours, plus other materials pertinent to the discussion. May the Spirit of Truth lead us into deeper understanding, greater obedience, and full experiencing of all that He desires for our lives.

### **The Most Important Fact In This Month's Magazine M-A-Y Be This:**

No matter what you believe about these various topics and issues, **we Know God still gives SOME spiritual gifts Now.** Some folks feel strongly that 1 Corinthians 12-14 have little relevance today -- that such gifts passed away. I don't agree, but let's all keep on studying God's Word carefully about it.

But I trust we all agree that Romans 12:4-8 has not expired but is still valid. Paul writes:

As in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ... let us use them:

if **prophecy**, in proportion to our faith; [the only "miraculous" gift in this list; those who reject this as a valid gift today need to explain its presence in Rom. 12 but absence from the church today; see the September and October 2003 *W&Ws*]

if **service**, in our serving; [picking up people for church meetings -- or to take them to the grocery or doctor's office; preparing the Lord's Supper; cleaning the building; keeping records of baptisms and church membership; keeping finance records and doing the banking; van maintenance; bulletin-copying; overseeing the building; song-leading; intercession; visiting the unsaved and visitors; etc.]

he who **teaches**, in his teaching; [sermons; counseling; Sunday School, VBS and other classes; children's services; your own children at home; teaching other folks' children at home—yours or theirs.]

he who **exhorts**, in his exhortation; [words of encouragement, or maybe admonition -- spoken or written; public or private]

he who **contributes**, in liberality; [donations to the local congregation, and to missionaries and other ministries; also special or emergency needs of many kinds -- locally and world-wide]

he who **leads**, with zeal; [elders, especially; also deacons in charge of various ministries; leaders of youth; missionary leaders; etc.]

he who **does acts of mercy**, with cheerfulness. [helping the poor; visiting the sick and shut-ins]

Praise the Lord for those who use their gifts here and now. But many more are needed. And we need to serve not only with love, but with faith: trusting and thanking God for His gifts and His promised empowering. Let's keep singing and praying that old song, "Revive us again. Fill each heart with Thy love. May each soul be rekindled with fire from above. Hallelujah! – Thine the glory! Revive us again!"

[**The articles this month again represent a miscellaneous assortment of beliefs and experiences.** A few were written specifically for this issue. They were responses to our invitation to express your reactions (pro or con) to the approximately 30 articles in the July-Oct. W&Ws regarding the Holy Spirit and His spiritual gifts – especially the gift of prophecy. Others articles were gathered from here and there as we studied these important topics. As always, use discernment. Next month we shall turn to a different, but closely related, subject.]

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## REFLECTIONS on Recent Articles

By Tom Langford, Lubbock TX

[with some replies by the editor, below]

I have read with profit all of the W&W issues on spiritual gifts. I generally agree with all you said, well, nearly all. And I agree that it has been a neglected subject.

One disappointment I had is that you never really resolve the question of what tongues are. Are they real languages or unrecognizable utterances? [1; *see below.*] Acts 2 would seem to indicate that real languages are involved, but most of the tongue speakers I know would say that what they speak is merely "heavenly language." The instances I have heard don't always sound that heavenly, but who am I to judge? I will admit that I have heard some instances that were very rhythmical, most pleasant to the ear. I remain unconvinced, however, that the biblical instances were not actual languages, known to men.

Your point on the sovereignty of God is important, it seems to me. While all the gifts mentioned in various places may indeed still be op-

erable, it seems that the incidence is markedly diminished. (Perhaps I speak from too limited experience.) **I have long argued that God gives the miraculous gifts wherever they are needed**, and that given the right circumstances he can enable missionaries to speak in tongues (languages) today, if that is necessary. In one sense, he gives missionaries the facility to learn languages easily, and they speak in tongues formerly unknown to them. **What we all need is to be totally open to God's gracious gifts, so that we will have whatever we need to accomplish his will. He doesn't ask anyone to do what he does not empower him to do.** [2]

Two other points. I remain unconvinced that 1 Cor. 12:13 refers to the Spirit as the element of baptism. I think the translators have good reason for the use of "by," for the Spirit directs us and leads us to the water. I think 1 Cor. 12:13 probably includes Holy Spirit baptism, like all valid immersions through which the Spirit is given. I doubt we should separate water and Spirit baptism. The Word of the Spirit directs us to be baptized and God honors that submission by imparting his Spirit – the water outside and the Spirit inside. [3]

Also, why do we necessarily have Paul contradict himself by forbidding women to speak in the assembly in 1 Cor. 14 and referring to women prophesying in 1 Cor. 11. I can't see the necessity for viewing such prophecy as taking place in the assembly. Philip's daughters prophesied, but was it in the assembly? I know most scholars assume that 1 Cor. 11 refers to the assembly, but there is nothing in the context that justifies this assumption. I would rather think that Paul does not contradict himself. [4]

These are but random reflections, none of which take away from the excellent treatment you have given. I do enjoy Word and Work.

#### The editor's responses to Brother Langford's responses:

[1] I really don't know. My study and experiences parallel what you say in the rest of this paragraph. Interestingly, Ed Fudge recently wrote the following question and answer in GracEmail: "The New Testament speaks of 'tongues' as: a) Human languages only. b) Ecstatic languages only. c) Fire over people's heads only. d) Different kinds of languages, including human and angelic. *Answer:* The New Testament speaks of 'tongues' as (d.) Different kinds [1 Cor. 12:10], including human and angelic [1 Cor. 13:1]. It appears that Acts 2 involves human 'tongues' (not for proclaiming the gospel but for riveting the crowd's attention and impressing them with the message Peter delivered later), and that 1 Corinthians 14 among other texts involves angelic 'tongues' -- a personal 'prayer language.'"

[2] It seems to me you have expressed it perfectly, especially the parts we've put in bold type. You mention that the Lord could "enable



missionaries to speak in tongues (languages) today, if that is necessary." In Manila we had missionary friends (from England) who twice experienced that very thing!

[3] You say, "I think 1 Cor. 12:13 probably includes Holy Spirit baptism, like all valid immersions through which the Spirit is given. I doubt we should separate water and Spirit baptism." I agree with that! I must not have expressed it very well in my article. See other articles this month on that topic.

[4] You may be right, though I'm not convinced. There would be no contradiction between what Paul wrote in 1 Cor.11:5 and 14:34-35 if by telling women to keep silence in the church meetings he meant, "Quit disturbing the meetings with your interruptions, especially your questions. Ask your husbands at home, instead." Some scholars say that 14:34-35 in Greek may be understood that way. This would allow them to prophesy in the meetings, though not be the pastor-teachers.

Many thanks for your helpful feedback, dear brother. --avw

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## **Reflections on Motivational Gifts, Ministry Opportunities, and the Holy Spirit's Manifestations**

Crystal Hardin in Seoul, Korea

I was delighted on the day I returned to school in January to find my copy of the June *W&W* in my mailbox! The following week, much to my surprise, I received July, August, and September, all on the same day. I have appreciated your articles on the gifts. Here are some comments, mostly about the questions/answers article in July: According to my memory (from 25 years ago) Bill Gothard doesn't teach only about motivational gifts. He uses the first verses of I Cor. 12 to cite three categories: Motivations, ministry opportunities, and manifestations. He spends a lot of time on the motivations--each Christian's basic approach to life in the body (Rom. 12)--to help people discover what approach to ministry opportunities (Eph. 4 and later in I Cor. 12) will bring the most joy. He believes that each of us has a basic motivational gift, and Christ had all seven. In our involvement with the church, our particular gift becomes apparent -- often to others first and later to ourselves. Then, as we grow in Christ and learn to use other gifts, the one that is basic doesn't stand out as much to others because they see all of them being exercised in us. We, however, derive joy from ministering through the approach of our own motivation,

and we can understand others better when we realize that their gifts are different--they don't see things from the same perspective. The teacher will pay special attention to words, whereas the one with the gift of helps is thinking, "We should talk less and get busy doing something,"--but both will understand each other when they see that their motivational gifts are different.

The person who shared the idea that the prophet is always irritable and too outspoken and judgmental must have had the gift of mercy--or the prophets he knew must have been failing to mature in grace. I know that my speech (as one whose basic approach to life is a prophet's) is not nearly so cutting as it once was, and I hope I can continue to learn to speak truth in such a way that it is covered in grace and love. I am learning something about this from those brothers and sisters who are gifted with mercy. All of us must learn the other seven gifts to become mature. It helps me so much to understand that many of my fellow-believers don't see things in black and white, so they may have much difficulty seeing things that hit me in the face. However, I need to learn mercy, exhortation, and particularly administration from them--not just focus on pushing my prophetic reactions to the limit.

Although I am motivated by prophecy, my ministry opportunity (Eph.4) is teaching. If I try to approach my job from the perspective of teacher, I tire easily, become frustrated, and get bogged down under the load. I simply don't think like a teacher--and I never volunteer for anything administrative. The moments, however, when I can speak to the kids something that I know God has given me to say, tie the lesson to principles of scripture, or motivate the kids to "love not the world," "lay aside every weight," or "present your bodies a living sacrifice" are the moments that make the rest of the teacher business worthwhile. I am not content merely to present facts, but feel that I must be able to use those things for the building of the kingdom. I probably would not survive in a public school. Knowing my gift helps me understand why it is easier for me to speak to a group than to an individual, difficult for me to comfort people, difficult for me to be organized, difficult for me to keep my mouth shut -- although these are all things I need to learn as I "grow up" toward the image of Christ.

Bill Gothard spends little time on the manifestations, including the miraculous gifts in I Cor. 12, saying these are things God does as He deems necessary when the body is functioning as it should, things we are not responsible for and don't need to worry about. There have been times when I know I have had a word of knowledge, but they are very rare. One was after an anti-abortion rally when a news reporter approached me and asked a question. God gave me, on the spot, a rea-

sonable, cogent answer--a soundbyte even--which was later played on the news report, and which I could never remember afterward. In the late 60's--early 70's, when many of my friends were "speaking in tongues," I struggled with whether tongues was something God wanted me to have. Understanding that it was something God would bestow if it was necessary -- so I didn't need to worry about it -- gave me peace with the whole issue. I'm not responsible for the Spirit's manifestations. I still don't speak in tongues--although I wish God would enable me miraculously to speak Korean--but I have wonderful fellowship with many who do.

I really enjoy the gfa.com (Gospel for Asia) website. Gospel for Asia trains national pastors to go to the most remote villages in their own countries to spread the gospel and plant churches. The missionaries travel barefoot and live on about \$70 per month. I am very skeptical of healings shown on television (although I have seen the fruit in some friends from their contact with some of those ministries), but when I read about those blessed national missionaries going out with nothing but the clothes on their backs to reach the remote villages, I know the Spirit is working. When I read that they go into a village and are threatened and often beaten, and then God leads them to pray for someone and that person is healed and the entire family comes to Christ and a church is established, there is no doubt at all in my mind that the Spirit has manifested Himself to give authority to their preaching. It seems to me that God manifests these gifts today much more often in places where the gospel is just arriving.

I have been in international churches for most of the last fifteen or so years and have had wonderful fellowship with evangelical Christians of many different persuasions. "How blessed it is when brethren dwell together in unity!" We never have to compromise our own beliefs, but share them freely, along with the reasons behind them. I believe that this is the way God intended the church to function--for us to share what we learn with each other, not insist that our way is the only way and draw apart from others with those who think like we do. Where is the challenge to study the scripture when there is no one who disagrees with you? I recall the poem about the blind men and the elephant. The one who had hold of the tail said that an elephant is like a rope; the one with the trunk said it was like a snake; the one holding the ear thought the elephant was a fan; the one feeling the leg perceived a tree-like creature; and the one who leaned against the side said it was like a wall.

There is one Truth, the Son of God, the Incarnate Word, Who is revealed in His inspired word. The problem is that we, being finite in our understanding, are not yet made perfect and see that truth from different perspectives. We still know in part! It's a little like a basket

of gems sitting in the sun. They all take in and reflect that one light according to the way the jeweller has cut their facets. Imagine all of us beautiful gems, with all our diverse facets, held in one basket and sparkling with God's truth--and His love--so that all the world can see. What a glorious sight!

May the world indeed know us by our love.

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## **Points to Ponder about TESTING the Gift of Prophecy Practical Guidelines**

One church practices what they believe is the gift of prophecy. But to guard it carefully against extremes and extravagances, they put in place a number of checks and balances:

“Prophecies are not to be controlling, such as in predicting babies or marriages (which would interfere with the normal decision-making process). People are encouraged never to make a decision solely on prophetic instruction. Prophecies about sinful activity are to be given in private. Predictions of national disasters, economic events, and divine visitations are discouraged, and only allowed with prior approval from church leaders. In fact, all public prophecies must first be cleared by them. Most prophetic utterances are now recorded so people can be sure what was said and hold the prophet accountable.” --From *Christianity Today*, 1-14-91

\* \* \*

**Tests to Apply to Prophecies** (compare 1 Thes. 5:19-22; 1 Cor. 14:29)

Theologian Roger Olson offers five tests to apply to a prophetic utterance:

1. **The Christ Touchstone.** If a prophecy promotes Christ and not the prophet, it *may* be valid.

2. **The Apostolic Norm.** If it is consistent with the message of the gospel as found in the didactic writings of the New Testament, it *may* be valid.

3. **The Unity Criterion.** If a prophecy does not promote spiritual elitism or schism, it *may* be valid.

4. **The Sanity Check.** If it does not require the sacrifice of intellect and the mindless acceptance of newly revealed teachings, it *may* be valid.

5. **The Messiah Test.** If it does not exalt some individual into an object of veneration, it *may* be valid. --From *Christianity Today*, 1-14-91

\* \* \*

### **Distinguish the Present Gift of Prophecy from Prophecy Written in Scripture**

“We prophesy in part,” or, “Our prophecy is imperfect” -- 1 Cor. 13:9, NIV & RSV.

The New Testament gift of prophecy “was different from that special gift given to the Old Testament prophets. The latter were few in number, extending over a period of many centuries. Their word was binding.... Their message, together with the writings of the authoritative New Testament apostles, is still the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20).... In contrast, Paul writes to the church in the New Testament that *everyone* should desire the gift of prophecy. [1 Cor. 14:1, 39; etc.]

“The prophet must personally bear responsibility for what he ... says, and not hide behind any formula which suggests the prophecy is unquestionable because it comes directly from God with no human mediation.... We must recognize Christian fallibility. Sin may affect the functioning of any gift. Prophecy should be encouraged just as teaching is. But both those gifts should be exercised in humility, with a readiness to have one’s words tested and judged, discussed and even rejected if they are found to be wanting.” --Jerram Barrs in *Shepherds and Sheep*

\* \* \*

**Amazing Fulfilment of a Present-day Prediction:** “The most recent and most widely publicized prophecy was that of Duncan Campbell, esteemed revivalist who announced beforehand that revival would come to Canada and that it would begin in the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Saskatoon. And the record stands. One of the most unusual visitations of the Holy Spirit in Canadian history did begin there in 1971.” --Neill Foster in *The Third View of Tongues*, written in 1975. [Duncan Campbell was the main human agent of God’s powerful reviving work in the Hebrides Islands off the coast of Scotland in the 1950s. The exciting revival in Canada, which Campbell foretold, was described in an article compiled by avw in the Oct. ‘92 W&W. Though the Lord seems to provide such predictions very rarely in our

time, who can say He can and ought never do so? Remember Acts 2:17-18?--avw]

\* \* \*

“Do not smother the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at those who prophesy, **but test everything that is said to be sure it is true, and if it is, then accept it. Keep away from every kind of evil.**” --1 Thes. 5:19-22, *The Living Bible*

### **Eureka – It was True!**

The W&W editor’s memory has gotten dreadfully unreliable (though his forgetter is improving, perhaps to compensate for it). So every time I remember something accurately there is rejoicing. In last September’s W&W I mentioned some modern examples of what some believe is the gift of prophecy, including that “more than once a preacher—Charles Spurgeon, I believe—received revelations from the Lord while preaching.” Several attempts to verify that claim brought no result; but finally proof was found in Spurgeon’s own *Autobiography*. The incidents did occur, though he never called them prophecies (and some folks today would call each of them “a word of knowledge”).

Here is what Spurgeon wrote: “*God sometimes guides His servants to say what they would themselves never have thought of uttering*, in order that He may bless the hearer for whom the message is personally intended. While preaching on one occasion, I deliberately pointed to a man in the midst of the crowd, and said, ‘There is a man sitting there, who is a shoemaker; he keeps his shop open on Sundays, it was open last Sabbath morning, he took ninepence, and there was fourpence profit out of it; his soul is sold to Satan for fourpence!’”

The statement was 100% true. The man later told a Christian, “How he should know that, I could not tell. Then it struck me that it was God who had spoken to my soul through him, so I shut up my shop the next Sunday. At first, I was afraid to go again to hear him, lest he should tell the people more about me; but afterwards I went, and the Lord met with me and saved my soul.”

Another time in the midst of a sermon Spurgeon suddenly pointed at a hearer and said, “Young man, those gloves you are wearing have not been paid for; you have stolen them from your employer.” After the meeting a young man, “looking very pale and greatly agitated, came . . . and begged for a private interview.” With tears he confessed his sin, and said, “It’s the first time I have robbed my master, and I will never do it again.”

Spurgeon concluded, "*I could tell as many as a dozen similar cases in which I pointed at somebody in the hall without having the slightest knowledge of the person, or any idea that what I said was right, except that I believed I was moved by the Spirit to say it; and so striking has been my description, that the persons have gone away, and said to the friends, 'Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did.'*"

## **The Holy Spirit's Leading - Inner Promptings**

Paul D. Woodhouse, Minister, Grace Church of Christ

Recently, I contemplated a visit to one of my hospice patients (I am a chaplain in a regional hospice program.). He was surrendering his spirit to Jesus, slowly and in suffering. My schedule looked like I could not fit him in for a couple of days, but something or someone inside of me kept pushing, directing me to see him that very day. The notion would not leave. It was persistent and I surrendered to the inner prompting. The following night, in the early morning hours, this patient died. Because of the "inner voice" I was able to pray with him and speak with him one last time.

Was this the voice of the Holy Spirit I heard? I heard no words, just the strong inner prompting that I needed to go immediately. There was no sounding of trumpets or the pounding of drums. No audible voice. Just an irresistible impetus to do this one thing.

I do not boast of such happenings only occurring to me. I urge you to train yourself to listen for the Spirit, particularly when others are in need of hearing the good news.

The story is told about a man who had lost his watch in the snowy white regions north of the Arctic Circle. After sifting through much snow and ice he fell on the ground in disgust. His partner suggested, "Why don't we just sit here and be quiet." Soon they heard the sound of the ticking watch and found the valued piece. If we would quiet our hearts before God, we could hear the Spirit. I do not know how many times I have resisted the Spirit's urging. I used to think, "Oh, this idea is just a stray thought, a random idea." It might have been the Spirit saying, "Go attach yourself to that person, begin that project, teach that class, go to that seminar."

Let's begin to be quiet and listen. God is speaking softly.

[This copyrighted article was originally published in Grace Centered Magazine ([www.gcmagazine.net](http://www.gcmagazine.net)), a daily, online publication, dedicated to stimulating personal and public thought, prayer, and discussion about living the Christian life. ]

# THE DANGERS OF FALSE PROPHETS

David Reagan in the *Lamplighter*, Nov.-Dec. 2003

**Ellen G. White**, spiritual founder of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, spoke as a prophet of God in declaring that anyone who had not accepted the Adventist message by October 22, 1844 had no hope of eternal life. (Robert D. Brinsmead, *Judged by the Gospel: A Review of Adventism*, 1980, pp. 130-133.)

**Charles Taze Russell**, founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, prophesied that the end of the world would occur by the end of 1914. (Charles Taze Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, 1889, p.99.)

**Florence Hooteff**, who succeeded her husband as head of the Branch Davidians, prophesied that David's Kingdom would be established on earth on April 22, 1959. (*The Watchman Expositor*, "A History of False Prophets," www.watchman.org, accessed on 9/11/2003.)

**Herbert W. Armstrong**, founder of the World Wide Church of God, prophesied that a great drought would strike the United States sometime before 1975, probably between 1965 and 1972, and that this would mark the beginning of the Great Tribulation which would result in the death of one-third of humanity. (Herbert W. Armstrong, 1975 in *Prophecy*, published in 1956, pp. 10,12.)

**"Moses" David Berg**, leader of The Children of God, prophesied that the United States would be destroyed in 1974 by the comet Kohoutek. (David Berg, "The Third Letter of Moses on the Comet," November 12, 1973.)

**Jean Dixon**, America's most famous psychic, claiming that God spoke through her, predicted that a woman would be elected President of the United States during the decade of the 1980's. (Ray Comfort, *The Secrets of Nostradamus Exposed*, Living Waters Publications, 1996, p.III.)

**Edgar E. Whisenant**, a Christian layman, predicted the Rapture of the Church would occur on September 12, 1988. His booklet, *88 Reasons Why Jesus Will Return in 1988*, sold over four million copies. He confidently asserted, "Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong." When the event failed to occur, he issued a new date of either September 1st or 30th, 1989. (*The Watchman Expositor*, "Failed Prophecy Hall of Fame," www.watchman.org, accessed 9/22/2003, p. 2.)

**Harold Camping**, president of the Family Radio Network, set the date for the Lord's return to be in the fall of 1994. His prediction was



based on a complicated mathematical formula that tied the Rapture to the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. (Harold Camping, 1994 published in 1992.)

False prophets are all over the landscape today, and they are a sign of the times pointing to the soon return of Jesus.

### **Multiple Warnings**

*Jesus Himself* warned of false prophets in the end times. His most detailed discourse on end time signs is recorded in Matthew 24. In that passage the very first sign He mentions is false prophets (Matthew 24:4-5), and it is the only sign He repeats (Matthew 24:11, 24). His warning was blunt and plain spoken: "Many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many."

The Apostle *Paul* echoed the Lord's warning when he spoke to the elders of the church in Ephesus. Here's how he put it, as recorded in Acts 20:28-31 --

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock . . . [for] I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be on the alert.

*Peter and John* also warned against the danger of false prophets. Peter asserted that false prophets would "introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master" (2 Peter 2:1). John exhorted his brethren to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

John proceeded to provide a test that should be given to prophets. He said they are to be asked to confess that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" and that He is from God (1 John 4:2). He went on to assert that anyone who refuses to confess that Jesus is from God has the "spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:3).

*The Old Testament test* of a prophet is spelled out in Deuteronomy 18:22. "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously . . ." This, of course, is an obvious test. But what if the prophecy is fulfilled? Does that guarantee that the prophet is speaking for God? Not necessarily. The reason is that a prophetic utterance might be fulfilled by coincidence or because of supernatural insight given to the prophet by Satan. So there must be other tests.

## Additional Tests

1) ***Does the prophet speak in the name of a god other than the true God revealed in Scripture?*** If a prophet speaks in the name of Allah or Baal or Vishnu, you can be assured that he is a false prophet. "If a prophet. . . rises among you and gives you a sign or wonder, and the sign or wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known), and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of the prophet. . . for the Lord your God is testing you." (Deuteronomy 13: 1-3)

2) ***Does the prophet's message pass the test of Scripture?*** If a prophet tells you that you can be saved by putting your faith in Mary, the mother of Jesus, you can be certain he is not a spokesman for God. "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8)

3) ***Does the prophet's life manifest a commitment to holiness?*** If a prophet lives a sinful life, his prophecies are to be doubted. "Among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing; the committing of adultery and walking in falsehood. . . Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets, 'Behold, I am going to feed them wormwood and make them drink poisonous water.'" (Jeremiah 23:14-15)

4) ***Does the prophet's teaching produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)?*** If the prophet's followers are motivated to worldly living, the prophet does not speak for God.

"Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. . . a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit." (Matthew 7:15- 16,18)

5) ***Does the prophet emphasize vain visions?*** If the prophet focuses on personal visions with sensational insights (visits to Heaven or Hell, for example), his words are to be distrusted. "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by . . . taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind." (Colossians 2:18)

6) ***Does the prophet deliver only positive messages?*** If the prophet never issues a call for repentance, he is to be suspect. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord. They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The Lord has said, 'You

will have peace. . .” They say, ‘Calamity will not come upon you.’” (Jeremiah 23:16-17)

7) *Does the prophet appear to be greedy for monetary gain?* If the prophet operates in a manner that makes it appear that his greatest interest is money, he is to be avoided. “From the least even to the greatest, everyone is greedy for gain; from the prophet even to the priest, everyone practices deceit. And they heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people superficially, saying, ‘Peace, peace.’ But there is no peace.” (Jeremiah 8:10-11)

8) *Does the prophet focus on the exaltation of Jesus?* If a prophet tries to bring attention to himself or focuses on the Antichrist or the sensational, he is to be questioned. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Revelation 19:10)

Over and over, the Word of God commands us to test all messages lest we be deceived and led astray. Paul urged the people of Berea to test everything he taught them, and they did so by "examining the Scriptures daily" to see whether what he was teaching was scriptural (Acts 17:10-11). Paul was an apostle! How much more so should we test everything we hear taught by the standard of the Word of God.

The tragedy is that most professing Christians today are incapable of testing anything because they are biblically ignorant. There is a famine of the Word in most churches today (Amos 8:11) as people are fed a diet of pop psychology and positive thinking.

What about you? Are you in the Word on a daily basis? Are you capable of testing doctrine by Scripture? If not, then you are a sitting duck for deception. "Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5 :21).

[Comments by avw: You might think the above good article should scare us away from desiring the gift of prophecy today. Not really. Paul knew of the dangers and the warnings, and urged believers to heed them. Yet he also repeatedly encouraged them to seek and exercise the gift of prophecy: “Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy .... Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy.” “Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.” (1 Cor. 14:1, 39; 1 Thes. 5:19-22). As for the infallibility of O.T. prophets versus the fallibility of the gift of prophecy in the churches, see various articles in Sept. and Oct. 2003 *W&W*. [You may order *The Lamplighter* from P.O. Box 919, McKinney, TX 75070]

# AN ASSORTMENT OF VIEWS

## Related to Various Aspects of our Subject

The late John Wimber used to present this loving challenge to Bible believers: You believe that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came to stay, and that He gives gifts to the born-again. Therefore "my question to any evangelical [i.e. Bible-believing, Gospel-trusting Christian] is: If that is true, then **why are the gifts of the Spirit not experienced in [most] churches today?** I also emphasize the importance of **expectation**. If the experience of the Holy Spirit isn't preached or seen by the people – which is true of most evangelical churches – **they won't expect these things to happen, therefore they will not happen. When we see that there is more we can experience, we are willing to embrace the gifts and operate in them.**"

\* \* \*

"Many evangelicals take the attitude: Yes, we **acknowledge there is a theological basis for the practice of the gifts, and we acknowledge that there is a possibility that they do exist today, but, in fact, we prefer that no one actually practice them among us.** That position must be carefully scrutinized, because if we acknowledge that something is valid, then we are in disobedience to God and his Word if we aren't willing to act on it." --John Wimber

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"We can only live to God's glory when we are living with the power of God in our lives. We can only do that when we know God. If Satan can keep us from worship, our religious activity doesn't worry him. We've worked ourselves to death, but without power." -- Tim Warner

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Carl F. H. Henry, a Leading Evangelical Scholar, on the Pros and Cons of the Charismatic Movement (from a magazine interview when he visited the Philippines in 1978):

"I do believe God heals people in His own sovereignty. I don't believe in this vaudeville display of healing. But I can't read the epistle of James without believing that God in His sovereignty and to His own glory from time to time heals people -- I believe that. Yet I believe there is a great deal of potential miscarriage of doctrines, and many risks and dangers in the Charismatic Movement.

*"Now I don't think we have a right to criticize the Charismatic Movement unless we are always as concerned as it is for the infilling of the Holy Spirit .... It was a disgrace to apostolic Christianity if*

Christians tried persistently to exist in the world with anything less than the daily infilling of the Holy Spirit. *Paul pleads, 'Be ye being filled ongoingly with the Holy Spirit of God.'* And we need to capture that." [Carl Henry went to be with the Lord this past Dec. 7, 2003, at the age of 90. He helped in launching the National Association of Evangelicals, was the founding editor of *Christianity Today* magazine – where he opposed doctrinal liberalism and powerfully promoted balanced Biblical conservatism--taught in seminary, and wrote over three dozen scholarly books. *World* magazine's obituary by Edward Plowman calls him "a towering thinker, educator, editor, and theologian who left an indelible imprint on the evangelical movement of the past half century.... This giant of a scholar and mover-and-shaker also was a down-to-earth guy with a servant attitude. He cared about people, showing his concern in tangible ways. Humility, generosity and patience were among his traits. He loved Scripture, and he maintained a consistent Christian witness. The Great Commission was ever on his mind and heart. Mr. Henry will be known for his insistence on integrating faith and learning, and then doing something about it to help change the world."]

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## Articles Regarding Spirit-Baptism:

# What is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

By Ray Downen in his online Bible Studies

[Brother Downen and I have communicated over the years regarding several matters. He loves the Lord, and is zealous in spreading His Word. --avw] In the August 2003 issue of *The Word and Work* (edited by Alex V. Wilson) are articles about the Holy Spirit and His work in God's church today. Included is an article by Alex, "What is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Why is it Important?" He teaches that all Christians receive two baptisms at once when they accept baptism into Christ. So the apostle Paul was wrong when he taught in Ephesians 4 that for Christians there is **one** baptism rather than two.

Or was it Jesus who was wrong when He taught His apostles they should baptize those who came to believe in Him as Lord? Or was it Peter who was mixed up when he taught that those who had been baptized into Christ had at their baptism (in water) received the "gift of the Holy Spirit" rather than a baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Alex quotes Mark 1:8 to suggest that **all** are to receive baptism in the Holy Spirit. But the fuller explanation of what was prophesied there is that the ones listening (or **some** of them) were to receive baptism in the Spirit and baptism in fire, both administered by the coming

King. The prophet made clear that the baptism in fire was the burning up of "chaff." So is baptism in fire for everyone? Surely if the Spirit baptism is for everyone, so also is the baptism in fire. Yet no Bible student believes that all who receive Spirit baptism will then later go to Hell. Why would anyone assume that everyone was to receive Spirit baptism but only **some** would receive a baptism in fire? The fact is we have no way of knowing exactly who heard John's prophecy. We have no way of knowing exactly who might have been included in the prophecy. We have no right based on what John said about baptisms to be performed by Jesus to teach that all God's people in the church age would receive Spirit baptism. We could as well claim we would all go to Hell, that is, that we all would receive baptism in fire.

Alex recognizes that the promise made by Jesus of an imminent baptism in the Spirit was given only to the apostles [Acts 1:4-5]. But then he claims that in fact everyone present on Pentecost also received Spirit baptism when the apostles **did** receive Spirit baptism. But the text doesn't so teach. The tongues like fire which sat upon the heads/shoulders of the apostles were not apparently seen on **everyone** then or later when the 3,000 were being baptized into Christ. The speaking in known tongues (unknown to the speakers but known by the hearers) is not said to have been being done by all, but rather it was done by the **apostles** who had a story to tell about a man who had risen from the dead.

The miraculous events which comprised the apostles being baptized in the Spirit were not repeated until ten years later they **once** were seen again, according to the report of the apostle Peter who was present both times. Untold thousands had been baptized [in water] during those years, but the signs were **not** present. Unusual signs were seen in Samaria when apostles laid hands upon some, but not the Pentecostal signs which had accompanied Spirit baptism which came upon the apostles.

Alex explains why he thinks and teaches as he does. It's because most who advocate tongue-speaking assume that tongue-speaking (in gibberish unknown to listeners) is somehow a sign of receiving Spirit baptism. Yet most of these who speak in "unknown tongues" do so long after they accepted water baptism. Alex wants it understood that all Christians are baptized in the Spirit at the instant they are immersed in water in the name of Jesus and are added to His church. Acts 2:38 says that in Christian baptism we receive both remission of sins and the "gift of the Holy Spirit." Alex wants that received "gift" to be a baptism, but it isn't.

Nor does any Christian receive a second baptism later. Christian baptism is a new **birth**. It happens only once. No Christian should

**ever** seek to be baptized. The baptism commanded by Jesus is to bring us **into** Christ. We should never leave Him. He will never leave us so long as we walk in love and seek to live and love as He did. Those who do **not** have life gain life by the new birth. It's a once in a lifetime experience. We repent whenever we realize we've sinned. But we are baptized only once.

So the cure for the false teaching of charismatics is not to claim there are two baptisms for each Christian at any time, but rather to realize there is only **one** baptism in the Christian system. *One plus one is one too many.*

Alex suggests, "1 Corinthians 12:13 is the only passage in the epistles which specifically mentions the baptism in the Holy Spirit." Then he points out that the baptism of which Paul speaks is one which unites us because it's an experience which every Christian has shared. This is a good point. Paul's theme in this passage is unity. Indeed, throughout the Corinthian epistles, unity **in Christ** is the point apparently constantly in mind. No Bible student should miss seeing that Paul's aim in writing to the Corinthian church was to bring them all together as **one** body when disunity had crept in.

[Brother Downen also wrote a slightly longer follow-up article. The closing paragraph of the above was from that 2<sup>nd</sup> article. He will send you a copy of that whole lesson if you contact him at 417-782-0814, or P O Box 4502, Joplin MO 64803, or [outreach@sofnet.com](mailto:outreach@sofnet.com)

Brother Tom Langford also refers to Spirit-baptism in his letter/article this month.]

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## Analyzing Various Views on Holy Spirit-Baptism

Alex Wilson

When a sinner receives Jesus as lord and savior, via repentance and faith expressed in baptism, God does wonderful things for him. The convert is forgiven, but that's just the start. He is also endowed with the *gift* of the Holy Spirit (i.e., the Spirit himself; Acts 2:38), *born of the Holy Spirit* (John 3:3,7; 1 Pet. 1:23), *sealed* with the Spirit (Eph. 4:30), and given the Spirit as "a *pledge*" or "earnest" or "deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5, & Eph. 1:14, NAS, ASV, NIV). Conversion thus marks the start of the Holy Spirit's *dwelling in our hearts and bodies* (Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19). And from conversion onward, we have the possibility of being not merely indwelt but also *filled* with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) – *repeatedly*, as new

needs arise (Acts 2:4, 4:8 & 31; 9:17; 13:9; Peter and Paul were filled more than once; and the command to Christians in Eph. 5 is in the ongoing verb tense: keep on being filled). Wow – how indebted we are to the Holy Spirit! What an obligation we have to Him (Rom. 8:11-13). And more of His ministries and blessings to us could be listed.

But what about Holy Spirit-baptism? There are several positions and much dispute on that aspect of His work. Here are three major views and one minor one on this subject:

#1. R. H. Boll explained, “The baptism of the Holy Spirit, like the baptism in water, is an initial, initiatory event, without which one is not even a member of the Body. (1 Cor. 12:13) Those individual believers in Christ that received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost were thereby joined together into one body, the church.” “Most [Christians] among us,” he continued, believe that Spirit-baptism “was given at the beginning [i.e. the Jews at Pentecost and Gentiles at Cornelius’ house], and once for all; and that everyone as he is baptized into Christ [through the centuries since then] enters into and becomes a partaker of that original baptism of the Spirit, and is thus incorporated in the One Body. Each believer, as he is added to the Body enters into the benefits of that original baptism” [but is not personally baptized with the Holy Spirit]. That was his view, and is basically similar to what Ray Downen espouses in this W&W.

#2. Brother Boll added, “Some brethren among us believe that *when one is baptized in water he is also at the same time baptized in the Spirit*. They plausibly point to the analogy of the typical baptism of Israel ‘in the cloud and in the sea’ (1 Cor. 10:2) – the two-fold element, water and the cloud; and in the cloud was the presence of God.” This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> view. Several years ago Leon Gibson wrote a book supporting this, entitled *Christian, You were Baptized in Water and Spirit*. I never bought the book, but kept the ad about it! It says it is “an in-depth defense of the teaching of Moses Lard, Robert Richardson, and Robert Milligan, that water and Spirit baptism occur together. We have all had it.” (The men named were some leaders in the Stone-Campbell movement during the 1800s. The book was available from Leon Gibson, 1819 N. Greenwood, Santa Ana CA 92701; but that was over 10 years ago!)

Boll speaks of view #1 as believing Spirit-baptism is received *indirectly* (that is, we now enter into the benefits of the one-time initial baptism given in Acts 2/10). He describes view #2 as believing Spirit-baptism is received *directly* (each convert thus baptized individually).

The proponents of view 1 say to others, “You believe that two baptisms (water and Spirit) are still operative, but how can that be? *Paul says there is ‘one baptism’ (Eph. 4:5), so which one is it? How*



*can there be only one, if both water baptism and Spirit baptism are valid at the same time?"*

Advocates of view 2 reply: That problem is solved by realizing that they normally *occur* at the same time. (Acts 8 seems to be an exception, for special historical reasons. If God so chooses, He can do it that way again, but the norm is that they take place together.) Yes, water baptism is external, and administered by men, while Holy Spirit baptism is internal, and administered by Christ. But when sinners receive Christ by faith and repentance, and thus obey His command to be baptized in water, He keeps His promise to baptize them in the Holy Spirit. As the shell and the kernel of a pecan are just one nut, so the "two baptisms" are actually one.

They continue: Before Pentecost, when John baptized repentant people it was a baptism of water only, bringing forgiveness only. But from Pentecost on, immersion became a baptism of water and the Spirit (contrast Mark 1:4 with Acts 2:38). For the New Covenant age had dawned, and the great new blessing of that age was the Holy Spirit. That's what the prophets had foretold (Joel 2:28-29; Ezek. 36:26-27). Just as Walmart may advertise a "2-for-1" bargain, so God offers us now a 2-for-1 baptism. Something (rather, Someone) new has been added! The Holy Spirit has been *outpoured* (Acts 2:17-18, 33), available in fullness to all who receive Jesus as the Christ. As Peter proclaimed at Pentecost, Jesus, "exalted to the right hand of God...has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." How privileged we are!

Frankly I don't see that there is any crucial difference between the two, but the second view seems more accurate to me. First, John the Baptizer's promise of a future Spirit-baptism surely seems offered to *all* who would repent, not just to the apostles (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). And **John 1:33** seems to say even more decisively that Christ keeps on baptizing with His Spirit all who come to Him – not just the apostles. In that verse the Baptizer said, "He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, **this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.**'" Matthew, Mark and Luke quote the Baptizer as saying, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" – a simple future tense. But John's gospel uses a present participle, used to describe an ongoing activity or condition. John Stott explains the significance of this:

This use of the present participle describes not the single event of Pentecost, but the distinctive ministry of Jesus: 'this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' Indeed, the very same [Greek] words *ho baptizon*, which refer here to Jesus, are used by Mark to denote John the Baptist himself! In Mark 1:4; 6:14, 24 he is called *ho baptizon*, an expression rendered in RSV, 'the baptizer.' In other words, just as John is called

‘the Baptist’ or ‘the baptizer’ because it was characteristic of his ministry to baptize with water, so Jesus is called ‘the baptizer’ because it is characteristic of his ministry to baptize with the Holy Spirit. [*Baptism and Fullness*]

Stott goes on to point out that in John 1:29 (the same chapter) the baptizer says of Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” *Takes away* is another present participle. “If we put verses 29 and 33 together, we discover that the characteristic work of Jesus is twofold. It involves a removal and a bestowal, a taking away of sin and a baptizing with the Holy Spirit. These are the two great gifts of Christ our Savior.” And, it seems to me, 1 Cor. 12:13 says it was thus fulfilled and experienced in Corinth, and of course everywhere that the Gospel was believed.

#3. This is the view taken by nearly all “Holiness” churches plus almost all Pentecostals and Charismatics. They believe Spirit-baptism is not part of what occurs at conversion, but a second, later blessing which all believers should experience and some believers do experience after their conversion and new birth. A writer says, “The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a 2nd encounter with God in which the Christian begins to receive the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit into his life. We are not speaking of the Holy Spirit in His introductory ministry but in His empowering ministry to the believer. Conversion and baptism in the Holy Spirit are not only separate experiences, they are given for separate and distinct purposes. By conversion the nonchristian becomes a Christian, while by the baptism in the Holy Spirit the Christian becomes a powerful Christian.” Both “holiness” believers and charismatics would agree with that statement, though some might emphasize that the result of such an experience is a deeper holiness of life while others emphasize power in service – especially winning others to Christ. Unlike “holiness” churches, most charismatics also teach that tongues is the evidence that a Christian has received Spirit-baptism. That writer continues, “I believe God knew exactly what He was doing on the Day of Pentecost and that He did it right the very first time and that He hasn’t changed His mind since.”

But that interpretation does not hold water. Let’s lovingly point out to them that 1 Cor. 12:13 is the only passage in *the epistles* which specifically mentions the baptism in the Holy Spirit. And what does Paul say there? He makes it clear that **this experience is not a blessing that divides Christians (“I have it but you don’t”) but unites us because it is a common experience that all believers share.** Notice: “For in one Spirit were we *all baptized into one body*, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were *all made to drink of one Spirit*” (ASV). Just as all who receive Christ as Lord and Savior are equally redeemed, equally justified, and equally born again, so they all are equally Spirit-baptized. Also, 1 Cor. 12:13 says the Corinthians had *all* been baptized in the Spirit, but verse 30 says *not all* of

them spoke in tongues. So there is no basis for telling fellow disciples that they need to seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit, for they have it -- or rather, Him -- if they have Christ as Lord and Savior.

Also we should notice that water baptism is commanded while Spirit baptism is promised. That is, water baptism is something we do for the Lord (or, more accurately, we have it done to us-- thus not our work!) -- obeying His commands, while Holy Spirit baptism is something the Lord does for us -- fulfilling His promise. There's not a single verse that orders, "Be baptized in the Spirit." Instead it is a promise. "In a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). And Christ Himself is the one who baptizes converts with the Spirit. We see this from the four gospels plus Acts 1 and 11. Men can baptize in water, but only Messiah baptizes in the Spirit. It is a one-time experience, not repeated. Urging disciples to seek Spirit-baptism, with some supernatural evidence, too often diverts them from step-by-step growth and present duties which may not be sensational but are God's will for us. Instead, let's follow the very Biblical duty of seeking the Spirit's **fullness** through trusting and obeying our Savior day by day.

4. While we're on this subject, here is another view -- but you will probably never run into it. It is held by a small group of churches whose theology is *ultra*-dispensationalist. They teach that since Paul says there is "one baptism" (Eph.4:5), water baptism has now been replaced by Spirit baptism. All verses which mention baptism but not water automatically refer to baptism in the Holy Spirit, or merely being submerged in truth, in God's Word! Thus they allegorize even verses which mention water. Here is an example:

The water (the preparation of John) is now the Spirit, the Word of God! Jesus commanded the apostles to Go and teach, baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost. Their teaching was to immerse them in, submerge them in, and indeed overwhelm them in the name -- Jesus -- the Word of God. Jesus did not command water baptism, but he commanded to go and teach, go and overwhelm, immerse, submerge the people in the Word which is Christ Jesus and all that He is!

According to this view, we need not practice water baptism any more, since it has been superseded. This is so obviously erroneous that we need not take time to offer refutation.

Frankly, rather than spend so much time and ink analyzing these views, I much prefer to glory in the great salvation our Lord God has given us at such immense cost to Himself! Let us worship our Father, obey our Savior, and seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit's fruit and gifts in our character and service.

## Regarding Speaking in Tongues:

“I speak with tongues in my secret closet of prayer. It is a beautiful devotional experience with me. It is not a group or public experience. No one else involved but Jesus and me! And when a brother in Christ comes to me and says, ‘I believe I too have a wonderful Holy Ghost baptism, and I’ve never spoken in tongues,’ I say, ‘Praise God - I believe you.’ Why should there be any argument? We should rejoice in each other’s love for Christ....

“Those who speak with tongues must put the fruits of the Spirit above the gift. He must not consider the gift of tongues as a cure-all, end-it-all, best-of-all, experience. It is just a starting place. There is so much more. If a person who speaks with tongues honestly believes God is controlling his speech -- when he comes back down to earth and speaks with his understanding, he had better not gossip, backbite or verbally assassinate another brother. Tongues should be a Holy Ghost mouthwash.

“Away with thinking that everybody who speaks with tongues is a saint. Away with trying to force it on others who do not seek it.” -- David Wilkerson [Obviously he takes the “middle position,” not the hardline Pentecostal view]

\* \* \*

“I accept as a fact that some of God’s people are ‘filled’ or ‘baptized’ with the Spirit, and that *nomenclature is purely a secondary matter that should not keep us from appropriating what lies behind the differing terms for the same experience*. It is also a fact that God, through His Spirit, does perform miracles and healings. Speaking in tongues does happen and is a bonafide gift of the Spirit.” -- Harold Lindsell in his book, *The Holy Spirit in the Latter Days* [Lindsell, former editor of *Christianity Today*, is not a “charismatic,” but a leading conservative Evangelical. But obviously he too takes the “middle position.”]

\* \* \*

**Fred Saure**, professor at the Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary, also leans toward “the middle position” between the Pentecostal and the Cessationist views. Regarding tongues, this in-between view says, “Seek Not, Forbid Not.” But he also laments the many abuses and pressures that occur in seminars on how-to-speak-in-tongues. He comments, “What is *appropriate* is a seminar on ‘*Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts*’.... One wonders why Charismatics concentrate only on teaching prospects ‘how to speak in tongues.’ It will be helpful if they can also teach their prospects ‘how to interpret tongues’! What about a seminar on ‘how to perform miracles’?” Significantly, Dr.

Saure originally "came from a Pentecostal denomination, ...has had a close association with believers who speak in tongues and preachers who teach people how to speak in tongues. There was a period in his Christian life when he himself felt he had the gift of tongues." -- *Evangelical Life* magazine, Jan. 1995

\* \* \*

*"We should neither reject speaking in tongues nor regard it as the be-all and end-all of spirituality....* I rejoice when one of my friends receives this gift. It is a way in which the deep subconscious parts of our being can be caught up to praise the Lord; and this brings release, deep joy, peace, and the longing to spend time with God in prayer which nobody who has experienced the gift will deny." --Michael Green, evangelist and N.T. commentator, in *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*

\* \* \*

**Edward O'Connor, a charismatic theologian:** "Some people begin speaking in tongues at the moment of (Spirit) baptism. Others do not begin until hours, days, or even weeks later, and *some never do.*" [Italics added. We include this quote to show that a number of Charismatics do not accept the classical Pentecostal belief that speaking in tongues is **an indispensable** initial evidence of "Spirit-baptism."]

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## And What about APOSTLES? APOSTLES TODAY?

Edward Fudge

*A gracEmail subscriber writes concerning a man who claims to be an apostle, and whom a number of believers regard as such. Are there living apostles today? What makes a person an apostle?*

\* \* \*

The word "apostle" literally means "one sent." "Emissary" or "delegate" are more contemporary synonyms. The greatest Apostle is Jesus of Nazareth, whom God sent into the world with authority to make atonement for sin and to give eternal life to those whom God had given him (Heb. 3:1; John 17:1-3). The New Testament assigns the 12 Apostles a unique role in the Church -- with Matthias replacing Judas who betrayed Jesus then hanged himself (Mk. 3:13-19; Acts 1:21-26). Paul was an apostle of equal standing with the Twelve (Gal. 1; 2 Cor. 10-13) as apparently was James the Lord's brother (Acts 15:7).

The New Testament also mentions a few other "apostles" in the sense of "missionaries" or "church planters." Those include Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:1-6), as well as Andronicus and Junias (or Junia, a feminine name), a pair whom Paul described as "outstanding among the apostles" (Rom. 16:7 NASB). No doubt God still raises up that kind of apostles today. My maternal grandparents fit that description, having gone to Africa in the early 1920s to preach the gospel and having continued in that task for more than 60 years. We all know others who are "apostolic" in this missionary sense.

If your professing apostle today places himself alongside Andronicus, I should not find that particularly troublesome. If, however, he considers himself on a par with Peter, James and John, that would be something altogether different indeed. Twice the New Testament writers warn against false apostles (2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2), apparently pretenders who claimed spiritual authority equal to the Twelve. I would reject as false any such claim today, whether that apostleship was said to have been transmitted by a chain of succession, restored to the earth after centuries of absence, or bestowed by special charism.

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## VOICES From The FIELDS

**James Ashley**      **2770 Lakeview Rd., Midlothian TX 76065**  
**Dec. 2003**

Karen says I'm a little strange, but one of the things I'm looking forward to this Christmas season here in the States is the release of the third movie in J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy. I'm a long-time fan of "Middle Earth" [and] it appears that this Christmas, at least, I'll have plenty of company. Thousands of others have also eagerly awaited this week's release of the final movie "The Return of the King."

Yet even as I anticipate seeing "The Return of the King" sometime this Christmas season, I can't help but wonder what my friends back in Sa'a village would think. Frankly, I don't think that they would be at all interested in the movie – it would be too strange, too confusing, just an inexplicable jumble of weird creatures.... It is just too foreign. The only way for them to ever understand "The Return of

the King” would be for someone to produce a version in the Sa’a language. Fat chance of that ever happening!

But the *real* story of the return of the King, the coming King of kings – ahh, that’s another matter! As we have done for the last 17 years, we are still working on the version of that far more magnificent story, and we are very hopeful that it will indeed be released next year. The text of the Sa’a New Testament was “finished” in June this year, but actually, “finishing” does not happen at one single point in time. It is a process that involves tidying up punctuation, formatting the pages, re-checking the spelling, double-checking that every verse is there, adding cross references, selecting pictures, and completing innumerable other typesetting chores.

This is what we are currently working on, and we are hoping to bring our co-translator Jonathan Soiseu to the States in March 2004 to help in the final stages of that process. We would really appreciate your prayers that we will be able to do this. Specifically, we’d appreciate prayer that we will have the finances to bring him over, and that he will be able to travel with someone who can guide him through the bewildering, first time experience of intercontinental travel.

[For more news of the family, etc. write the above address.]

## **Tim & Dawn Yates**

## **Missionaries in Australia**

What a gift! For Christmas this year our church received one of the greatest gifts of all. Three teenagers whom we have been praying would receive Christ for years.

In addition to the three teenagers mentioned above, we have three other people in the wings that are planning their baptisms. In fact, most of those will have taken place by the time you receive this newsletter. What a wonderful God we have.

We celebrated the fifth anniversary of our arrival in Australia in November. Approaching this date has given us reason to reflect on our ministry here and refocus on the vision the Lord has for us.

Five years ago we planned on working with the local church here in Australia in order to partner with them in future church work. The idea at the time was that after a few years of working with the local congregation, we would have gained quite a bit of cultural knowledge and be ready for a truly “Australian” work. There was also the hope that they would raise up support from the church so that they would at the very least support the church work that we would be involved in,

with hopes that there may even be some who are willing to go and work with us.

All of these issues were discussed in a meeting I had recently with the church elders. We really believe that now is the time for us to start looking into what our next phase of ministry in Australia is going to be.

For two months the elders got together to discuss and pray about this. A few weeks before our church anniversary service, we brought it before the church deacons. Finally, we revealed our plans to the entire church at the anniversary service. In our discussion, we outlined 7 goals for our church for 2004.

1. To train the existing leaders to leading small groups.
2. To establish at least one additional small group.
3. To begin a prayer chain.
4. To establish a monthly prayer theme for different areas of the church.
5. To increase our church tithe from 10% to 12%.
6. To begin supporting at least one new mission.
7. To make new plans for a new church plant.

We were confident that most of these goals would be ratified by the congregation. It was the seventh goal that we were concerned about. Would the congregation understand and would they accept such a bold plan?

Much to our surprise, they were supportive and even enthusiastic about the idea. Five years ago, this would have been very difficult. The Lord works in wonderful ways, though, and it seems the last five years have been crucial to preparing the way.

As we begin to look for ways to fulfill these goals, our ministry here will slightly shift from the attention we've given to the local church for the last five years, to attention that is needed in the next area of ministry. The most difficult part about this is, we are still discovering what that ministry might be. Please pray that the Lord would show us His way as we look into possible ministry opportunities in Australia.



# NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

**Ladies Inspiration Day...** will be held at LaGrange Church of Christ on April 3, from 9:00 am – 2:30 pm. The theme: Strengthening our Lives through Prayer: Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield.

**Bro. Larry Miles**, with the consent of the Cherry St. Church of Christ, has begun placing the "Words of Life" messages on their Web site. If you have a computer with sound, and internet access, please visit their site and you will be able to listen to the radio broadcasts. Go to [www.cherrystreetchurchofchrist.com](http://www.cherrystreetchurchofchrist.com) and follow the instructions to get to the "Words of Life" messages.

**Sis. Retta Tapp**: faithful and loving wife of Bro. David Tapp was called "home" to be with her Lord Tuesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>. We praise God for this godly woman and mother who served faithfully the Lord all her life.

**Start Planning Now...** to attend this year's KY-IND Christian Fellowship being planned for August 2-5, 2004.

**China...** cracks down on unofficial worship! This brings fear as communist authorities crack down on unauthorized worship, detaining activists and bulldozing churches. Thank God for our continued freedom here - but for how much longer?

**NOTE CHANGES in this item (due to lateness):**

**School of Biblical Studies (SBS)** began its spring semester on Monday January 5, 2004. The classes being offered are to encourage local

leaders, elders, deacons, Sunday School teachers, ministers, young people, wives of leaders, etc. We are glad for those who take advantage of these opportunities of continued fellowship with others around the study of God's Word. Plan now to attend next fall. Contact SBS at (502) 499-0702.

**Christian Crusade for Christ - 2004**, Location: Oak Grove Church of Christ. Date: March 22-25, 2004. Theme: "Learning from Others - Some Bible Examples." Speakers include: Joe Stone, Eddie Olberding, Julius Hovan, Randy Coultas, Paul Kitzmiller, Harry Coultas, Robert Gill, & Kenneth Preston.

For information: Cleo Russell at (225) 294-7814. Sponsor: Ponchatoula Church of Christ.

**Turkey Creek, LA** Harry Coultas announces a Church Family Reunion, January 31st-February 3rd. Preaching by: Robert Johnson (The Past, Sat. p.m.); Glenn Baber (The Present, Sun. 10:00 a.m.); Don McGee (The Future, Sun-Tues. p.m.) One member of Turkey Creek will be celebrating his "136" birthday! ???

**With her Lord, which is far better:** On Dec. 14, Dollie Garrett, 100 years old, went home to be with her Savior and Heavenly Father. Sister Dollie was a longtime missionary in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Africa, along with her husband Dewitt (died 1972), and also her son Robert and his family. Our October issue had an inspiring article about her, re-run from the Winchester (Ky.) *Sun*. She was a woman

of great faith and faithfulness in serving her Lord. Though blind and weak in recent years, she was uncomplaining--in fact, joyful. Love, hard work and a sense of humor were lifelong characteristics. A memorial service was held at 11:00 on Sat. Dec. 20th, at the Belmont Church of Christ in Winchester, Ky. She is survived by her sons Dewitt, Cecil, Robert; daughters Verma, Carolyn, Anna Marie plus 21 grandchildren and 54 great-grandchildren.

#### **A Great Day at Linton, Ind.**

"What a beautiful day we had last Lord's Day! [NOV. 30] It was our usual time to have our Thanksgiving dinner, yes, but more than that! It was our day for Mothers and Fathers to present their babies and ask God to help them raise them! Those dedicated and their parents were: Hayden Dunning, son of Steve & Nicole Dunning; Vanessa Ann Shafford, daughter of Jason & Heather Shafford, Claire Hockman, daughter of Michael & Alyson Hockman, Parker Stone, son of John & Heather Stone, Jasmine Hall, daughter of Steve & Valerie Hall, and Caylin Chandler, daughter of Travis Chandler & Kerrie Barnett. Let us all pray for these parents in the task that is before them.

"At the invitation Mercedes Shafford came to be baptized; her mother Heather transferred her membership to our church; Martha Carmichael was moved to respond because of the awesome responsibility of being an example for the little ones in our church; and Mikeal Trump asked for prayer as he has been accepted at David Lipscomb University for the next semester & wants to be a youth minister. What a service! What a day!" -Jerry Carmichael in church bulletin

**Westminister (MD) Church of Christ...**(Gary Pearson) Elder Curtis

Wasmer announced on December 21 that the congregation will be supporting Ken Grimm in his upcoming mission work as a Bible teacher in an African Christian school for Sudanese refugees. Pray for Ken as he prepares to undertake this work. For more information you can contact: Gary Pearson, P.O. Box 1373, Westminster, MD 21158, [www.westcoc.org](http://www.westcoc.org)

**Antioch Church of Christ (Frankfort, KY)** lost a man of God and leader. Bro. Asa Tipton was called home to glory the last week of January and a memorial service was held in Frankfort. The service was conducted by Dan Luttrell, minister at Antioch, who made reference to Bro. Tip's relationship to his wife Sis. Ruth and the church. He had not seen a better "team" than they. Mike Graham, son-in-law, spoke on behalf of the family and shared several personal memories and felt blessed having a father-in-law like Bro. Tip. A cousin, Roy Tipton, also spoke and went down memory lane with many personal accounts of the man of God and personal friend he was to many. The Central Kentucky Churches of Christ will truly miss this man of God and his influence in the Lord's work throughout the state.

**Welsh, La. Church of Christ** bulletin: Last October, "Southwest Bible College and Seminary conferred the degree of Doctorate of Christian Education on our Joyce Broyles. After years of intensive study, she has achieved the goal she wanted for herself to help in her understanding of the Bible, her writing, and her teaching. The proof of this milestone hangs in her office next to certificates of Master of Arts in Christian Education and Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education [English].

Good work, Joyce!" To which we add, Amen.

### Available Minister Moving to Louisville:

My name is Logan Heeke and I am searching for a full-time ministry position. I grew up attending the Tell City Church of Christ in Southern Indiana. In May of 2004 I will graduate from Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould, AR with an Associates Degree in Bible. Upon graduating, my wife and I plan to relocate so that I may attend the School of Biblical Studies in Louisville, KY. If you are searching for someone or know of a congregation who is, please contact me at (870) 335-9619.

### Update on Great Songs Hymnal

The last we heard, Frank Preston, now ministering at Mackville, Ky Church of Christ, has about 500 copies left of *Great Songs of the Church*. He is the one who undertook the most recent (and last?) reprinting of this hymnal. Inquire from him to learn the cost and/or to order copies. His email is [fmpresto@bell-south.net](mailto:fmpresto@bell-south.net) Or phone 859: 262-5161.

### The Da Vinci Code ?

For information re: this latest popular attack on the credibility of the Bible and the Christian faith, see an article by Greg Hartman: "'The Da Vinci Code': Exciting New Novel, Tired Old Conspiracy Theories." You may access it on Dr. James Dobson's *Focus on the Family* website: [family.org](http://family.org) Here are a few excerpts from that review of the anti-christian book:

"Historians and textual critics judge the historicity of ancient documents by two main criteria: 1. How many manuscripts exist? 2. How many years separate the oldest manuscript from the original?"

"The world's second-best documented ancient book is Homer's *The*

*Iliad*. It was written about 900 B.C.; the oldest manuscript is dated about 500 B.C., separating it from the original by 400 years, and we have 643 manuscripts.

"The best-documented ancient book of them all, though, is the New Testament. We have more than 24,000 manuscripts of the New Testament; the oldest, part of the Gospel of John, is conservatively dated at A.D. 125 — *only 35 years* after the original. As history, it's not overstating matters at all to say that the Gospels are in a class by themselves. As many historians have pointed out, if we call the Gospels into question, we must also reject the vast majority of what we teach as history."

### A Tool to Refute Mormon Errors:

Steve Watson, a W&W subscriber in Cal., writes: "Here is an interesting website, focused on the evangelization of those who are caught in the deception of the LDS Church..." [Mormonism]: [www.living-hopeministries.info/index.html](http://www.living-hopeministries.info/index.html)

"**'Merry 'winter festival':** In the holiday that celebrates His birth, acknowledging Jesus is no longer politically correct. In New York public schools, the symbols of other religions that have holidays around this time — the Jewish menorah for Hanukkah, the Muslim star and crescent for Ramadan — are allowed, but nativity scenes are verboten.... Contemporary Christian musicians craft songs that avoid the name of Jesus, so that their purposefully ambiguous lyrics 'could be taken either way,' applying either to Jesus or to a boyfriend.... Relativism has become not just a philosophy but an unquestioned assumption. **Tolerance** is one of the few moral absolutes left, and it has changed its meaning from 'tolerating differences' to 'denying that there are any.'" —Gene Veith in *World* magazine

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# Christians Beware!

## Important Warning from Dr. James Dobson:

Educators, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, please pay special attention not only to what your kids watch on TV and in movie theatres and the music they listen to ... but we must also be alert regarding the books they read.

Two particular books, *Conversations with God* and *Conversations with God for Teens*, written by Neale Donald Walsch, sound harmless enough by their titles alone. These books have been on the New York Times best seller list for a number of weeks. These publications make truth of the statement "Don't judge a book by its cover/title". The author purports to answer various questions from kids using the "voice of God." However, the "answers" that he gives are not biblically-based and in fact go against the infallible Word of God.

For instance (and I paraphrase), when a girl asks the question "why am I a lesbian?" his answer is that she was born that way because of genetics just as you were born right-handed, with blue eyes, etc. Then he tells her to go out and "celebrate" her differences. Another girl poses the question "I am living with my boyfriend. My parents say that I should marry him because I am living in sin. Should I marry him?" His reply is "Who are you sinning against? Not me, because you have done nothing wrong."

Another question asks about God's forgiveness of sin. His reply - "I do not forgive anyone because there is nothing to forgive. There is no such thing as right or wrong and that is what I have been trying to tell everyone. I do not judge people. People have chosen to judge one another and this is wrong because the rule is 'Judge not lest ye be judged'."

And the list goes on.

Not only are these books the false doctrine of devils but in some instances even quote (in error) the Word of God. These books (and others like it) are being sold to school children (The Scholastic Book Club) and we need to be aware of what is being fed to our children. Our children are under attack so I pray that you be sober and vigilant about teaching your kids the true Word of God and guarding their exposure to worldly media because our adversary, the devil, "roams about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). And how many of us know that lions usually hunt for the slowest, weakest and YOUNGEST of its prey.