

The Holy Spirit-

An Approach to Understanding His Gifts



This study, "The Holy Spirit: An Approach to Understanding His Gifts," has been prepared at the direction of the general conference and under the guidance of the general board of administration of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

The members of the committee were chosen from a broad representation in the church. An effort was made to include those of various understandings and persuasions. They are to be commended for their thoroughness, understanding and strict adherence to the Scriptures.

Those serving on the committee were:

Rev. Paul Fetters, director of the School of Christian Ministries

Dr. Duane Reahm, bishop of the overseas conferences

Dr. Raymond Waldfogel, bishop of the west district

Dr. M. I. Burkholder, retired dean of the Seminary at Huntington College

Rev. Kirby Keller, pastor in the Pennsylvania Conference

Rev. Kent Maxwell, conference superintendent and pastor in the Central Conference

Rev. Marvin Price, pastor in the Pacific Conference

The study was adopted by the general board of administration on May 24, 1974 as a guide for all members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and is to be applied in their teaching, preaching and practice. It supercedes the publication "The Spirit Filled Life and the Tongues Movement" together with the resolution adopted by the general board of administration, June 5, 1963.

This guide is commended to United Brethren with the prayer that we may indeed be made one in the Spirit.

The Board of Bishops

The following resolution, with the study paper, was adopted by the general board of administration. May 24, 1974:

The general board of administration presents this study paper as a guide toward harmony in understanding the Holy Spirit and His gifts.

In keeping with the spirit and teaching of this report, both ministers and laymen are not to disparage any fellow believer whose judgment or understanding in these matters is different from their own. This should be done neither in public nor in private.

One who violates these guidelines is subject to reproof and discipline by the conference or the local church, as the case may require.

PREFACE

The preparation of this paper was undertaken with two basic assumptions in mind: 1) There is validity today for the expression of the biblical gifts of the Holy Spirit, 2) The reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit qualifies the believer for any of the gifts that the Holy Spirit may choose to give him.

Several guidelines were also kept in mind: 1) The Scriptures are the final authority and experience is to be interpreted in light of the Scriptures, 2) God is sovereign and it is futile to circumscribe Him, 3) The truth is to be spoken in love, rather than to create strong polarization, 4) This project must keep the whole United Brethren fellowship in focus, and 5) This project is exploratory and suggestive rather than exhaustive. Hopefully it will help clear the way for a better understanding of what the gift of the Holy Spirit means to us, and how He would minister through His church today.

The scripture quotations, unless noted otherwise, are from the New American Standard Bible.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A GIFT TO THE CHURCH

As Jesus Christ ministered to His disciples, the time came when He instructed them concerning the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself was to leave them, but He would not leave them comfortless. In John, 14—16, Jesus told them why it would be necessary for Him to go away, and He spoke concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He made it clear that the Holy Spirit does not operate in a vacuum nor in non-personal objects. "Unto you" is one of the key phrases in Jesus' delineation of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in the believer and there the Spirit's ministry comes into focus.

The believer's "body is a temple (or sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God" (I Corinthians 6:19). The giving of the Spirit was dependent

upon the "glorification" of Jesus, which involved His death, resurrection and ascension. Following this glorification, it is for the individual person to receive the Spirit on the condition of simple faith in Jesus.

In order to have a better grasp of the significance of the Holy Spirit, it would be well to consider some of the descriptions of His person. A term used to refer to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is the word *parakletos*, often translated "comforter," "helper," "intercessor" or "advocate." In military language *parakletos* referred to one who was an "encourager," one used to rally troops for battle, or to cheer them to fight

Also in the context of Christ's teaching, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth (John 14:17), the teacher and remembrancer (14:26), the one who will testify of Christ (15:26).

Another work of the Holy Spirit is that of enabler. That is, He makes man able to cope with life. He is the fulfillment of the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Life is always calling us into battle. The One who makes us able to stand up to the opposing forces, to cope and to conquer, is the *parakletos*. He is the Holy Spirit, who makes real the presence and the power of the risen Christ. The word *parakletos* has a colorful background in the Septuagint, portraying comfort and consolation in distress which keeps a man on his feet. Left to himself, he would collapse. It is the comfort which enables a man to pass the breaking point and not break.

As an advocate, the function of the Holy Spirit is to safeguard the interests and throne rights of the Lord Jesus in the world, the Church, and the individual believer. This is precisely what the Lord Jesus said about the Holy Spirit in John 16:14, "He shall glorify Me." His work is to represent, speak of and exalt Christ. He is to deal with man in regard to Christ, and to convict him of sin against Christ. "Christ, Christ, Christ" is the theme of all! It is His speech and the direction of all His activity.

But the Lord not only said of the Holy Spirit, "He shall

glorify Me," but also "He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you" (John 16:14). This simply means that after the Holy Spirit has brought us to repentance, He will show us the resources of Christ to deal with our acknowledged sinfulness.

As was noted above, all these provisions of the Spirit are conditioned on faith in Jesus Christ. The one act of faith does not neglect the Holy Spirit but embraces the Spirit. Faith in Jesus results in the gift of the Holy Spirit. We cannot receive one without the other. The Holy Spirit comes in Jesus Christ as recorded in Galatians 3:14, "in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Individuals sometimes think that the Holy Spirit comes to them through their surrender, commitment, obedience, and devotion. However, we need to understand that the Holy Spirit comes to man through the absolute obedience of Jesus Christ to God.

The Scriptures assume that the gift of the Holy Spirit at conversion is complete. Continuing experiences of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer may have caused some to think of the initial reception of the Spirit as a partial experience.

The Scriptures equate the baptism in (by, with, of) the Holy Spirit with conversion. Basically, the same Greek terminology is used in the gospel references to the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33 and in Acts 1:5, 11:16) and I Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." In each of these the Greek preposition *en* is used before Holy Spirit (in I Corinthians 12:13, before Spirit only).

This Greek preposition is also used before the Greek word for water in Matthew 3:11 and John 1:31, 33, where the issues of John's water baptism and the Spirit baptism are being discussed. It is absent, however, before water in Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; and Acts 1:5, 11:16. Whether the writers use of the preposition *en* (in, by, with, of) is theologically

significant, or a matter of individual style is debatable. If the former, the preposition *en* may mark the element or environment in which the baptism takes place. It should be translated "in" before Spirit in each of the above references and also before water in Matthew 3:11 and John 1:31, 33. Where it is absent, it may mark the instrument or matter with which the baptism is effected.

It is appropriate to speak of the baptism by Jesus in (or by, with, of) this Holy Spirit. Indeed, John the Baptist in the gospel passages cited above did say that Jesus would perform such a ministry, whereas he (John the Baptist) came to baptize with water. A comparison of the scripture passages in the gospels and Acts with I Corinthians 12:13 is interesting. It leads to the conclusion that Jesus' baptism of the believer with (or in) the Holy Spirit refers to the regeneration or salvation experience. At the time of his conversion, the believer is immersed or baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to dwell in him, and by that baptism the believer is also made a part of, and comes into, the church. Often some of the consequences of this Holy Spirit baptism are not experienced until later in the believer's life. It does, however, open one to the possibility of experiencing both the infilling of the Holy Spirit, the various gifts (charismata) of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit.

Though we recognize that the baptism in the Spirit occurs at conversion, we also recognize that for various reasons the fullness of the Spirit's presence in the life may not be appropriated until later. This has been described by some as a baptism in the Holy Spirit or sanctification.

The baptism in (or with) the Holy Spirit, or the conversion experience, does not eliminate the need for continuing experiences or subsequent infillings of the Holy Spirit. These are referred to in Acts 2:4, 4:31, 9:17, 11:24 and 13:52. It was because of the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit that the disciples began to speak in other tongues at Pentecost. They witnessed with boldness, and did many other wonderful deeds.

The early Christians were obviously equipped for service by

the infilling of the Holy Spirit. If one will recognize conversion as the baptism in the Spirit, he may also be able to use "baptism in the Spirit" to refer in a non-technical way to subsequent fillings of the Holy Spirit. This is true because we regard the term "baptism" as a flexible metaphor, not a technical term.

Jesus' action in John 20:22 where He breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit," has been variously understood and interpreted. Conclusive interpretations are impossible with the information we have. One possibility is that Jesus' action and words were the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or conversion, for the disciples. The later Pentecostal experience for them was a continuing experience of the Holy Spirit by which they were filled (Acts 2:4) for the service of preaching they were to do that day.

Another interpretation is that Jesus' actions were symbolic of what was to take place at Pentecost. There the baptism of the Holy Spirit would be experienced, together with the infilling of the Holy Spirit for the service of ministry to be rendered that day. The former interpretation is the more likely, since Jesus had already been raised from the dead and the conditions for salvation, or for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, had already been met.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT MINISTERS TO THE BELIEVER

In considering post conversion experiences and phenomena, we have assumed that our conversion takes place because of the ministry of the Spirit and the Word. We assume there is a ministry of these two agents prior to conversion which convicts the sinner and draws him to Christ. At the point of conversion he (1) confesses his sin, (2) repents of (turns from) his sin and (3) accepts. He accepts the ministry of Jesus Christ in his behalf, the Holy Scriptures as God's Written Word for his own spiritual life and health and the Holy Spirit for his spiritual comfort and help. This is described by the Word and taken by faith. Further, subsequent to conversion, the new convert experiences the

ministry of the Holy Spirit in the everyday affairs of his life. The Holy Spirit draws him into an increasingly mature relationships with the world.

However, there are experiences in the Holy Spirit which do enhance one's relationship with the Lord and fit him for the task at hand. According to Jesus, 'It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). Therefore, because of our new birth, we may expect spiritual equipment for every need in this life. In contrast to the thief who would destroy, Christ has come "That they might have life, and might have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Thus we are talking about a life of fulfillment and abundance as we trust in Christ and begin to exercise that trust in obedience to Him. We begin to experience fullness of the life in Christ as we put into practice that which He has provided and which we have received through faith.

Christ Jesus promised that His disciples would receive power "when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8). This corresponds to the statements He had made earlier, such as that contained in John 14:12ff, which had been spoken at the same time He gave the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. In this instance it is clear that power in the life of the believer is the result of Jesus' going to the Father. It is the consequent gift of the Holy Spirit by the Father, upon the request of the Son. Note that the Spirit is referred to as a gift.

Conditions given to the disciples for obtaining the Holy Spirit are love and obedience (John 14:14, 15, 16, 21). In chapter 15 these conditions are expanded to include abiding in Christ. Thus, love for Christ which causes an abiding and obedient relationship to Him equals effective power for living. There is no limitation to this power. We are led to believe it is power completely effective for every need.

Sanctification of the believer is also a work of the Holy Spirit. This is amply shown in several passages: Romans 15:16; I Corinthians 6:11; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2. We also note other scriptures which show that Jesus Christ

himself is our sanctification (I Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 10:10, 13:12). The sanctification by the Savior takes place through the Spirit, to the measure that the Spirit is allowed to fill us.

Reference has been made previously to the reception of the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion. Peter, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (II Peter 1:3, 4).

Other passages speak of the Holy Spirit as a natural experience in the life of the new convert (Colossians 1:27; I Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 4:24). They also speak of purity of life in the believer. Thus the Spirit is seen to convey a new nature to man. This new nature of the Spirit does not sin (I John 3:9).

The old nature is dealt with in the Spirit, not in the flesh. The Spirit fulfills in us that which Christ won at Calvary. As the Spirit, with our consent, continues to work in us, our old nature is kept in subjection (Romans 8:12, 13; Galatians 5:16, 24, 25). Our spiritual life must grow ceaselessly unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The Spirit must increasingly fill us into the perfect fullness of God. The result of our life in the Spirit is that we bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22ff). We are conformed and transformed into the image of His Son through the Spirit (Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:10). We are drawn into a closer relationship with God.

The quality of abiding love is both the essential by-product of regeneration and the necessary condition for an effective growing life of power and victory in Christ. Since it is a love relationship to Christ built upon our faith in Him, the maintenance of love requires a continuing response on our part, especially at times when our love for Christ has "grown cold," or we see that our life is without victory or power.

The only possible help for this condition is to turn again to the Savior in faith that He will forgive us for our indifference and "Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation" (Psalm 51:12).

No matter when we turn to Christ to contemplate Him, His work for us, His love and mercy and grace toward us, or to confess our own indifferent or evil spirit, we always receive from Him His choosing. This experience of receiving might come after a period of backsliding. Or, it might come as we, struck so forcefully by the past and continuing ministry of our Lord, continue to dwell upon the person of Christ at the time of our conversion. Or, it might come just prior to entering some great spiritual challenge, struggle or opportunity.

These times of refreshing and blessing will have their positive, visual benefits. We can expect power in prayer and answers to prayer. We may expect a powerful ministry and needed assurance and wisdom for that ministry. We may become aware of at least one of God's special gifts of the Spirit for the ministry into which we are being directed. There may be other phenomena that can be understood only as the Holy Spirit performing an effective ministry in and through the life of the individual. Though we are told to "earnestly desire the greater gifts" (I Corinthians 12:31), we believe it to be the teaching of the Apostle that these are gifts from above. They come from God, and not properly out of our own will or seeking (I Corinthians 12:11).

As our continued cultivation of the abiding love relationship between the Christian and Jesus Christ may have its "charismatic" or "power-gift" expression, it may also have its sanctifying, purifying result. In fact, we cannot find anything to indicate that there should be the reception of either one to the exclusion of the other. Both seem to be expected. According to the previous statement, it is implied that throughout life the possibility of sin remains in us because of the presence of the "old man" nature.

The new nature of Christ within us does not sin. It remains for the believer to apply this new nature to the many circumstances of his life. He should strengthen his

relationship with the saving Christ thus making the volume and authority of the Holy Spirit predominant over his "old man" nature, bringing it into subjection and destroying its influence. This produces a freedom from the effect of sin in our life, which is described by some as "a moral union with God." It is fellowship which cancels out the essence of sin which is alienation from God. It is not a "something," but a moment-by-moment trusting in the merits of Christ met by a continuing walk of faith.

To fully portray the ministry of the Holy Spirit the New Testament employs several terms or concepts in addition to baptism, such as: anoint, seal, the earnest, enduement and filled.

Three of the seven New Testament references to the "anointing" of the Spirit (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27, 10:38) are used in relating the work of the Holy Spirit to Jesus. It is thought that the word "anoint" is used in the sense of "apply" and was closely related, in the Old Testament, to the office of the "priest" (Leviticus 8:12), the "king" (I Samuel 16:13) and the "prophet" (I Kings 19:16). In relation to the Christian, the use of the word "anoint" with the Spirit implies the initial act of indwelling. The presence of the Spirit is the result of the anointing and has the purpose of providing the believer with spiritual discernment and wisdom (I John 2:20, 27).

"Sealing" is used in the sense of ownership and/or approval. Christ was given divine approval by the Father (Matthew 3:17) and was sealed (John 6:27). References that teach the sealing of the Christian are II Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13, 4:30; and II Timothy 2:19. The seal is the Holy Spirit, himself, and this ministry of the Spirit is God's "amen" to the Christian's consecration.

"The earnest" of the Spirit is referred to in II Corinthians 1:22, 5:5 and Ephesians 1:14, and signifies a token or initial payment on a purchase. It stands as a guarantee that the full amount will be paid later. The indwelling Holy Spirit himself is "the earnest." This is the pledge that all future blessings which God has promised will be fulfilled. He has guaranteed

our complete salvation, our glorification, our likeness to Christ and our freedom from sin and its evils.

"Enduement" of the Spirit is sometimes interpreted to mean the composite of the ministries enumerated thus far. Its use in Luke 24:49 indicates being clothed with power from on high. Thus, enduement refers to being equipped for service.

The "infilling" of the Spirit is continuous as the believer is fully yielded to the indwelling Holy Spirit. A fresh infilling of the Spirit is available for each crisis that the Christian faces in the line of duty. The exhortation of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:18 indicates that the status of the fullness of the Spirit is to be the normal state of each Christian, so that he may be able to serve more effectively. The book of Acts records that Christians were filled more times than one (Acts 2:14, 4:8, 31, 6:3, 7:55, 9:17, 11:24, 13:9, 52). Through the fullness of the Spirit all the ministries of the gift of the Spirit are intensified so that the spiritual life of the believer becomes more effective in the church and her ministries.

The above-stated ministries associated with the gift of the Spirit are sovereignly and universally bestowed on all believers by God. Frequently the believer is not aware of these ministries of the Spirit until he is guided by the Holy Spirit into a study of the Word of God where they are revealed.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT MINISTERS THROUGH HIS ENABLING GIFTS

It is important that the body of Christ be cognizant of the gift ministry of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:1).

Charisma basically means "gift." Among its various usages in the Pauline letters, is the one for the special gifts which are to be exercised in the service of the Church (Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30).

Charismata (gifts of grace) comes from God's grace and can never be achieved, attained or possessed by a man's own effort.

These special endowments are granted by the direct action

of the Holy Spirit. They are not simply innate or natural abilities. However, such abilities could become gifts if the Spirit energizes and elevates them to a supernatural level of usefulness.

Every true believer is endowed with one or more gifts to minister through the Church (Ephesians 4:7, 8; I Corinthians 12:7, 11). The Holy Spirit may choose to use any believer and may exercise through him any of the spiritual gifts as the need arises. The Holy Spirit is given to empower the church, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are bestowed for edification of the believers (I Corinthians 14:31).

The church must understand that the members are to be the extension of Jesus' ministry in the world. Christ gave power and authority to minister in His name and thereby fulfill the great commission (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Paul warns the readers about how necessary it is for each one to think modestly of his own gift (Romans 12:6ff). He is to use it faithfully within the sphere that God has assigned. One is not to desire the spectacular gifts to exalt the human ego, or to mystify the brethren, but to edify the "body."

The Apostle Paul explains the variation in the gifts of grace (Romans 12:4ff; I Corinthians 12:12ff). Paul emphatically makes it clear that the dispensing of the gifts is determined by the free will of God. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts to each person according to His holy will, and each person must be thankful for the gift he has received.

However, Paul encourages the believer not to remain passive in the matter of receiving gifts (Romans 12:3 NEB). The believer is encouraged to desire the best *charismata* or it will be lost through neglect (I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6). Any striving for such *charismata* is to be done with the right motive—to serve the congregation. The Holy Spirit knows which gifts we need, and when and where. The church cannot prosper unless those needed are functioning in their place.

The gifts of the Spirit differ from the fruit of the Spirit. The gifts are Spirit-given abilities for Christian service. The fruit of the Spirit is the character and nature of Jesus Christ and is shown in the life of the believer (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Prior to our listing and defining the various gifts, note that the writer in I Corinthians 13 wants to remind his readers that love is the badge of the believer. Love should be the atmosphere of the gift ministries.

Spiritual gifts are listed in several passages: 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11 and I Peter 4:10, 11. The first nine are itemized in I Corinthians 12:8-10 (the reference is in parentheses if the gift also appears in other of the above named passages).

(1) *Word of Wisdom*: The ability to apply knowledge and insights to the specific situation at hand.

(2) *Word of Knowledge*: The insight which manifests itself in the thorough understanding of the subject it treats and the conduct determined thereby.

(3) *Faith*: A special bestowal to face anything. It goes beyond the principle of faith by which every believer lives (Romans 1:17b). It might be considered a gift of "vision," for it is the ability to see something that needs to be done and to believe that God will do it even though it looks impossible.

(4) *Gifts of Healings* (also vs. 28): The power of God to heal at every level of human need: bodily, emotionally and spiritually.

(5) *Effecting of Miracles* (also vs. 28): The work of the power of God in a supernatural way, which supercedes natural processes of nature.

(6) *Prophecy* (also vs. 28; Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:11; I Peter 4:11): Prophecy is not necessarily foretelling future things, but telling forth God's message to build, stimulate, guide and direct His people.

(7) *Distinguishing of spirits*: The ability to distinguish between truth and error and know the spirit of the individual himself. This enables the making of right decisions.

(8) *Kinds of Tongues* (also vs. 28): The ability to speak supernatural utterances and/or languages never learned by the speaker and possibly not understood by the mind of the speaker.

(9) *Interpretation of Tongues*: The power to give a full

explanation of what was uttered by the gift of tongues to the enlightenment and edification of the hearers (I Corinthians 14:5).

The order of the next four gifts of the Spirit is revealed in I Corinthians 12:28.

(10) *Apostles* (Ephesians 4:11): "Apostle" means one sent out or sent forth. The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11). Apostles were empowered to declare the foundational body of truth concerning Jesus Christ. Upon that truth the universal church rests. The apostolic gift is still being given today, though in a secondary sense. The body of truth which we have is to be taken by those who have an apostolic gift and imparted to new churches wherever they may begin. It is part of the apostolic gift to start new churches.

(11) *Teaching* (Romans 12:7): The ability to communicate truth that will be translated into Spirit-filled living by the hearers.

(12) *Helps* (give assistance): The ability to assist whenever there is a need. It is done in such a manner that others are spiritually strengthened.

(13) *Administration* (governing): The gift of organizing and guiding the church to accomplish its mission.

Now, in Romans 12:6-8, there are five more spiritual gifts that have not been discussed.

(14) *Service* (ministry, I Peter 4:11): The word for "deacon" is the same as that of "serving." It is ministering or rendering some service on behalf of the church. This is much like the gift of "helps."

(15) *Exhorting*: The encouraging, comforting, strengthening or giving reassurance to another.

(16) *Giving*: Freely giving without considering whether such can be afforded because of the confidence in the knowledge of God's provision. The giver uses wisdom and experiences joy and blessing.

(17) *Leading* (rulership): The gift of spiritual leadership. One who uses authority responsibly to the end that others are helped.

(18) *Showing Mercy*: The special aid given to those who cannot help themselves or seem undeserving.

The last two gifts mentioned are found in Ephesians 4:11. There is no special significance to their order of enumeration.

(19) *Evangelists*: Every believer should evangelize, but not all are gifted evangelists. The evangelist effectively explains and proclaims the plan of redemption in Jesus Christ which results in the new birth.

(20) *Pastors and Teachers* (Pastor-Teacher): The "shepherd" placed over a flock of believers to maintain the life of the body, by feeding and correcting it and preserving its life in vigor and vitality.

It must be remembered that wherever the real exists, the counterfeit makes its appearance. It is imperative to distinguish the genuine from the false by the tests of doctrine and works.

The Scriptures do not give us a definite hierarchical ranking of graces, although they do seem to place apostleship, prophecy and teaching above miracles, healings, helps, governments and tongues (I Corinthians 12:28). However, the apostle Paul in the Corinthian letter definitely rates prophecy superior to speaking in an unknown tongue in the public assembly, unless the tongue is interpreted. It seems that any apparent ranking of the spiritual gifts is based according to their greater or slighter value in the instructions and strengthening of the congregation (I Corinthians 12:28, 14:1-5, 12:26; Ephesians 4:12, 16).

IV. THE SPIRIT SUPERINTENDS HIS GIFTS

Some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are more subject than others to misuse and abuse. Holy Scripture provides instruction in the use of some of these. Wisdom regarding the others provides insight into their employment. We want to suggest guidelines for the employment of some of the gifts.

The Gift of Tongues

Devotional use of tongues. The expression of tongues may

occur in the private devotional life of the believer in the form of prayer and/or singing (I Corinthians 14:14, 15). This may result in his personal edification (I Corinthians 14:4) for more effective ministry. Praying or singing in a tongue is not to be considered a substitute for the devotional praying in one's native tongue which also results in edification (I Corinthians 14:14, 15). The manifestation of the devotional use of tongues in the public service is to be discouraged (I Corinthians 14:28).

Public expression of tongues. The New Testament forbids the manifestation of tongues in the public service unless it is accompanied by interpretation. The leader of the service should ascertain whether one is led to interpret when another desires to give a message in tongues (I Corinthians 14:28) and then never more than two or three. The leader should seek a stance of openness and expectancy lest he quench the Spirit in forbidding the speaking in tongues, but maintain proper order in the service (I Corinthians 14:39b, 40).

The Gift of Prophecy

This gift of prophecy may be manifested within the congregation when the Holy Spirit inspires a revelation that serves to edify, encourage or comfort the hearers. While prophecy is "revelation," it makes the mind or will of God clear—it must never be exalted to the level of biblical revelation. Prophecy may illuminate the meaning of the Scriptures but it can never replace it. In such prophetic utterances, the prophet does not have license to say whatever he wants and then to defend it as coming from the Lord. It must meet the tests of serving to build up, encourage, and comfort the church, (I Corinthians 14:3) and its validity will be attested by the body.

Claiming inspired utterance while haranguing the fellowship or individuals within the fellowship is false and may be the result of demonic pressure. This is not to say that reproof would necessarily be altogether eliminated. We should be careful of personal directive prophecy outside the ministry of a mature and submitted child of God. Extreme caution

should be used in receiving any alleged directive or predictive prophecy.

It must be remembered in the exercising of the gifts of tongues and prophecy that the person speaking is in control over the gift (I Corinthians 14:32).

The Gift of Healing

We encourage the application of the instructions of James 5, regarding prayer for healing, including confession of sin, laying on of hands, anointing with oil and the prayer of faith. We recognize that there will be instances in which healing as we expect it may not occur. In such cases we commit those needs to the all-wise and understanding God.

It must be stressed that scripture nowhere forbids the use of normal means of professional medical care and the natural healing processes in the treatment of sicknesses and disease. Indeed, God utilizes these methods in effecting healing.

The Distinguishing of Spirits

The distinguishing of spirits may be manifested in two broad areas: (1) the recognition of "truth and error" or wrong attitudes harmful to the fellowship. In such a case a word of reproof or correction will need to be spoken by the one receiving the discernment; and (2) in relation to evil spirits or demon possession of an individual. This may involve exorcism of a spirit or spirits (Acts 16:16-18; Luke 8:26-39) which must be undertaken discreetly and only after much prayer with other mature believers.

Demon possession must be carefully distinguished from mental or physical disorders or human failures that may be the result of temptations or human weaknesses common to all people. On the other hand, there *is* release in the name of Christ for those who are possessed.

Care is to be exercised in the use of these and all other spiritual gifts so that improper attention is not called to the gift and the Holy Spirit at the expense of glorifying Christ (John 16:13, 14).

In the exercising of spiritual gifts, there must be the

recognition of established authority. Paul writes, "If any one thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if any one does not recognize this, he is not recognized" (1 Corinthians 14:37, 38). There is the responsibility of each Christian bringing himself into subjection under those in authority over him. This is true even in the area of the spiritual gifts which he knows to be given him by God through the Spirit.

There is also an awesome responsibility on the part of him who is in authority. He must recognize that he indeed must issue what is "a command of the Lord" and not his own personal prejudices when he either limits or allows the expression of spiritual gifts within the fellowship.

CONCLUSION

In a study of the gift ministry of the Holy Spirit, one becomes deeply impressed with the thought that any doctrine of the church, though right in itself can be wrongly elevated to a position it does not deserve. There must be a balanced message. At its center is man's salvation in Jesus Christ.

We must place equal emphasis upon the importance of the Spirit and the Word. The Church must be open to whatever God wants her to do. The Church must discover a professed openness to the fullness of the Spirit which reconciles negative attitudes. Those of the Church who disagree on the gift ministry must remember love is the cord that never breaks. The Church must seek to have everything done under the guidance of the Spirit, in obedience to the Word, so that it exalts Jesus Christ, ministers to the Church and witnesses to the world. The deepest intention of members of the Church should be a spiritual fullness that we so desperately need.