

the Spirit in the believer. Those who have not had this experience should not feel threatened or intimidated, but should rejoice with those who have. Those who have had this experience should refrain from spiritual pride and should honour those whose experience has been different from theirs.

(e) The evidence of the Spirit within us will be a growth in the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5.22-23); note also 1 Cor. 12.31 and ch. 13). In Christ, we are transformed into a whole new being (2 Cor. 5.17).

(f) All believers need to "be filled (be constantly being filled) with the Spirit" (Eph. 5.18). When people talk about the Spirit as "it," they are often looking for a sense of power. The Spirit is a Person. It is not a question of whether we have the Spirit, but whether the Spirit has us! or, in other words, whether we are wholly committed to knowing and doing the will of God.

(g) Each believer has one or more particular spiritual gifts (*charismata*) which contribute to and build up the life of the whole Body. Paul writes about these *charismata* and their place in the Body in Rom. 12.3-8, in 1 Cor. 12 and in Eph. 4.7-13. There are other New Testament Scriptures that speak of gifts -- some writers have found 27 gifts or more. Each gift has to be valued and to find its place under the leadership gifts of Eph. 4.11-12 so that the Body will be nurtured and will grow. 1 Cor. 12-14 bears witness to the breaking of

the Body where these principles had not been understood or followed.

(h) The gifts of our "traditional" members are important for the wholeness of the Body of Christ. The gifts of our "charismatic" members are important for the wholeness of the Body of Christ. We need one another and will seek, through Word and Spirit, to build one another up in faith and love, thus expressing "the unity of the Spirit."

Ministry Together

Understanding the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement and establishing a clear biblical basis for working together

Peter J. Blackburn

The account of the first Christian Pentecost records that, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the initial group of believers were all "filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other tongues, as the Spirit enabled them" (Acts 2.4). These "tongues" were languages recognised by different parts of the crowd (v. 11), though others (possibly locals) simply thought they were drunk (v. 13). Concerning the life among those early believers, it is recorded, "Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles" (v. 43; also 5.12).

What did it all mean? It meant that God had poured out his Spirit in power on his believing people (vv. 17-21). It meant that the crucified Jesus had not only been raised from death but had ascended to the right hand of God the Father (vv. 32-33). It meant that Jesus is the Lord and the expected Messiah (v. 36). It meant that all people were now being called to repentance and faith so that they could receive forgiveness and the same Holy Spirit (vv. 38-39).

But what about the accompanying tongues and other "miracles and wonders"? In a number of other instances in Acts those signs are recorded. The conversion of Cornelius was accompanied by "speaking in

tongues and praising God" and Peter recognised that "these people have received the Holy Spirit" (10.46,47). Some disciples of John whom Paul found at Ephesus came to Christian faith and baptism. On receiving the Holy Spirit, "they spoke in tongues and prophesied" (19.6). A number of healings are recorded (3.1-10; 5.15-16; 9.32-41; 14.3, 8-10; 16.16-18; 19.11-12; 28.8-9). Other signs included the death of Ananias and Sapphira (5.1-11), the deliverance of Peter from prison (12.6-11), the blinding of Elymas (13.6-11), the earthquake at the Philippian jail (16.25-26), protection from snakebite (28.3-6).

The ending of Mark's gospel has been a major textual puzzle. The text in the oldest codices ends at 16.8. In codex B, for example, the remaining greater portion of the column and the whole of the next to the end of the page are left vacant. The New International Version has a line after v. 8 and adds vv. 9-20 after a comment "The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16.9-20."

The question for the church centres on vv. 17-18 -- "And these signs will accompany those who believe..." The words are certainly descriptive, but are they prescriptive? Are they the necessary marks of the true church and the true Christian?

By the end of the apostolic age the frequency of reported signs had declined, though they have never been entirely absent. In the latter half of the second century the Montanists prepared

themselves for the advent of the New Jerusalem, the signal for which was to be a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Tertullian was the most noted member of this group which protested the growing formalism and worldliness of the official church.

In the mid-nineteenth century the Holiness Movement emerged in USA in an attempt to preserve the original thrust of John Wesley's teachings on entire sanctification or Christian perfection. Distinguishing Christian perfection from absolute perfection, Wesley defined the former as freedom from voluntary transgression of a known law. He taught that it was received instantaneously by faith and confirmed by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The experience was often called the "second blessing."

Modern Pentecostalism began as an outgrowth of the Holiness Movement. In 1901 a Bible school called Bethel College was started at Topeka, Kansas, by Charles F. Parham who drilled his students in "Spirit baptism." The movement spread to Houston, Texas, where Parham opened a school, and then to Los Angeles, where William Seymour founded the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission on Azusa Street in 1906. The Azusa revival led to rapid growth throughout the nation.

Early pentecostals never desired new denominations, but felt they should call all Christians back to what they believed to be apostolic faith. However, the formation of denominations such as the Assemblies

churches (the Roman Catholic church was one of the first to do this) have tended to drop the term "charismatic" in favour of "renewal" (the UCA in Queensland has a Synod committee on Renewal Ministries). This term also is now used by Pentecostal churches.

I believe that we must all recognise our need for the fullness of the Spirit (as in Ephesians 5.18) – without pre-conditions. Somehow, both inside and outside the pentecostal/charismatic movements we have had pre-conditions – limiting God to working in the way that has pleased us best and making lesser Christians out of those whose experience of the Lord has differed from ours.

Word can we "keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4.3).

It is therefore important that our teaching make the following affirmations -

(a) *The Holy Spirit is a Person (not a force) – the third person of the Trinity. We do not refer to the Holy Spirit as "it" (as the Jehovah's Witnesses do!). This has a profound influence on how we understand his Person and work in the life of the Body, the Church.*

(b) *All who have truly received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour by faith have received the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1.12; 3.1-17; Rom. 8.9; Gal. 3.1-5) -- and the Father, too (Jn. 14.23)! This spiritual rebirth is the true "baptism of the Spirit." It is the point at which "the Christ out there" becomes "the Christ within." The disciples did not experience it (and did not become "Christians") until the day of Pentecost. The "believers" in Ephesus in Acts 19 had not believed in Jesus (v. 4). When they were baptised in the name of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came upon them (v.6).*

(c) *Some believers, at the time of conversion or at a later time, experience an overwhelming sense of release in the Spirit in which they speak in tongues. This may, but does not always, become a prayer language which is part of their personal relationship with God (1 Cor. 14.2,4).*

(d) *Not all believers have this experience either initially or later (1 Cor. 12.20). It is neither the sign nor the guarantee of the presence and work of*

As a Uniting Church, our preaching and teaching are to be "controlled by the Biblical witnesses" (Basis, para 5). We believe that the same Spirit under whose control men spoke the message that came from God (2 Pet. 1.21) continues to move and act in people's lives according to the written Word. He speaks about Christ (Jn. 15.26) and brings to remembrance the words of Christ (14.25; 16.15) and to fruition the works of Christ within us – just as Christ bore witness to the Father and did the works that the Father gave him to do. Only as we thus recognise the relationship between the Spirit and the