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The
Holy Spirit
in the Life of
the Church



An Assembly 75 Congregational Study Guide

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Introduction

...e joining the study of the Holy Spirit. I covet for you a time of fellowship with others, and deepening joy in the Spirit of Christ.

The Holy Spirit is moving in God's people around the world. Persons are being renewed in the Holy Spirit and congregations are experiencing new life. In such a time people search the Scriptures and have their beliefs challenged and enlarged. Differing views emerge, and conflict may result.

Can our Mennonite congregations scattered across North America search together for central affirmations of faith? The delegates to Assembly 75 believed we can. They recommend that your congregation become involved in discernment on "The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church."

The purpose is not only for growth in understandings within your congregation, but also for your congregation to mutually relate to other congregations. I believe the Holy Spirit will continue to move us toward unity in love as we take each other seriously through study of the Scriptures. In this way we demonstrate our need for each other as members of Christ's body.

The above understandings urge your congregation to become involved in the study. A task force prepared a study report of understandings on the Holy Spirit. Assembly 75 recommends that your congregation study the document and respond. In cases where the congregation as a whole decides not to participate, small groups of members can participate and respond. The results of the study should include not only your growth and that of the congregation, but also the sharing of your congregation's findings with the task force. They will want to know:

1. Your response to the document as a whole.
2. The parts which, with them, you can affirm.
3. The parts where you come out at a different place and what you affirm in-

reach agreement, calling for fur-

m the Mennonite Board of Con-
ned by the General Board to im-

y guide can be used.

orning for six Sundays, with a
ssion groups during the Sunday
ational groups or regular youth


school hour.

ible study could be used.


above all, we want your growth
its mission in fellowship, deeds

Harold E. Bauman,
MBCM Executive Secretary

Does Not Circulate



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Holy Spirit
in the Life of
the Church



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Planning Your Study

This study has three parts: a six-lesson study of Scriptures about the Holy Spirit, the *Study Report* "The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church" presented at the Mennonite Church General Assembly 1975, and a Bibliography. Hereafter the Assembly Study will be referred to as the *Study Report*.

1. The lessons are designed to bring you and the Word of God together in such a way that Jesus' Word in John 14:26 can become true for you; the Holy Spirit "will teach you all things."

2. Use the lessons to study God's Word. Unless you study the Word, Jesus' promise will pass you by. Work through a lesson each week with your family. If you do it in submission to the Lord, to the Word, and to the church God will bless you.

3. The ideal way to use the study is to involve the entire congregation. All adults study a lesson during the week. On Sunday it becomes the focus of the pastor's message and of the adult classes. However, it can also be used by individual classes.

4. The teacher's task is easy when the class meets. First, agree as a class that each person will work through each lesson before class and write out the answers to all except the thought questions. Second, when the class meets each in turn can read a question and the answer. Discussion will emerge from problems in answering and from the thought questions. These questions will encourage people to read the books especially those used in the lessons.

5. The study can be expanded to twelve lessons by either (a) using the additional lessons in separate sessions or (b) deciding to make each lesson cover two class sessions and use the additional lesson if more material is needed.

6. The Task Force that wrote the *Study Report* will provide each congregation and class with a "report form." If for some reason you do not have this form, write to Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries, Elkhart, IN 46514. Allow time at the close of the final class session to get the information requested in the report form.

The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church was prepared in response to a request by the delegates of the General Assembly of the Mennonite Church meeting at Eureka, Illinois, August 5-10, 1975. The delegates requested a study guide in order to help congregations study and respond to the report prepared by the Task Force on the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church. The guide was developed and edited by the Congregational Literature Division of the Mennonite Publishing House, Laurence Martin, director; Levi Miller, editor. A counsel and reference group consisting of Harold Bauman, Howard Charles, and David Helmuth assisted Jason Martin in the preparation of the lesson guides.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

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Lesson One

The Holy Spirit Makes Us God's Children



Introduction

Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit. Acts gives the story of the fulfillment of the promise. The New Testament letters written by the apostles interpret the promise and the fulfillment of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the continuing life of the church. This lesson explores some of the promise, fulfillment, and interpretation.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to learn just how fundamental the Holy Spirit is to the believer and to the church. What does the Holy Spirit do that makes Him so vital, so useful, so indispensable?

Prayer

O God, my heart is ready to praise You! You have made me Your child. Thank you Father. In the name of Jesus, let the Holy Spirit speak the groans and praise of my heart that words cannot express. Give me an understanding mind to know the Word of the Lord as I study it. Amen.

Scriptures

John 14:16-27, 16:5-15; Acts 2:38-49; Romans 8:1-27

Other Readings

Read the entire *Study Report* beginning on page 23. This excellent brief statement explains the Bible's teaching about the Holy Spirit and the charismatic movement. It relates the charismatic movement to the Bible and shows how the Lord is working in the church worldwide. Lesson One relates specifically to sections I to II.B.

A. Jesus Promised to Send the Holy Spirit

When Jesus went to John the Baptist to be baptized, John said, "I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mk. 1:8).

1. Who told John that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit? (Jn. 1:33, 34.)

Jesus taught that He and the Father would send the Holy Spirit. Read John 14:16-27 and 16:5-15.

2. In 14:16 and 26, who sends the Spirit?

3. In 15:26 and 16:7, who sends the Spirit?

A thought question: Is there a contradiction

in who sends the Spirit in questions 2 and 3? For help refer to John 10:30.

4. The Holy Spirit delights to exalt Jesus. What does 16:14 say the Holy Spirit does for Jesus?

Examine now the good things Jesus said the Holy Spirit does for the believer. After each verse in questions 5 to 8 write what it says the Spirit does. Simply copy from the Bible or try and restate it in your own words.

5. 15:16, 17. (Think of the function of a counselor or comforter to answer.)

6. 14:23. (How do Jesus and the Father



make Their home with us?)

7. 15:26. (Here two things are stated.)

(a) _____

(b) _____

8. 16:13. _____

We receive other good things from the Holy Spirit but to summarize Jesus' teaching look again at 14:16: "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor." Does Jesus mean by "another Counselor" that the Holy Spirit will do everything for us Jesus would if He were bodily present? I believe that is what Jesus meant. That is one way the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. The Holy Spirit renews and brings close the whole range of Jesus' ministry on earth.

B. Pentecost Began the Fulfillment of Promise

On Pentecost when the believers received the Holy Spirit Peter proclaimed the event as the fulfillment of promise. He said it was what Joel had prophesied. The testimony of the sacred word gave witness to the believers' blessing. Read Acts 2:38-41.

1. Peter explains how the Holy Spirit is received. How can one receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? (Verse 38.)

2. What promise does Peter refer to in Verse 39? (See verses 16-21 and John 1:33.)

3. Who is included as recipients of the promise? (Verses 39 and 16-21.)

4. Thought: Acts 2:17 says, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." How literally is that to be understood? There are meanings in Joel's prophecy we do not readily see. 1. In the age of the Spirit all God's people will have the privileges formerly reserved for prophets. 2. "On all flesh" means no sex distinctions and no distinc-

tions of age, race, rank, or religion.

C. God's Children Live by the Spirit

Read Romans 8:1-27. It describes the life of believers filled with the Holy Spirit. This greatly loved chapter contrasts life in the Spirit with life in the sinful nature. Life according to the flesh (sinful nature) is the only option open to the unredeemed. They are stuck with it. They may know there is a better way but cannot achieve it. Jesus said we receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. Romans 8 says the power of the Spirit sets persons free from the power of sin and death. Praise God for the grace of Jesus working out His will in us.

One way to interpret Romans 8 is to take verses 15 and 16 as the key to the chapter. God has adopted us into His family for we have received the "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (KJV). The Word not only says we are God's children but goes on to say Jesus is our older brother (8:29). The Holy Spirit makes us God's children.

Belonging to God's family involves both benefits and obligations. In general the obligations are ethical. We are freed from sin; free to live a holy life.

1. After each reference write the obligation described:

Verses 1-4 _____

Verses 12, 13 _____

2. There are many benefits for God's children. After each reference write what the Holy Spirit does for us:

Verse 2. _____

Verse 6. _____

Verse 9. _____

Verse 11. _____

Verse 13. _____

Verse 14. _____

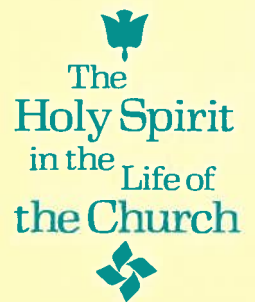
Verse 15. _____

Verse 16. _____

Verse 26. _____

Verse 27. _____

3. Thought: At the end of this lesson do you agree with the statement: "The Spirit undergirds the whole range of Christian experience from beginning to end"? (*Study Report* section III.B.2.)



Conclusion

Three points stand out: 1. Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit. 2. Peter's proclamation that the promise was being realized. 3. The Romans 8 description of life in the Spirit. Truly the Spirit is fundamental to the believer's existence as well as to the church's existence. Neither church nor believer can exist apart from the Spirit's gracious work. In the Word of God the Holy Spirit is part of the gospel. He has a highly visible place parallel in importance to Jesus' death and resurrection.

Personal or Group Response

I believe my church and I need the Holy Spirit so we can please the Lord. In the name of Jesus I will thank God and praise Him for adopting me into His family. I am ready to receive all the Lord wants to do for me.

Suggestions for an Additional Session

Title: The Glory of the Holy Spirit Ministry

Purpose: To see the New Testament church's experience of the glorious fulfillment of the long-awaited age of the Holy Spirit. But go beyond merely understanding the church in the New Testament. Desire to personally experience what they experienced. Surrender to Jesus and He will do for you what He did for them.

Scriptures: Exodus 34:28-35; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Joel 2:28-32; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18.

Other Reading: John R. W. Stott, *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, chapter 3, "A Universal Blessing."

Teaching Suggestion: Develop a lesson by using the Scriptures and preparing questions. Either mimeograph them or write them on a chalkboard so people can write them on paper for studying during the week.

Lesson Two

Be Filled with the Spirit

Introduction

This lesson title is a command from Ephesians 5:18. It is an imperative. We have only one option: to obey. Some people say that they are ready to obey but don't know how. Give yourself in openness to the Word and you will learn how.

Purpose

This lesson is basically a scriptural study to help understand certain words: baptism of the Spirit, fullness of the Spirit, receiving the Spirit, the anointing of the Spirit. These frequently used words are not as important as the reality at which they point. The purpose is to get behind the words to the reality in order to understand and experience it.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, enable me to give myself more fully to You so that You can open 7



my mind and heart. Make me able to receive Your will. Make me able to become Jesus-like. Make me able to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Scriptures

John 1:29-34, 3:5-8, 7:34-39; Acts 1:4-8, 2:1-4, 37-39, 4:23-31; Ephesians 5:15-20.

Other Resources

Study Report section III.C.; Stott, *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*; Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit*, Chapter One.

Lesson two relates directly to section III.C. of the *Study Report*, page 25. By all means read it. It will help you understand the New Testament teaching about the Holy Spirit. The brief book by Stott and Chapter One of the book by Kraus are also valuable for Lesson Two.

A. Jesus Received the Holy Spirit and He Baptizes with the Holy Spirit

Read John 1:20-34. In the Old Testament when a person was set apart for leadership of God's people the "Spirit of the Lord came upon him." In the same way Jesus was designated Leader when the Spirit came down and remained on Him. John the Baptist observed the event, recognized its significance, and immediately testified "this is the Son of God."

Read John 3:5-8.

1. In verse 5, how is a person reborn?

2. In verse 8, to what does Jesus compare the Spirit?

Nicodemus wanted to know the details of how a person is born again. Jesus says the Spirit has freedom to work as He sees best in bringing people to faith. "The wind blows where it wills." It is not up to us to set a pattern for the new birth. That would hinder the Spirit. In the same way it is not up to us to set a pattern for the work of the Spirit in the believer. (Compare this conclusion with the *Study Guide* page 25, III. C.2. and III. C.3.b.1.

Read John 7:37-39.

3. Of whom did Jesus speak when He used the words "living water?"

4. What must a person do to experience living water from within? (v. 38).

Galatians 3:2 says the Spirit is received by "hearing with faith." If you believe the gospel you receive the Spirit.

8 5. Thought: If Galatians 3:2 and John

7:37-39 are combined how would you explain to someone else how to receive the Holy Spirit?

The meaning of Jesus' words in verses 37-39 need further explanation. Jesus spoke these words on the last (eighth) day of the feast of Tabernacles. Every morning of the feast a priest brought a pitcher of water from the pool of Siloam and poured it out in the temple. This symbolized two things: First, the miraculous provision of water from a rock when Israel wandered in Sinai (Ex. 17:6). Second, the future outpouring of the Spirit "as the scripture has said."

Jesus placed Himself at the heart of this symbolism and loudly proclaimed He was the source of living water. In 1 Corinthians 10:4 Paul draws the same parallel.

How is the Holy Spirit received? Jesus teaches how in four verbs: thirsting, coming, drinking, believing. These present tense verbs mean continuous and repeated action. Keep thirsting for Jesus. Keep coming to Jesus. Keep drinking the water He gives. Keep believing in Jesus. He is the only source of a full, overflowing life. His words in verses 37 and 38 apply equally to becoming a believer and to the daily life of faith. Read Acts 1:4-8.

6. What did Jesus command the disciples? (v. 4).

7. If they obeyed Jesus what would happen? (v. 5).

In this passage Jesus promised the bap-

tism with the Holy Spirit for His disciples. Jesus is here recalling John's prophecy (Jn. 1:33) that Jesus would baptize people with the Holy Spirit.

B. Jesus' Promise Was Fulfilled on Pentecost

Read Acts 2:1-4.

1. In verse 4 how is the realization of Jesus' promise described?

2. When they were filled with the Spirit they spoke in tongues. What did they speak about? (v. 11).

3. Thought: What do Peter's words in 2:14-21 mean about the difference between the past and the present age? (Old and New Covenant).

Read Acts 2:37-39.

4. What is the condition here for receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit?

In Acts 2:1-4 the Holy Spirit filled Jesus' disciples as Jesus had promised. Before that day ended Peter told unbelievers to repent and be baptized and "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit comes with repentance. Also He fills believers. Read Acts 4:23-31.

5. What did the believers experience after they prayed?

These are the same persons who were previously filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

C. We Are Commanded to Be Filled with the Spirit

Read Ephesians 5:15-20.

1. What are we to understand? (v. 17).

2. The Lord's will is defined in verses 18-20. After each reference write the part of the Lord's will given there:

18a. _____

18b. _____

19a. _____

19b. _____

20. _____

Are drunkenness and fullness of the Spirit parallels or opposites? The Holy Spirit loves to exalt Jesus. The Holy Spirit makes us like Jesus. Drunkenness makes us like beasts. The two are opposites.

Conclusion

This study of Scripture focuses on the experience of rebirth and the life of faith that follows. As the Word clearly shows, the Holy Spirit is involved in first producing and then maintaining faith. No one can live without the gracious working of the Spirit. He brings power to us.

The ideal for believers is a life "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). This is the norm for Christian living. Read the *Study Report* section III.C.3b.

Review the key words and experiences on the chart on page 10.

Personal or Group Response

I want to be filled with the Spirit. I yield my life to the control of the Lord Jesus and the Spirit.

Suggestions for an Additional Session

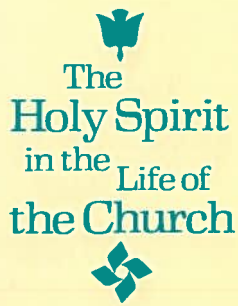
Title: Evidences of the Fullness of the Spirit.

Purpose: Lesson Two was a rather general examination of religious experience in the New Testament. The ideal is fullness of the Spirit. The purpose of this lesson is more specific: how do I know if I am full of the Spirit?

Scriptures: Ephesians 5:15 — 6:9, Colossians 3:16, 17, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Other Reading: Assembly 75 *Study Report*. III.C. John R. W. Stott, *The Baptism and Fullness of the Spirit*. Chapter 7 "Marks of the Fullness of the Spirit."





Be Filled with the Spirit

<i>Whose Experience</i>	<i>When It Happened</i>	<i>How It Is Described</i>
Jesus.	At his water baptism (Jn. 1:29-34).	Spirit descended upon Him like a dove.
Jesus teaching Nicodemus. It applies to everyone.	New Birth (Jn. 3:5-8).	Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom.
Jesus' teaching for everyone about living water.	Conversion and continuously afterward. (Jn. 7:27-39).	Out of his heart shall flow . . . living water.
Disciples.	Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).	They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.
Peter teaching the crowd. Applies to everyone.	Pentecost. Unbelievers seeking help. (Acts 2:37-39).	Repent . . . and you shall receive the . . . Holy Spirit.
Persons already believers. Same ones as on Pentecost.	Prayer meeting (Acts 4:23-31).	They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.
Ephesian believers. Applies to all believers.	It is a continuous and repeated experience (Eph. 5:15-20).	Be filled with the Spirit.

Lesson Three

The Body of Christ

Introduction

Possibly in our time the most neglected and least understood aspect of the Holy Spirit is His work in building the community of faith. Much is in print about the Spirit but little about the Spirit giving shape to the church. I am convinced that the Lord has uniquely equipped the Mennonite Church to fill this gap because we have a ready-made understanding of the church which is close to the New Testament description of the church as the community of the Holy Spirit.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to learn how the Holy Spirit creates the community of faith which the Word often calls the body of Christ.

Prayer

Thank you, Father, for making me a member of Your body. I praise You, Lord Jesus, the head of the body of Christ. I want to do Your will in fellowship with the other members of the body. Let the Holy Spirit glorify You by making us the true and faithful body so the world can see Jesus on the earth. I praise You, Father in heaven, for Your grace with us in Jesus. Amen.

Scriptures

John 16:7, 13, 14, 12:32, 14:26; 1 Corinthians 12:1-30; Ephesians 4:7-16; Galatians 5:13-26.

Other Readings

Study Report page 24, III.B.4-5-6. Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit*, Chapters 2 to 6.

A. The Holy Spirit Exalts Jesus

Read John 12:32; 14:26; 16:7, 13, 14. These three references show two things chiefly:

- (1) Jesus needs to be and will be exalted.
- (2) The Holy Spirit exalts Jesus.

1. In John 12:32, who will draw all men to Himself?

2. How will He attract people?

3. Drawing people to Jesus needs to happen in our time. How can it happen?

Jesus spoke of His death in verses 32 and 33. By His death He draws people. Jesus wants to attract people today. It is up to the church to lift up Jesus for all to see. That is evangelism. How does the church lift up Jesus? By being the body of Christ. We turn now to verses that show how Jesus is glorified in the believer.

4. In 14:26, write the two things the Holy Spirit does:

(a) _____

(b) _____

5. Thought: How does the reminding and teaching work of the Holy Spirit equip for evangelism?

6. In 16:7, why is it better that Jesus went away?

Physically Jesus could not relate to many people, a few hundred at a time. The Counselor is not limited that way. He relates without physical limitations. What does the Spirit do for us? He does the same things Jesus would if He were right here. In John 14:16 Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor." Another Counselor? Yes, another who will continue Jesus' work for us.

7. In 16:13, what does the Spirit do for the believer?

8. At the beginning of verse 14, what does the Spirit do for Jesus?

The passages from John show some of the ways the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. The next part of the lesson shows the exaltation of Jesus in the community of believers where the Holy Spirit reproduces Jesus' works and character.

B. The Holy Spirit Recreates Jesus' Character and Works

Read Galatians 5:13-26. This passage points to one aspect of the body of Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is manifested in the body of Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is Jesus' character. The spiritual gifts are Jesus' deeds. The work of the Holy Spirit is to recreate Jesus' character and deeds in the church. Such a church is the body of Christ. Read 1 Corinthians 12. There are four divisions in this chapter: 1. Verses 1-6, introductory remarks about spiritual gifts. 2. Verses 7-11, a catalog of nine gifts. 3. Verses



12-26, a comparison of the church to a body. 4. Verses 27-31, another catalog of gifts.

1. About what shouldn't we be ignorant? (v. 1).

2. Who are the three persons who give the gifts? (vv. 4-6).

3. Why is the manifestation of the Spirit given? (v. 7).

4. Who produces the spiritual gifts? (v. 11).

We need to be informed about the spiritual gifts (v. 1). The Holy Spirit gives them (v. 11). We should eagerly desire them (v. 31). The gifts are the works of Jesus recreated in the community of believers by the Holy Spirit. That is why the church is called the body of Christ.

5. Thought: Why must we be informed about the spiritual gifts and why should we eagerly desire them?

6. Read the section about the body (vv. 12-26). Who creates the body? (v. 13).

Notice how interdependent the members are.

7. The last section (vv. 27-30) begins with: "Now you are the body of Christ." Who has God appointed in the church?

Notice how much these gifts parallel Jesus' ministry. "Now you are the body of Christ" means the church does the things Jesus did when He was here bodily.

Read Ephesians 4:7-16. Here again a catalog of gifts is linked with a teaching about the body. Four main catalogs of gifts are in Paul's letters and each one is linked with a teaching that the church is the body of Christ. Hallelujah. I want to lift up Jesus by being a member of His body.

8. In Ephesians 4:12, what do the gifts do for the body?

Notice how building up the body is described (vv. 13-16).

The chart on page 13 summarizes the passages used in this lesson. The four catalogs of gifts appear at the bottom. The left-hand column gives the same gifts except for duplications.

Conclusion

First, the body of Christ draws people. As the chart shows, evangelism happens when the church is the body of Christ. Read again the Assembly 75 *Study Report* section III.B.4-6, page 24. Second, the body of Christ is the community where the Spirit recreates the character and deeds of Jesus. His character and deeds are lifted up in the fruit and gifts of the Spirit. Third, the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised (Acts 1:8) enables us together to be Jesus' body.

Personal or Group Response

I believe the Holy Spirit is working to make our congregation the body of Christ. I now yield myself to the Spirit's working so He can make us His body.

Suggestions for an Additional Session

Title: Body Ministry.

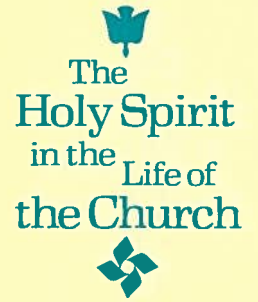
Purpose: The phrase "body ministry" is sometimes used for a unique ministry that the church has the privilege to exercise. In this lesson you will study Scriptures that will help you learn and practice body ministry in the New Testament way.

Scriptures: Holy kiss: Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14. Washing feet: John 13:1-17; 1 Timothy 5:9, 10. Healing: Mark 5:25-34; James 5:13-16. Fasting: Matthew 4:2, 6:16-18; Mark 2:18-20; Acts 13:1-4. Laying on hands: 1

Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6; Matthew 19:13; Acts 6:6; Hebrews 6:2.

Other Reading. Little in the bibliography relates directly to "Body Ministry." Study

the section on healing in the *Study Report*. Chapter Two in Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit*, relates in a general way.



The Body of Christ

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 4:17). "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ . . . and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

To Repent Means

Join This Community



Leave This Community

The Works of the Flesh

- Sexual immorality
- Impurity
- Debauchery
- Idoltry
- Witchcraft
- Hatred
- Discord
- Jealousy
- Fits of rage
- Selfish ambition
- Dissensions
- Factions
- Envy
- Drunkenness
- Orgies

Those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:21.

The mind of sinful man is death. Romans 8:6.

Romans 12:6-8

Serving Teaching
 Propheying Leadership
 Encouraging Showing Mercy
 Contributing

1 Corinthians 12:7-10

Wisdom Testing
 Knowledge Tongues
 Faith Healing
 Interpretation Prophecy
 Miracles

1 Corinthians 12:28

Apostles Administration
 Prophets Tongues
 Miracle Workers Teachers
 Healing

Ephesians 4:11, 12

Apostles
 Prophets
 Evangelists
 Teachers
 Pastors

Lesson Four

The Spiritual Gifts

Introduction

In the Old Testament the glory of God, the Shekinah, God dwelling in the temple made Israel the people of God. In the New Testament the church is the new Israel made so by God dwelling not in a building but in His people. Now, the glory of Jesus is the Shekinah shining out from the body of Christ on a sin-darkened world. The glory of Jesus is manifested where the Holy Spirit dwells and brings forth anew Jesus' deeds and character which are the spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to learn from the Bible what the spiritual gifts are so we can receive and use them.

Prayer

Father in heaven may Your kingdom come where Your will is done on earth. I praise You, Father, for Jesus Christ. In my heart I acknowledge Him as the Holy Lord. Give me willingness to learn Your will for the church about spiritual gifts. Amen.

Scriptures

Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12 and 14; Ephesians 4:1-16.

Other Readings

Study Report section, pages 26-28, III.D.E. Hamilton, *The Charismatic Movement*, Chapter one. Gangel, *You and Your Spiritual Gift*.

A. Let the Word Control Your Attitudes About the Gifts of the Spirit

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1. First Corinthians 1:7 indicates the Corinthians had all the gifts. But they may not have understood their proper use. What is Paul's desire for the church? (12:1)

Following each reference write the attitude expressed about gifts:

2. 12:31. _____

3. 14:1. _____

4. 14:5. _____

5. 14:12. _____

6. 14:18 _____

14 7. 14:39, 40. _____

8. Thought: If all the gifts are the work of the Spirit (12:11) should you fear or desire them?

The spiritual gifts are the power Jesus promised, "when the Holy Spirit comes upon you" (Acts 1:8). When they were filled with the Spirit on Pentecost a number of gifts were immediately manifested: tongues (Acts 2:4); evangelism (2:41, 47); teaching (2:42); miracles (2:43); and giving (2:45). The newborn church witnessed to Jesus not just with evangelism but with all the gifts.

Are the spiritual gifts for today? Yes. The church cannot witness to Jesus without them. We are the body of Christ. Can a body live without eyes, mouth, lungs, stomach, and legs? No. In short it is impossible to have a healthy church apart from exercise of the gifts of the Spirit by the members of the body.

B. Let the Word Define the Various Gifts.

It will not be possible in one lesson to

describe all the gifts. Some of them are fairly well understood today and will be grouped together for brief treatment. See Lesson Three for a listing of eighteen distinct gifts. Some say there are more; some say fewer. Some say no other gifts than those are named in the New Testament. Some say others were exercised then and there may be others now. Those questions are important but our concern is to understand the gifts, not to determine whether the list of gifts is exhaustive. (Read the *Study Report*, page 26, section III.D.2.)

1. Wisdom and Knowledge

Both are speech gifts and are related in meaning. Here is a comparison of some uses:

<i>Wisdom</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>
James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom . . . ask . . . and it will be given."	First Timothy 2:4-6: ". . . come to the knowledge of the truth . . . one God . . . one mediator . . . Christ Jesus"
First Corinthians 2:6-16: "We do impart wisdom" (v. 6) "not . . . human wisdom . . . but taught by the Spirit" (v. 13). "But we have the mind of Christ" (v. 16).	Romans 2:20: ". . . the law the embodiment of knowledge."
SUMMARY: Wisdom is to know the mind of Jesus about the facts in the Word.	SUMMARY: Knowledge is to know the facts in the Word.

2. Faith and Healing

Faith, healing, and miracles can be viewed as related gifts. Much controversy has surrounded healing and miracles, especially healing. Jesus healed physically and spiritually. He worked for the healing of the whole person. He led them to faith, (Mt. 15:21-28). He healed the sick and demon possessed (Mk. 1:29-34). He said those who believe in Him will do "greater works than these" (Jn. 14:12). (Read *Study Report*, page 26, III.D.4.)

a. Read James 5:13-18. Who offers the prayer of faith?

b. Who heals the sick person? (v. 15).

c. Read Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 12:3. Which words are used to express faith?

lift up Jesus by leading people to say, "Jesus is Lord." Do you think the following statements agree with Scripture? Every healing and miracle is aimed at helping people to say, "Jesus is Lord." If healing causes that to happen, then God will heal. If healing will not make that happen, God will not heal. By faith we submit to the accomplishment of God's will.

3. Faith and Miracles

Read Acts 12:1-11. What miracle happened?

Faith has the same relationship to miracles as to healing. The Lord works miracles of healing and other miracles to strengthen

the believer's faith and to bring unbelievers to faith. By faith we submit to the Lord the right to determine whether or not a miraculous work is the way to help people say, "Jesus is Lord."

4. Prophecy and Testing

Testing and Distinguishing Spirits are synonyms.

a. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21. Which two gifts are linked here?

b. Read 1 Corinthians 14:29-33. When prophets speak, what are the listeners doing? (v. 29).

c. What good is prophecy to accomplish? (v. 31).

Healing is to bring glory to God and to

In 1 Corinthians 13:2 what does prophecy **15**

understand?

The prophetic gift allows a speaker to utter the mind of God. Prediction is a minor part of prophecy. Its main function is to speak the will of God about a situation or problem. Such knowledge of God's will is revealed by the Holy Spirit. Prophecy often comes through a revelation of the meaning of a part of God's Word with the realization that that meaning is God's will for right now.

d. Read 1 John 4:1-3. What is the function of testing?

What measure is used in testing?

Why do you think prophecy and testing spirits are linked in Scripture?

When one prophesies it is easy for human

emotions and prejudices to contaminate the message from God. Testing of spirits helps the prophet and the congregation to know when the word from the Lord has been changed with a word from man.

5. *Tongues and Interpretation*

a. What does 1 Corinthians 12:28 say about the origin of tongues?

b. Read 1 Corinthians 14:26-28. What instructions are given for the use of tongues in worship?

Interpretation is not word for word translation but gives the meaning of the message. (Read *Study Report*, page 27, III.E.1.)

6. *The Remaining Gifts*

Serving	Contributing	Apostles
Teaching	Leadership	Evangelists
Encouraging	Showing Mercy	Pastors

They are less controversial *but not less important*. For a study of all the spiritual gifts, the book *You and the Spiritual Gifts* by Gangel is helpful. (See bibliography, page 22.)

Conclusion

The spiritual gifts come from God. We should desire them. The church is weakened when some are missing. God's glory shines out from the church in which the gifts and the fruit are manifested, for that is Christ's body.

Personal or Group Response

We are willing to accept all the spiritual gifts in the church. We seek to be open and obedient to Jesus believing He will bless us.

Suggestions for an Additional Session

Title: The Fruit of the Spirit.

Purpose: To understand how the Spirit makes us Christlike by giving us the fruit of the Spirit.

Scriptures: Galatians 5:13-26; John 15:1-17; 1 Corinthians 13. Find other references where fruits are mentioned. Think of the fruits as describing Jesus' personality. No-

tice the contrast between fruit and flesh.

Other Reading: John Drescher, *Spirit Fruit*. Herald Press. Scottdale, Pa. *Study Report* section V. 4, 5 and VII.3. Donald Gee, *Fruitful or Barren?* Gospel Publishing House. Springfield, Mo. Hannah Hurnard, *Mountain of Spices*. Fleming H. Revell. Old Tappan, N.J.

Lesson Five

The Spiritual Gifts in the Congregation



Introduction

Lesson Four attempted to define some of the gifts. This lesson focuses on the use of gifts in the life of a congregation. What is the use of gifts to accomplish for both the redeemed and the unredeemed?

Purpose

This lesson will explore how the gifts are used to carry out all the church's work.

Prayer

We praise You, Heavenly Father, with our hearts, with our lips, and with our deeds. You enabled us to do that by the working of Your grace. Lord, we are open to all the gifts You give us. You give generously to all without finding fault. You give both the desire and the power to please You; therefore we praise You in Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture

1 Corinthians 12 — 14.

Other Readings

Study Report section V.A. and VI. Hamilton, ed., *The Charismatic Movement*; Chapter Five, "The Charismatic Gifts in Worship" by J. M. Ford.

A. The Spiritual Gifts Build Up the Church

The use of gifts caused trouble in the church at Corinth. The trouble arose not from their use but from misuse. Paul identified the problem as ignorance about gifts (12:1) and lack of love (chapter 13). In chapters 12 to 14 Paul counsels the church about the use and abuse of gifts in words that are as valid for now as they were then. To get an overview of the three chapters study the outline on page 17 carefully.

Read First Corinthians 12.

1. Why is the manifestation of the Spirit given? (v. 7).

2. In verse 11 who gives the gifts and on what basis does He give them?

3. Verses 12-26 compare the church to a body. What does this passage tell us about

using spiritual gifts?

4. What do you think are the greater gifts of verse 31? Refer to 14:12.

Read chapter 13 (12:31b introduces chapter 13).

5. What is the "more excellent way"?

6. Which four spiritual gifts are mentioned in 13:1, 2?

7. Love is a Spirit fruit. How would you describe the position love is given? (*Study Report*, page 27, III.D.5.)

8. Thought: Chapter 13 is often read alone as though it were isolated. But it is the central part of an extended instruction on

Spiritual Gifts in Worship

First Corinthians 12 — 14

CHAPTER 12

A problem at Corinth: the use of spiritual gifts was dividing the church. Each one used his gift without respect for others.

1-11

Spiritual Gifts

Although there are many gifts

The Same Spirit

The Same Lord

The Same God

inspires all of them . . . for the common good.

12-31a

The Body of Christ, the Church

Each part of a body contributes to the entire body's health. So it is also with the use of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ.

"Eagerly desire the greater gifts."

CHAPTER 13

"And now I will show you the most excellent way."

12:31b — 13:13

Love

The best way is to use the gifts in loving respect for each other.

If I:

- speak in tongues
- prophesy
- know mysteries and knowledge
- have great faith
- give to the poor
- endure persecution

but have no love "I am nothing."

- prophecies will cease
- tongues will be stilled
- knowledge will pass away

But "love never fails."

CHAPTER 14

Chapter 14 is a long discussion of how to use tongues and prophecy in worship.

14:1-25

Gifts of Prophecy, Testing, Tongues, Interpretation

The proper motivation is, "Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts."

The exercise of a gift in church should: strengthen encourage comfort (see v. 3).

The gifts should also lead sinners to worship and exclaim: "God is really among you" (vv. 24, 25).

26-40

Orderly Worship

"Let all things be done for edification.

If everyone wants to contribute to worship make sure you maintain order. Earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues."

In summary: First Corinthians 12 — 14 shows how spiritual gifts are to be used. Exercise of gifts in worship is a congregational concern. The use of gifts is subordinate to the good of the body. Gifts are not only for an individual's enjoyment. Their use is to build up the body and to make sinners fall down and exclaim: "God is really among you!"

the use of gifts. What is the meaning of this chapter for using gifts in the church?

Read chapter 14. Chapter 13 gives a definition of love. Chapter 14 goes beyond definition to action. What are the deeds of love in the use of gifts? Chapter 14 gives the answer.

9. After each reference write how love is expressed in the use of gifts:

Verse 3. _____

Verse 5. _____

Verse 12. _____

Verse 19. _____

Verse 26. _____

Verse 31. _____

Verse 39. _____

Verse 40. _____

10. What is the repeatedly stated goal for use of gifts in chapter 14?

Chapters 12-14 are rich with instruction about spiritual gifts. In this teaching lies a touching expression of God-given tenderness between believers. When the congregation worships, the Lord Jesus is lifted up by the common concern of His people. Contrary to every person being for himself, in the congregation each one surrenders the use of the gifts to build up the body. Mutual support and mutual accountability are the order of church life. Each one supports the other in all of life. Each one is accountable to all the others in all of his life.

B. The Spiritual Gifts are to Bring the Lost to Faith

In section A. you studied how gifts edify the believer. What about the lost? Read First

Corinthians 14:22-25.

1. What effect will prophecy have on unbelievers?

2. Thought: If your congregation is to have a similar effect on unbelievers what kind of worship should you have? Evangelism by a "gifted" congregation is the New Testament method of evangelism. The unbeliever comes to the Lord when he observes Holy Spirit power in spiritual fruit and gifts manifested in the church. A Holy Spirit empowered community will attract people away from a devil controlled community characterized by the works of the flesh. What does the church offer? A community so characterized by spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit that Jesus is continually glorified. Read Luke 12:11, 12 and Acts 6:8 — 7:1-60.

3. Stephen's trial shows Jesus' words fulfilled. What gifts and fruit were manifested in Stephen? (6:10; 7:60).

Read Acts 8:4-7, 26-40.

4. What gifts and fruit enabled Philip to evangelize?

Read Acts 11:19-30. This is a brief description of a new church in Antioch.

5. List the spiritual gifts manifested in Antioch.

6. Thought: 1 Corinthians 12 — 14 is often interpreted in two ways: (a) When the gifts are used in worship, they must edify and build up the church. This understanding holds that the lists of gifts (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10; 12:28; Eph. 4:11) are representative rather than exhaustive. The gifts are heaven's response to the needs of the church (see *Study Report*, page 26, III. D. 1, 2). If needs do not exist, certain gifts may not be manifest. Most important, the gifts are used to build up the body and to make sinners fall down and exclaim, "God is really among you." This is evangelism (see *Study Report*, page 27, III. D, 5 and page 31, VII. 3). (b) A second interpretation holds that all the gifts mentioned are for the church's edification and should be present in every congregation. This understanding holds that the lists of gifts are fixed and required of every congregation for edification. Although the gifts should not be elevated above the giver (see *Study Report*) (V.A.5), all should be manifest. If all the gifts are present, all members are edified. If some are not present, some members are not edified and the rest only partially. If any gift is absent, evangelism falters.

Conclusion

The spiritual gifts are necessary to all the church's work. They edify the body when properly used in worship. They bring unbelievers to faith. By means of the spiritual gifts the church can witness to Jesus.

Personal or Group Response

We will follow the way of love and eagerly desire the gifts given by the Spirit for the common good.

Suggestions for an Additional Session

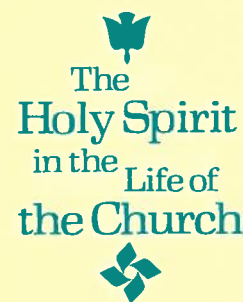
Title: Mutual Support and Mutual Accountability.

Purpose: The title points to a fundamental quality of life in the Holy Spirit led community. This lesson is geared to help you understand that life so you can live it.

Scriptures: The Spirit brings interdepen-

dence (Eph. 4:1-16); helping each other deal with anger (4:25-32); supporting each other in worship (5:15-20); mutual accountability in marriage (5:21-33).

Other Reading: Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit*, chapters 4 and 5. *Study Report*, section V.A.



Lesson Six

Understanding the Charismatic Movement

Introduction

This lesson will contain less Bible study than the previous ones. Charismatic renewal is influencing the church on a global scale. We should not be ignorant about it because it is widespread. Charismatic renewal is influencing the Mennonite Church in many ways.

Purpose

This concluding lesson should help relate the charismatic movement to Scripture and to the renewal of the church.

Prayer

Lord, renew Your wonders in our day as by a new Pentecost. We praise You, Jesus, as Head of the body. We praise You as Lord of history. Help us in our weakness for our need is great. We joyfully accept whatever You are doing now in the church. We praise, You Lord Jesus. Amen.

Scriptures

The passages used are general and appear throughout the lesson.

Other Readings

Study Report, Sections IV-V. Hamilton, *The Charismatic Movement*. Chapters 2, 4, 7, 9, 10. Ralph Martin, *Fire on the Earth*, Word of Life, P. O. Box 331, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Martin is Catholic and sympathetic to charismatic renewal and to people of other denominations. He gives a readable overview of renewal worldwide. Order from the publisher. Hamilton's book, chapters two and seven, traces beginnings of the modern charismatic movement to an abandoned stable on Azusa Street, Los Angeles, 1906. The meetings moved to an unused church building where the intense revival continued with services lasting up to fifteen hours. Most churches in the Pentecostal tradition trace back to Azusa Street. In 1960 at a Van Nuys, California, Episcopal Church, believers received the "baptism in the Holy Spirit," marking start of charismatic renewal in established non-Pentecostal churches.

How shall we regard the charismatic movement and how can it be evaluated? Sections IV and V on pages 29-31 of the *Study Report* give an evaluation. This lesson will highlight the *Study Report* and attempt to relate it to Scripture.

A. Positive Contributions of Charismatic Renewal (Section IV.C.)

The *Study Report* lists 27 positive contributions. In the following listing they are abbreviated and grouped by theme. Where an applicable passage was found it follows in contribution. (1) Read *Study Report*, page 28, IV. C. (2) Read each of the following and its Scripture. (3) If you find the contribution scriptural and positive write "good" in the margin next to it.

The Lordship of Jesus

1. Renewed commitment to Jesus. First Peter 3:15; Acts 4:23-31.
2. Increase in praising the Lord. Colossians 3:15-17; Revelation 5:12-14.
3. New expectation of Jesus' return. First Thessalonians 4:13 — 5:11; Revelation 22:12-21.
4. A great love for Jesus. First John 5:1; John 14:23, 24.

Spiritual Gifts and Power

1. Miracles, healing, answered prayers. Hebrews 2:3, 4; John 14:11-15.
2. Renewal of prophecy and tongues. Acts 2:17, 18, 10:44-46, 21:8, 9.
3. Growth in faith. Colossians 1:4.
4. Effective evangelism. Acts 2:47.

The Character of the Church

1. New forms of community and church life. Acts 2:42-47.
2. Great unity and love in the brotherhood and between denominations. Colossians 1:3, 4.
3. Raising up new leaders. First Corinthians 12:28.
4. Desire to work in existing churches.

General

1. Devotion to the Scriptures. Acts 2:42.
2. Giving money and time is increased. Acts 2:44, 45.
3. New birth is emphasized. John 3:3-8.
4. It holds young people who might otherwise leave the church.
5. Less legalism and more spiritual discernment. Galatians 3:2.

B. Potential weaknesses (Page 29, Section IV.D-E-F)

The *Study Report* lists eleven but says "obviously many of these problems are not due entirely to the charismatic movement." (Read IV. E.)

In the following listing the weaknesses are abbreviated. Read *Study Report* IV. D-E-F and evaluate these weaknesses grading from one to five. If this is a strong weakness due to the movement, give a five; otherwise give a lower number.

Potential Weaknesses in the Charismatic Movement.

1. Separation from noncharismatics.
2. Preoccupation with the more dramatic gifts.
3. Viewing tongues and healing as unique marks of faith.
4. Attributing all problems to the devil's work thus absolving individuals of personal responsibility.
5. Using stereotyped language.
6. Legalistic judging and labeling of other Christians.
7. Failure to appreciate the full range of the Holy Spirit's work.
8. Concentrate on personal feelings to the neglect of discipleship.
9. Religious arrogance.
10. Careless use of Scripture and lack of serious Bible study.

11. Exploitation of gifts for selfish reasons. After evaluating these positive and negative contributions, do you agree with these statements about charismatic renewal in the *Study Report* IV. f: "Its overall contribution is basically a positive one. . . . What the future course of the charismatic movement may be is not known, but this should not prevent us today from recognizing the authentic hand of God in it—judging, quickening, inspiring, encouraging, forgiving, and strengthening His people."

C. Counsel for All Christians (Page 29, Study Report V.A.)

Six suggestions are given for maintaining unity between charismatics and non-charismatics. Read V.A. and the following abbreviated statements. Is this good counsel for maintaining unity? Can you use it?

1. Our unity is in the Spirit (Eph. 4:3).
2. Mutual helpfulness is sharing our experiences in love.
3. God is sovereign and we cannot tell Him how to carry out His purposes.
4. We need openness to all the Spirit's gifts and use them with love.
5. Our focus is not on gifts but on how the Spirit makes us like Jesus.
6. We must confess our blindness, prejudice, and disobedience and turn anew to Jesus.

D. Counsel for "Charismatic" Christians (Study Report V.B.)

Seven suggestions are given to maintain unity in the body of Christ. Read section V.B. carefully and answer the following questions:

1. Overall does it express tenderness to persons and sensitivity to Scripture?
2. Would you want charismatic Christians to follow this counsel?
3. The pronoun "we" is used throughout *Study Report* V.A.B. What does such usage suggest?

E. Counsel to Pastors (Page 30, Study Report V.C. and VI.B.)

Read these brief descriptions of the pastor's role in the congregation with respect to the use of the gifts of the Spirit.

1. In reflecting over the biblical studies in the first five lessons, do you find this description of the pastor's role in harmony with Scripture.

2. VI.B. 1. says "The pastor can no longer be the sole minister of God to the people but



is one among others exercising the gifts given to the whole congregation." Can you affirm that statement? Does it agree with Ephesians 4:11-13? Are you ready to be one of God's ministers in that kind of situation?

Conclusion

The *Study Report* on page 28 (IV.A.) says it is not yet possible to "make a thorough assessment of the present or potential contribution of the movement . . . it is appropriate that some observations and tentative judgments be offered for consideration and testing." In section IV.f. the authors offer these evaluations of charismatic renewal:

1. "Its overall contribution is basically a healthy one."
2. We should recognize "the authentic hand of God in it — judging, quickening inspiring, encouraging, forgiving, and strengthening His people.

Personal or Group Response

The Task Force that prepared the *Study Report* has prepared an evaluation or "report form" for your congregation to complete. Please give this matter time for careful consideration. It will help the Mennonite Church.

Suggestions for an Additional Session

Title: The Holy Spirit Is God's Seal of Ownership.

Purpose: The Holy Spirit undergirds the whole range of Christian experience: brings us to faith in Jesus, enables us to remain obedient, and assures us of future redemption. This lesson would emphasize these three

functions of the spirit.

Scriptures: New birth, John 3:1-21. Enabling, 1 John 2:26, 27; 3:21, 22. Redemption, Romans 8:23; 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22, 4:16, 18, 5:10; Ephesians 4:30.

Other Reading: *Study Report* III.A.B.

Bibliography

Most of these books are referred to in the study and reflect various points of view.

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Mennonite Church General Assembly 1975



The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church



A study report recommended by the Assembly for congregational study and response.

- I. Why This Study?
- II. What Are the Focal Points of Concern?
- III. Some Biblical Guidelines
- IV. Toward an Evaluation of the Charismatic Movement
- V. Practical Suggestions
- VI. The Discovery and Exercise of Gifts
- VII. Conclusions

I. Why This Study?

Historical circumstances often call attention to particular aspects of the church's faith and life that need fresh consideration. The emergence and growth of the modern charismatic movement in recent years has done this. Many Christians within our church and beyond have become increasingly aware of the significant role of the Holy Spirit in Christian theology and experience. This heightened awareness is reflected in various ways: the rise of a considerable body of literature on the work and especially the gifts of the Spirit; the emergence of charismatic prayer meetings, fellowships, and communities; the staging of study conferences, seminars, festivals, renewal and celebration conventions; the revitalizing experience of fresh encounters with the Spirit in the lives of many; a new interest in spiritual gifts

and their exercise, particularly prophecy, tongues, and healing; the modification of traditional patterns of public worship allowing more freedom for lay participation in prayer, praise, and testimony; the creation and use of a new type of music, etc.

Although in the history of the Christian church there have been renewal movements of various types, this study focuses on the contemporary charismatic movement which arose outside the Mennonite Church some fifteen or twenty years ago. Many of our congregations have been more or less affected by it. Some members are active participants; others are sympathetically interested. Uniformity of understanding and experience is not a practical or necessary goal. But some clarification and evaluation of the issues involved and some positive suggestions for relating to the Spirit and to each other would seem to be desirable if progress together is to be made toward ever more mature and effective Christian living and service.

II. What Are the Focal Points of Concern?

The range of the Spirit's work in the church is as broad as its life. The focus of this study is limited to issues related more



The
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the Church



or less closely to the charismatic movement. These include the following:

A. How significant is the role of the Spirit in the life of the church? In my life as a Christian?

B. How can I establish and maintain a meaningful relationship with the Spirit? Is there one uniform pattern of relationship?

C. What is meant by the "baptism with the Spirit"? Is it to be identified with or distinguished from the initial reception of the Spirit?

D. What are spiritual gifts? How do they differ from the "fruit of the Spirit"? How are they related, if at all, to natural abilities? What purpose are they intended to serve?

E. Does every Christian have a spiritual gift? Can I choose and receive the gift I want? Are some gifts more important than others? How may I know what gift God has given me?

F. Were tongues, prophecy, healing, and miracle-working intended only for the primitive church or also for today? Is tongues the necessary sign of having been baptized with the Spirit? How can prophecy be tested? Is healing in the atonement? Is exorcism a spiritual gift?

G. What positive contributions can the charismatic movement make to our brotherhood? What are its limitations and weaknesses?

H. How can "charismatics" and "noncharismatics" relate to each other in our congregations in a constructive and mutually helpful manner?*

III. Some Biblical Guidelines

A. *The Spirit Is Fundamental to the Church's Existence.*

The roots of the church go behind Pentecost. But we cannot speak of the church in its full reality apart from the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost. The experiential mark of membership in the church for Jew and Gentile was the possession of the Spirit.

B. *Significant Features of the New Testament Understanding of the Spirit*

1. The Spirit indwells every Christian. To belong to Christ is to possess the Spirit (Rom. 8:9). Discrimination among Christians on the basis of possessing or lacking the Spirit is not possible.

2. The Spirit undergirds the whole range of Christian experience from beginning to end. This provides the broad basic framework for Paul's conception of spiritual gifts. Unlike the Corinthians, Paul did not limit the operations of the Spirit to the unusual and the spectacular.

3. The Spirit is closely associated with Christ. Although the dispensation of the Spirit follows the historical ministry of Jesus, it does not supersede it. The Spirit remains subservient to Christ. The Spirit interprets Christ (Jn. 14:16; 15:26; 16:13 ff.) and the person and life of Christ is the norm for understanding what the Spirit is and does (1 Cor. 12:3).

4. The Spirit was given that the church might truly be the body of Christ sharing in His life, faithfully manifesting His character, and being fruitful in every good work (Rom. 8:29; Gal. 5:16-26). This is the basic evidence of the Spirit's presence and work. To stress the gifts of the Spirit at the expense of the ethical is not only to distort the gospel but also to invite judgment upon ourselves (Acts 8:18-24).

5. The Spirit was given to the church to empower it for the task of bearing witness to Christ (Acts 1:8). A powerful evangelistic ministry in word and deed which is effective in making disciples among all nations is one of the most immediate and primary results of the Spirit's work since Pentecost.

6. In brief, it is the work of the Spirit so to interpret and vitalize the gospel in the lives of God's people in all His manifold and rich dimensions that the church, in turn, may become part of the good news of God's grace and purpose, commending its truth to the world.

*The word charismatic is based on the Greek word *charisma* which is usually translated (RSV) by the English word "gift." In Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4; 1 Peter 4:10, etc. it is used in a semitechnical sense to designate the service abilities which are given to members of the body of Christ for ministry in building up the church. Since every Christian has been given some gift or gifts every member may properly be called a charismatic. Today, however, the word is com-

monly used in a more restricted sense to refer to those who have experienced what is frequently called "the baptism of the Spirit" and who lay particular stress on the reception and exercise of gifts of the Spirit (prophecy, tongues, healing, etc.). It is in this popular contemporary sense that the terms "charismatic" and "noncharismatic" are used in this report. To indicate this departure from New Testament usage, the words are put in quotation marks.

C. *Establishing and Maintaining a Relationship with the Spirit*

1. The normal pattern for the reception of the Spirit is indicated at the close of Peter's sermon at Pentecost. "Repent, and be baptized. . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Repentance involves a change of attitude from unbelief to faith in God's act in Christ. This new attitude publicly expressed in the symbolic rite of baptism is the basis upon which the Spirit is bestowed. Everyone meeting this condition may rightly claim the promised gift of the Spirit.

2. There are two passages in Acts which may appear to contradict this general pattern.

a. Acts 8:14-17. This difficult passage has been variously interpreted. Most likely the Samaritan believers had not exhibited the outward manifestations that had accompanied the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. But whatever may have been the situation, Luke's use of the words "not yet" and "only" in verse 16 would suggest the unusual character of this incident. The implication is that the normal procedure was the reception of the Spirit at the time of the initial turning to Christ in repentance and faith accompanied by baptism.

b. Acts 19:1-7. The disciples Paul met in Ephesus were not full Christian believers. They had undergone John's baptism which was a rite in anticipation of the subsequent pouring out of the Spirit. But they had not heard that the Baptist's promise had now been fulfilled as the consequence of Jesus' ministry. When Paul shared this fact with them, they gladly embraced the gospel, were baptized in the name of Jesus, and received the Spirit.

3. Should a distinction be made between the initial reception of the Spirit and the baptism of (in or with) the Spirit?

a. The phrase "to be baptized in/with the Spirit" occurs several times in the New Testament. John spoke prophetically of Jesus as the One who would baptize people with the Holy Spirit (Mk. 1:8 and parallels; cf. also Jn. 1:33). The risen Christ recalled this promise for the disciples in the days preceding Pentecost (Acts 1:5). Peter, too, remembered it after the Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household (Acts 11:16). The one remaining occurrence is in 1 Corinthians 12:13: "By [with or in] one Spirit we were all baptized into one body . . . and all were

made to drink of one Spirit." The references in the Gospels and in Acts 1:5 are most naturally understood as referring to the future bestowal of the Spirit at Pentecost. The remaining instances (Acts 11:16 and 1 Cor. 12:13) which are post-Pentecostal refer to an event standing at the initiation of Christian experience. It would appear, therefore, that the New Testament use of the language of being baptized with the Spirit is either in relation to the original event at Pentecost or subsequently to the bestowal of the Spirit at the time of conversion.

b. More significant than terminology is the experience which the language is meant to describe. This may be examined both from the standpoint of New Testament evidence and also that of contemporary experience.

(1) The New Testament knows a range of Christian experience all the way from that of babes in Christ who can reprovably be described as "men of the flesh" to persons who are regarded as mature and spiritual (1 Cor. 3:1-4; Heb. 5:11-14). The ideal which Paul holds before his converts is a life "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). The meaning of this norm for Christian living is such a complete constant surrender to the control of the Spirit that will result, as the context makes clear, in ethical sensitivity to the will of God, a ministry of mutual edification in the body of Christ, and a spirit of thankful praise in Christian worship. In the Book of Acts, particular persons are identified as being "full of the Spirit" (Stephen, Acts 6:5; 7:55; Barnabas, 11:24). Reference is also made to persons being "filled with the Spirit," not merely once but repeatedly (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52). New situations of need are paralleled by new experiences of Spirit infilling. Thus while the New Testament recognizes varying levels of Christian experience, it is clear that the thrust is toward what is described as being "full of the Spirit."

(2) Contemporary Christian experience also witnesses to fresh and transforming experiences in relationship to the Spirit. The terminology by which it is described may vary (e.g. baptism in the Spirit, release of the Spirit, anointing of the Spirit, infilling of the Spirit, rededication, etc.) but the reality and meaningfulness of the experience to which it points is beyond question. The Holy Spirit for many in our church and beyond is no longer a vague or forgotten article of the creed but has become a blessed reality





The
Holy Spirit
in the Life of
the Church

that has enriched the whole of their lives.

c. How then shall we understand our relationship to the Spirit? If the relationship is of an "I-Thou" nature, then perhaps interpersonal relationships on the human level may provide some help by way of analogy. Perhaps relationships are never static because persons are not fixed things but dynamic centers of freedom and change. A relationship between two persons may become more meaningful or may deteriorate. There may be a sudden breakthrough from one level of acquaintance to a more intimate understanding and fellowship. Indeed, there may be more than one such experience. The quality and character of the relationship will depend on the will of both to work at the task of relating to each other. Meaningful relationships don't just happen. Neither can they be stereotyped since no two persons are exactly alike. If such relationships are to have integrity, individual differences within the broad scope of human similarities will need to be respected. If there is validity in this analogical approach, then certain theses can be offered for testing by reference both to Scripture and to contemporary Christian experience.

(1) It is the will of God through the Spirit to enter into an abiding, deeply meaningful relationship with us as Christians. This intention includes an awareness of the reality of Christ, a certainty of His love, a call to Christlikeness in character and in conduct, a sense of responsible participation in the body of Christ, a gifting and enablement for service in the mission of Christ in the world.

(2) For God's intention to be realized in our experience as Christians a personal response may vary due to such factors as individual differences of understanding of God's plan for us or of differing degrees of willingness to enter upon it. For some the initial decision to become a Christian may entail such a radical openness to God that from the very beginning the totality of the person is caught up in the freeing, renewing, enabling life and power of the Spirit. For others the initial experience may have less depth and meaning. It may be followed by a series of subsequent responses each leading to new levels of relationship with Christ both in faith and in obedience and a progressive experience of ever larger and richer dimensions of life in the Spirit. For still others, the subsequent response may come as a radical crisis type in which the person is suddenly catapulted into a wholly

new experience of release in the Spirit that brings new freshness and dynamism to the whole of life.

(3) If experiential patterns of appropriation of the rich resources for Christian living and service given to us in the gift of the Spirit may vary within the Christian community, every Christian should be encouraged and helped to possess in full measure these available treasures. Only as each member lives and serves in the renewing and enabling power of the Spirit will the church truly be the church.

D. What Are Spiritual Gifts?

1. The gifts of the Spirit as a technical expression refers to service abilities given by the Spirit to Christians for the purpose of meeting needs in the life and ministry of the church. There are four catalogs of such gifts in Paul's letters (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28; Eph. 4:11) and a brief one in 1 Peter 4:10 f. The gifts are to be distinguished from the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22 f.). The latter are spiritual graces designed to make us Christlike in character. While the gifts are variously distributed among Christians, all of the fruit should be manifested in some degree in each Christian.

2. The lists of gifts vary in length and content which suggest that they are representative rather than exhaustive in character. The gifts are heaven's response to the needs of the church on earth. As needs to some extent may vary so also the gifts. Broadly viewed, the gifts fall into two groups, gifts of word and gifts of deed, corresponding to the two general areas of need in the life of the church.

3. Both ordinary and extraordinary abilities are included among the gifts. All of a Christian's abilities whether usual or unusual are seen within the framework of a new existence in Christ. Every part of the Christian's personality has been touched by the presence and the cleansing, energizing, creative power of the Spirit. All abilities are now gifts to be used in the service of the church.

4. The gifts are sovereignly and diversely bestowed (1 Cor. 12:7-11). Two consequences flow from this fact. First, there is no place either for pride or for self-depreciation in regard to the gifts that one has or has not been given. Second, no one is expected to possess all the gifts so that the contribution of others is unnecessary.

5. The primary purpose for which the

gifts are given is the edification of the church (1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:11-16). The emphasis on love in connection with the discussion of the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 — 14 is significant. Love prevents the selfish use of gifts which so often disrupts rather than edifies the church. Furthermore, if gifts are given to edify the church, their presence in response to genuine needs in the contemporary church should be anticipated.

E. *Some Controversial Gifts*

1. Tongues

a. Reference to this gift occurs in 1 Corinthians 12:10, 14, 28; Acts 2:4 ff.; 10:46; 19:6. In Acts it is mentioned only in connection with the initial experiences of receiving the Spirit. In Corinth it was part of the ongoing life of the church. It is the service ability for edifying the church when the utterance is interpreted. Nowhere is it regarded as the required sign of having the Spirit.

b. Tongues are unintelligible utterance to the speaker and normally also, unless interpreted, to the hearer. Apparent exceptions occurred at Pentecost and occasionally since where languages unknown to the speaker were spoken or a miracle of hearing accompanied the utterance.

c. Both in Acts and 1 Corinthians tongues are basically utterances of worship addressed to God. (Acts 2:11; 10:46; 1 Cor. 14:2, 14-16). For this reason they can have meaning to the speaker even if uninterpreted.

d. The normal context for the exercise of the gift is private worship. A limited permission is granted for public worship if an interpreter is present (1 Cor. 14:18 f., 27 f.).

e. The gift does not appear to be intended for all Christians (1 Cor. 12:10, 30, where the implied answer is "no"). 1 Corinthians 14:5 expresses a wish (similar to 1 Cor. 7:7) but is not imposing a standard.

2. Prophecy

a. While occasionally in the New Testament church prophecy may have included prediction (e.g. Acts 11:28), its usual content was exhortation or encouragement (1 Cor. 14:3). The prophet spoke under immediate and evident inspiration. "Givenness" rather than novelty is the characteristic feature of prophecy.

b. Inspiration of itself does not guarantee the authenticity of the prophetic word. Prophecy must be tested (1 Cor. 14:29;

1 Thess. 5:20, 21; cf. also the gift of the discerning of spirits, 1 Cor. 12:10). One such test is whether or not it exalts Christ (1 Cor. 12:3).

3. Healing

a. Although the gift is mentioned in only two of the lists (1 Cor. 12:9, 28), its practice is frequently attested in incidents and references of healing in Acts. The early Christians doubtless saw the gift as a continuation of Jesus' healing ministry and of His commission to the disciples to heal (Lk. 9:1; 10:8).

b. The Bible understands man to be a unitary being composed of body and spirit. The welfare of the body, therefore, is part of God's concern for us as persons. Healing is not so much a proof of the truth of the gospel as part of the good news itself.

c. While some illnesses may be the direct result of personal sin, certainly not all are to be accounted for in this way. Illness is part of the present order prior to the perfection of the end time. To expect healing of all illness now is to look for the perfection of the end before the end. Only in a general way is healing in the atonement. It is there in the sense that the cross and resurrection of Jesus are a pledge of the final abolition of all illness and death. Miraculous healings in the present time are a foretaste of the final victory.

d. Faith in God's power to heal does not exclude the use of medical aid. Paul advised Timothy to use wine for his ailments (1 Tim. 5:23) and anointing with oil is combined with prayer for healing in James 5:14 (cf. Mk. 6:13; Lk. 10:34). It should not be a matter of either/or but both/and. All healing ultimately is a gift from God whether given through or apart from medical services.

e. We should not demand healing from God as though it were a sin to be sick. This fails to recognize the sovereignty of God. God's purpose is to glorify His own great name in and through His dealings with us. Sometimes, as both Jesus and Paul knew, that may best be accomplished through suffering (Jn. 9:3; 2 Cor. 12:7-10).

f. Faith in God's power to heal directly should not be the Christian's last resort when all human aid has failed. It should be a normal part of congregational concern and activity when Christians gather in worship before God and in mutual care for one another.



4. Deliverance and Exorcism

a. No reference is made to such a gift or gifts in any of the lists unless it be regarded as one of the "gifts (pl.) of healing" in 1 Corinthians 12:9. Exorcism, however, was a part of Jesus' ministry and was also known in the early church (Acts 16:16-18; 19:11-20). There is also contemporary interest in it.

b. The New Testament would suggest that the devil and his activities should not be the focus of our attention as Christians. Christ in His death and resurrection defeated Satan (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14; Eph. 1:20-22).

c. The devil, nevertheless, is not dead. We are called to warfare against the demonic powers of our world (Eph. 6:10-20). If we slip and fall in the struggle, there is cleansing and victory when we turn in penitence and faith to our living Lord.

d. There are also times when Christians suffer extraordinary attacks from the devil. They then stand firm in victory, empowered by the presence of Jesus Christ, and encouraged by the prayers and fellowship of the people of God. By faith in the finished work of Christ and through the fellowship and ministry of believers, they are delivered from satanic attack. This deliverance is accomplished in a variety of ways but always in the name of Jesus Christ.

e. Sometimes people are suspected of being possessed by an evil spirit. Possession implies that a person hosts the evil spirit which controls his will either periodically or constantly. When this occurs, exorcism is called for in which case, in the name of Jesus Christ, the evil spirits are commanded to come out. Extreme care should be taken to assure that each case of suspected possession is discerned properly. Possession is a comparatively rare occurrence and is not synonymous with mental illness. If exorcism for example, is undertaken because a person is being tempted sorely, the results can be very disappointing and, in fact, harmful. As much as possible, the community of faith should be involved in the liberating ministries.

IV. Toward an Evaluation of the Charismatic Movement

A. An evaluation of the modern charismatic movement must be qualified by the recognition of two factors: first, its rather recent origin in Catholic and Protestant circles and still more so in the Mennonite Church; second, the diverse character of the movement. Although it is still much

too early to make a thorough assessment of the present or potential contribution of the movement to the modification of Mennonite theology or piety, it is appropriate that some observations and tentative judgments be offered for consideration and testing.

B. Like all renewal movements of the past, it is to be expected that this one will have both its positive and negative aspects. It would be grossly unfair, therefore, either to reject the movement out of hand as having nothing to offer or to embrace naively whatever may parade under the charismatic banner as holding promise of a better tomorrow. Critical discernment is necessary if we are to profit from its assets and avoid its liabilities.

C. Among the positive contributions of the charismatic movement both to the larger Christian community and to our brotherhood the following may be noted: a renewal of serious commitment to Jesus as Lord; a release of spiritual gifts and power; a strong and effective ministry of evangelism; great unity and love among the brotherhood; new forms of community and local church life; miracles of healing; many answers to prayer and other signs and wonders; growth in faith; a new vitality in the study and use of Scripture; significant increase in sacrificial giving of time and money for the Lord's work; an experience of Christian unity that transcends denominations, age differences, and cultural differences; freedom to make helpful changes in old and firmly established religious institutions; strong emphasis on the new birth as the basis for Christian life; disciplined lives of holiness and separation from the world; raising up of many strong leaders in the church; winning the active support of many young people who would otherwise be lost to Christ and the church; a dramatic increase in praise to the Lord; new levels of freedom and spontaneity in prayer and worship; church meetings that are more meaningful; the recovery of prophecy as an active gift in the church; the rediscovery of tongues, the gift of knowledge, and other spiritual gifts; much new music; a new readiness to share out of personal experience with the Lord; a more sensitive spiritual discernment as an alternative to legalism; rediscovery of the dangers of the occult and demonic powers as well as growth in knowing how to bring the deliverance of Jesus; the emergence of an evangelical renewal within

the Roman Catholic Church; a commitment to work within existing churches rather than to separate from them; recovery of a lively expectation of the Lord's return; a great love for Jesus Christ our Lord, and for the church as His body.

D. Elements of potential weakness are also occasionally evident in the movement. Attention may be called to the following: the development of stereotypes of language, understandings, and experiences which become legalistic norms for judging and labeling Christians; the withdrawal from fellowship with "noncharismatics" in congregational or other settings suggesting a superior religious status; a preoccupation with the gifts of the Spirit, especially the more dramatic, with a comparative lack of interest in the fruit of the Spirit; the suggestion of a deficiency of faith if unable to speak in tongues or to experience complete and instantaneous healing; the failure to appreciate the broad and richly diverse ways in which the Spirit works in corporate and personal Christian experience; a concentration on inner religious feelings and experience to the neglect of interest in practical aspects of Christian discipleship and social concerns; a religious arrogance that refuses to accept constructive criticism from fellow Christians; an arbitrary and careless use of Scripture resulting from an unwillingness to submit to the discipline of serious Bible study; a readiness to attribute all problems and difficulties to the devil absolving the individual of personal responsibility; the exploitation of gifts for selfish advancement.

E. Obviously, many of these problems are not due entirely to the charismatic movement. Many of the social tensions and personal tragedies frequently associated with it are largely the result of unresolved problems which existed prior to the coming of the charismatic emphasis. As in any renewal movement, the introduction of new patterns of thought and religious expression places a strain upon the fabric of the church's life. When both the church and the movement are basically healthy, the accompanying struggles can be a creative and growing experience. But when the church is weak and full of unresolved problems, the coming of some new emphasis can become the occasion for adding to the church's difficulties.

F. Although the charismatic renewal is of relatively recent origin, it has been observed in a sufficiently wide range of church situations to confirm that its overall contri-

bution is basically a positive one. It is moving in a direction that brings men and women into a closer relationship with Christ, enriching both their personal and corporate Christian experience. For the most part the movement has achieved a healthy integration into the larger life of the church. Although it is only one of the forms in which God is at work in His church, He may well have chosen this movement to counteract tendencies toward secularization, routinization of worship, hierarchical power, spiritual coldness and lethargy. What the future course of the charismatic movement may be is not known, but this should not prevent us today from recognizing the authentic hand of God in it—judging, quickening, inspiring, encouraging, forgiving, and strengthening His people.

V. Practical Suggestions for Maintaining Fellowship between Charismatics and Noncharismatics

A. *To the Entire Christian Community*

1. We should remember that the basis of Christian fellowship is our common participation in the gift of the Spirit given in response to our surrender in faith and commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord. We are not called to create Christian unity but "to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

2. As members of the body of Christ we are called to a ministry of mutual helpfulness. This includes sharing our experience of God's dealings with us in the area of our understanding and appropriation of the resources available in the gift of the Spirit. Such sharing should be done in a grateful but humble spirit free of any attempt to make our own experience normative for other Christians.

3. We must not forget that God is sovereign in all of His dealings with us as His children. We cannot dictate to Him. Although He is utterly faithful in His purposes toward us, our human understanding of His will is limited.

4. We should consciously seek to broaden our understanding of spiritual gifts to include all service abilities for building up the church. Diversity of gifts must be expected and respected. The exercise of all gifts must be in the spirit of love and for the benefit of the church.

5. Spiritual gifts should not be valued above the Giver. Neither are they an end in themselves. Interest in gifts should not be



allowed to obscure the more basic work of the Spirit in creating love for Jesus, joy in Him, peace of mind and heart, enthusiasm in witness, hunger for the Word, love for the brethren, and submission in humility to Jesus and to His body.

6. We should frankly acknowledge and ask God for deliverance from our blindness to His purposes for us, our prejudices, our disobedience, our lack of love for and submission to our fellow Christians, our failure to appropriate the joy, the freedom, and the power available to us in the gift of the Spirit. We should daily surrender ourselves anew to the lordship of Christ that the fullness of His life may be realized within us.

B. To "Charismatic" Christians

1. Let us not encourage devotion to a movement. We are called to be followers of Jesus not of movements or persons.

2. Let us guard against the arrogance of a superior spirituality centered upon experiences and gifts which readily leads to discord and strife. Let the restraints of James 3:13-18 and 2 Timothy 2:24-26 be known among us.

3. We should not be unduly hasty to declare our new experience with the Spirit. It ought to be allowed to simmer for a while. We should reflect upon and pray about it. We are not automatically obligated to share it immediately.

4. When we do share it with others, we should not go beyond what others are ready to accept or assimilate. When the response is negative, we should drop the matter until a more opportune time.

5. We should allow God to discipline us to fruitful submission to our local congregation. Let us pray for our leaders and assure them of our full respect and support. Let us expect the Spirit to break through barriers which may separate us from one another.

6. Let us learn to walk in the Spirit as a constant life pattern. The experience of "the baptism of the Spirit" is only the beginning of a new chapter and not the end of the quest for divine enabling and the deeper life.

7. In our enthusiasm for the new things which God is bringing into our experience, let us not disregard the rich heritage of faith and life which has come to us in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.

C. To Pastors

1. Provide the congregation with an adequate and balanced teaching program on the ministry and gifts of the Spirit.

2. Be familiar with the contemporary charismatic movement and be sensitive both to its points of strength and its potential weaknesses.

3. Provide opportunity and encourage congregational participation in testimony, praise, and prayer for specific needs. The pastor should be an example in sharing, confession, and praise.

4. Seek to be understanding of the experience both of "charismatics" and "noncharismatics" helping each to accept and learn from the other.

VI. The Discovery and Exercise of Gifts

A. General Counsel

1. The body of Christ is functioning properly only when each member is exercising his or her gift in the service of the church.

2. The discovery and release of gifts is both a personal and corporate responsibility. Gifts may be identified personally by the individual involved or by one or more other persons in the congregation. Gifts sometimes emerge as persons give themselves to tasks at hand in the local congregation.

3. When gifts are identified the persons expressing them should be encouraged to fulfill their respective ministries and be affirmed in doing so by their fellow Christians.

B. The Role of the Pastor

1. An emphasis on a distribution of gifts in the congregation entails a modification of the pastor's conventional role. The pastor can no longer be the sole minister of God to the people but is one among others exercising the gifts given to the whole congregation. Even the pastoral leadership may be shared among several persons or elders.

2. The pastor not only should encourage the development and provide opportunity for the exercise of the diverse gifts within the congregation, but should also see that their exercise, both in manner and in balance, contributes constructively to the upbuilding of the church.

3. The pastor should lead the congregation not only in the exercise of gifts within the gathered life of the assembly, but in an effective ministry of word and deed in the larger social community.

VII. Conclusions

1. The significance of the Spirit's role in Christian faith, experience, and ministry is evident. Apart from sharing in the Spirit, no genuine participation in the blessings of the gospel and the life of the new order of God's kingdom is possible.

2. The diversity of ways in which the Spirit works in our lives and in the gifts bestowed for service should be recognized. Insistence on uniformity is not consistent with the evidence either of the New Testament or of Christian experience.

3. The expression of "the fruit of the Spirit" is of fundamental importance to the proper exercise of spiritual gifts. To neglect or minimize the former will result in the abuse of the latter.

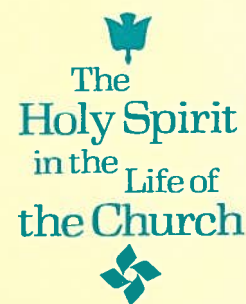
4. Christian experience both contemporary and historical should not be ignored in attempting to understand the Spirit's work. The Scriptures, however, must remain the primary source of guidance in shaping our Christian insights and experience.

5. The Spirit is a gift to the whole church and not an exclusive personal possession. The unity, edification, and mission of the church provide the framework for the valid exercise of the gifts of the Spirit.

6. Much yet remains to be explored. Let us carry forward our study in humble and serious searching of the Scriptures, a willingness to learn from what God has done and is now doing in our midst, an openness to dialogue with one another in the spirit of mutual love and respect, and a daily cultivation of an ever deepening sense of wonder and gratitude for the gift and blessings of the Spirit.

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Have You Studied the Other Assembly 75 Issue?

A companion study guide, *Biblical Interpretation in the Life of the Church*, will be available after April 1976. It contains seven lessons and the Task Force study report presented at Assembly 75, "Principles of Biblical Interpretation."

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