

The Gifts of the Spirit

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

A study of the Person, work, gift and gifts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian.

1. Born in the Spirit p2.
2. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament p4.
3. The Holy Spirit in the Gospels p6.
4. The Holy Spirit in Acts p8.
5. The Holy Spirit in the Epistles p10.
6. In John's Writings p12.
7. In the Early Church p14.
8. In the Church Today p16.
9. The Gift of Serving and Helping p18.
10. The Gift of Giving and Sharing p20.
11. The Gift of Craftsmanship p22.
12. The Gift of Healing p24.
13. The Gift of Apostles and Prophets p26.
14. The Gift of Pastor – Teachers and Evangelists p28.
15. The Gift of Teaching and Exhortation p30.
16. The Gift of Wisdom, Knowledge, Discernment p32.
17. The Gift of Tongues and Interpretation p34
18. The Summary of the Gifts p36
19. The Fruit of the Spirit p38.
20. The Fullness of the Spirit p40.

Born In The Spirit

IN THE STUDY:

When John Wesley spoke to Bishop Butler concerning the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, the Bishop replied, "Sir, this pretending to extra ordinary revelation and gifts of the Holy Spirit is a horrid thing – a very horrid thing!"

Not many people would go as far as to say that these days. However, there are many people who still contest the thought of the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Theirs is not a New Testament position. A Christian is one who is born of the Spirit (John 3:3-5) and the possession of the Holy Spirit is the distinguishing mark of the Christian. If anyone does not have the Spirit he does not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9).

Paul (Eph. 4:30) uses an interesting word when he says that we who have believed were sealed with the Holy Spirit. Sealing in ancient times was the mark stamped on to an article to give evidence of ownership. His thought is that the Holy Spirit is God's seal upon the believer. It is God's indication that we belong to him.

John (1 Jn 3:24; 4:13) indicates the reverse side of this. That if we possess the Spirit we have evidence to indicate that God abides with us. The presence of the Spirit is our assurance that God is within us.

To be born of the Holy Spirit and to know the in-dwelling of his power is a New Testament basis of a) evidence that we belong to God, and (b) evidence that God dwells within us.

IN THE PULPIT:

People who re-born of the Spirit of God carry upon them certain birthmarks, which for them are signs of joy.

- 1. New certainty.** Our rebirth has come only through the work of the Holy Spirit. You cannot shout at a dead man to come back to life. We are dead in trespasses and sins. Only the power of the Holy Spirit has brought us back to life (Jn 16:8). We have been saved not by works but according to God's mercy through the washing of our regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).
- 2. The New Life.** The Holy Spirit is the Spirit who quickens us (Romans 8:2, John 6:63). He now lives within us and our bodies are his temple. Our new life is confirmed by His presence within us.
- 3. New Freedom.** Paul indicates that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Cor. 3:17). We have been born into a new freedom where everything is of grace. We have been freed from the Law of sin and of death (Romans 8:2).
- 4. New Power.** Paul's preaching came in a demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor. 2:4). Jesus was described as being anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power (Acts 10:38). He told his followers that with the coming of the Holy Spirit they would receive power.
- 5. New Guidance.** Jesus promised the Spirit of truth to guide us (John 16:13). He promised that the Spirit would guide us in our belief and in our witness (Mark 13:11). The New Testament Christian acted constantly under the new guidance given by the Spirit of God (Acts 2:4; 15:28; 16:6). These are the birthmarks of the Christian born of the Spirit of God. We need to live these marks joyously revealed to the world.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

In the first retirement village I built in Victoria I built a men's workshop. Bill Ferrisey, took over the men's workshop built to provide a place where men can use power equipment in creative activity. Bill set himself up in a business restoring old furniture, which he beautifully French polishes. I looked at the work in the workshops and noted how many of the pieces of furniture come in

covered with paint, with woodwork battered, scarred nail holed, and split. Furniture that looked useless and fit only for burning.

This man with loving care begins sandpapering and cleaning until he gets back to layers of fresh clean wood. Each piece of wood is carefully taken apart, remade and refitted. Soon the re-assembled piece of furniture is stained and gradually polished. As the days go by soon a valuable piece of furniture completely remade and renewed is standing ready for its owner. I thought later that the work of this master craftsman is not unlike that which goes on in the church.

Our Church is not an art gallery where saints are exhibited, but a workshop where a master craftsman by the power of His spirit remakes, renews, and refurnishes lives.

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

IN THE STUDY:

The Holy Spirit is the personal indwelling of God in the life of the believer, made possible by the Lordship of Christ, to aid the Christian in daily living, and as part of the Church.

To be Christian, is to live in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit ministers within and through us. Our new birth is of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8). Because we are sons of God we have the spirit of God, and because we have the spirit of God we are sons of God (Gal 5:16-25), which would be beyond our unaided ability.

The Holy Spirit enters the life of the believer when Christ is obeyed as Lord, usually at the time of our baptism (Acts 2:38). With some, the Holy Spirit is active prior to baptism (e.g. Cornelius in Acts 10:44-48) and with some after baptism (Acts 19:1-7). We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit, which is usually a growing experience. (More on the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit later).

FROM THE PULPIT:

Each Australia Day, we think about our heritage. The earliest name given to Australia by the Portugese explorers was “Land of the Holy Spirit”. Was that a prophetic insight? Many people, particularly those who are Pentecostalist or Charismatics, think of the Holy Spirit as coming to the world in the first century, then suddenly “rediscovered” in the twentieth. While the work of the Holy Spirit is certainly obvious in both these centuries, that concept is completely wrong.

Any study of the work of the Holy Spirit must start in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit was alive and well before Pentecost! 1. The Spirit of God was active in creation (Gen 1:2). Elihu speaks of God’s spirit creating him (Job 33:4). The Psalmist says the same (Ps 104:30). God’s re-creating power in men and creation is likewise exercised through the Holy Spirit (Isa. 32: 14-15; 1 Sam. 10:6). 2. The men of God in the Old Testament, were possessed by the Holy Spirit. Great men spoke as they were moved by His spirit (Gen. 41:38; Num 11: 16-17; 27:18). 3. The Prophets were directed in their prophecies by God’s spirit. (Num. 24:2; 1 Sam. 10:10; 11:6; 16:13; Isa. 48:16; Ezek. 11:5). Isaiah’s great message (61:1) not only applied to his ministry but to that of the One of whom he spoke, Jesus (Luke 4:18).

However, in the Old Testament, the work of the Holy Spirit among believers, was confined to outstanding people in the purposes of God, and for special purposes. The ordinary believer had no sense of divine companionship and inner power from a comforter. That had to wait for the coming of the Messiah (Isa 11:2; 44:3; Joel 2:28). That time came, and Pentecost saw the same Holy Spirit come with power and conviction with divine gifts for every believer who owned Christ as Lord. Pentecost was the advent of the Holy Spirit in the life of ordinary Christians.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

She was young radiant, and full of the Conference she had just attended. The singing with uplifted hands, the praying in tongues, and the sense of oneness with other Christians from protestant and catholic churches had rekindled her warm love and zeal for Christ. “I know you have been baptised, and have received Christ as Lord and Saviour. But that is only half-way. This is something much more wonderful. Pray to be baptised now with the Holy Spirit and you’ll be a real Christian!” So she urged.

That is the tragic mistake of many people who have grown in the Holy Spirit. To emphasise His presence, and his indwelling power, and divine gifts, is essential. But when a person receives Christ as Lord and Saviour, nothing can be more real or significant. Salvation is complete and needs no additions.

The Christian possesses the Holy Spirit when he possesses Christ. He still needs filling by the Spirit of God, and needs to develop the gifts given, but the Holy Spirit isn't an extra to be added to Jesus Christ. To have Him, is to have all.

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Holy Spirit in the Gospels

IN THE STUDY:

In the first three Gospels there are few references to the Holy Spirit. There are four broad sections of teaching in the first three Gospels.

1. The inference of the Holy Spirit concerning the birth of Jesus. The Holy Spirit revealed the truth of the coming of Christ to Simeon (Lk 2:25-26). It was the Holy Spirit who gave birth to Jesus (Lk 1:35) and equipped him for his ministry at the time of baptism (Matt. 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22).
2. It was the Holy Spirit who filled Jesus (Lk 4:1), who guided him at the time of his temptations (Matt. 4:1), and who empowered Jesus in his ministry (Matt. 12:28).
3. The Holy Spirit came into the lives of the followers of Jesus. He was to baptize them with the Spirit (Matt. 3:11). The Holy Spirit would give gifts to the believers (Lk 11:13), and would be with the Christian in time of danger (Matt. 10:20).
4. In the first three Gospels there is mention also of the sin against the Holy Spirit. Many people have misunderstood this teaching. It will be referred to in this series later. In John's Gospel we have the highest teaching on the Holy Spirit of the New Testament. John has his own unique title for the Holy Spirit – the Paraclete (Jn 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). This word is often translated as helper, counsellor, advocate, or friend.

The Holy Spirit is God's gift (14:15). He is in the abiding presence of the risen Lord (16:7; 14:16). Jesus had to return to the Father but the Holy Spirit would dwell with the believer in his place. The same is the Spirit of Truth (14:17; 15:26; 16:13). The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. He will unfold to the new Christian truth of the faith, he will bring to our memory the teaching of Jesus (14:26). He will guide us in our future path (16:13). It is the Holy Spirit who will both witness to Jesus, convict men of their sin, and convince them of their need of righteousness (16:8-11).

FROM THE PULPIT:

Ralph Amos in a brilliant sermon once described the spiritual tragedy of the Church at Ephesus, where they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit, as "a tragedy that keeps on repeating itself". There are many churches where the Holy Spirit is not liberated. Our Lord teaches in John's Gospel that the Holy Spirit is given to live within the life of the Christian. In four great chapters (Jn 3, 14, 15 and 16) Jesus outlined the reasons for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is to be our living companion. Five times in three chapters Jesus repeats that the Holy Spirit is to be our companion no matter where we are in his work. The comforter would abide with us forever. The Holy Spirit is not an influence or a feeling but a person.
2. The Holy Spirit is our living teacher. He was to bring to our remembrance the teachings of Jesus. The Holy Spirit guides us through the reading of the scriptures, through the memorisation of the teachings of Jesus, through the advice of a Christian friend, and through the seekings of the individual believer to keep on being filled with the Spirit of God.
3. The Holy Spirit comes to us as a living authority. He was to convict the world of sin to convert the world to righteousness and to convince the world of the coming judgement. His role was to be the authority for the individual Christian.
4. The Holy Spirit comes to us as a living helper. The Paraclete was the word used of a witness to help in a law case, an advocate who argued your position, an expert who gave advice, a soldier who provided reinforcement and an encourager in a time of discouragement. The Holy Spirit is the

helper of the distressed, the doubting and the discouraged. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit for the benefit of all Christians. What a tragedy that some Churches do not even know that He exists.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

The sailor in a small craft, does not spend all of his time concentrating on the wind, but on getting to his destination. The wind in the scriptures referred to the breath of God, or the Spirit of God. When the Christian opens his life up to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit the motive power propels him to his God-directed destiny.

Commenting about a recent tragedy one of my dear friends said "If it wasn't for the assurance of the companionship of the Holy Spirit, I don't know how we would have coped".

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Holy Spirit in Acts

IN THE STUDY:

In the Book of Acts the Holy Spirit is the link between the ascended Lord and His disciples. He is even called “The Spirit of Jesus” (16:7). The coming of the Spirit was the fulfilment of John’s prophesy of a coming baptism (1:5). It was through the Holy Spirit that the Lord gave His final commandment to His Apostles (1:2) and this would be fulfilled in the general out-pouring of the Spirit. Acts Chapter 2 is the fulfilment of the out-pouring of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit becomes the power and motive of the Church’s missionary witness to Jesus Christ. Peter (v.16) sees the coming of the Holy Spirit as the fulfilment of Joel’s prophesy.

This gift of the Holy Spirit was not confined to the people on the day of Pentecost. Peter said it was to their children and to all who were afar off (Acts 2:39). The Holy Spirit is to be received by all who repent of sin and are baptised for the forgiveness of sins (2:38).

From then on outstanding Christians were those who were possessed by the Holy Spirit e.g. Stephen (6:10, 7:55); Paul (13:9); Barnabas (11:24).

In the New Testament Church the Holy Spirit is the guiding and controlling power of its mission. By the Holy Spirit Philip is instructed to witness (8:29); Peter instructed to go to Caesarea (10:19); the Antioch Church instructed to send out Barnabas and Saul (13:2) and on their journeys Paul and Silas are instructed to take the gospel from Asia to Europe (16:6-7).

The question of how these early Christians knew they were filled by the Holy Spirit will be studied in a later Word Talk. Acts records the Holy Spirit coming upon converts during the preaching of the Gospel, at the time of baptism, and at times during their Christian experience.

IN THE PULPIT:

Every Christian knows that wonderful day of Pentecost when 3000 heard the word, repented, believed, and were baptised.

According to Peter’s promise they also received the Holy Spirit. On that day two groups of people received the Holy Spirit – the 120 gathered in the Upper Room (2:1) and the 3000 Baptised (33, 39).

Yet this second large group has no recorded evidence of the miracles that accompanied the coming of the Holy Spirit to the 120 – the rushing wind, the tongues of flame or the speaking in foreign tongues.

The difference between the two groups is that the 120 were believers already and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit only after praying upon God for ten days. The 3000 were unbelievers who received forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit at the same time as they repented, believed, and were baptised.

Some Christians argue for the experience of the 120 – that after waiting days of prayer and expectation they received the gift with the miraculous elements of the Holy Spirit. Other Christians believe that like the 3000 we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins at the time of baptism. There is no question that this latter experience is the normal Christian experience. The events with the 120 on the Day of Pentecost was unique in that it was the ushering in of the new Messianic Age; it was the fulfilment of the special promises of Jesus in the Upper Room to the Apostles and those who would establish the Gospel; and it was the commencement of the first revival of Christian history.

These special experiences were to continue throughout history but they were not the norm of Christian experience.

What is normal with the Christian is that those who respond in faith to God, who repent and are baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Paul indicated the same thing. We receive the Holy Spirit by hearing with faith (Gal. 3:2). "We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:14).

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

One night in the relaxed atmosphere of my lounge, I asked Dr Alan Walker to tell me his experience of receiving the Holy Spirit in his life. He told me that on April 6th 1953, when he was about to commence the Mission to the Nation across Australia, he spent time walking in the Australian bush. He lay down in the dry grass between two towering gum trees and prayed for God's blessing upon his nation-wide mission. As he prayed the wind sprung up and the rustling of the gum trees was obvious. He suddenly remembered Jesus speaking of the Holy Spirit coming like a wind. "The wind is in the gum trees! The phrase pressed into my mind with compelling power. The Holy Spirit came upon me with power I had never known before. I only know it changed my life".

From that moment on Dr Walker experienced the power of the Holy Spirit. There were no tongues and no other miracles or special signs. He only knew that from now on he spoke in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Holy Spirit in the Epistles

IN THE STUDY:

To Paul the power of the Holy Spirit is almost the same as speaking of the divine principle in Jesus. The operation of the power of God within Jesus marks him out as the Messiah, and his Sonship is proved by the resurrection. The Holy Spirit is the mode of Christ's presence in and among His people. Through the Holy Spirit Christ dwells in the believer and within the Church. The believer is "in Christ" and the Church is "the body of Christ."

The Spirit is the spirit of Christ himself. To be a Christian is to be in the spirit (Rom. 8:9). The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ. Without the Spirit of Christ we do not belong to Him. (8:10). To have His Spirit is to have Him and to have the power who raised Jesus from the dead (8:11). It is the Holy Spirit who makes real the presence of Christ within the believer and within the Church. It is the Spirit of God that enables a person to claim Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3).

Paul can see "The Lord Jesus Christ", "God the Father", and "The Holy Spirit" as the Godhead. (2 Cor. 13:14).

Paul makes a contrast between the Spirit and the Law. The New Covenant brought into effect by Jesus Christ is dependent upon the in-dwelling of God's Spirit which gives life, whereas the Law brings death (2 Cor. 3: Rom. 7:6, 8:2). The Holy Spirit also is contrasted to living a life "in the flesh" (Gal. 3:3). To live in the flesh is to live in an unredeemed human state alienated from God. The contrast is the Christian who lives with the Spirit demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit. Christians are those who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:4-6). Through the Holy Spirit Christians come to know God as Father (Rom. 8:14-17). Through the Holy Spirit we have access to God. (Eph. 2:8). Through the Holy Spirit we pray to God (Rom. 8:26-27). The Spirit of God becomes the ground of the Church's unity as one body in Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). When Christians live in the Spirit of God they have the guarantee of eternal life and the total redemption that is yet to be complete. There are many signs of the presence of the Spirit, the supreme one being love. These signs, gifts of the Spirit, and fruit of the Spirit will be discussed in later Word Talks.

All Christians are to partake of the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit, be aglow with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Rom. 12:11).

FROM THE PULPIT:

In Hobart a woman asked me "How can I discover my spiritual gift"? When the Holy Spirit dwells within a person he gives to each person a gift. This will be examined in greater detail in later issues.

However, many Christians don't know how to discover what the gift God has given to them happens to be. To discover God's gift:

1. Explore the possibilities – for there are at least 21 different gifts mentioned in the New Testament.
2. Experiment with as many differing gifts as possible.
3. Examine your own feelings for God doesn't give you a gift that is counter to your own abilities or emotions.
4. Expect confirmation from other people. If you think you have a gift for singing, it may be that others will correct that idea!

5. Expand your gift to the limit of your ability.
6. Evaluate your effectiveness in serving God with your gift.
7. Exercise your gift for the benefit of other people. Learning what your gift is will take time.

Exercising your gift in God's work will take all your life!

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

There are many Christians who are terrified of experiencing the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. They believe that the presence of the Holy Spirit must be equated with some Pentecostal or charismatic experience. They do not realize that they cannot be Christian without the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Cathrine Marshall once said "Do without the Holy Spirit? How could any of us who have embarked on a pilgrimage that is Christianity do without Him? For we who long for something more for strength and hope and wisdom beyond ourselves, discover to our joy that as the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us in Him we have our heart's desire."

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

In John's Writings

IN THE STUDY:

The Gospel, letters, and Revelation bearing John's name have a great deal of content concerning the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel Jesus is uniquely possessed of the Spirit. (1:32-33). The Christian is one who is born anew in the spirit (3:5-8). That new birth in the spirit had to await Christ's work being completed and His Ascension. The spirit had not been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified (7:39). Jesus gave instructions to the Disciples about the coming of the Counsellor who would dwell with them, guide them in truth, help them understand the life of Jesus (14:26), and to witness to Him (15:26-27).

The Holy Spirit would come at the time of the physical departure of Jesus. After the Resurrection of the Jesus the gift of the Spirit is bestowed upon His followers by his creative inbreathing (20:22). In the letters of John He indicates that all Christians are anointed by the Spirit of God as the assurance of Christ's presence (1 John 2:20; 3:24). The Holy Spirit witnesses to Christ and is responsible for acknowledging His Lordship (1 John 4:2; 5:7-8).

In the Revelation it is the Holy Spirit who declares the message through John (1:10; 2:7; 4:2 etc.) When the Church cries out for the coming of the Lord it is the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through the members (22:17).

IN THE PULPIT:

The Revelation of John reveals part of the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. The spirit gives the vision. It is only when John is open and available to the Spirit of God that the great visions flash upon his mind's eye. We understand heaven only through being available to the Holy Spirit.

2. The Spirit brings the message. In each of the letters to the seven churches it is the Spirit of God who speaks. The Spirit is Christ's messenger to humanity.

3. The Spirit guarantees the promise. In John 14 He guarantees the gift of eternal life and of our rest in eternity.

4. The Spirit bears the invitation. It is the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit who invites the return of Jesus Christ. The Church and Spirit together look forward to His return.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

The woman sat in my study and told me of how her marriage had broken down, and of the months of loneliness of separation. While praying to God a phrase came into her mind "Two of you can work a miracle". The phrase kept re-occurring in her mind over and over again.

She tried to locate where she had heard it. A sermon? A television show? In a woman's magazine? The source of the phrase was obscure but the message was clear. If she and her husband came together they could by God's grace work a miracle that would reconcile them and make their marriage new.

She approached her husband. He wanted no more of the marriage. However, the phrase stuck in his mind. Then he approached her. They decided to try again this time asking God's help in their

marriage. Very tenderly they are trying to put back the pieces of a shattered marriage. Even the trying seems to be a miracle.

Was her voiced instruction only wishful thinking? Was it some spiritual message? Was it some dregs of a sub-conscious desire? Was it the result of a dream now forgotten? The origin of the words don't matter. What matters to her is that she believed that the Holy Spirit guided her and is helping both her and her husband work a miracle.

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

In the Early Church

IN THE STUDY:

Many commentators have suggested that the Acts of the Apostles could be equally well titled “The Acts of the Holy Spirit”. Throughout the expanding church in the first centuries we read of the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1, the Disciples were commanded by Jesus to wait until they received the power of the Holy Spirit. They gathered together in fellowship, studying the scriptures, praying and looking forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit.

All the leaders of the early church were men filled with the Holy Spirit. This was the description used of Peter (4:8); of the first Deacons (6:3); of Stephen who was filled with the Holy Spirit (6:5); of Paul (9:17, 13:8); and of Barnabas (11:24). Every early church leader was spoken about as being filled by the Holy Spirit, this description even being made of Jesus Himself (10:38). Every great decision the early church took was also under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who tells Philip to approach the Ethiopian (8:29); Peter to go to Cornelius (10:19, 11:12); the leaders at Antioch to set apart Paul and Barnabas (13:2); and it is the Holy Spirit who guides and directs the decision of the Council of Jerusalem whereby Gentiles are welcomed into the church (15:28-29).

It was the Holy Spirit that guided and directed the activity of Paul, from Asia Europe (16:6-7). It is the Spirit of God that guides him through Macedonia and on to Jerusalem (19:21).

The early church particularly saw that the activity of the Holy Spirit was connected with aspects of its life, particularly with prayer (4:31, 8:15); with preaching (10:44, 11:15); with fasting (13:2); and with baptism. Usually speaking, the coming of the Holy Spirit was the consequence of the act of Baptism (10:45; 19:5-6). Baptism was the time of the coming of the Holy Spirit when God gave the new believer the power to witness for Christ. Closely associated with this was the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. The Samaritans (8:15-18) received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands of Peter and John. The Holy Spirit came upon Paul through the laying on of hands of Ananias (9:17).

The early church grew because of the impact and influence of the Holy Spirit. Archaeological records indicate the vast extent of the tunnels under Rome where the early Christians met and buried their dead. The tunnels extend for over 900 miles and over 4,000,000 Christians were buried there in the first three centuries of the early church, such growth was a result of the power of the Holy Spirit.

FROM THE PULPIT:

There is no book in the New Testament in which the Holy Spirit becomes so alive as He does in the Book of Acts. Yet not everyone in the early church responded to the Holy Spirit. People may – even in ignorance – be responsible for denying the right of the Holy Spirit to guide our lives. (a) There are those people who lie to the Spirit of God. This was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:3-9). They lied to the Holy Spirit out of selfishness. As each decision of the Church was a decision under the influence of the Holy Spirit, their selfishness was a direct lie to the Spirit of God. (b) Some resisted the Spirit. Stephen charged the people of his day of resisting the Holy Spirit (7:51). People can refuse the gift of the Holy Spirit. (c) Many are ignorant of the Holy Spirit. The need Paul found to re-baptise twelve because they did not even know of the Holy Spirit is a contemporary need (19:1-7). They knew what it was to repent but they did not know what it was to live in the power of the Spirit. It needs little imagination to see how contemporary people lie to the Spirit of God, resist His influence in their lives, and live ignorant of the abundant life through the Holy Spirit which they can have.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

During question time on an interstate Mission where I had been asked some questions concerning the role of the Holy Spirit one man rose and asked if he may make a brief statement. He said "Like the previous questioner I doubted the attitude of people who emphasised the Holy Spirit for most of my Christian life. Since I have discovered the power of the Holy Spirit in my own life I realise that up to now I was only living a life of formal Christianity, I knew nothing of its joy, nor its power".

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

In the Church Today

IN THE STUDY:

No study of the role of the Holy Spirit would be complete without an historical survey from the close of the New Testament Church to today. Throughout history there have been some references to the New Testament gift of the Holy Spirit, especially as it concerns the gifts of miracles, speaking in tongues, and of healing. Each of the following have historical records of their displaying these gifts of the Holy Spirit: Irenaeus (2nd C.). The Montanists (2nd C.); The Jansenists (17th C); Early Quakers and Methodists (18th C); and Presbyterians e.g. Charles Finney (19th C); and some followers of D.L.Moody (19th C).

It is generally agreed by historians that New Years Eve 1900 is the beginning of the contemporary Pentecostal Movement. Charles Parham in Kansas U.S.A. experienced speaking in tongues with a group of young Christians. Immediately the Movement spread across the United States and into Negro Churches. There have been no great personalities like Luther. Knox or Wesley in the Pentecostal Movement, but the laying on of hands of ordinary believers, one to the other, has been the means of transmitting the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In 1950 through the Secretary General of the World Pentecostal Fellowships David Du Plessis made overtures to the mainstream Churches within the World Council of Churches Fellowship. By 1960 all mainstream Churches had charismatic or neo-Pentecostal movements within them. The Roman Catholic Church in particular has seen rapid development of the charismatic movement. The main emphasis is not upon speaking in tongues, but upon the re-discovery of the Holy Spirit in the Church today.

IN THE STUDY:

In the first three Gospels there are few references to the Holy Spirit. There are four broad sections of teaching in the first three Gospels.

1. The inference of the Holy Spirit concerning the birth of Jesus. The Holy Spirit revealed the truth of the coming of Christ to Simeon (Lk 2:25-26). It was the Holy Spirit who gave birth to Jesus (Lk 1:35) and equipped Him for His ministry at the time of baptism (Matt. 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22).
2. It was the Holy Spirit who filled Jesus (Lk 4:1), who guided him at the time of his temptations (Matt. 4:1), and who empowered Jesus in His ministry (Matt. 12:28).
3. The Holy Spirit came into the lives of the followers of Jesus. He was to baptize them with the Spirit (Matt. 3:11). The Holy Spirit would give gifts to the believers (Lk 11:13), and would be with the Christian in time of danger (Matt. 10:20).
4. In the first three Gospels there is mention also of the sin against the Holy Spirit. Many people have misunderstood this teaching. It will be referred to in this series later.

In John's Gospel we have the highest teaching on the Holy Spirit of the New Testament. John has his own unique title for the Holy Spirit – the Paraclete (Jn 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). This word is often translated as helper, counsellor, advocate, or friend.

The Holy Spirit is God's gift (14:15). He is in the abiding presence of the risen Lord (16:7; 14:16). Jesus had to return to the Father but the Holy Spirit would dwell with the believer in His place. The same is the Spirit of Truth (14:17; 15:26; 16:13). The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. He will unfold to the new Christian, truth of the faith, He will bring to our memory the teaching of Jesus (14:26). He will guide us in our future path (16:13). It is the Holy Spirit who will both witness to Jesus, convict men of their sin, and convince them of their need of righteousness (16:8-11).

FROM THE PULPIT:

I once read a brilliant sermon, which described the spiritual tragedy of the Church at Ephesus, where they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit, as “a tragedy that keeps on repeating itself”.

There are many churches where the Holy Spirit is not liberated. Our Lord teaches in John’s Gospel that the Holy Spirit is given to live within the life of the Christian. In four great chapters (Jn 3, 14, 15 and 16) Jesus outlined the reasons for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is to be our living companion. Five times in three chapters Jesus repeats that the Holy Spirit is to be our companion no matter where we are in His work. The comforter would abide with us forever. The Holy Spirit is not an influence or a feeling but a person.

2. The Holy Spirit is our living teacher. He was to bring to our remembrance the teachings of Jesus. The Holy Spirit guides us through the reading of the scriptures, through the memorisation of the teachings of Jesus, through the advice of a Christian friend, and through the seekings of the individual believer to keep on being filled with the Spirit of God.

3. The Holy Spirit comes to us as a living authority. He was to convict the world of sin, to convert the world to righteousness and to convince the world of the coming judgement. His role was to be the authority for the individual Christian.

4. The Holy Spirit comes to us as a living helper. The Paraclete was the word used of a witness to help in a law case, an advocate who argued your position, an expert who gave advice, a soldier who provided reinforcement and an encourager in a time of discouragement. The Holy Spirit is the helper of the distressed, the doubting and the discouraged. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit for the benefit of all Christians. What a tragedy that some Churches do not even know that He exists.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

I had spent some time over a series of meetings helping the Governor General of Australia understand what it meant to be a Christian. He had been a regular viewer of my television program, “Turn ‘Round Australia”. He and she were close to the point of full commitment to Christ. Sitting in the Governor General’s residence, he lent over to me and said confidentially, “You have helped change our lives but now I am not sure. Last weekend we were in the country we had Sunday morning free and I felt like going to church – not officially but just as worshippers. No forewarning of the minister, just the security people and ourselves. My wife had seen a lot of cars pulling up outside our church so we decided to go there.”

“It was queer!” After an emotional and furious sermon in which there was not much intellectual content, people started to stream to the front. I have never seen anything like it in my life. People started falling to the ground and they just left them there. Others were babbling like demented people and others were yelping like dogs. I just said to the security man “Let’s get outa here!” I knew exactly the situation. Here was a minister and congregation who lacked knowledge and wisdom. I had two troubled people who lost what faith they had and who never in the future seriously considered Christ again.

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Gift of Serving and Helping

IN THE STUDY:

There are four separate lists of spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament 1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12:3-8, Eph. 4:7-12 and 1 Peter 4:10-11.

In 1 Cor. 12:4-6 Paul indicates varieties of gifts, varieties of service, and varieties of working. He indicates it is the same Spirit, the Lord and same God who gives and inspires these gifts. Although the gifts are diverse there is only one giver. Each time he states this truth he relates the gift to a different person of the trinity "the same spirit," "the same Lord," and "the same God," i.e. the Father. Paul uses three different words to denote the gifts themselves: v.4 Gifts of God's grace: v.5 Forms of service: v.6 Energies, activities or powers.

Putting these three words together, spiritual gifts might be defined as "certain capacities bestowed by God's grace and power which fit people for service"-John Stott.

As previously mentioned in an earlier study, there are at least 21 gifts mentioned, and it is obvious that these were not expected to be an exclusive list but samples of the types of gifts given by the Holy Spirit. The first gift mentioned is the gift of service. There is nothing miraculous about the concept of some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit i.e. the gift of teaching, encouraging, giving money, doing acts of mercy, or of serving. Other gifts such as the utterance of wisdom, possessing knowledge, having faith, likewise do not anticipate a miraculous content.

Both Peter and Paul call "serving" a spiritual gift (Rom.12:7; 1 Peter 4:11). The term they use means any kind of ministry either pastoral or practical. The term referred to a waiter who served at meals like Martha (Lk 10:40). A similar word was the use of the term "helps". This gift of helps is to be understood in the light of the service of ordinary Christians to bring strength encouragement and practical aid where it is needed.

IN THE PULPIT:

In any of our Churches we have people who demonstrate the gift of service. There is not a church dinner that doesn't have behind it the exercise of the gift of serving. Everytime the gardens of the disabled need tending, our volunteers from Wesley Home Care provide practical aid for an invalid widow or church member to do some ironing, the gift of the Spirit of God is being exercised. Those that print and fold our Church paper, lay-out the Communion Emblems, hand out the hymn-books, vacuum Wesley Centre carpets, and complete any other form of service for God, are fulfilling part of the Gift of the Spirit. Everyone within the Christian community has the ability to exercise this gift. In the Upper Room there were two sacraments-one centering round the bread and wine, the symbols of sacrifice, and the other centering round the basin and towel symbolizing the sacrament of service. Every time the Christian Church meets for Communion it should be equipping itself for the practice of the gift of service within the world. Following the hour of worship, the week of service begins.

In washing the Disciples' feet Jesus gave an example of service. Greatness expresses itself in service. That service must be completed in humility. The servant is not greater than his Lord, and we are called to take up the towel and "do as I have done." Leslie Weatherhead tells of a lady who visited a girl and asked her about her Church life. Was she a Church Member? Baptised? Attending Sunday School? Interested in helping people? A good girl? And because the girl did none of these things the lady concluded "And if you die what will you do if you have to tell God you have done none of these things?" The girl who had given herself in a lifetime of service to her family who were in desperate need, said "I will show him my hands," And so must each of us. Every Church has the call to serve the needy. Every Church faces some needs in its area. Because we cannot meet every need in our area that is no reason why we should not be meeting

some. What acts of service is your Church completing? What acts of service are you completing?
Are you allowing the gift of service from God's Holy Spirit to be exercised through your life?

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Gift of Giving and Sharing

IN THE STUDY:

One of the more mundane gifts of the Holy Spirit is the gift of giving. It is mentioned first in Romans 12:8 among the other charismatic gifts. It is very definitely one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This gift is the ability to make, spend and use money in the service of God in such a way that it brings glory to Him. Paul in 1 Tim. 6:17-19 gives good instruction to the young minister on how to advise people in the service of their gift. Our stewardship of our possessions is outlined in many places in scripture, particularly in the New Testament. 1 Cor.16:2 outlines for us the manner in which we should give our gift to God: Planned, personal, proportionate and prayerful.

The gift of giving is elaborated by Paul in at least two places. Our gifts should be to those in need (Eph. 4:28) and our giving should be open and liberal or generous (Rom.12:8). However, this does not mean that our giving to people in need should not take account of their other needs. For example, an alcoholic who asks for money has a need, but his greater need is not for money to buy more alcohol for drink but rather food. In the same way, our liberality in giving is not the main end in itself. Liberal giving never justifies wicked earning, something corporate donors need to remember. Paul's letter (2 Cor. 8) concerning the Macedonians and their giving outlines for us in a beautiful way our principles of giving.

All Christians have income before they are converted to Christ. The gift of the Spirit is not so much enabling them to earn more money, BUT what does change as a result of the Gift of the Holy Spirit is their new motive in giving and their objectives in their gifts.

IN THE PULPIT:

I believe that God wants you to be successful and prosperous. Failure and poverty are not God's invention but are a sign of sin's triumph and evil's presence. Unemployment, economic injustice, poverty – these are not the signs of God's blessing but the signs of sin working out in the lives of people somewhere. However, God's plan for successful personal finances does not depend purely on man's effort. The key lies in tithing i.e. giving one tenth of our total income back to God. Abraham commenced it, Jacob continued it, Moses confirmed it, Malachi commanded it and Christian people ever since have continued it.

1. Tithing puts God first. He had the first lamb, first harvest grain, first fruits.
2. Tithing makes you budget. When you give to God the first tenth you then plan what you must do with the other nine-tenths. Tithing encourages discipline, self-control and management of your budget. That is why tithers rarely have financial problems.
3. Tithing involves the believing family as a team. It requires a decision of all members and creates togetherness. Where a member is not a Christian then the Christian member tithes only what is in his/her control.
4. Tithing faces the future in faith. It is a faith test to give as God prospers you. We believe that God is able to supply our every need.
5. Tithing frees people from the great dollar hang-up. A tither trusts God and puts God first, and becomes free from the pressures of money.
6. Tithing proves the reality of your faith. For while people talk about trusting God and relying upon Him the tither proves what others talk about.

7. Tithing reveals the blessing of God. Those who have tithed throughout their lives know that God returns the blessings.

I commenced tithing from the day I earned my first pay at 18 years of age. Over forty years have now gone and I know the Lord has blessed us abundantly as we use the tithe as a minimum of what we give back to His work.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

The stewardship of a Christian includes what happens to what you have earned after you are dead. There is a stewardship through your Will. Too many people leave their estate to non-dependents who are non-Christians. A Christian needs to not only give through his or her earnings but through the accumulation of his or her blessings.

Churches also need to learn how to give. No church can expect to prosper while it keeps all of its income to itself. Every Church should, at a minimum, tithe its income for others. No increase comes without discovering the secret of giving. A Brisbane man who last month won \$260,000 has given every cent to charity. "I am a Christian man and if you are faithful in helping others God will certainly help you. God works in many ways and even this win is His chance of giving me a chance to help the poor and the needy". That man's own spirit is an example of those who throughout their lives have discovered the secret of giving. To give God's way of raising money, but God's way raising men.

I have had some extremely successful businessmen say to me over the years, "I wish I was doing what you are doing. I would like to work helping people." I reply, "Many people can successfully help others. I can hire a dozen every day. But few people have the gift of making and giving a lot of money. Use the gift God has given you to make money, then give it, and we can employ lots of people to care for others."

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Gift of Craftsmanship

IN THE STUDY:

One of the gifts ascribed to the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in the New Testament at all. However, it is described in a beautiful Old Testament passage concerning the building of the tabernacle by Moses. God told Moses to contact Bezalel and God described him as a man whom “I have filled with the spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship.” (Exo. 31:1-11). While the other gifts are also mentioned in the New Testament as gifts of the Holy Spirit “craftsmanship” was not included in any New Testament list of the Gifts of the Spirit possibly because the early Church was not involved in any building.

This passage describes the work of craftsmanship as seen in the Bible: 1. To make artistic designs in gold, silver and bronze (such as a jeweller or coppersmith would do today): in cutting stones for setting (the type of work a jeweller does with precious stones or a stonemason with granite or marble for a great building): and in carving wood (such as a sculptor, carpenter or cabinetmaker). Later in this passage there is also added the craft of making finely worked garments, priestly robes, and liturgical decorations for inside the tabernacle.

The whole emphasis in this passage is that through the Spirit of God men and women can so receive the Gift of God that their natural talents are enhanced to do fine work to aid in His worship. The instruction to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness was to be aided by those people so gifted in making beautiful surroundings to create an atmosphere of worship.

The Old Testament lists as craftsmen: carpenters, furniture-makers, boat-builders, wood-carvers, carvers in ivory, ebony and alabaster, smiths in gold, silver and bronze, weavers, tanners, leather-workers, tent-makers, carpet makers, rope-makers, basket weavers, fullers, dyers, sculptors, jewellers, glass-workers, potters, lamp makers, etc. God was described as the greatest craftsman of all (Heb. 11:10).

FROM THE PULPIT:

Jesus and Joseph are the only people in the N.T. called craftsmen. (Matt. 13:55, Mark 6:3). Jesus built yokes, ploughs, threshing boards, benches, beds, furniture, coffins, boats, houses, and door frames for the people of Nazareth for 18 years. He was known as “the carpenter”. Over his workshop probably hung the advertising sign – “My Yokes are Easy”.

Luke investigated the life of Jesus closely and records every significant detail except what happened in those 18 years – the greater part of His life. Why was Luke silent concerning this time?

Because for 18 years Jesus of Nazareth was a craftsman utterly undistinguishable from any other worker.

He worked and supported his widowed mother and at least five younger children (Mark 6:3). Think what those years of craftsmanship did for His understanding of us. 1. Jesus understands your feelings when you have spent years in unspectacular work. 2. Jesus understands your struggle to support a family on an inadequate or uncertain income. 3. Jesus has given us superb teaching based not upon the idealistic dreams of some academic aloof from life, but the answers of a man who tried them out first as He earned His bread by His sweaty hands. 4. God was preparing Jesus for a wider ministry through His craftsmanship. He was to work, not with twisted and knotty wood but with twisted lives.

At Stanford University I have seen in the Chapel a picture of the Master Craftsman with the words "The highest service may be prepared for in the humblest surroundings. In silence, in waiting, in obscure un-noticed tasks. In years of uneventful, unrecorded duties, the Son of God grew strong!"

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

For a number of years I taught Sunday School in a Boys' Home near my Church in the "Chapel of the Boy". Here the pews are all carved with Australian animals, birds and wildlife and with all the hobbies of typical young boys. A Master Craftsman had been at work!

In our Church during different times of the Christian year large and beautiful coloured wall hangings reflect the Christian themes. Our choirs add a wonderful sense of reverence and majesty as they sing God's praise. Our musicians on organ, piano, strings, brass, drums, violins, flute add their craftsmanship to worship.

In our congregation a retired motor mechanic of great skill helps many people in mechanical need. He is known as a Christian craftsman with his spanner and screw-driver. God's special gifts of craftsmanship are still being exercised today.

The Gift of Healing

IN THE STUDY:

Some gifts of the Holy Spirit are divinely sent but not miraculous. For example the gifts of teaching, craftsmanship, performing acts of mercy, generous giving, serving others, giving encouragement, administration, possessing faith, wisdom and knowledge. Yet other gifts are miraculous – the working of miracles and gifts of healing for example.

All other gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned are in the singular, but the gifts of healings are plural (1 Cor. 12:9). There are different types of healing mentioned in the New Testament.

1. Spiritual Healing (Matt. 13:15, 1 Pet. 2:24). The result of evangelism is often spiritual healing.
2. Emotional Healing: Jesus said the Spirit had sent him “to heal the broken hearted ... to set at liberty the bruised.” Many who have been counselled by ministers, psychologists and psychiatrists have been emotionally healed.
3. Physical Healing: Jesus and the Apostles healed the deaf, blind, dumb and crippled etc. In Acts three Apostles had this gift: Peter (Act 3:6-8; 9:33-4); Philip (Acts 8:6-7); and Paul (Acts 28:8). Even in Apostolic times physical healing was rare. Paul did not experience it himself (2 Cor. 12:7-9), neither did his friend Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23), nor Epathroditus (Phil 2:25-39) who was healed but not through Paul.

All healing is divine healing. Yet on rare occasions some healings are miraculous.

Bible miracles of healing cluster in four sections of the Bible round about four great personalities. 1. Moses, 2. Elijah and Elisha, 3. Jesus, 4. The Apostles. The major purpose of these miracles and healing was to authenticate a fresh stage of God’s revelation of Biblical history.

FROM THE PULPIT:

There are many lame people about the doors of the House of God (Acts 3:1-10). Some people are lame physically, others are lame socially, emotionally, spiritually, or matrimonially.

Often like the man at the gate beautiful they think that money can solve their problems. Peter had no money to give but offered concern, love, faith, friendship, hope, and healing. Note his method: 1. He declared his faith boldly. 2. He ordered a response with conviction. 3. He took the lame man by the hand and helped him. 4. They spent time together and went on praising God.

Christians need to learn that ordinary people who have faith can help the lame. We need to relearn that what people need is not money but care, not possessions but prayer.

All types of lameness can be healed when those that believe show a concern, care, practical help, companionship, friendship, faith, hope and love. In an age when many people think that money answers all the problems Christian people need to say “I have no money at all, but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I order you to get up and walk.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

There are about 400 people in our membership who are involved in the healing professions: In medical work, nursing, occupation, speech and physiotherapies, research, social work, counselling, hospital administration and management, pharmacy, chaplaincy, and all of these have something of the gifts of healings.

In the Bible wholeness is a very biblical concept. We need to rediscover in our day the healing of the whole person. Nowhere is the need for team ministry better emphasized than through the practising of the gifts of healing.

One Sunday I stood with a crowd of over 3000 people outside a public hall to hear an American faith-healer. Inside the hall were already 2½ thousand people and the doors were closed because of the crowd. We waited for three hours when another duplicate service was immediately presented. I moved in with that crowd and sat in the aisle. All the lame were there – arthritics, cripples, the mentally afflicted, spastic children, and many of nature's tragedies.

The preacher indicated that he would pray for healing and asked all who desired that healing to stand in the building. During the service that I attended at least 2000 people stood requesting prayers for healing of the mind, the spirit or the body.

The Church must rediscover its ministry of healing! In every service there are those who need our prayers and concern and help for their wholeness of body, mind or spirit. Every service must have some care for those whose hearts are breaking.

Many Churches do this in different ways. In one service each week we have a "Care Prayer and Share Time". This is the most beautiful time of the service when people in the congregation stand and indicate some person for whom we should pray, or some need in some family, or some world situation, and then we together care by concentrating our prayers to God on those who need healing. There are no emotional scenes, not even the biblical practice of laying on of hands, but the care of the people as they share together in prayer is powerful in its effect.

The healing of persons is too great and important to be left just to hospitals.

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Gift of Apostles and Prophets

IN THE STUDY:

There are over twenty specific gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the various New Testament lists. On the basis of New Testament meaning and practice not all of those gifts are available today. There is New Testament evidence that the gifts of Apostles and Prophets are not for today.

The word APOSTLE is mentioned 79 times in the New Testament in three senses.

(a) In the general sense that every Christian is sent of the mission of Christ (John 17:18; 20:21) but as that applies to every Christian it cannot be used in the sense of a special gift of the Holy Spirit given only to some.

(b) It was used in the sense of messengers of the Church sent out on missionary service (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25) but again this is not the sense of "Apostle" in the list of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as in each case the Apostle leads the list as the primary office given in the Church (1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11).

(c) In the sense that the Gift of the Apostle referred to the specially chosen people by our Lord – the Eleven, Matthias (Acts 1:15-26), Barnabas (Acts 14:14), James (Gal. 1:1), Andronicus and Junia (who was a woman!) (Rom. 16:7), and Paul (Gal. 1:1). The latest person to become an Apostle was Paul. Each of these people had the qualifications of being an eye witness to the historic Jesus, having met the risen Lord, having been personally appointed by Christ, and specially inspired by the Holy Spirit. This New Testament sense of Apostle ceased at the end of the Apostolic Age.

The office of PROPHET likewise is not an office given today. In the Old Testament sense the Prophet was one who spoke the very words of God (Exo 4:12, 7:1, Jer 1:4-9). God's self revelation was complete with the coming of – "forth-telling". But social comment or political interpretation is not the use of the New Testament gift of the Holy Spirit no matter how important to our age. Phillip's four daughters (Acts 21:9) prophesied.

Apostles and Prophets are claimed by their teachings to belong to the foundation upon which the Church has been built (Eph. 2:20, 3:5). The foundations were completed. They are never re-laid on top of the building!

Paul makes these two gifts the highest of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:20, 3:5 4:11). Their office is not continued today in giving of fresh revelation but their teaching is to be expounded.

By the 2nd Century the use of the term Apostle was limited to the ones mentioned above. To clarify the doctrines of the faith "The Apostles Creed" was circulated and a Canon of New Testament books either by the Apostles or their immediate Disciples was drawn up and finalised.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

While there is not apostolic succession by the laying on of hands or by the giving of special gifts in this century for the office of Apostle or Prophets, there are great Church leaders who have fulfilled some of the functions of Apostles and Prophets in our generation. They have been so endowed with other gifts of the Holy Spirit that they have given the outstanding leadership to Christians of our generation.

We should each draw up a list of those outstanding Christian leaders we have met with whom we have spoken. The world level Christian leaders that I have met who have given some of the leadership expected of Apostles and Prophets are as follows:

- Rev. John R. Stott, evangelical Anglican whose Biblical exposition and leadership mark him out.
- Dr Martin Niemoller, whose personal courage and open witness to the Lordship of Christ to the very face of Adolph Hitler led to years of concentration camp torture as Hitler's private prisoner.
- Dr Hans Kung, the reformer theologian within the Roman Catholic Church whose very insights to scripture and desire to reform within the Church breathe the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- Dr. Billy Graham, world evangelist and servant of Christ.
- Dr. E. Stanley Jones, Missionary Statesman who inspired a generation of Christian Missionaries and Ministers, and whose gracious charm bridged the east and the west.
- Dr. Robert Schuller, whose Possibility Thinking has encouraged a new generation of young Christians.
- Dr Philip Potter, ecumenical leader whose prophetic statements on social and racial issues bear the courage and insights of Jesus.

We each can draw our own lesson of those whom to us have been continuing in the tradition of the Apostles and Prophets of the New Testament Age.

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Gift of Pastors – Teachers and Evangelists

IN THE STUDY:

The remaining two Gifts of God among the leaders of the Church were those of evangelist and the pastor-teacher.

The EVANGELIST (Eph.4:11) was the major reason why the Church grew. The evangelist was the primary gift for church extension. Every Christian believer was to witness to his faith but some witnesses were especially equipped by the Holy Spirit for their work as an evangelist.

Surprisingly, very little is said in the New Testament about the office of an evangelist. Only one man in the New Testament was called an evangelist – Philip of Casarea. He is not to be confused with the Apostle Philip. Philip the evangelist was one of the seven original deacons (Acts 6: 1-7). He moved up and down the coastal area of Palestine proclaiming the Gospel. After the persecution in Jerusalem by Saul of Tarsus and others, he went to Samaria (Acts 8). Gaza and surrounding areas. Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5) was urged to do the work of an evangelist.

The PASTOR-TEACHERS needed to care for the flock of God and to build them up in their faith. The famous Old Testament example of the pastor is found in Ezekiel 34, where the faithful pastor is one who feeds, strengthens, heals, leads, directs and protects the flock of God.

In the New Testament Jesus is the chief shepherd (1 Peter 5:4, Heb. 13:20 and John 10:11-14). He lays down His life for His sheep. Under-pastors are to tend His flock on His behalf (1 Pet. 5:1 – 3). A significant task of the Elder within the church was to also pastor the flock (Acts 20:28 – 31). The Elder was to give oversight to the people of the congregation. His diligence and faithfulness were to be an example to all.

FROM THE PULPIT:

Our idea of an evangelist these days has been very largely coloured by the very successful international evangelists speaking to mass meetings like Billy Graham, following the world-wide tradition of D.L. Moody, or the successful television evangelist like Rex Humbard.

In the New Testament the evangelists had none of the benefits of rapid transportation and mass communication. The early evangelists like Philip, were itinerant, moving from city to city preaching the good news. They generally spoke to unbelievers about the Gospel rather than to teach. Their work was blessed with results in conversions.

When the evangelist was finished the work of the pastor-teacher began. He was the Minister of God settled in one area for some length of time, preaching mainly to believers to build them up in their faith and to teach them the whole counsel of God. The pastor-teacher encouraged the inner growth of believers.

Today the local Minister is often called to have the special gifts of both the evangelist and the pastor-teacher. Not every man can have every gift. These were special gifts given by the Holy Spirit and most of us Ministers may have one gift of God, and we seek to adequately equip ourselves in the other areas.

Where Churches have team ministries men with specialist gifts compliment each other, the special gifts of one compensate for the mere adequacy of another. In one-Minister churches the Elders should meet with the Minister and learn to complement his or her ministry by strengthening the area where he lacks the special gifts.

This is the real concept of “the body of Christ”, where each of us has a duty and a responsibility for supporting the other in building up the body of Christ.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

The evangelist is to get churches going. The pastor-teachers are to keep them going! So often in our church work we have the evangelist preaching to the converted and the pastor-teacher working among the non-believers.

Too often Missions are directed to the converted rather than to those still outside the Gospel. This is frustrating both for the evangelist and also for the pastor-teacher because their gifts are not being used as God has given them.

As an evangelist, I have spoken in most of the large city halls and public buildings across Australia. There have been many hundreds of converts through this ministry but the ministry of the evangelist is wasted unless it is immediately supported by the pastor-teacher who then welcomes each convert into the church and builds them up into the faith.

Every local church needs both the evangelist and the pastor-teacher, and if the local congregation cannot afford to pay two specialists, then the congregation as a whole must learn to use the gifts within its body.

The Gift of Teaching and Exhortation

IN THE STUDY:

Two other gifts of the Holy Spirit are specially given:

TEACHING: This is the art of communicating truth to others so that their lives will be changed by their growing understanding. It is listed third in the Biblical order (1 Cor. 12:28).

Jesus taught the Disciples and was known as a teacher. He is called teacher 30 times in the Gospel (e.g. Jn 1:38). The early Church grew because those converted through the work of the evangelists were built up in their faith on the Apostles' teaching (Acts 2:41-2). Both Paul and Barnabas had the gift of teaching (2 Tim 1:11, Acts 15:35). Apollos was a gifted teacher (Acts 18:24-5).

One of the qualifications for an Elder was the ability to teach. (1 Tim 3:2). Jesus taught by lecturing (Matt 5:1-2); dialogue (Jn 3,4); and by small group discussion (Luke 11:1-13).

EXHORTING: The Gift of Exhortation is best seen today in the person who can motivate others to action (Rom. 12:1).

The word for exhortation was the same word as one used to describe the Holy Spirit himself (Rom 12:8). A successful football coach probably is good at exhorting as would be a Trials Lawyer and a national leader. This is the public exercise and God's Gift is given to some Ministers. In another sense, to exhort is to encourage another to change their life-style by your compassion and concern for them (2 Cor. 2:6-8). Such exhortation is exercised by the Counsellor whether he be Pastor, Marriage Guidance Counsellor or Psychologist. In the third sense the scriptures use the word exhort in the sense of rebuking a Christian person who is living foolishly (Phil.4:2; Acts 5:1-11). Paul instructed Timothy to exhort with patience and with instruction (2 Tim 4:2).

FROM THE PULPIT:

The Disciples became good teachers because they were well taught. When they learnt from Jesus they were interested in what they were learning from a good teacher.

Nicodemus recognised that Jesus was a teacher come from God.

The teaching methods of Jesus contained five elements that need to be adapted by every teacher today.

1. His teaching was adapted to His pupils' understanding.
2. His teaching had the ring of conviction about it without being dogmatic.
3. His teaching caused His listeners to think for themselves.
4. His teaching was caught by them because it lived in Him.
5. His teaching was an extension of His love for people.

My late Mother-in-Law, Mrs Edith Vernon, was one of the most gracious women I have ever met. The Holy Spirit gifted her with the ability to teach and, until 72 years of age, regularly taught Christian faith in schools and Sunday School holding the largest class of teenage girls. She followed the teaching methods of the Master!

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

For 49 years Randall T. Pitman was associated as a Student and Lecturer at the College of the Bible Melbourne, where I did my initial training for ministry. Knowing him only in his latter years I

never found him an exciting teacher, but one who was personally enthused with his task. His methods were not modern – no microphones, overhead projectors or sound laboratories, but he gave to hundreds of ministers who attended his lectures a personal enthusiasm for the word of God.

After an ample roast lunch, topped off with plum pudding and custard I found the warmth of the afternoon not conducive to Old Testament study. But Mr Pitman did! His enthusiasm for the word transmitted itself through his teaching. A minister is often called upon to be a teacher, even if he isn't adequately equipped, but his enthusiasm for the task will certainly transmit far more than the contents of the latest paperback.

The Gift of Exhortation is a rare one.

Nothing can be more boring than the continued exhortation "let us ... let us ...". Perhaps those who can teach well but rarely have people coming to the front in Gospel Services to make decisions for Christ could experiment by using others from the Congregation who believe they have the Gift of exhortation by allowing them to make the appeal following one of our Gospel addresses. The good teacher does not necessarily have the Gift of Exhortation and vice versa. Perhaps the teacher may need to accept humbly the addition of an exhortation following the sermon!

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Gift of Wisdom, Knowledge, Discernment

IN THE STUDY:

WISDOM. This is the quality of mind that enables a person to live well and to counsel for successful living, particularly with the counsel of God. There is a natural wisdom that makes men cunning and others powerful, that cuts little ice with God (1 Cor. 1:19-21, James 3:15).

But God offers spiritual wisdom to all who ask for it (James 1:15). His gift is available to all who would teach, counsel, preach, or lead in any work of God. It is always an aid to the fulfillment of his will in building up the face of others and the advancement of his Church. Some Christians, however, receive the gift of spiritual wisdom in extraordinary measure.

Stephen had the gift of wisdom and his witness was such that few could argue against it. (Acts 6:10).

KNOWLEDGE. This is the ability to understand the work and word of God and to be able to express it with faith and simplicity. The gift of knowledge is the ability to see beyond the immediate significance of things to the deeper underlying purposes of God. Peter had that personal knowledge of Christ that went far beyond the guesses of others (Matt.16:16).

DISCERNMENT. This is the gift of the Holy Spirit to enable Christians to distinguish between true and false teaching and to distinguish between true and false spirits. (1 Cor. 11:4, 12:10, Gal. 1:6-10). Paul himself had the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood and true spirits from false spirits. He recognised in the slave-girl at Phillipi even through her glowing praise (Acts 16:18) that she was being manipulated by evil.

These gifts of the spirit are rarely mentioned in scripture and were gifts given to some leaders within the early Church.

FROM THE PULPIT:

Every local Church definitely needs men and women who possess the gifts of wisdom, knowledge and discernment.

Solomon prayed for, and received, both the gifts of wisdom and knowledge (2 Chron. 1:11-12). He became internationally famous for both his wisdom and knowledge (1 Kings 10:6-8). However, he did not add to his wisdom and knowledge continued devotion to God, and so on occasions acted less than his best.

How often people with wisdom and knowledge fail to live up to their own abilities. Many people may be wise in public and foolish in their personal lives.

The Church desperately needs people who can exercise their mutual talents and who seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom, knowledge and discernment are desperately needed in many Churches. Too many good businessmen fail their Church by leaving their brains at home when they attend a Church Business Meeting. Many Churches act foolishly because those in leadership do not seek the insights which are available through constant devotion to God. Wisdom and Knowledge are not only necessary in property and financial matters within the Church but also in dealing with false teachings and many cults in the community. In an era when interest in the occult is at an all time high we need Christian people who have the gift of distinguishing between truth and falsehood.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

My Professor of Philosophy at Melbourne University was an elderly man, a distinguished academic, and an author of note. But Professor A. Boyce Gibson was not only an internationally known philosopher, but an excellent teacher as well. Then I discovered he had something more. For some time I puzzled over it until one day he spoke about his personal faith and commitment to Jesus Christ and I recognised that through his ability as a philosopher he also possessed the Christian gift of the Holy Spirit of wisdom.

The gift of knowledge, may be given to Christians, in a special way by the Holy Spirit, for the benefit of others. Some people have the ability to understand events and their significance beyond that of the rest of us. In an unconfirmed report I read by Rick Yohn, Billy Graham was troubled about President John F. Kennedy's trip to Dallas, Texas. On the day that Kennedy was due to leave Graham rang the White House and requested that the trip be cancelled. Graham believed that God had given him special insight into a tragedy that was about to happen. The President's assistants thanked the evangelist for his concern but did not cancel the trip. The next day Kennedy was assassinated. Was this an example of the special gift of knowledge? Is this E.S.P? Or what? To distinguish between the spirits of good and evil is not a gift sought by many. But missionaries in remote areas tell of the supply by the Holy Spirit of this gift to aid their work. Those working in the concrete jungles of huge cities where so much wickedness is perpetuated under the guise of good could well do to be armed with the gift of discernment as their missionary counterparts.

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Gift of Tongues and Interpretation

IN THE STUDY:

The last of the gifts mentioned in the list by Paul are taken together in scripture – Speaking in TONGUES and the INTERPRETATION of tongues (1 Cor. 14:5, 13, 27, 28.). Both these gifts are gifts of the spirit, in spite of what some teachers say. Anti-charismatic teachers are wrong in claiming that speaking in tongues is always satanic or psychological in origin. Paul describes these gifts as coming from the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, Christian Pastors from Africa and Latin America tell of how witch-doctors induced speaking in tongues among their adherents.

The gift of speaking in tongues and of interpreting them is reported in the Book of Acts on only three occasions in the early Church, each at a special occasion.

1. When the Holy Spirit spoke through the Disciples at the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:3,4).
2. When the gentiles praised God through speaking in tongues (Acts 10:46).
3. When the Disciples of John the Baptist responded to the laying on of hands from Paul (Acts 19:6). On each of these occasions God's message was introduced to a new group of people in a new geographical area. It seemed as if tongues were used to break through into a new region, both spiritually and geographically.

In 1 Cor. 14 Paul writes concerning the problems in the abuse of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Had Paul been speaking about it as a doctrine or a practice we would be in a much clearer position of understanding these gifts today. However, we must infer much of his teaching as he was speaking concerning the abuse of the gifts. He seems to indicate three areas where tongues were to be used and the limitations which were to be placed on them.

1. In private prayer (v. 1-19). The essential message was that tongues could be used for spiritual growth. This was for individual development and was seen as a lesser gift than the Gift of proclaiming God's message in a way that people were edified. Paul wished that all people could grow in spiritual maturity through speaking in strange tongues, but preferred that they had the gift of proclaiming God's message to others, (v.5). Paul indicates how necessary an interpreter is to bring knowledge to other people from the gift of tongues (v.6-19).
2. Tongues were to be used as a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit to others. (v. 20-25). Once again it is essential that for an unbeliever to be convinced of his sins he will need an interpreter speaking plainly of the Gospel.
3. Tongues could be used in public worship. In such cases there was to be a discipline in the presentation, a limitation on the numbers speaking, and the interpretation of what is said. This gift of proclaiming God's message through tongues should also be under the control of the person so speaking (v.32-33).

Unfortunately, many Christians who have had the gift of tongues and interpretations of tongues have made it appear that these gifts were the essential evidence of the possession of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament nowhere teaches that tongues were for all Christians. Rather they are gifts for only a few. The use of the phrase "Given to another" (1 Cor. 12:10) implies that there some to whom the gift was not given. This is also the way of understanding 1 Cor. 14. Furthermore, "No" is the only answer to the question "Do all speak in tongues?" of 1 Cor. 12:30. There is also the way of understanding 1 Cor. 12:30. There is no evidence that, because some experience the gift, all must seek it. Outside of the passages of Acts and Corinthians mentioned, there are no other Christians in the New Testament actually said to have exercised this gift. It was not the normal requirement of the early Church Christians.

Furthermore, the possession of the gifts of tongues was frequently associated with those who were spiritually immature, rather than those of spiritual maturity and stability. While Paul possessed the gift in greater measure than others, (1 Cor. 14:18), there is no record of him ever exercising that gift. Paul wrote of it only once and that was because of its abuse.

There are a number of examples of the filling of the Holy Spirit of Christians in the New Testament who showed no evidence of speaking in tongues, even though they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter did not speak in tongues when he was filled with the Holy Spirit, before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8). Other examples are Acts 4:31; 6:5, 8; 7:55-56; 13:52.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

Those Christians who roundly condemn other Christians who speak in tongues should remember that this is a gift of God. You should accept the tongue speaker in love and not regard yourself as a second class Christian. You have other gifts to be discovered and used in his service, and ought not look at the gifts given to any other either with yearnings or with fear.

To those who speak in tongues, please remember that your gift is mainly for personal spiritual growth. It must be used to centre your thoughts on Jesus Christ. Without interpretation it does not build up the body of Christ. Your gift is from God to you but it is not your place to so rejoice in it that you make other Christians not possessing this gift feel inferior for your gift is the least of all.

The Summary of the Gifts

IN THE STUDY:

We have been studying the various gifts of the Holy Spirit. A spiritual gift is the ability that is given to a believer so that he or she may complete God's will for them. Every Christian possesses at least one God-given gift. Sometimes Christians have several gifts. The gifts mentioned in the New Testament are found in Romans 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:14, Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Peter 4:10-11. There are at least 20 different gifts mentioned in the New Testament but by other counting they may number 21 or even 27. Even this is not an exhaustive listing.

They fall into four categories:

a) The gifts for helping. This includes:

The gift of serving. Which is the ability to give aid in any way that encourages others;
The gift of generosity. The ability to make and give money in the work of God
The gift of showing mercy. The ability to work with those people who need help;
The gift of craftsmanship. The ability to make works of art that inspire others
The gift of healing. The ability to heal people spiritually, emotionally and physically.

b) The gifts for leading. These gifts include:

The oversight and leadership of the work of God and the local church.
This includes the gift of administration – the ability to encourage other Christians and to correctly guide the affairs of the church; and the gift of faith – which is the ability to trust God completely and to raise the vision of other people to point where great things are attempted and achieved.

c) The gifts for growing.

Each of these important gifts are concerned with the growing of the individual Christian to maturity in the faith. Several of these gifts have been given to help the individual Christian grow in maturity in Christ. Among these gifts are the gift of Apostleship – the gift given to the early New Testament disciples to develop the work of God through the ministry of the word; the gift of prophecy – the ability to preach God's work with conviction; the gift of evangelism – the ability to so preach Christ that people are convicted of sin and converted in their faith to Jesus; the gift of being a pastor – the ability to care for people's spiritual needs through feeding them on the word of God and nurturing them in the faith; the gift of teaching – the ability to understand and communicate God's truth clearly and forcefully to others; the gift of exhortation – the ability to motivate people to action through the skilful handling of the word of God; the gift of wisdom – the ability to interpret God's truth to the lives of Christians in every situation; the gift of knowledge – the ability to know and to impart fundamental truths; the gift of discernment and interpretation – the ability to perceive through the true and false influences and powers of this world. These gifts help the Christian grow to maturity.

d) The gifts for amazing.

These were the gifts that are so often sought by Christians because they are spectacular and can be used greatly to help others. They are also the gifts that have been greatly misused and have caused dissension within the family of the faith. They include the gift of miracle working – which is the ability to perform acts that are contrary to what we know of nature with power beyond normal human ability; the gift of tongues – the ability to speak in strange sounds beyond human understanding or learning; and the gift of interpretation – the ability to understand speaking in tongues and interpret the message which is unintelligible to others. These gifts of amazing others,

were gifts which at the time caused division and dissension within the early church as well as the conversion of many.

FROM THE PULPIT:

Visiting one of the artists in our congregation who has made a great contribution to the worship of God through her art, I was asked “How can I distinguish between my natural talent and a spiritual gift?”

1. Both natural talents and spiritual gifts come from God (1 Cor. 4:7). Both can be used for good or ill, to promote the work of God and the welfare of mankind.
2. Only Christian people possess the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8: 9 1- 17; 1 Cor. 12:7). The unbeliever is observed not to possess gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 14:16 – 24).
3. While natural talents are given at birth, spiritual gifts are given at a time of re-birth. Paul was a great teacher, student and leader before his conversion, but after his re-birth he had the gift of miracles, apostleship, and exaltation.
4. Both natural talents and spiritual gifts must be developed, or they will be lost. As with the talents in the parables of Jesus, they can be increased or decreased. If you don't use them, you'll lose them!
5. The Holy Spirit helps us to discover and develop the gift given to us (2 Tim. 1:7). The Holy Spirit guides and empowers us in the use of our gifts. Every Christian must let their light shine!

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Fruit of the Spirit

IN THE STUDY:

It is impossible to complete a study of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit without considering the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The nine fruit are the character evidences of God's presence in the life of the Christian as outlined in Galatians 5:22-23. The nine fruit form three groups, each of three Christian graces. The mature Christian, balanced and Christ-like, will grow in these qualities and characteristics. In our relationship with God we will demonstrate LOVE, JOY AND PEACE. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us God's love, joy and peace. These qualities show to all the presence of God within the Christian. Love is our motive in all we do, joy is the sign of the in-dwelling presence of God, and peace is the rest within the heart that is in line with God's will.

In our relationship with other people we demonstrate PATIENCE, KINDNESS and goodness. Patience is the capacity to put up with other people's rudeness and harshness with understanding and consideration. Kindness is the virtue of possessing a positive goodwill towards the welfare of others. Goodness is that characteristic which puts the kind wish into action and constructively helps others. These qualities are ascending steps in our relationship towards other people. In our relationship with ourselves, we will demonstrate FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS and SELF-CONTROL. The emphasis is upon our trustworthiness. People find in us that we are faithful in all our dealings. Gentleness is the mark of strong and confident character. Those who are strong can afford to be gentle. They have no need for aggressiveness. Self-control is personal mastery over our passions, thoughts, emotions, speech and behaviour.

These fruit of the Holy Spirit show to the world by the quality of our character that we are mature in Christ. They affect our spiritual relationships with God, with other people and ourselves.

FROM THE PULPIT:

Through the Holy Spirit God gives gifts to every Christian. These gifts differ and some are gifted greater than others. But all Christians should produce evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the mark of our maturity.

The Church at Corinth had all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but they were divided, fighting among each other, sensual, and neglecting the true graces of Christian living. They failed to grow in grace as mature Christians. They had special gifts, but they needed spiritual character which only comes from the fruit of the spirit. When Christ dwells within, then our character should show evidence of his presence.

John speaks of the qualities of Christian character (1 John 3:9). Peter encourages Christians to grow like Christ (2 Peter 1:5-7). Paul urged the early Christians to change their nature by God's power and to grow in Christian grace (Col. 3:9-12).

The early Christians, who were known most for their work in the advancement of the Kingdom of God, were people who possessed both the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Their Christian character guided them to maturity and effective service. Note both the gifts and the graces mentioned in Barnabas, Stephen and Philip. Christian character must govern our spiritual gifts. Whenever some Christians claim special gifts of the Holy Spirit and yet are spiritually snobs and divisive, there is an indication that they lack the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus indicated that it was by our fruit that we would be known. Nothing can be more important to the individual Christian than he show forth the qualities of character associated with Christ.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

As I look back over forty years of ministry, the people I remember with the greatest affection are those who showed the fruits of the Holy Spirit. I have met many talented and gifted people but those who possessed the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their life are those who have always meant much to us. As a teenager, the encouragement and care of Eric and Elsie Hammond helped our young lives develop. As a student minister, the patience and hospitality of David and Ethel Moncur guided our early ministry. In the rural church, Loy and Nellie Fleming showed those graces, which transcended denominational barriers and party strife. In Denominational Leadership, Miss Marjorie Job showed forth calmness and devotion that epitomised Christ like character. In a long city ministry with national and international ramifications the grace demonstrated in Professor Alf Pollard AO and Dr. Jim Pendlebury OAM helped me immensely.

In our lives we all know forceful people, successful people, talented people, but as years go by we remember most the graceful people.

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes

The Fullness of the Spirit

IN THE STUDY:

We bring to a close the long study of the Gift, Gifts, Fruit and Fullness of the Holy Spirit. Never has the Holy Spirit been so eagerly sought or completely misunderstood as in our generation. One misunderstanding centres on the filling of the Holy Spirit.

There are several New Testament examples of people who are said to be filled with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, Stephen, Saul, Barnabas and the seven Deacons are all mentioned as being filled with the Holy Spirit. However, no one else is mentioned in the New Testament outside of the two books written by Luke.

Some people speak of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This reference goes back to John the Baptist who said that while he baptised with water one would come who would baptise with the Holy Spirit (Matt.3:11: Mark 1:8). The risen Lord indicated that He was the one who would give the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) and Peter re-emphasised it (Acts 11:16).

These sayings centre around the Day of Pentecost for the Jews and the home of Cornelius for the Gentiles. On both occasions the baptism of the Holy Spirit is accompanied by speaking in tongues. This special baptism of the Holy Spirit emphasized the beginnings of the faith among Jews and Gentiles and there is no further indication in scripture that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to be a continuing separate practice for every believer.

Indeed, a passage like 1 Cor. 12: 13 indicates the unity of believers because of their common baptism into Christ and their common possession of the Holy Spirit. There is no precedent in the New Testament for one person to ask another if they have been baptised by the Holy Spirit. If a person had been baptised into Christ then it was accepted that he was baptised of the Holy Spirit. The connection between water baptism and Spirit baptism recurs throughout the Book of Acts. Saul was both filled with the Holy Spirit and baptised (Acts 9: 17 – 18). So was Cornelius (Acts 10: 45 – 48). So were the twelve men at Ephesus (Acts 19: 5-6). It is further mentioned when Titus speaks of both the washing of regeneration and the renewal in the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5-7). It is quite wrong to separate baptism in water and baptism by the Holy Spirit. Some have done so to justify the practice of confirmation and others to support Pentecostal teaching. But in the New Testament both were at the same time. (Acts 2:38).

However, it is important for Christians to be filled by the Holy Spirit. The emphasis some make on the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a separate event emphasizes a spectacular event that may happen to some Christians. But filling of the Holy Spirit is necessary for all Christians. All believers receive the Holy Spirit at the time of their baptism in water. They must go on growing until they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

FROM THE PULPIT:

How can we be filled with the fullness of the Holy Spirit?

1. Remember the Holy Spirit is God's gift of grace. It is not received by our striving (1. Thess.4:8).
2. It is a gift not given to all men. God gives life, sun and rain to all but the Holy Spirit only to those who are willing to open their lives to Him as people spiritually receptive (1. Cor.2:4). Like the cross the receiving of the Holy Spirit is foolishness to the natural man.
3. All Christians have the Holy Spirit from the time of their baptism but not all possess the fullness of the Spirit. If we neglect, quench or grieve the Holy Spirit by our careless attitude, irreverent behaviour and spiritual neglect we have ourselves to blame.

4. We need to ask for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told us so (Luke 11: 13; John 7:37). Paul urged believers to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
5. We must repent from sin and be baptised (Acts 2: 38).
6. We must live a life of obedience (Acts 5: 32) by faith (Gal.3:1-5).

Without the Holy Spirit we cannot live Christian lives (Rom. 8:9,14). Even more wonderful than the filling of the Holy Spirit in this life, is the realisation that the possession of the Holy Spirit is only the first indication (earnest, guarantee 2. Cor. 1:22;5:5; Eph. 1:14) of what is yet to come in the glory of eternity.

AMONG THE PEOPLE:

An earnest, young Pentecostal woman was saying to me “But surely you want to be baptised by the Holy Spirit?” I indicated to her that when we speak of baptism of the Holy Spirit we are referring to the once and for all Gift of the Holy Spirit; but when we speak of the fullness of the Holy Spirit we are speaking of what needs to come to us continually. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is part of our initiation into the Church and into the faith, the fullness of the Holy Spirit is a growing experience of Christian maturity.

In Luke 3 and 4 we read of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus in three senses.

- a. He came upon the Lord Jesus to equip Him for His ministry at the point of His Baptism
- b. Jesus returned from the Jordan filled with the Holy Spirit as his normal spiritual state and
- c. He was led and strengthened by the Holy Spirit during the time of temptation.

All Christians receive the Gift of the Holy spirit at their baptism. Like our Lord, we are to grow in grace and into the fullness of the Holy Spirit during our lives. At times of special need, temptation, or demands for special Christian service, we have the promise of His strengthening presence.

Thank you for making this study part of your life. If you have enjoyed this study on the Holy Spirit, why not introduce it to a group of friends for a group study. You will all be blessed!

Rev Dr Gordon Moyes