

PART NINE

Cessationism vs Biblicism

Cessationism under the biblical spotlight

PHILIP L. POWELL

Can the Cessationist and the moderate Pentecostal reach agreement over spiritual gifts?

This was published as a separate paper, which appeared in CWM Journal *Contending Earnestly for The Faith* (CETF). Your comments on this, and any other part of the book are welcomed.

CHAPTER ONE

A Universal Issue

Introduction

An earlier draft of this article was sent by email to a number of men from both the cessationist and non-cessationist camps. Barry Chant, Peter Barnes, Jacob Prasch, Andre van der Linden and Spencer Gear made the most comprehensive responses, some of which have been incorporated. However I stand responsible for what is published below, which I know will not be the final word on the subject. Your comments are very welcome. Spencer Gear made the suggestion that a biblical response to cessationism warrants a more detailed look at such questions as: *What supernatural gifts are available for today's church? Can "tongues" in the Book of Acts be compared with I Corinthians 12-14? Why the fuss about tongues? Is the hassle concerning the supernatural gifts in the church today in any way related to the church's lack of power and impact on society (in the Western world)? Is there any way of reconciling cessationists with moderate (biblical) charismatic/pentecostals? If apostles continue today, what should their function look like?* These are all valid questions and no doubt there are more.

In what follows I have simply sought to open the subject and give a reasonably comprehensive overview. Somewhere along the line we will endeavour to act on Spencer's suggestion and possibly publish a booklet addressing these issues or maybe one of our readers will take up the challenge. Already we have received some very helpful comments about the modern "apostle" idea from Carl Guiney, who is a member of an AG (USA) committee who are looking at the vexed question of doctrinal purity associated with the revival of the latter rain errors linked to Pensacola and Toronto, which have been taken on board by so many. Douglas Dean of Florida, suggested that there is a huge conflict in the USA and he, like so many, encouraged us to go forward in the battle for truth. We value your prayers and your thoughts on the subject.

Philip L. Powell

CHAPTER TWO

Definitions and Perspectives

THIS might prove to be the major issue confronting part of the church in our time. Bible-believing Christians find themselves in a tension between the extremes of charismania and Pentecostalism on the one hand and their steadfast commitment to a God who never changes, as presented in scripture and throughout history, on the other.

What confronts us here is the old “*baby and bath-water*” analogy, which has been much over-used and at times can be dismissed as being too simplistic. In some cases there may be more than one bathtub or there’s no baby, just dirty water, which needs to be thrown out! But the analogy does apply in this case as we are dealing with an honest dilemma that has produced a pendulum swing. Good people, who won’t endorse the false, do, at times, end up rejecting the real.

To examine the issue dispassionately and fairly we must start with a right premise and proceed with clear logic, humbly looking to the Lord that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. So let’s begin with definitions and then establish a foundation for our rationale:

CESSATION: “a stopping, permanent or temporary; discontinuance”

—*The World Book Dictionary* by Thorndike Barnhart.

From a theological perspective “*Cessationist* refers to someone who thinks that certain miraculous gifts *ceased* long ago, when the apostles died and scripture was complete.”¹

When the word *CESSATIONISM* is applied in a biblical or theological setting it signifies a body of belief which asserts a permanent or temporary discontinuance of the supernatural displays of God and/or of the manifestations or gifts of the Holy Spirit as listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and/or of some

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, p1031.

of the ministry gifts of Christ referred to in Ephesians 4:11. Just as there are degrees of charismatic and Pentecostal teaching and emphases so there are degrees of CESSATIONISM.

The extreme position of the latter asserts that everything supernatural ended with the establishment of the canon of scripture and the passing of the twelve Apostles. Dr Jack Deere² shows how serious the cessationist position can become. He writes:

“I was once arguing with a well-known theologian over the subject of the gifts of the Spirit. I made the comment that there was not a shred of evidence in the Bible that the gifts of the Spirit had passed away. He said, ‘I wouldn’t go that far, but I know that you cannot prove the cessation of the gifts by scripture. However, we do not clearly see them in the later history of the church, and they are not part of our own theological tradition.’”

This man taught at a seminary that was dogmatically cessationist in its approach to miraculous gifts, but in private conversation he freely admitted that this doctrine could not be proved by scripture.³

Dr Peter Masters of Spurgeon’s Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, is a cessationist. He wrote:

“In these days of charismatic confusion we need constantly to draw attention [to] the texts which prove that signs and wonders were peculiar to the apostolic band, and were not bestowed generally.”⁴

Very few Christians, let alone denominations and local churches, accept this extreme teaching today. Most will acknowledge that at the very least supernatural divine healings do sometimes (occasionally) occur; that inexplicable miracles do take place; that God does still answer prayer, otherwise why pray? The following view seems to be widespread:

² In quoting Jack Deere, here and elsewhere in this article, we do not intend to give the impression that we endorse his extreme charismatic position. We consider he is correct in what we have quoted.

³ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993, pp55-56.

⁴ Peter Masters, *The Healing Epidemic*. London: The Wakeman Trust, 1988, p69-70.

“The more spectacular gifts (tongues, healings, miracles) necessitated some degree of order that would prevent their indiscriminate use (1 Corinthians 14:40). The spirits of the prophets must be subjected to the prophets (vs 32). Paul clearly insists that spectacular gifts were inferior to those that instructed believers in faith and morals and evangelised non-Christians. Tongue speaking was not forbidden (vs 39), but intelligent exposition of the word, instruction in faith and morals, and preaching the gospel were infinitely superior. The criteria used to judge the relative values of spiritual gifts were doctrinal (1 Corinthians 12:3), moral (1 Corinthians 13), and practical (1 Corinthians 14).”⁵

The more moderate and reasonable cessationist teaching focuses upon some, if not all, of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and upon two of the ascension ministry gifts of Christ viz that of apostle and prophet — c/f Ephesians 4:11. In short, moderate CESSATIONISM believes and teaches that the ministries of apostle and prophet are not valid since the completion of the canon of scripture and that those gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were essential to their function, have ceased. How many of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit are thus affected is not always clear. There are varieties of opinions among those who take the cessationist position on this point. Most will deny three of the *vocal* gifts — speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy, unless prophecy is interpreted as preaching, as it is by many cessationists. John MacArthur is such an example.⁶

Some will deny the *sign* gifts viz working of miracles and some aspects of the gifts of healings and of the gift of faith. Often cessationists adopt a view about the three *revelatory* gifts — the word of wisdom, word of knowledge and discerning of spirits — so as to diminish or destroy the supernatural nature of their displays. Thomson & Elwell provide an example of this kind of interpretation:

⁵ J.G.S.S. Thomson and W. A. Elwell, “Spiritual Gifts,” in Walter A. Elwell (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, pp1045-1046).

⁶ “The New Testament prophetic gift (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10) primarily has to do with declaration, not revelation. The New Testament prophet ‘speaks to men for edification and exhortation and comfort’ (1 Cor 14:3). He is a preacher, not a source of ongoing revelation. His task is one of forth-telling, not foretelling. That is, he proclaims already revealed truth; he is not generally a conduit for new revelation” (John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992, p81).

“Speaking the word of knowledge suggests a word spoken only after long and careful consideration. This would be a word that the Christian teacher would ordinarily speak.”⁷

“The greatest problem with my former point of view [as a cessationist] is that it is not even remotely close to the experience of the people of the Bible. God did speak to them apart from the scripture. He warned, encouraged, and gave specific geographical leading to his people. In order to support my old view, I had to find a way to *explain away* all the biblical examples of God’s regular special revelation and guidance for his children.”⁸

BIBLICISM: “strict or literal adherence to the Bible”
—*The World Book Dictionary* by Thorndike Barnhart.

Theologically, biblicism “refers primarily to an excessively literal method of interpretation. It emphasizes individual words, rejects any form of the historical-critical method, and frequently employs some form of free association or taking verses out of their context to prove a point (hence, proof texts). Some evangelicals may use biblicism to indicate their commitment to the absolute authority of the Bible in all matters of faith and practice.”⁹

In every theological discussion we must start with scripture, so let’s do it and return to the basic argument and an examination of the presuppositions and “modus operandi” of both sides later.

“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the LORD, who hides His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. Behold, I and the children, whom the LORD has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells in mount Zion. And when they shall say to you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that whisper, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To

⁷ Thomson & Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p1045.

⁸ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, p274.

⁹ H.C. Waetjen, “Biblicism, Bibliolatry,” in Walter A. Elwell (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984, p152).

the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

—Isaiah 8:16-20

When Isaiah penned those words the expression “*to the law and to the testimony*” was an appeal to the Word of the Lord as it then stood as Alec Motyer in his Tyndale OT Commentary¹⁰ on Isaiah and H.C. Leupold in his Exposition of Isaiah: Volume 1, Chapters 1-39 (one vol. edition) prove — see footnote 10, below. We must of course remember that the Israelites had a strong and accurate oral culture at this time.¹¹

The Law and the Testimony included everything and precluded nothing of the whole counsel of God at that time. Interestingly Isaiah in this passage condemns all those who go outside of the Word of God for their instruction or teaching as being in total darkness even though v19 makes it clear that he is opposing those who are into spiritism. Sola Scriptura is a doctrine that stretches right back to the Garden of Eden and is supported by the balance of the Old Testament e.g. Micah 3:5-7, Jeremiah 27:12-22 and 29:4-9.

The New Testament affirms the same thing,

“For I testify to every man who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”

—Revelation 22:18-19

¹⁰ Alec Motyer, *Isaiah* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries). Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999, pp86-87).

¹¹ “Verse 20. Slogans abound in this portion of the prophet’s message. Verse 16 is a slogan which describes the course necessary for the present: ‘bind up the testimony...’ Verse 19 describes a slogan against the following of which men are to be warned: ‘Consult the mediums...’ Verse 20 again gives the best slogan of all, in the very concise form: ‘To the law and to the testimony’. It is true that ‘law’ means ‘instruction’. It is also true that from an early date the Mosaic law was regarded as a primary instance of such instruction. ‘Testimony’ again was another synonym for the ‘law’. Apparently then the two terms together imply that men should turn back to all instruction **oral or written** (emphasis added), that may have been brought to their attention at any time. Such instruction may have been largely ignored. It was important then. It is important now. In fact, the giving heed to it is the most important issue of the day. It could therefore be aptly paraphrased: Let the nation turn back to that basic instruction which has come to it from God in the past; to do so is their only hope” [H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah: Volume 1, Chapters 1-39* (one vol. edition). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1971, p177].

While the words “this book” may indeed be primarily a reference only to the Book of the Revelation as some assert¹² there are many other New Testament scriptures, which affirm the unique authority of the Bible in matters of spiritual life and doctrine as the following bear testimony by way of example.

“And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”

—2 Timothy 3:15-16

“Search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they, which testify of me. And you will not come to me, that you might have life”

—John 5:39-40

At this point we can reasonably conclude, with some reservation that in theory, at least, both sides think they are standing on common ground, but in practice each tends to stray and sometimes for a very noble reason on the part of both viz a commitment to the *Sola Scriptura* principle. On the one hand some who belong to the Pentecostal or charismatic camps, in their honest attempt to support the biblicism that includes the present day reality of the Holy Spirit, end up trying to defend the indefensible in justifying some or all of the aberrations of their history and/or current bizarre practices. On the other hand some of those who adopt the cessationist position, by starting from the premise of these obvious unscriptural and non biblical occurrences sometimes end up undermining their most cherished doctrine — *Sola Scriptura*, by actually appealing to extra biblical sources in an attempt to establish their point.

John MacArthur has done this by his examples from experience. See chapter 7 of *Charismatic Chaos*, “How do spiritual gifts operate?” and the experiential examples he gives. One example is that of parents who wrote to his church about their daughter who “had become involved in a large, well-known

¹² In commenting on vv. 18-19, Robert H. Mounce writes: “The book [of Revelation] draws to a close with a severe warning against adding to or taking away from its prophetic message... It is best to take the passage in a straightforward manner as a severe warning to the hearers not to distort the basic message revealed through John” [Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament, F.F. Bruce, ed.). Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977, pp395-96].

Third Wave church. Her mother wrote about the daughter's experience with speaking in tongues, angels and demons. One demon 'sat on her husband's head one night and hissed at her. She sees others riding on top of cars or standing on rooftops and some in battle with the angels. She sometimes sees darkness around people. She believes seeing this is a God-given gift'.¹³

In fairness to MacArthur, we must remember that Paul appealed to the experience of the Judaizers when he confronted Peter in Galatians 2. I'm sure we could find other examples from experience in scripture. We cannot confront error without appealing to current examples.

Jack Deere observes,

“There is one basic reason why Bible-believing Christians do not believe in the miraculous gifts of the Spirit today. It is simply this: they have not seen them. Their tradition, of course, supports their lack of belief, but their tradition would have no chance of success if it were not coupled with their lack of experience of the miraculous. . . . No cessationist writer that I am aware of tries to make his case on scripture alone. All of these writers appeal both to scripture and to either present or past history to support their case. It often goes unnoticed that this appeal to history, either past or present, is actually an argument from experience, or better, an argument from lack of experience.”¹⁴

Jack Deere pointedly says “Even the greatest of the cessationist scholars, Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, could not make his case on scripture alone. He appealed both to the scriptures and to “the testimony of later ages.”¹⁵

In effect each arrives at the one point — a denial of the sufficiency and adequacy of scripture — why? I suggest that it is because their premise is wrong. I am not saying that we must not appeal to church history or to experience — far from it. All valid as well as false doctrines find their outworking in real life. What I am saying is that if we start with history instead of with our doctrine of God from the Bible we will go astray and come to wrong conclusions. We must build our argument upon the basis of scripture alone. Having done that, then we should examine history and current happenings in

¹³ MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, pp192-193.

¹⁴ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Spirit*, p55.

¹⁵ Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1918, reprint 1983, p6, in Deere, *Surprised by the Spirit*, n9, p268.

the light of the doctrine that we have established from the Bible. This is the only safe way to proceed.

Is Cessationism Biblical?

Here we must once more emphasise the fact that there are degrees of cessationism —see the examples above. To say, as was common among a number of branches of conservative evangelicals several decades ago, that supernaturalism ended with the passing of the original apostles is without any biblical support. Statements such as, “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8), whether interpreted solely in relation to the context or taken as a great principle of the gospel, clearly denies the idea. There are many biblical statements that teach the same thing.

“For I am the LORD, I do not change; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

—Malachi 3:6

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

—James 1:17

What we are discussing here is what theologians call the immutability of God. The extreme cessationist view is so clearly contrary to the doctrine of the changelessness of God as taught in scripture that we would only labour the point if we quoted more passages from the Bible against it.

The more moderate view is not so easily dismissed as it impinges upon another equally important theological truth, which we call the sovereignty of God and which needs to be held in tension with God’s immutability. Cessationists tend to focus on the former whereas most Pentecostals and charismatics focus on the latter. Correct teaching about each will not deny or undermine either. This is where the art of rightly dividing the Word of Truth by comparing scripture with scripture, is so important. Sovereignty says that God can choose to withdraw the displays of His supernatural powers. Immutability says that He will only do so in accordance with His nature and character as revealed in His Word, the Bible.

Far from sovereignty denying and undermining immutability, the fact that God is SOVEREIGN means that He is able to maintain the changelessness of

His ways and works. Now this is the principal part of the premise on which we must build our argument in respect of our topic.

Cessationism affirms that God in His sovereignty has determined to cause certain things that He gave to the early New Testament church to cease or come to an end. We say that such a position must not be arrived at arbitrarily by conjecture, nor simply on the basis of history as we perceive it, but by scripture. Does the Word of God establish (prove) it?

To those in the Pentecostal and charismatic camps we would issue the same challenge. Let the Word of God decide and let history and experience illustrate what the Bible teaches. To the one we say, “Take out your Bibles and show us clearly where scripture teaches that the supernatural displays of God, including the nine gifts (manifestations) of the Holy Spirit and the five ascension ministry gifts of Christ, are said or prophesied to cease and we will support your view. Do this before you make your appeal to church history.”

To the other we say, “Take out your Bibles and show us clearly where your strange and sometimes bizarre so called manifestations of the Holy Spirit find support. Do this in a reasonable and convincing manner before appealing to experience or history and we will go along with you”.

At the risk of labouring the matter I suggest that this is where some who have already spoken or written on this topic have been in error. I have read a number of Cessationists, of varying degree, who have started out by attacking their opponents, not on the basis of Bible doctrine but on the basis of what is perceived to be their bad record or suspect origins. This is a false starting point and will inevitably result in misleading conclusions, especially when men make huge leaps of logic purportedly based on scripture.

For example several opponents of those who are of a Pentecostal persuasion have started their discussion by pointing to the extremes of Azusa Street and W.J. Seymour or of Charles Parham at the beginning of this century. Or they have attacked prominent Pentecostal ministers, such as Smith Wigglesworth, on the basis of the alleged extremes, which no sensible Bible-believing person would endorse. Others who are anti-charismatic have begun by exposing the pro-Roman Catholic leanings of the leaders of the so-called Charismatic Renewal of the 1950s and 1960s, such as David du Plessis, who took “*charismania*” to the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). They ignore the fact that du Plessis’ action was condemned by a number of his Pentecostal colleagues at the time. Bible-believing Christians from both camps cannot justify these extremes or the actions, which have contributed to ecumenism. BUT I say that this whole approach of starting with history instead of with

scripture is wrong and will inevitably lead to suspect conclusions. The argument is founded upon a wrong premise. Sadly, some good people who were committed to the immutability of God in respect of the present day reality of the Holy Spirit in fruit and gifts have cast away their first love and their faith and now wander in the wilderness of doubt.

Both sides do it and both are equally wrong. Pentecostals and charismatics, in some regards are worse than those in the Cessationist camp, for they frequently revise history and claim or imply that many of the great heroes of the “church” support their position. All too frequently they do this on the basis of very flimsy evidence and in some cases no evidence at all. These are the sorts of consequences that inevitably flow out from an argument that is built on history and not on scripture. Let us appeal to history and to experience, by all means, but let us do so only after we have established our case clearly on the Word of God.

To illustrate my point I refer to two cases: One of my former colleagues appealed to Charles Wesley’s great hymn , “*Oh For A Thousand Tongues To Sing My Great Redeemer’s Praise*” as evidence that John and Charles Wesley and the early Methodists supported speaking in tongues as taught by Pentecostals. He said that the thousand tongues of the hymn were “*diverse kinds of tongues*” referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:10. On another occasion a former associate in that particular camp suggested to me that the late Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones (MLJ) would support the bizarre happenings of Toronto and Pensacola. He based his assertion simply on the doctor’s many spoken and written statements in support of revival.

Having known MLJ to some extent during my time as a preacher in Great Britain and being aware of his great suspicion of the charismatic movement, I of course knew that my friend was quite wrong in his conclusions. Despite his well-known criticisms of the extremes of both Pentecostalism and charisma, it is worth noting that MLJ was still very friendly with well-known Assemblies of God leaders including the late WTH Richards and the late David Powell.

Maybe Jack Deere puts his finger on the problem,

“When Christians from the Western world hear stories like this [Corrie ten Boom’s vitamin bottle that did not run out], they sometimes ask, ‘Why don’t we have more supernatural revelation in our churches?’ I think it’s because the Western church often

has more in common with the Laodicean church than with the faith of those like Corrie ten Boom. “Why should we expect God to speak to us when we spend so little time with Him?”

The question is not, ‘Why don’t we see more miracles and have more supernatural revelation in the church today?’ Rather, given the apathy and the lack of godliness in the church today, the question is, ‘Why do we have any supernatural experiences at all in the American church?’”¹⁶

To the LAW and the TESTIMONY

Isaiah’s appeal to the Word of God in terms of His law on the one hand and the record of His acts on the other (c/f Is 8:20 explained above) finds a counterpart in DOCTRINE (mainly the epistles) and HISTORY (mainly the four gospels and the book of Acts) in the New Testament. Isaiah actually implies what will happen to those who depart from a Sola Scriptura position — dead formality i.e. a religious experience and practice, which lacks the supernatural element that is essential to make God’s people “*signs and wonders*” (Isaiah 8:18) on the one hand; or on the other hand an occult situation among the “*mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter*” (Is 8:19). This is precisely what is happening.

John MacArthur gives an example,

“I talked to a man who is a leader in the modern Pentecostal movement, and he said to me, ‘You cannot deny my experience.’

I responded by saying, ‘Well, let me ask you this. When an experience occurs, do you always, without question, know that it is of God? Be honest.’ He answered, ‘No.’

‘Could it be of Satan?’ I asked. He reluctantly replied, ‘Yes.’ My charismatic friend had no answer. This is exactly where the Corinthians were. They did not know what was of God and what was not. The work of the Spirit was confused with pagan ecstasies. They needed help.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, pp88-89.

¹⁷ John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, pp202-203.

MacArthur is of the view that “only what is valuable is counterfeited”. He explains,

“It seems obvious that if people in the Corinthian assembly were calling Jesus accursed, the gifts they claimed to have received from the Holy Spirit were counterfeit. My father had a saying, ‘No one counterfeits what isn’t valuable.’ One never hears about counterfeit brown paper. People do not counterfeit trash. But they do counterfeit money, diamonds, and jewellery. Counterfeits copy what is valuable because that is the only point in counterfeiting. Satan was busy in the Corinthian church imitating spiritual gifts, and he is busy doing the same thing today.”¹⁸

Wayne Grudem warns about associating tongues’ speaking with the demonic,

“*Paul says, ‘I want you all to speak in tongues’* (1 Corinthians 14:5 RSV). He gives no warning that they should beware of demonic counterfeit or even think that this would be a possibility when they use this gift.”¹⁹

On balance I favour MacArthur here as 1 Corinthians 12:3 implies the possibility of a demonic counterfeit.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp205-206.

¹⁹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p1077.

CHAPTER THREE

Spiritual Gifts & Callings

Apostles & Prophets

“Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together grows into a holy temple in the Lord: In whom you also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit”

—Ephesians 2:19-22

In another place Paul tells us that Christ Himself is the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11). Here, in Ephesians, he explains that this foundation is already laid and that Christ is also the “*chief corner stone*” viz that which holds the whole building together. The apostles and the prophets of Ephesians 2:20 have done the job once and for all time (c/f Jude 3). They were an exclusive group who were committed to a unique work. Neither will ever be repeated. The work of the apostles of the Lamb and the prophets of the scripture, through the enabling of the Holy Spirit, was foundational to the establishment and continuous building of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is common ground for both parties — Sola Scriptura! Extreme Pentecostals and Charismatics depart from the sufficiency of scripture when they fail to see this and like Peter Wagner and his associates go into a non-biblical authoritative heavy shepherding teaching that end times “apostles and prophets” lay the foundation of the present day church.

For example, Peter Wagner says,

“I am giving considerable emphasis to prophecy on these pages because I sense we are living in the midst of an extraordinary

move of God. It has recently become evident that the fastest growing segment of Christianity on six continents is a movement I call the New Apostolic Reformation. It includes, among many others, African Independent Churches, Chinese house churches, Latin American grassroots churches, independent charismatics and many local congregations still operating within traditional denominational structures. One of the most innovative characteristics of this movement (although several exceptions might exist) is the reinstatement of the New Testament offices of prophet and apostle.”²⁰

The idea that modern “apostles and prophets” are the foundation of the church is rank error and leads to an apostasy of THE FAITH once delivered to the saints. But — and here’s the dividing line between those who take a cessationist position and those of us who don’t — while the Ephesians 2:20 “apostles and prophets” and their work were unique, those mentioned two chapters later are not just the twelve or the Old Testament prophets, as an examination of the context and a detailed study of the New Testament make plain.

“And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

—Ephesians 4:11-13

Here is the New Testament reference to the five (some say four) ascension ministry gifts of Christ. Each person is himself a “gift” of Christ to His church. Naturally each will have “gifts” to enable him to perform his function, but that is not the emphasis of this passage. Christ gave each ministry gift to His body for all time — until “*we all come to the unity of the faith*”. The fact that “evangelists” and “pastor/teachers” or “pastors and teachers” are mentioned alongside of “apostles and prophets” points to the fallacy of the idea that the ministry gifts of apostles and prophets ended with the canon of the New Testament or the passing of the apostles of the Lamb. Paul teaches that Christ

²⁰ C. Peter Wagner, *Praying with Power*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1997, p44.

gave all five (four) for the “*equipping of the saints for the work of ministry*”, which is required throughout the church age.

The incident of Acts 1:15-26 indicates that the *apostles* chosen by Christ did not view themselves as exclusive. They were prepared to elect someone to replace Judas. Irrespective of whether we view Matthias or Paul as the true replacement, we are faced with an extension to the original twelve apostles. Acts 14:14 mentions Barnabas as another. It is possible, though not certain that Judas, Barsabas and Silas (see Acts 15:22, 23 & 33) were also apostles. Some have pointed to Romans 16:7 as including Andronichus and Junia (a woman), but the evidence is flimsy to say the least.²¹ Wayne Grudem writes, “The verse has too little clear information to allow us to draw a conclusion.”²² It is far more likely that the apostles recognised them as notable faithful followers of Christ. The idea of a woman being a New Testament apostle is contradicted by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34. These considerations, plus texts such as 2 Corinthians 11:13 and Revelation 2:2 indicate that the term apostle was fairly liberally applied to leaders in New Testament times, so much so that there arose false apostles, who were in danger of deceiving God’s people. All of this points strongly to the idea that we are not looking at an exclusive group that was as numerically limited as some have led us to believe.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet I show you a more excellent way”

—1 Corinthians 12: 27-31

In 1 Corinthians chapters 12 to 14 Paul is basically dealing with conduct within the local church especially as it applies to spiritual activity. He commences with the injunction— “Now concerning spirituality” literally “spirituals” [Greek *pneumatikos* (Strong 4152) the word *gifts* is not in the original of verse 1]. In verses 4-7 he outlines his subject:

²¹ Some versions render this as ‘Junias’ which is masculine.

²² Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p909.

- 1) Verse 4—different gifts—taught in verses 7-11;
- 2) Verse 5—different parts—taught in verses 12-27; and
- 3) Verse 6—different appointments—taught in verses 28-30.

Contrary to what is implied by some Pentecostals, Paul is dealing with spirituality and spiritual function as a whole within the context of a local church and not only with the gifts of the Spirit. So, could it be that when he comes to consider appointments (functions) as the final point of his teaching in this chapter, he is talking about those who operate only in a local church setting? In other words are there local apostles as distinct from the twelve and distinct from the apostles of the church universal?

The problem that we face is one of translation. The Greek *apostolos* (Strong 652) signifies one who is sent forth with orders. He is a delegate or a messenger. Our English apostle transliterates the word and this has tended to create grandiose ideas, which may not have occurred had the word been translated. Peter Wagner and the many Assembly of God and other Pentecostal leaders, such as Brian Houston, Phil Pringle, Mark Conner, John Lewis and Danny Guglielmucci, whom we named in the previous CETF²³ as being some who have jumped on the band wagon of self promotion, have cashed in on this and in so doing have over-looked what Paul had to say about himself and other genuine ambassadors (apostles) of the New Testament church. He calls himself the least of the saints, the greatest of sinners and, as an apostle, one who was set last not first. He was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ i.e. one who was sent forth to represent the One who made Himself of no reputation and became obedient to the death of a cross. It is an issue of identification not one of authority.

If all the marks of an apostle as outlined by Paul were applied to those who see themselves as modern day apostles there would be few takers. Yes Paul does speak of supernatural signs (2 Corinthians 12:12) and church planting (2 Corinthians 10:16), but he also points to the things that he suffered and his good example in appointing to office only those who shared his character and humility (2 Corinthians chapters 11 & 12).

On one occasion I told my former colleagues who were touting one of their members as an apostle that he was precluded on account of the character of some whom he appointed as pastors. One was a homosexual and another became a double adulterer. These things do count even though the modern church so readily overlooks them and hides the facts. Apostles don't appoint men of questionable character and conduct as pastors or elders of God's people.

So in summary, while Cessationists may see only one expression of the ministry of apostles and prophets in the NT, there is a strong biblical argument for at least two and possibly three.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit everyone. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another different kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these work by one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man according to his will”

—1 Corinthians 12: 7-11

The biblical word “manifestation”(1 Corinthians 12:7) Greek *phanerosis* (Strong 5321) is derived from *phaneroo* (Strong 5319), which contains the idea of something that “shines forth” as distinct from “fruit” (Galatians 5:22) Greek *karpos* (Strong 2590), which signifies that which grows i.e. the natural product of life. The nine gifts of the Spirit, in their pure expression are manifestations i.e. (the out-shining) of the works of God, of whom the Holy Spirit is the executor. The nine fruit of the Spirit are the natural product of the nature of God, which is love. True manifestations and the real fruit of the Holy Spirit reveal God in His works and in His nature and character. They are complementary and should never be viewed as competitive or mutually exclusive.

Cessationists never question the validity of the fruit of the Spirit at any point in church history, including the present day, so why do they question the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Is there any biblical basis for their denial?

Some point to 1 Corinthians 13:8-13. The argument mainly relates to the statement that “tongues will pass away” (in the middle voice) i.e. “pass away of themselves”. The argument is not convincing as an examination of the passage shows:

²³ CETF Vol 6.1 (April 2000) page 4.

“Love never fails: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”

(verses 8-10)

Groups like the Strict or Bible Baptists and some Open Brethren have argued that the “perfect”, which Paul said would come, is a reference to the completion of the canon of scripture, when prophecies and tongues would cease.

While not naming the denominations, John MacArthur acknowledges,

“Many suggestions have been made as to the meaning of ‘the perfect’. Some believe it is the complete New Testament; thus they conclude this passage is saying that tongues would cease when the canon was closed.”²⁴

But there are huge logical and contextual problems to that idea. Paul says that knowledge will “*vanish away*”. Did this happen with the advent of the canon of scripture? Knowledge far from vanishing has increased enormously. Faced with this problem some cessationists say that the knowledge referred to is the supernatural gift of the word of knowledge mentioned in verse 8 of the previous chapter. If that is so then how do they explain the phrase “we know in part” in the context of their argument? Did the canon of scripture make our knowledge complete? If you reason that Paul and the Holy Spirit are referring to the supernatural “word of knowledge” then logically you must say that the coming of the canon of scripture extended the gift into another dimension. It didn’t cause it to cease.

Then they are faced with a further problem when asked to explain the analogy of 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verses 11 and 12,

“When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known”.

²⁴ John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, p389.

The completion of scripture does not put anyone of us in a position where we know everything (even as we are known), nor does it ensure that we always put away childish thoughts and ways. The coming of the “perfect” to which Paul refers cannot possibly be a reference to the canon of scripture though we agree that the scriptures are perfect. And yes we agree with many cessationists that it is not our Lord Jesus Christ that he is referring to, though He too is perfect. On the basis of logic and the context of the passage it is quite clear that Paul is talking about a future state, which will eclipse this present church age. He is alluding to the Second Coming of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ when the gifts of the Holy Spirit as the early church and the pilgrim church of the ages experienced them will no longer be required. The clause “*then face to face*” (v 12) is the key to WHEN this will be — at his second coming.

So what are these gifts and how do they operate? First we must face a prior question — what initiates the reception and/or manifestation of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit?

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, (v2) and saying, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (vs 5&6) Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and the entire region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins (vs 10-12). And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees: therefore every tree, which brings not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptise you with water to repentance: but he who comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the granary; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

—Matthew 3:1-12

According to Hebrews chapter six there is a New Testament doctrine of baptisms (c/f v2) –note the plural. In the above scripture John Baptist mentions two:

- 1) His own baptism in water to repentance; and
- 2) Baptism by Christ with (into) the Holy Spirit and with fire.

The New Testament mentions three other baptisms:

3) The Baptism of Suffering—for Christ and His followers (Luke 12:50 c/f Matt 20:22-23);

4) Christian Water Baptism replacing John’s Baptism (Matthew 28 c/f Acts 19:3-5);

5) Baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Each of these baptisms forms an important part of the third of the six foundational truths spoken of in Hebrews chapter 6 and is worthy of deep study. For the purposes of this article we need to look briefly at the second and the fifth viz baptism by Christ, the Head of the church in or into the Holy Spirit and baptism by the Holy Spirit into Christ i.e. the body of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as the subject of the action and the body of Christ as the element into which the believer is immersed. In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist identifies Christ as the subject of the action and the realm of Holy Spirit as the element into which the followers of Christ would be baptised. There are obvious distinctions so we must conclude that there is a real difference. Can this be confirmed from other Bible passages?

John chapters 14, 15 and 16 contain the major teaching of Christ regarding the Holy Spirit whom He identifies as the comforter, helper, advisor or advocate. His essential work is to replace and represent Christ by “*abide[ing] with you forever*” (John 14:16-18), “*teach[ing] you all things and bring[ing] all things to your remembrance*” (John 14:26), “*testify[ing] of Me*” (John 15:26) and “*convict[ing] the world of sin, ... righteousness and of judgement.*” In achieving this Jesus said to His disciples, “*you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you*” (John 14:17).

In summary our Lord taught that the Holy Spirit is WITH IN REVELATION i.e. convincing or convicting of sin, righteousness and judgement. He comes INTO to bring ANIMATION i.e. life at the moment of the new birth or what we call regeneration. This is illustrated when our Lord appeared to His disciples on the day of His resurrection, breathed on them and said, “*Receive the Holy Spirit*” (John 20:22). Such teaching is in complete harmony with Peter’s view of the new birth as taught in his epistle,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”

—1 Peter 1:3

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever.”

—1 Peter 1:23

In the act of regeneration the Holy Spirit enters the life of the believer and applies the Word of God, which is the active life-giving agent. As Paul puts it, *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”* (Romans 10:17). The basis of this is not what happened at Pentecost but what happened at the resurrection of Christ.

In Acts chapter one our Lord promised that the Holy Spirit would come upon His disciples to empower them to become witnesses to Him i.e. DEMONSTRATION, see Acts 1:8. In verses 4 and 5 He calls this the Promise of the Father, which He Himself had previously told them about and which He links to the action and statement of John the Baptist — see Matthew 3:11. It is very clear that the baptism in or into the Holy Spirit by Christ the head of His church, to which John the Baptist referred and which Christ said would occur *“not many days from now”*, took place on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter 2, ten days after Christ’s ascension (Acts 1:9).

By comparing scripture with scripture it seems reasonable to say that it is by the entry of the Holy Spirit into a person that he/she is “baptised” (initiated) into the body of Christ and it is by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the believer that he/she is baptised (initiated) by Christ into the realm of the Spirit. That both may happen simultaneously is possible; that each may be separate in time and occasion is also possible.

The Crux of the Matter

“He that speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself; but he that prophesies edifies the church. I would that you all spoke with tongues, but rather that you prophesied: for greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.”

—1 Corinthians 14:4&5

²⁵ It also includes the sublime chapter on love.

1 Corinthians chapters 12 to 14 contain some of the most difficult and contentious parts of the New Testament.²⁵ The issue of “speaking with tongues” has been one of the most divisive. While that is acknowledged, neither the passage of scripture nor the gift of tongues should be ignored. All scripture is inspired of God i.e. God breathed (2 Timothy 3:16) and is therefore vital to us as His people.

In 1 Corinthians 14:4-5 Paul brings together what are often referred to by Pentecostals as the three vocal or inspirational gifts, though both designations are obvious over-simplifications. The context shows that he is teaching the correct public function of these gifts in the local church at Corinth, where he implies all sorts of abuses including the wrong use of the gift of tongues. He tells us that the person who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues unless that person actually interprets the tongue, which he speaks. The reason being that tongues, on its own does edify the individual but it does not edify the church, while prophecy on its own does edify the church. The basic idea of edify is to build up. Remembering that Paul is teaching the public operation of the gifts for the benefit of the whole church, his meaning is quite clear and, contrary to what has been claimed by some cessationists, he is correcting but not condemning the public use of tongues. In another verse he actually says that he uses the gift of tongues more than anybody and thanks God that he does, but when he is in church he chooses not to speak in tongues, his emphasis being on teaching. (1 Corinthians 14:18-19).

Quite obviously then Paul has in mind a speaking in tongues which is other than public. In verse 15 he writes: *“I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also”* and links this in verse 18 with speaking with tongues. The argument of verses 4 and 5 — see above — points very clearly to the idea that all public tongues speaking, whether ordinary speech or in song requires interpretation for the edifying of the church, something which is not required if it is done in private. This is in line with the force of Paul’s argument of verses 18 and 19. There is no other satisfactory explanation of this passage of scripture,

“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when you shall bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupies the place of the unlearned say Amen at your giving of thanks, seeing he does not understand

what you say? For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

—1 Corinthians 14:15-19

What is the Gift of Speaking with Tongues?

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them divided tongues like fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

—Acts 2:1-4

Those in the upper room — the context suggests all 120, not just the 12 apostles — spoke forth what the Holy Spirit gave them to articulate. They did not know what to expect. It would be much better if people, who seek the fullness or baptism of the Holy Spirit today didn't know either. Pentecostal specialists, who first instruct then suggest what to articulate, actually degrade the experience to a humanistic and psychological level. This is the result of an undue and unbiblical emphasis on speaking in tongues. That which was a sovereign act of God has been reduced to a human manipulation where men count scalps. How many have “come through” is all too frequent a question on the lips of Pentecostal seekers. Speaking in tongues not the mighty baptism in the Holy Spirit has become the focus and pursuit of many. In Acts 1:8 Jesus promised ability (*dunamis*) to bear witness (become martyrs) not some initial evidence of speaking with tongues. Nonetheless they did (all of them) speak in tongues so what was it or what is it?

“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were

all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear every man in our own tongue we were born with? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, what does this mean? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.”

—Acts 2:5-13

The “other” Greek “*heteros*”²⁶ (= other than one’s own) “tongues” Greek “*glossa*”²⁷ (= languages or dialects) of verse 4 is paralleled by “our tongues” of verse 11. Those identified in verses 1 to 4 spoke in identifiable languages, which were recognised by a number of foreign visitors at Jerusalem and not learned or previously known by those who spoke. Some of their audience did not understand the languages spoken or what was happening. The scoffers dismissed it all as the conduct of drunks, not because there was any suggestion of conduct associated with drunken behaviour, but simply because they didn’t understand the languages nor what was happening. Each spoke in an unknown tongue.

Six times in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 the KJV translates the word *glossa* by “unknown tongue” — see verses 2, 4, 13, 14, 19 and 27. The fact that there is no Greek equivalent for the English “unknown” does not destroy the significance of the words chosen by the KJV translators. The context of each verse listed above implies that the language or dialect spoken was unknown to the person speaking and to the body of the church unless what was said was interpreted. In fairness when Pentecostals use the word unknown in this context they do not imply that it is not a valid language that was spoken, as some Cessationists have falsely claimed.

Pentecostal scholar and commentator, Dr Gordon Fee, writes concerning 1 Corinthians 13:1,

“‘Tongues of men’ would then refer to human speech, inspired by the Spirit but unknown to the speaker, ‘tongues of angels’

²⁶ Strong 2087

²⁷ Strong 1100

would reflect an understanding that the tongues-speaker was communicating in the dialect(s) of heaven.”²⁸

The unknown tongue is a valid language that will be known and spoken somewhere – on earth or in heaven.²⁹ In fairness though I disagree with the use of the expression *ecstatic utterance*, in respect of speaking in tongues, it does not imply meaningless babble. It simply expresses the attitude and expression of joy of the person speaking.

On account of the bizarre, outrageous and totally absurd claims and conduct of some of my former Pentecostal friends I have, at times, longed to be able to find an explanation for *speaking in tongues* other than the one which I was taught within the Pentecostal camp, but I can't. The idea that speaking in tongues is simply a linguistic ability just makes nonsense of what Paul says and teaches. It also contradicts what happened on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter 2. Both apply *speaking in tongues* to an act of the Holy Spirit, which superseded human knowledge and intelligence,

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

—Acts 2:4

“For he that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not to men, but to God: for no man understands him; but in the spirit he speaks mysteries.”

—1 Corinthians 14:2

Why Tongues?

There are four major clear incidents in the book of Acts where we are told about the Holy Spirit filling, falling upon or being received by the people — Acts chapters 2, 8, 10 and 19. On three of these occasions speaking in tongues is directly identified. Cessationists say that each is a sort of corporate baptism or initiating — the first of the Jews, the second of the Samaritans, the third of

²⁸ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Company, 1987, p630.

²⁹ My personal view is that 1 Cor 13:1 is an hyperbolic reference to the power of oratory. It does not prove or disprove the idea of angelic languages. In scripture angels always communicated in the local dialect.

the gentiles and the fourth a special case. This is an extra biblical explanation or a dispensational interpretation. There is no basis in scripture itself for the conclusion. It is theologically and logically unacceptable. If there is a need for a corporate baptism of different ethnic groups, which is highly questionable, it still does not account for the Special Case of Acts 19 where, in verse 6 we have the evidence of tongues and prophecy. Some say that in the case of the latter we have a group of people who were not Christians but simply followers of John Baptist. But verse 1 denies this. The word “*disciple*”, unless it is otherwise previously qualified, is consistently applied to Christ’s followers in the four gospel narratives and the book of Acts. Consistency demands that it means and implies here what it does elsewhere. The issue in question is not whether these 12 men were followers of Christ but whether they had heard about the Holy Spirit, which then raised the issue of baptism. The question remains — if the idea of corporate baptism by the Spirit is a valid one then why the special case?

The only other case that features in scripture is that of Saul of Tarsus who became Paul the apostle,

“Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared to you in the way as you came, has sent me, that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

—Acts 9:17

Interestingly and to contradict those Cessationists who argue that the filling of the Holy Spirit referred to here was a reference to Saul’s conversion, Ananias calls him “brother” and makes no reference to his pending conversion, regeneration or new birth, but simply to his receiving sight and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Saul’s unconditional submission to the Lordship of Christ (Acts 9:6) makes it very clear that he was converted on the road to Damascus (c/f 1 Corinthians 12:3) and then later filled or baptised into the Holy Spirit and into water. Later he says to the Corinthians, “*I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than all of you*” (1 Corinthians 14:18).

So of the five cases mentioned in scripture — there are no others — there are four incidents of speaking in tongues either at the time or subsequently. The one exception is Acts 8, where quite obviously there was some dramatic and immediate supernatural sign that the believers had received the Holy Spirit seeing Simon the sorcerer offered money for the power to impart the Holy

Spirit. We do not know what it was and must not argue from silence either for or against tongues. We do know that Simon had witnessed miracles performed by Philip and that he did not make the same offer to him that he later made to Peter and John. So what he saw and/or heard when the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit was obviously quite remarkable and Simon expected similar displays when others received.

The question remains “Why did God choose speaking in tongues?”

Paul applies the prophecy contained in Isaiah 28:11-12 to the New Testament practice of speaking in tongues — c/f 1 Corinthians 14:21 — and gives one reason for tongues speaking viz a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22). This is what happened on the day of Pentecost and it became at least in part a fulfilment of what Isaiah said would happen. However the force of Paul’s words, being in the present tense and the local church setting, is that the sign would be ongoing, but only in a selective way.

“Brethren, do not be children in understanding: but in malice be children, but in understanding be men. In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak to this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, says the Lord. So then tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that do not believe: but prophesying serves not for them that do not believe, but for those who believe. If therefore the whole church come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are uninformed, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad?”

—1 Corinthians 14:2

Paul is not condemning tongues speaking. He is correcting the abuse of it in the local church and regulating its function to the edification of the body. That it is a sign to the unbeliever remains a truth established by testimony (Acts chapter 2) and by doctrine (Paul’s teaching). To depart from this is to depart from the Sola Scriptura principle.

“Let all things be done for edification. If any man speaks in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and in succession; and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.”

—1 Corinthians 14:26-28

We may deduce another reason why God chose tongues from the teaching of James who tells us that no-one is capable of controlling his tongue i.e. his speech (James chapter 3). What happened at Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius and at Ephesus and to Paul and the Corinthian tongues speaking believers — all of these are clearly established historic incidents — were displays of divine ability to control what no man or woman is able to control unaided by the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost God tamed the human tongue and caused men and women to speak forth the praises of God in languages which they had never learned, thus by-passing the one faculty which tends to make us arrogant and proud — our intellect. Could there be any greater reason why God would choose tongues?

However, having said all that, there are two important things to emphasise:

1) God does not arbitrarily overrule man's will, so the control, which is illustrated in the gift of speaking in tongues, is not a permanent feature in respect of human behaviour. It was as the Holy Spirit gave them to articulate at Pentecost and it is as the Holy Spirit distributes as He wills in respect of all of the gifts of the Spirit; and

2) It is unbiblical to seek tongues per se. We should seek the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and there's the rub and what I consider to be a major contributing factor to much of the error that has crept into the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. Many Pentecostals have become "tongues" seekers instead of being seekers after God and the mighty baptism into the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER FOUR

Brief Historic Survey

JOHN WESLEY (1703-1791), who with his brother Charles saw the start of the great world-wide Methodist movement was regularly in dispute with another minister called Conyers Middleton. In response to inquiries about the gift of tongues by Rev Dr Conyers Middleton, John Wesley (JW) said,

“Sir, your memory fails you again: It has undoubtedly been pretended to [ie practised], and that at no great distance either from our time or country. It has been heard of more than once, no farther off than the valleys of Dauphiny. Nor is it yet fifty years ago since the Protestant inhabitants of those valleys so loudly pretended to [ie practised] this and other miraculous powers, as to give much disturbance to Paris itself... He who worketh as He will, may, with your good leave, give the gift of tongues, where he gives no other; and may see abundant reasons so to do, whether you and I see them or not.”³⁰

On another occasion John Wesley preached,

“It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were common in the church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian; and, from a vain imagination of promoting the Christian cause thereby, heaped riches and power and honour upon the Christians in general, but in particular upon the Christian clergy. From this time they almost totally ceased; very few instances of the kind

³⁰ John Wesley, “A Letter to the Reverend Doctor Conyers Middleton Occasioned by his late ‘Free Inquiry,’” in *The Works of John Wesley* (3rd. Edition, Complete and Unabridged), Vol. X, “Letters, Essays, Dialogs, Addresses. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1872 edition, reprinted 1978, p56.

were found. The cause of this was not, (as has been vulgarly supposed,) ‘because there was no more occasion for them,’ because all the world was become Christians. This is a miserable mistake; not a twentieth part of it was then nominally Christian. The real cause was, ‘the love of many,’ almost of all Christians, so called, was ‘waxed cold.’ The Christians had no more of the Spirit of Christ than the other heathens. The Son of Man, when he came to examine his church, could hardly ‘find faith upon the earth’. This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian church; because the Christians were turned heathens again, and had only a dead form left.”³¹

Today (21/09/00), as I am writing this piece, I received a copy of Edmund Hamer Broadbent’s (1861-1945) magnificent book *The Pilgrim Church*, which I first encountered when studying at the AoG Commonwealth Bible College (CBC) in Brisbane, (1957-1959), the city where we have just returned to live. It has been re-published by Gospel Folio Press, PO Box 2041, Grand Rapids, MI 49501, USA and contains a foreword by Dave Hunt. The enthralling record of the faithful remnant church as distinct from the structured (organised) false Christendom, which masquerades as the church, focuses on the persecutions not the incidents of supernaturalism of church history, but nonetheless the author provides convincing evidence of God at work through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Writing of Christ’s declared intention for His church, the author records,

“Each of these consists of those disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ who, in the place where they live, gather together in His Name. To such the presence of the Lord in their midst is promised and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is given in different ways through all the members (Matthew 18:20; 1 Corinthians 12:7).

Each of these churches stands in direct relationship to the Lord and draws its authority from Him and is responsible to Him (Revelations 2 and 3). There is no suggestion that one church should control another or that any organised union of churches

³¹ John Wesley, Sermon LXXXIX, “The More Excellent Way,” in *The Works of John Wesley* (3rd. Edition, Complete and Unabridged), Vol. VII, “2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Series of Sermons.” Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1872 edition, reprinted 1978, pp26-27.

should exist, but an intimate personal fellowship unites them (Acts 15:36).

The chief business of the churches is to make known throughout the world the gospel or glad tidings of salvation. This the Lord commanded before His ascension, promising to give the Holy Spirit as the power in which it should be accomplished (Acts 1:8).

Events in the history of the churches in the time of the Apostles have been selected and recorded in the Book of the Acts in such a way as to provide a permanent pattern for the churches. Departure from this pattern has had disastrous consequences, and all revival and restoration have been due to some return to the pattern and principles contained in the scriptures.”³²

Elsewhere he writes,

“The practice of founding churches where any, however few, believed, gave permanence to the work, and as each church was taught from the first its direct dependence on the Holy Spirit and responsibility to Christ, it became a centre for propagating the Word of Life.”³³

“The growth of a clerical system under the domination of the bishops, who in turn were ruled by “metropolitans” controlling extensive territories, substituted a human organisation and religious forms for the power and working of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the scriptures in the separate churches.”³⁴

“In Phrygia, Montanus³⁵ began to teach (156), he and those with him protesting against the prevailing laxity in the relations of the church to the world. Some among them claimed to have special manifestations of the Spirit, in particular two women, Prisca and Maxilla. The persecution ordered by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (177) quickened the expectation of the Lord’s coming and the spiritual aspirations of the believers. The

³² *The Pilgrim Church* – page 26

³³ *ibid* – page 27

³⁴ *ibid* – page 32

³⁵ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Article, Montanus.

Montanists hoped to raise up congregations that should return to primitive piety, live as those waiting for the Lord's return and, especially, give to the Holy Spirit His rightful place in the church."³⁶

At this point we should acknowledge the possibility of bias and prejudice. I am reminded of the well known statement made by Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis to the effect that we are all biased so we might as well choose the bias with which we are biased. We all read history in the light of our particular mindset. Montanists³⁷ are viewed by many as heretics, but as Broadbent shows there were several expressions of the movement both within and outside of the RCC.³⁸

There are only 16 sayings which are extant that are regarded as coming from Montanists. We are thus relying for our view of the movement as it was seen by its opponents. The only literature we really have on them comes from Eusebius of Caesarea and Epiphanius of Salamis. The indication is that the movement was erratic. The earliest group may have started in the Spirit and like so many present day Pentecostals and charismatics ended in the smoke of confusion and uncorrected excesses, which inevitably express themselves in false doctrine.

A Montanist group seems to have predicted the second coming, with the New Jerusalem descending on Phrygia, which presents us with another interesting parallel between what happened historically and what is happening today. Both the Montanists and the Revival Now people adopt false teaching about the End Times and the Return of Christ. Our only point in referring to the Montanists and to some other groups is to produce historic evidence for our basic biblical premise. We do not in any way endorse the excesses of Toronto and Pensacola, which undoubtedly parallel the heresies of some of the Montanists. There is nothing new under the sun.

IRENÆUS (AD 115-202), pupil of Poly-carp, who was a student of John the apostle wrote: "In like manner do we also hear many brethren in the church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring

³⁶ *The Pilgrim Church* - page 35

³⁷ Dr Barry Chant of Tabor Bible College wrote to Philip Powell, "What Broadbent says of the Montanists is substantially correct. See FF Bruce, *The Spreading Flame* for some good evangelical stuff on them."

³⁸ *The Pilgrim Church* - pages 35, 36

to the light for the general benefit the hidden things of men and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostles term spiritual.”³⁹

JUSTIN MARTYR (AD 100-165) “It is possible now to see among us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God.”⁴⁰

TERTULLIAN (AD 160-220) invited the heretic Marcion, who was his contemporary, to produce among his followers anything similar to that which was evident among orthodox Christians. “Let him exhibit prophets such as have spoken, not by human sense but with the spirit of God, such as have predicted things to come, and have manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer, only let it be by the Spirit in an ecstasy, that is in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him.”⁴¹

PACHOMIUS (AD 292-348). In his book *LIVES OF THE SAINTS* (1756) A Butler refers to Pachomius, who after seasons of prayer was able to speak, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the Greek and Latin languages, which he had never learned.⁴²

MARTIN LUTHER (AD 1483-1546) In a letter to one of his followers (1545) “When you depart lay your hands upon the man again and say, *‘These signs shall follow them that believe; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.’*”

On the basis of the available evidence one is forced to the conclusion that throughout history there can be discovered incidents, remote at times, but nonetheless there, which prove beyond reasonable doubt that the supernatural manifestations of the power and presence of God through the gifts of the Spirit have occurred and recurred among God’s people under God’s providence.

³⁹ *Against Heresies*, V:6:1

⁴⁰ *Dialogue with Trypho*, 82, 88

⁴¹ *Against Marcion* –see also *On The Soul*, 9

⁴² I have misplaced the exact reference to Pachomius and the following one to Martin Luther. Would one of our readers be able to assist me with the exact bibliography and quotes?

The Covenanters and Puritans

Alexander Peden was a Scottish minister who was ejected in 1662. His farewell sermon lasted until midnight! He became a field preacher and had all sorts of experiences where he just escaped arrest through a prophetic word, which warned him of where to go or where not to go.

A strict cessationist would have some trouble with his biography.⁴³ The book is full of prophetic words, which happened to Peden all through his career.

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD (1600-1661) was a Christian Scottish writer in the seventeenth century, who saw no conflict between an authoritative Bible and the Almighty God giving divine revelation to people outside of the Bible. He records how this has happened through the history of the church:

“There is a revelation of some particular men, who have foretold things to come, even since the ceasing of the Canon of the Lord, as John Husse [John Hus], Wickeliefe [Wycliffe], Luther, have foretold things to come and they certainly fell out, and in our nation of Scotland, M. George Wishart foretold that Cardinall Beaton should not come out alive at the Gate of the Castle of St Andrews, but that he should dye a shamefull death, and he was hanged over the window that he did look out at, when he saw the man of God burnt, M. Knox prophesied of the hanging of the Lord of Grange, M. Ioh Davidson uttered prophecies, knowne to many of the kingdome, diverse Holy and mortified preachers in England have done the like...”⁴⁴

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON (1834-92) was the prominent Baptist preacher in England during the 19th century, who spoke of a “sermon at Exeter Hall in which he suddenly broke off from his subject, and pointing in a certain direction, said, ‘Young man, those gloves you are wearing have not been paid for: you have stolen them from your employer’. At the close of the

⁴³ *Alexander Peden: The Prophet of the Covenant* by John C. Johnston— Mournie Missionary Trust, 1988

⁴⁴ Samuel Rutherford, *A Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist, Opening the Secrets of Familisme and Antinomianisme in the Antichristian Doctrine of John Saltmarsh...* London: no pub., 1648, p42, in Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, p85.

service, a young man, looking very pale and greatly agitated, came to the room, which was used as a vestry, and begged for a private interview with Spurgeon. On being admitted, he placed a pair of gloves upon the table, and tearfully said, 'It's the first time I have robbed my master, and I will never do it again. You won't expose me, sir, will you? It would kill my mother if she heard that I had become a thief'."⁴⁵

"On another occasion while he was preaching, Spurgeon said there was a man in the gallery who had a bottle of gin in his pocket. This not only startled the man in the gallery who had the gin, but it also led to his conversion."⁴⁶

Spurgeon gives further examples of his prophetic ministry:

"While preaching in the hall, on one occasion, I deliberately pointed to a man in the midst of the crowd, and said, 'There is a man sitting there, who is a shoemaker; he keeps his shop open on Sundays, it was open last Sabbath morning, he took nine pence, and there was four pence profit out of it; his soul is sold to Satan for four pence!' A city missionary, when going his rounds, met with this man, and seeing that he was reading one of my sermons, he asked the question, 'Do you know Mr Spurgeon?' 'Yes,' replied the man 'I have every reason to know him, I have been to hear him; and under his preaching, by God's grace I have become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Shall I tell you how it happened? I went to the Music Hall, and took my seat in the middle of the place: Mr Spurgeon looked at me as if he knew me, and in his sermon he pointed to me, and told the congregation that I was a shoemaker, and that I kept my shop open on Sundays; and I did, sir. I should not have minded that; but he also said that I took nine pence the Sunday before, and that there was four pence profit; but how he should know that, I could not tell. Then it struck me that it was God who had spoken

⁴⁵ Susannah Spurgeon and Joseph Harrald (compiled by, rev. ed.), *C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography: Vol. 2, The Full Harvest*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1973, p60. I was alerted to this incident by Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, p89.

⁴⁶ F.Y. Fullerton, *Charles H. Spurgeon*. Chicago: Moody, 1966, p206, in Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, p89.

to my soul through him, so I shut up my shop the next Sunday. At first, I was afraid to go again to hear him, lest he should tell the people more about me; but afterwards I went, and the Lord met with me, and saved my soul.”⁴⁷

How does Spurgeon explain this prophetic ministry?

“I could tell as many as a dozen similar cases in which I pointed at somebody in the hall without having the slightest knowledge of the person, or any idea that what I said was right, except that I believed I was moved by the Spirit to say it; and so striking has been my description that the persons have gone away, and said to their friends, ‘Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did; beyond a doubt, he must have been sent of God to my soul, or else he could not have described me so exactly.’ And not only so, but I have known many instances in which the thoughts of men have been revealed from the pulpit. I have sometimes seen persons nudge their neighbours with their elbow, because they had got a smart hit, and they have been heard to say, when they were going out, ‘The preacher told us just what we said to one another when we went in at the door.’”⁴⁸

OS GUINNESS

“Speaking once at Essex University, I saw sitting in the front row a strange-looking girl with an odd expression on her face. Remembering an incident the previous night when a radical had tried to disrupt the lecture, I spoke on but also prayed silently that she would create no trouble. She remained quiet the whole evening but came up as soon as it was finished with a very troubled look and asked me what spell I had cast to keep her quiet. She told me she was part of a spiritist circle in the south of England and that the spirits had ordered her to travel to Essex, where she had never been before, to disrupt a series of lectures beginning that week. The curious sequel to this was that when I arrived back in Switzerland someone else in the community, far from a fanciful visionary, asked me what had happened in the Essex lectures. Praying for them one morning, she had seen in a vision, as real

⁴⁷ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles Spurgeon* (Vol 2). Curtin & Jenkins, 1899, pp226-227, in Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, pp89-90.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, in Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, pp90-91.

as waking reality, the lecture hall and the strange girl about to disrupt the meeting. Having prayed for her, she was convinced that nothing had happened, but she wondered if it was just her imagination. The presence of a Christian praying in the power of the Holy Spirit is always enough to render the occult inoperable.”⁴⁹

19th and 20th Centuries

Contrary to what is generally perceived, modern Pentecostalism finds its roots not at the beginning of the 20th century at Azusa Street, Los Angeles but in the revival towards the end of the previous century. Men such as Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody and R.A. Torrey stirred the hearts of many towards God. There are reports particularly during the ministry of Moody of people speaking in tongues.⁵⁰ For example the American evangelist in 1873 conducted a campaign in Sunderland, England. Robert Boyd was a journalist who visited the services and reported,

“When I got to the rooms of the YMCA I found the meeting on fire. The young men were speaking in tongues and prophesying. What on earth did it mean? Only that Moody had been addressing them that afternoon.”

F B MYER comments on his visit to the Baltic provinces of Russia: “It is very remarkable at a time when the Lutheran Church of this land has lost its evangelistic fervour The gift of tongues is heard quite often in the meetings ...”

In addition to these facts one has to take into account the impact of the Welsh revival of 1904 upon Pentecostalism. Jesse Penn Lewis classic *WAR ON THE SAINTS* points to excesses and the counterfeits, which seem to always accompany true revivals. But the thing about the early Pentecostals is that they quickly discerned the false. My late father told me how he stood against a man in Cardiff who sought platform position at their new Pentecostal church and how God showed him up as a spiritualist medium. One night God led Dad through the streets of Cardiff to a hall where the man in question was

⁴⁹ Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, p299.

performing a séance. The early Pentecostals were people with discernment who quickly purged out the excesses and the counterfeit. Sadly this no longer applies in respect of many of their modern counterparts.

Classic Pentecostals agree with moderate Cessationists that some of the events associated with Methodist minister Charles Parham and holiness preacher W J Seymour surrounding the Topeka Bible college and Azusa stable revival in Los Angeles were not biblical. Where they differ is regarding the perceived impact of Parham and Seymour, who in reality had limited effect upon what happened in the eventual spread of the revival. In UK, Pentecostalism developed out of the Welsh revival not from Azusa Street. What occurred in Wales and later in England, Scotland and Ireland impacted upon Scandinavia, Europe and far away India and Australia with a feedback into the USA helping to bring a balance with a strong emphasis on biblical doctrine.

CORRIE TEN BOOM (Born 1892 Amsterdam, Holland—died on her 91st birthday in 1983 in the USA.⁵¹ The Nazis sent this godly Dutch woman to a concentration camp for protecting Jews. She tells of an incredible supernatural happening in the prison:

“The vitamin bottle was continuing to produce drops. It scarcely seemed possible, so small a bottle, so many doses a day. Now, in addition to Betsie, a dozen others on our pier were taking it. My instinct was always to hoard it—Betsie was growing so very weak! But others were ill as well. It was hard to say no to eyes that burned with fever, hands that shook with chill. I tried to save it for the very weakest—but even these soon numbered fifteen, twenty, twenty-five...

“And still every time I tilted the little bottle, a drop appeared at the tip of the glass stopper. It just couldn’t be! I held it up to the light, trying to see how much was left, but the dark brown glass was too thick to see through.

‘There was a woman in the Bible,’ Betsie said, ‘whose oil jar was never empty.’ She turned to it in the book of Kings, the story of the poor widow of Zarephath who gave Elijah a room in her

⁵⁰ I have misplaced the exact reference to the ministry of Moody and tongues, but I think it was in Michael Harper’s *As At The Beginning*. Would one of our readers be able to assist me with the exact bibliography and quotes? I have also misplaced references to the quotes below by Robert Boyd and F B Myer.

⁵¹ “Heroes of History,” at <http://www.heroesofhistory.com/page59.html>, spotted 26 October 2000.

home: *'The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of Jehovah which he spoke by Elijah.'*

“Well – but – wonderful things happened all through the Bible. It was one thing to believe that such things were possible thousands of years ago, another to have it happen now, to us, this very day. And yet it happened, this day, and the next, and the next, until an awed little group of spectators stood around watching the drops fall onto the daily rations of bread.”⁵²

However, as soon as more vitamins became available from the hospital, this supernatural source ceased. Corrie explains:

“That night, no matter how long I held it upside down, or how hard I shook it, not another drop appeared.”⁵³

⁵² Corrie ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill, *The Hiding Place*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: A Chosen Book (Special Crusade Edition), Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1971, p202.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p203. I was alerted to this example of God's supernatural power available today by Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God*, pp87-88.

CHAPTER FIVE

In Conclusion

FEEL that I have laboured the topic somewhat and yet at the same time sense that there are areas that have not been fully covered. Many on both sides—Cessationists and Classic Pentecostals—have opposed the bizarre and strange displays and doctrines of what has been variously called The Toronto-Pensacola, Revival Now and River Revival movements. Some of us have stood shoulder to shoulder in our opposing the frightening ecumenical drift towards Rome. One of my purposes in writing this article is to try to build a bridge across which some will walk to join forces in our mutual efforts to “*earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints*”. You may not agree with me on all points, but what I have presented is honestly believed and I think it is biblically based. Further I think church history supports the view that I have presented.

Sola Scriptura—and let us all recognise and remember,
“It’s not by might nor by power but by MY Spirit says the Lord”.

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About the Authors

THE two authors have known each other for forty-one years during which time they have done several things together in Christian ministry. Shortly after they met they preached together at a National Assemblies of God (AoG) Youth Rally held in the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, UK. Much later they worked together at the National AoG Bible College (CBC) in Australia, where Aeron was the Principal and Philip was the local pastor and a lecturer. This is the first time they have joined as guest speakers at a Conference in connection with which they have co-authored this book.



AERON MORGAN is a Welshman who has pastored a number of AoG churches in Great Britain and Australia serving in several National Executive positions in both countries. He was Principal of the Commonwealth Bible College (CBC) for two periods - 1974 to 1981 and 1989 to 1992. Between the two principal-ships he pastored two Assemblies in the United Kingdom where he became the first National General Superintendent of Assemblies of God in Great Britain and Ireland. Aeron has been married to Dinah for almost 47 years. They have two sons and a daughter and nine grandchildren. They have travelled extensively in ministry to many countries.



PHILIP POWELL was born in Wales and migrated to New Zealand aged twelve, with his sister and brother and their Welsh parents. His late father was an AoG pastor. Philip has ministered internationally and trans-denominationally. In his capacity as National General Secretary of AoG in Australia he took a stand for sound biblical doctrine, values and practices, resigning in 1992. On the basis of this conviction he launched Christian Witness Ministries (CWM) in 1994 and established the first CWM Fellowship in February 2001 in Brisbane. Philip has been married to Kathleen for almost 36 years. They have three sons and a daughter and five grandchildren