

WRITINGS OF JAMES W GARRETT

by James W. Garrett

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by James W. Garrett, compiled for study and devotional reading.

26 Chapters

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01.00. DEALING WITH SIN IN THE LIVES OF CHRISTIANS

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01.01. Introductory Comments

DEALING WITH SIN IN THE LIVES OF CHRISTIANS James W. Garrett

What should be a church's response to sin in the life of one of its members? In America there typically are two opposing responses. Most mainline churches travel the road of noninvolvement. "Judge not," is the message spoken by their functional style. "Unconditional love," is expressed by the attitude, "Whatever you do, I will not judge you; I will love you, accept you, try to build your self-esteem, and through this positive response to you, hope to see you grow in constructive behavior." This attitude fits well into the American trend toward individualism, expressed by Frank Sinatra's song, I Did It My Way. "How I live is between me and God; my behavior is none of your business unless I invade your private territory." The opposite response is demonstrated by some Pentecostal groups, cults, discipleship movements, and fundamentalist churches. Dress codes, spiritual regimen, and strict codes of conduct are enforced. Those who violate the standards of the group face "discipline," which may consist of excommunication, banning, or shunning. Often, such severe pressure to conform is put upon a non-conformist that he leaves on his own - HE ESCAPES! The Church's concern with holiness and purity among its members is a Scripturally correct concern. The epistles are replete with such exhortations as the following, Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the Living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, they shall be My people.

Therefore, come out from among their midst and be separate,"

Says the Lord.

And, "Do not touch what is unclean And I will welcome you, And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,"

Says the Lord Almighty.

1

1 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

2 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler- not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

One of the questions that has to be faced is, "What sins or character flaws merit action on the part of the church?" To persist in a known incestuous relationship is one thing, but what about knowingly writing checks when there is insufficient funds in the bank to cover the checks? Does such deception and fraud demand church discipline? This is not an easy question to answer.

Along with the concern for purity, there must be concern for avoiding witch-hunts and undue disruption in the life of the Church. This is the concern of Jesus' Parable of the Tares, He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to him, 'An enemy has done this!' And the slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them.

Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather up the tares and bind them into bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

4 When the disciples asked for an interpretation of this parable, Jesus made it evident that this was a parable about the Church, the Kingdom of Heaven.

5 2 1 Peter 1:14-16 3 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 4 Matthew 13:24-30

5 Matthew 13:37-43 Two concerns relevant to our topic are expressed in Scripture, 1. Purity in the Body of Christ 2. The ultimate salvation of every believer.

Scripture recognizes the fact that believers will commit sin. I John, addressed to Christians, makes this assertion, My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

6 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

7 This epistle defines the difference between the incidental "sins" of the believer, and the "sin" of the ungodly.

...the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

8 The difference between the sin referred to in the first references above and that of the final reference is this, 1. In the first instance, John writes of those stumblings and failures that seem to be a part of our lives, even though we are Christians.

2. The second citation above refers to one who claims to be a Christian, but persists in open sinful behavior.

9

6 1 John 2:1-2 7 1 John 1:8-10

8 1 John 3:8-9

9 Such as one who practices adultery, versus one who succumbed to temptation in a given situation and had an isolated failure.⁵

01.02. Section One - General Guidelines

SECTION I GENERAL GUIDELINES Our study will be broken into two sections, Section I: General Guidelines for Dealing with Sin in the Lives of Believers Section II: Dealing with Sin among Leaders A summary of conclusions will be presented at the end of each section. A **SURVEY OF RELEVANT SCRIPTURES** In this section of our study, we will survey and comment on the New Testament Scriptures that relate to how the church should respond to different expressions of sin the lives of members.

James 5:15-16...and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. The implication of these verses is that at least some sickness is the result of sinful deeds. Note that the terminology is, if he has committed sins. Either God sovereignly punished sin with a sickness, or the sickness was the result of some natural law through which sin produced physical illness. In this case, there is no instruction to punish, excommunicate, or to restore the sinner to fellowship. Instead, there is an injunction to all Christians to confess their failures to one another so that healing and health might be obtained.

Again, this passage acknowledges the presence of sin in the lives of Christians. It also urges compassionate ministry to those who experience the consequences of their sin.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. The KJV, overtaken, suggests the idea of a sudden temptation's springing upon a believer before he has a chance to defend himself. This would tend to palliate the guilt of the offender. The Greek, 10 however, denotes one who is discovered in the very act of sin. There is an element of surprise in the terminology. The NAS, caught, conveys this sense. Thus, the emphasis is on the 10 kai<prolhmfqh|~ (kai prolemphthe)6 reality of his guilt.

11 The passage is urging tender treatment of actual offenders. The Greek terminology 12 enforces the idea that even guilty brethren should be treated with kindness.

Brethren, if a man be actually detected... deal tenderly with him in a spirit of meekness, is the sense of this sentence. This reminds us of the woman caught in the act of adultery.

13 The Greek verb translated, restore, 14 can denote the original construction of a mechanism (e.g, of the human body and of the universe in Hebrews 10:5; Hebrews 11:3), but more often the term refers to the readjustment of a mechanism (e.g, the setting of a broken limb, or the mending of nets, as in Matthew 4:21).

15 In this passage, the term refers to the correction of an offender with the ultimate goal of restoring him to his role and function in the church. The transition from the plural verb, katarti>zete (katartizete), all of you restore, to the singular, skopw~n (skopon), considering thyself, is

instructive. The task of restoring belongs to the collective body, but each member must examine himself individually, in order that he might perform his part in the restoration with humility and sympathy.

16 From this passage, we draw the following conclusions, 1. Excommunication or shunning is not the automatic response to moral failure.

2. Any action taken will have redemption as its goal.

3. To be complete, restoration would include a return to full function in the body.

4. The situation must be addressed in a spirit of gentleness or kindness. The attitude should be, "Brother, let me help you to overcome this fault," rather than, "You wicked sinner, you need to repent." The spiritual brothers should impress upon the one being corrected that he is loved and cared for.

5. One motivation for gentleness is the fact that the correcting brothers are aware that they too might stumble. They will treat the fallen brother as they would want to be treated if the roles were reversed.

Matthew 18:15-18 And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.

11 The Greek structure, εἰν τινι παραπτω>ματι, (en tini paraptomati) implies an episode of sin or struggling with weakness, rather than one who is committed to a lifestyle of sin.

12 The preceding και (kai) 13 John 8:1-11 14 καταρτι>ζετε (katartizete)

15 Interestingly, this is the term used in Ephesians 4:12, translated, perfecting, in the KJV and equipping, in the NAS. In this passage the term refers to placing each member in the place where he belongs in the Church, so that he can function as he is spiritually gifted to function, for the good of the Body.

16 Robertson Nicolle, *The Expositors Greek New Testament*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Rerdmans Publishing Co, Reprinted 1976). p.188-1897 And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. This passage presents a scenario in which the Church may have to exercise judicial authority because of sin in the life of a member. The Received Text (KJV) reads, if your brother sins against you. The expression, against you, is found in some manuscripts and versions and not in others. Therefore, it is uncertain as to whether or not the original text of Matthew contained these words. This uncertainty forces us to ask, "Is the sin referred to a sin done against the person being addressed, or of sin in general?"

Even if the doubtful, "against you," is disallowed, the language of the text seems to refer to private personal offenses, rather than sin against the Christian name. The statement, you have gained your brother (by confronting him, and keeping the confrontation confidential), implies the restoration of a broken relationship. Offenses that divide brothers must be addressed, whatever

they are. Relationships in the Kingdom are of top priority. Should the confidential approach fail, the matter is not to be dropped, but to be pursued further. A second meeting should be held, with two or three witnesses listening to the exchange. These witnesses will listen and comment. If this does not solve the problem, then the matter is to be brought before the church, which will function as a court. Should the parties involved fail to abide by the judgment of the Church, 17 then the one who will not heed the voice of the Church is to be treated as an outsider; he is to be loosed from the ties of brotherhood. This passage poses a problem. Jesus told us to forgive every offense against us; to pray for those who spitefully use us, etc.

18 In the parable of the Unmerciful Slave, Our Lord emphasizes the importance of total forgiveness from the heart, if we are to expect any mercy from Him.

19 One truth becomes immediately apparent: Since forgiveness and forbearance are priorities, it is inappropriate for us to rush forth and begin reproving each time we feel that we have been wronged. The question must be raised, "If forgiveness is to be the priority - 'from the heart'- then why reprove at all?" Two reasons come to mind. The first is out of concern for our brother. If the sin has exposed a character flaw that needs to be faced, loving concern will motivate us to alert the brother to this flaw. The second reason is that in some way the sin has separated brethren from one another. In the Kingdom of God, relationships are of a high priority. Broken relationships should not be ignored. Usually, if someone sins against us, they no longer are able to relate intimately with us. Not only that, but one who can sin with impunity against his brothers probably does not have a 17 i.e, what the Church "binds" upon him.

18 Matthew 5:38-45; Matthew 6:12, Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:35; Mark 11:25; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12-13.

19 Matthew 18:21-35 true relationship with them. This needs to be corrected. It would be out of concern for the soul of the sinning brother, and out of concern for the quality of relationships that are to exist in the Kingdom, that Matthew 18:15-18 would be activated. The Greek verbs of this passage, translated, bind, and loose, are verbs in the periphrastic future perfect tense, passive voice. A near literal translation of these verbs would be, shall already have been bound, and shall already have been loosed. The Church has the authority to bind and loose what God already has declared bound and loosed. If disputing brothers come before the church for arbitration, and one of the brothers refuses to abide by the pronouncement of the church, then heaven already has declared him to be excommunicated. The church only enforces what heaven already has declared.

How is a church to function in its judicial role? Acts 15:1-41 gives the only pattern found in Scripture. The church government met together to hear the presentation. This was a public meeting, in which the congregation witnessed the proceedings but did not participate.

20 After the hearing was completed, the church government pronounced its decision. By holding an open meeting, the church leaders prevented the losers in the dispute from circulating false reports of the proceedings.

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 is in the midst of a section of the epistle in which Paul defends his right to exercise authority in the Corinthian Church. The crises of authority is what seems to hold chapters 1- 6 together.

21 The references to the arrogance and boasting in Chapter 5 22 echo the attitude in Corinth that the church was too spiritually advanced to be instructed by Paul.

It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst.

23 The sin of incest between a man and his father's wife is a sin that even the morally loose pagans did not accept. Yet, this church seemed to be so morally insensitive that it tolerated such behavior in one of its members. Paul scolded the church for being arrogant. It should have been in mourning over this sinful condition.

I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus...Do you not know that a little

20 The congregation did agree with the leadership's decision to communicate the ruling by a circular letter to the churches involved. However, the congregation is not described as influencing the ruling itself.

21 Gordon Fee, First Epistle to the Corinthians, in The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1987), p. 195

22 vs 2, 6

23 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 leaven leavens the whole lump of dough: Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened.

24 Two motives, (a) ultimate salvation of the sinner 25 and (b) the purity of the church 26, are stated as reasons for the expulsion ordered. In the light of Galatians 6:1 and other verses already considered, we would expect Paul to exhort the church to call the man to repentance. Instead, he ordered them to move immediately to the ultimate action, Expel the man!

27 The focus of this chapter is more on the church's failure to deal with sin, than on the sinful man. The message of this chapter is, Corinth, you need to repent of your tolerant attitude. Hold to a Godly standard, and deal with the sin in your Body! Because of the attitude of the church, Paul called for a sign of repentance - Take action now!

28 The first truth to be gained from this section of Scripture is that a church that tolerates blatant sin among its members is a church that is in error. The second truth is that the goal, even of expulsion, is the redemption of the sinner.

29 The question has to be asked, "What does Paul mean by...deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh?"

30 Because the action that Paul called for was expulsion from the church, then expulsion must be understood as delivering someone to Satan.

How would expulsion fit this description? Certainly, one way would be the denial of Godly social contacts. The only social intercourse available to the expelled member would be with those

outside of the church. Being forced back into the course, “dog eat dog,” world outside of the church would be quite painful for anyone who has experienced the Community of Agape Love. No longer being the recipient of the benefits of the prayers of brethren, and perhaps even out from under angelic protection, the expelled member would become the defenseless victim of all of the evil that motivates godless society.

24 1 Corinthians 5:5-7

25 v5 26 v6-8

27 It may be that the nature of the sin was so despicable that Paul went to the extreme action of expulsion without first offering the sinner the opportunity to repent. However, it seems more likely that the condition of the church caused him to take this extreme action.

28 2 Corinthians 2:9 also informs us that Paul gave this command to see if the church would be obedient to him. It was a test: For to this end I wrote that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

29 v5 30 In 1 Timothy 1:19-20, in the very same terms, Paul describes his action toward two others Hymenaeus and Alexander. Hymenaeus expressed his love for the world through a false doctrine that he had developed (2 Timothy 2:17). Alexander, through unspecified actions, dealt much harm to Paul (2 Timothy 4:14).¹⁰ Scripture also presents the principle that God’s patience has its limits. There does come a time when God removes His Grace and allows a sinner to experience the natural consequences of his sin - disease, dissipation, alienation, etc. Thus, no evil experience or sad consequence is beyond possibility in the life of those expelled from the church. In time, the sin which had appeared so beautiful becomes an ugly illusion. The worldly human relationships that promised so much fail to satisfy. As pain replaces pleasure and emptiness replaces the filling of the Holy Spirit, the “disillusioned” sinner cries out for the restoration of his relationship with the Family of God. Thus, the flesh, with its desires and hopes, is destroyed.

Again, we are reminded that the goal of expulsion is repentance and restoration of the sinner. The action of expulsion is to be carried out as a public action of the church. Paul said, When you are assembled together.

31 Again, we would look to Acts 15:1-41 as a pattern for how such a problem would be handled. The action would be taken by leadership, following discussion or explanation, with the congregation being witnesses to the discussion. The action would be taken in the name of Our Lord Jesus and with the power of Our Lord Jesus.

32 Two observations, 1. Action cannot be taken in Our Lord’s Name unless He has authorized it. Church leadership needs to be very careful about taking action without clear biblical authority.

2. When actions are taken in obedience to commands and declarations of Our Lord, the power to execute such commands is resident in the church.

We must return to the question, “What kind of sin demands that the sinner be expelled?”

First, the sin must be a defining trait of the sinner’s life. “He is an immoral person,” describes someone who lives a life that is known for immorality. This is not someone who may on occasion

succumb to the temptation to glance at the cover of a Penthouse magazine. The man described in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 is a man who was living in a sexual relationship with his father's wife - he was an immoral person. Expulsion should be the church's response only in these instances, 1. when there is a behavioral lifestyle that Scripture clearly labels as sin, especially when the behavior is effecting the life of the church; 2. when there has been an effort to bring the person to repentance and these efforts have failed.

33

31 v4 32 v4 33 In the light of Scriptures already considered, this is the norm. In Corinth, for reasons described above, Paul by-passed this norm.¹¹ 2 Corinthians 2:5-10 This section reveals the results of the expulsion of the sinner, as mandated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. The results were what Paul had hoped for. The Church had expelled the man; the man had repented. Paul now had to exhort the church to receive the man back. The Corinthian Church seemed to be prone to the error that most congregations have to fight against when expulsion has taken place - a tendency to become hard and judgmental. Paul urged the church to 1. forgive the Man 1:2. comfort the Man 1:3. reaffirm their love for the Man 1:34 No further punitive action or probation was to be taken. Paul said that it is possible for a repentant sinner to be "overcome by excessive sorrow." The church's role is to help the repentant sinner to put the past behind him and to move on with life.

Paul makes the point that Satan's maneuvers are so unchangeable that they can be anticipated.

Satan's main thrust in his battle against the church is to bring separation and alienation. The expulsion of the man and his full reception back into the church, is the apostle's tactic to defeat Satan's maneuvers.

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. And yet, do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. In these closing verses of Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians, he makes another reference to shunning. The theme of both of Paul's epistles to Thessalonica is the return of Our Lord and the resurrection of the saints. Two problems had developed at Thessalonica because the church had misunderstood Our Lord's promise to return. The Thessalonians expected Christ to return before any of them died. This did not happen and so there was disappointment and confusion. They thought that their deceased brothers and sisters had missed Christ. In a grand description of Our Lord's return, Paul assures the Thessalonians that the resurrection of deceased believers will be the first event following the heavenly trumpet blast and angelic shout, announcing Our Lord's return.

35 The other major error in Thessalonica involved the manner in which some Christians awaited the Lord's return. Many quit their jobs and sat down to wait. These loafers were looking to the church treasury to support them in their idle vigil. Paul labels these loafing saints, "disorderly" and "busy bodies." To these, Paul said, "If a man will not work, he should not eat."

34 vs 7&8

35 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28 Paul concluded this section of his epistle with an exhortation to disassociate one's self from any church members who do not obey this

injunction. The anticipated result is that the loafers would be shamed by this treatment and make a change. It seems that the injunction refers more to the private social intercourse between individual believers, than it does to official expulsion. Those needing correction are not to be regarded as enemies, but brothers who need adjustment.

36 Paul was prescribing a dose of “reality therapy”, 1. Don’t feed them and thus enable them to continue in idleness; 2. Don’t associate with them and by association express tacit approval of their lifestyle.

AURICULAR CONFESSION In two passages considered above, 1 John 1:1-10 and James 5:1-20, confession is presented as a response to sin. Acknowledgement of sin and the efficacy of Christ’s blood for cleansing from sin is the subject discussed in 1 John 1:1-10. Since I John is written to Christians, reference is to sin in a believer’s life and the believer’s personal response to its presence. The prescription for cleansing is confession. The question naturally arises, “To whom should confession be made; is confession to be made to God or is confession to another believer required?” Roman Catholicism advocates the necessity of “auricular confession,” the confession to clergy. The confession called for in 1 John 1:1-10 certainly would include confession of sins to God, but is that the only confession to be made?

I John speaks of “sins,” implying sinful deeds, rather than “sin,” which would speak of the underlying condition of the heart. The confession referred to then would be specific, concerning things done, said, felt, or thought. Honest and contrite confession to God is declared to be the means of receiving forgiveness for sins committed by the believer.

One purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to bring the believer to an examination of his life. In the early years of Christianity, this was the focus of the weekly gathering of believers. Each Christian examined his own heart weekly. There was an obligation for believers to acknowledge to himself and to God any sins that he had committed since his last confession. As we already have noted, James 5:16 is in a passage that addresses the physical and emotional consequences of sin. Confession to another believer is presented as an agent of healing.

Confession is to precede healing prayer. Oral confession is important because it allows believers to pray for one another’s weaknesses and it also brings sin into the light.

Thus, I John presents confession as a means of forgiveness - this involves salvation. James presents confession as a means of healing - this involves deliverance from the physical and emotional consequences of sin. It would seem that confession to God is required for forgiveness; confession to other believers is required for healing from sin-caused illness.

36 Idleness is not a “sin,” but “behavior unbecoming a Christian.”¹³ **A SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS FROM SECTION I 1.**

Every Christian will sin from time to time.

2. Confession of sin to God results in forgiveness.

3. Confession of sin to another believer is a means of healing when the sickness is the consequence of sin.

4. If a believer sins covertly and is discovered in his sin, the church should endeavor to bring the sinner to repentance and a restored relationship with God.
5. There must not be any haughtiness or self-righteousness on the part of those who discovered the sinner. Each believer must acknowledge his individual potential for sin.
6. Effort should be made to restore the repentant sinner to full function in the Body.
7. Where sin has alienated brothers, reconciliation is of primary importance.
8. When efforts have been made to bring a sinner to repentance, and he refuses to respond to these efforts, expulsion may be required.
9. The purpose of expulsion is not to punish, but to bring the sinner to repentance and restoration.
10. A church that ignores and tolerates a sinful lifestyle among its members is a church that is disobedient to God.
11. When a sinning Christian who has been expelled repents, he is to be embraced immediately and received back into fellowship.
12. A church should not be on a "witch hunt," looking for sinners to expel. Only when there is obvious sin, and an unrepentant attitude should discipline be undertaken.

ADDENDA TO SECTION I In a practical note, comment must be made on the risk that church leadership faces if church discipline is exercised. In recent years, there have been a number of lawsuits against churches that expelled members because of persistent sin. Some of these have resulted in judgment against the church leadership.

Church attorneys now recommend that each church have a written church discipline procedure. This document should be given to every new member, upon his reception into the church. This will not prevent a lawsuit, but probably will protect the church from losing the lawsuit. The members of the church have voluntarily and knowingly entered into the "contract." If church leaders follow the procedures in their document, they would be protected.

37

37 The Tulsa Christian Fellowship Church Discipline Procedure is attached as an appendix to this study as an example of such a document.¹⁴

01.03. Section Two - Sin Among Leaders

SECTION II DEALING WITH SIN AMONG LEADERS When leadership sins, the result is not like hidden leaven, gradually influencing the whole loaf.

It is more like a sledge hammer, bringing immediate destruction to the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The more wide-spread the influence, authority, and fame of the leader, the greater the destructive potential of his fall.

Because of this, the New Testament contains special comments and instructions concerning leaders who fall into sin. For example, James cautions Christians about the danger of becoming a teacher.

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

38 Teachers will incur a stricter judgment than other members of the church. James states that the risk of erring as a teacher is a very great risk because anyone who does not stumble in what he says, is a perfect man.

39 The reasons for this stricter judgment are apparent.

1. Teachers mistakes will have multiplied effect in the life of the church 2. Teachers have more knowledge than most members of the Body. Stricter judgment will be required of those who possess the greater knowledge. In this study, we will examine the New Testament passages that address the issue of sinning leaders. THE TRAGIC FATE OF DESTRUCTIVE LEADERS Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

40 The issue before Paul in this passage is the condition of the local church and the party spirit that was growing in the Corinthian church. Four different parties are named in the opening chapter of the epistle, 41

38 James 3:1-2

39 James' discourse on the uncontrollable nature of the tongue (3:2-13) is a tangent that radiates from his warning to teachers.

40 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

41 1 Corinthians 1:10-31 1. The Paul party 2. The Cephas party 3. The Apollos party 4. The Christ party It seems that neither Paul, nor Cephas (Peter), nor Apollos had done anything to form the parties named after them. The various groups were birthed from the human tendency to focus on a charismatic leader, combined with the human tendency to argument and division. The implication

of Paul's comments is that even those who said that they were of Christ did so in a party spirit.

Unless corrected, this party spirit would result in the fracturing and destruction of the local church. The first four chapters of the epistle call the Corinthian Church to a correct view of leadership. They are told to stop exalting God's messengers and to view them as servants of God and servants to the church.

42 To make his point, Paul describes the local church as being a temple of the Holy Spirit, built upon the foundation of Christ.

43 He then gives solemn warning to all who have instigated, led, or contributed to the formation of parties.

If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him.

44 Evidently, the spirit of division was so wide-spread that there was no opportunity to single out guilty individuals for discipline. Since Paul's authority was being challenged by those of the Apollos, Cephas, and Christ parties, Paul was in the position of being able to do no more than give this warning. To do otherwise would have been viewed as self serving and would have resulted in the very destruction of the local church that he sought to prevent.

Ultimately, the Lord Himself is the one to whom all will answer. This is one of the most sobering verses in the Bible, as far as leadership is concerned. The horror contemplated in this verse should give pause to any leaders who are prone to cavalier action.

WOLVES AND HERETICS Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

45 42 1 Corinthians 3:4-9 43 1 Corinthians 3:10 ff 44 1 Corinthians 3:17

45 Acts 20:28-38 In his address to the Ephesian elders, Paul warns them about the certainty of the emergence of self-serving leaders. He warns them that there will be some who come from outside of the flock.

These he calls "wolves." Others will arise from within the eldership itself. A wolf is defined as, "One who does not care about the sheep; in a wolf's eyes, the sheep exist only for the benefit of the wolf." Such men come into the church only for personal gain. The same thing is true for those from within the flock who begin drawing people to themselves.

They have a need to be "somebody" and so they manipulate the people into following them. The most prevalent tool for such manipulation is perverted teaching.

Paul warned Timothy about the certainty of this phenomena, For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

46 To Titus, Paul gave similar warning, For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.

47 What should be done when such “drawing away of disciples” occurs?

First, it is the responsibility of apostles and elders to build the church upon the truth. By devoting themselves to the constant teaching of sound doctrine and exhorting the people in it, apostles and elders create a prophylactic against the members’ vulnerability to false doctrine.

Those who have been indoctrinated with the truth will not be so easily enticed into error.

It also is the responsibility of apostles and elders to refute the false teachers. Thus, Paul says that anyone chosen to be an elder must be equipped to do this.

48 Apostles and elders must answer to God for the flock.

49 Too often elders have watched silently while various “teachers” have drawn members of the flock to themselves through television, radio, books, and large rallies. Usually, such speakers have a dramatic or distinctive doctrine that “tickles the ears” of the people.

50 As distasteful as the task may be, elders must lose their timidity about addressing the false teaching manipulation of these ministries. Such teachers are wolves.

46 2 Timothy 4:3-4 47 Titus 1:10-11

48 Titus 1:9 49 Hebrews 13:17 50 2 Timothy 4:3-22 Within the flock there also will be those who seek to generate a following. Often, those guilty of this offense are unconscious of their own motives and tend to rationalize or justify both their actions and the results. It is not uncommon for a member of the church staff or an elder to be guilty of such an offense. Neither is it unusual for a member of a church board or a council of elders to feel that he represents a certain “constituency” within the Body. Such divisive situations must be addressed.

Paul instructed Titus that such men should be given no more than two warnings. If change does not occur after two warnings, the man is to be rejected or avoided. But shun foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a factious man 51 after a first and second warning; knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

52 Similar instructions are given to the Roman church, Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

53 Considering these two passages together, we make the following observations, 1. These instructions are given both to leadership (Titus), and to the whole church (Romans). The instructions to “keep away from them,” if followed, will stifle the activity of “heretics.” Such people thrive on opportunities for “friendly discussion”.

2. The instruction to Titus, “have nothing to do with him,” is realistic. Further efforts to change the behavior of such persons, after two attempts, is not good stewardship of time.

It also would give the offender an undeserved sense of importance.

3. Again, the “teaching you have learned,” is an antidote for the poison of divisive teaching. In none of these instances is the church told to do more than to approach a schismatic and attempt to get him to abandon his divisive activity. If that does not work, then he is to be shunned. Those who do not repent, are to be left in God’s hands for judgment.

54 Of course, his teaching is to be refuted if it is being presented publicly. Paul wrote to Titus that such refutation is one of the primary duties of eldership,

51 The Greek word is *hairesis* (hairetikon), heretic. This is the only place that this term occurs in the New Testament. It means one who insists on his own opinions, which are devoid of true Scriptural basis and which produce division.

52 Titus 3:9-11 NAS 53 Romans 16:17-18

54 The darkest pages of Church History are those that contain the record of the torture and execution of “heretics.” There is no New Testament authority for such horrors. 18...holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.

55 This is what Paul did in Galatia, when Peter succumbed to the pressure of Judaizing teachers. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

56 SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING SINNING ELDERS Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful of sinning. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thus share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin... The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

57 These verses do not refer to those who are in some wandering ministry, nor are they heretical sheep. The reference is to men who are in the established role of elder in the local church.

Paul began this section by cautioning against responding to every complaint brought against an elder. There always will be those who do not like any authority over them. The perversity of the flesh consistently stimulates criticism of leadership. If two or three witnesses bring a charge against an elder, it is to be heard. Otherwise, it should be ignored. When two witnesses bring charges, and an investigation proves them to be true, all of the procedures and actions related to any sinning brother should be followed.

58 If the sinning elder does not repent, then the airing of these matters should be held before the whole church. This will tend to prevent two kinds of sin, 1. False accusations against elders; 2. A casual attitude toward sin.

55 Titus 1:9-11 56 Galatians 2:14 57 1 Timothy 5:19-25

58 See Section I 19 Persistently sinning elders 59 are not afforded the privilege of privacy. Their sins are to be dealt with in public. Even though the rebuking of a fellow elder and dear friend may break the heart of the other elders, it must be done. No partiality or preference should be allowed to interfere.

Two questions must be asked at this point, 1. What sins merit such action?

2. What happens after an unrepentant elder is rebuked?

Both of these questions are difficult to answer. The best answer than can be given to the first question is that charges must involve deeds that clearly are labeled, "sin," in the New Testament. Such things as not spending enough time in prayer and Bible reading, not putting enough money in the offering bag, watching too much television, drinking coffee, clothing styles, etc, are not the sort of thing that would call for a hearing before the church. Adultery, lying, stealing, and other blatant sins do merit such a hearing. The second question is not so easy to answer. Much depends on the outcome of the hearing.

Since the passage before us does not spell out what is to be done, we must look to other passages for guidance. The only example that seems to be pertinent is Matthew 18:17, the scenario in which a church member refuses to abide by the judgment of the church. If the sinning elder refuses to repent and submit to the judgment of the local church government, then he must be excommunicated.

60 In the case of a repentant brother, the answer becomes more difficult. Certainly, forgiveness and the desire to see full restoration must be on the heart of the church members. This is consistent with Galatians 6:1, discussed in the earlier section of the paper.

However, a decision must be made about the restoration process. Should the repentant elder be immediately restored to full function as if nothing had happened? Experience leads us to conclude that this is not a wise move.

Several factors must be considered. First, is the question of the elder's own well being. Is the sin evidence of a spiritual or character flaw that needs to be overcome? If so, it would be unfair to put him immediately back under the pressure of church leadership responsibility. A second factor is one of trust. Will the members of the congregation trust his leadership?

59 The form of the Greek participle in this passage implies persistent sin. The NAS correctly communicates this sense by the terminology, Those who continue in sin.

60 Who should hear the case? Ideally, the council of elders in the local church. If this is not possible, or if it does not seem feasible or wise, apostolic brothers should serve as the court. Of course, in denominational churches, the appropriate denominational authorities would serve in this capacity.²⁰ A third consideration is his reputation in the community. One qualification for eldership

is that he have a good reputation among non-Christians.

61 Sinful behavior by church leaders causes the Bride of Christ to be looked upon with mockery and scorn. The church must send a signal to the world that the Kingdom of God is a society in which sin is not tolerated.

62 Wisdom, therefore, would dictate that even though the sinning elder has repented, he should be removed from the council of elders. depending upon the circumstances, he may be given an extended sabbatical or he may be removed totally.

Although the sabbatical has come into vogue as an almost routine response to elder sin, removal would seem to be more appropriate. When the leader is given a sabbatical, the assumption is made that he will return to the role of elder. This creates expectations that may interfere with the healing of the man, the building of trust, and the message sent to the world.

Removal avoids all of these problems. The man is freed to seek his identity and worth in Christ, not in his role as an elder. The church can love him and support him as a person, not as an elder. This would enhance his healing. The church and the world would observe him as he rebuilds his life and his relationship with Christ - not for the purpose of regaining his position in leadership, but for the purpose of being holy.

Throughout the early months, the church must be diligent in helping the repentant former elder through encouragement, accountability, and expressions of love. He is a casualty in the battle, not an enemy.

If the elder had been salaried by the church, it would be appropriate to continue the salary for a period of time, as he re-adjusts his life. The cutting off of income would be punitive. The goal is the restoration of the man, as a person and as a member of the body. All things should be done with gentleness. Should he return to the role of elder? Perhaps. This would depend upon the will of God. The other elders, or apostolic leadership, may receive in prayer a witness that this man is to become an elder once again. If this happens, then formal restoration before the assembled church should take place. The information available to us from the Apostolic Fathers indicates that this would be done by the laying on of hands and prayer.

61 1 Timothy 3:7 62 The church is an "alternative society." Sin always will be a part of the world. The church, however, is a society which offers an alternative to life in the world. This distinction often is missed by those who seek through legislation and political activity to make society conform to the standards of God.²¹ A SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS FROM SECTION II 1. The sin of leaders is more serious than sin among the flock because of the multiplied effect upon the Church.

2. Those leaders, official or unofficial, who destroy a local church will face destruction by God.
3. Those leaders, official or unofficial, who draw disciples away after themselves and their false teaching are wolves.
4. Divisive teaching and behavior must be exposed and rebuked.
5. Heretical teaching is to be refuted, but the heretic is to be left in the hands of God for punishment.

6. No accusations should be received against elders unless it is substantiated by at least two witnesses.
7. Sinning elders should be confronted in private.
8. Unrepentant elders must be publicly exposed and removed from office.
9. Repentant sinning elders should be removed from office and helped to rebuild their lives.
10. If there is a witness from the Holy Spirit that a former elder is to be returned to his role, restoration should begin with a public meeting in which hands are laid on the elder as a part of his re-instatement.
11. All of the Scriptures that apply to dealing with sin in the lives of Christians also apply to church leaders.²²

01.04. Appendix

APPENDIX TULSA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE The following document is the church discipline procedure document that is presented by Tulsa Christian Fellowship to each prospective member of the congregation. Each person assents to this procedure before becoming a member of the congregation.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE When the elders become aware of the persistent practice of a sin (acts that Scripture clearly prohibits and/or labels as sin) by a member of the congregation, they shall take the following steps in an effort to motivate the member to forsake his sinful behavior. The purpose of this action is to insure the salvation of the member and to preserve the holiness of the congregation.

SECTION I Elders' efforts to obtain repentance 1. The first action by the elders shall be as follows, A. If the sinning member is a male, one of the elder shall go to him and reason with him concerning his sin, calling him to repent and to forsake his sinful practice.

B. If the sinning member is a female, an elder and his wife shall go to the woman and reason with her concerning her sin, calling her to repent and to forsake her sinful practice. The purpose of this first step is to deliver the straying member from his sinful practice without causing public embarrassment. The elder shall report to the council of elders the results of his efforts in behalf of the sinning member. If the result is repentance and the forsaking of sin, then the matter shall be dropped. However, the elder who made the contact shall continue to aid the repentant member in rehabilitation through accountability, encouragement, and support. Should this first action by the elders fail to produce repentance and the forsaking of the sinful practice, step two shall be initiated.

2. The second effort by the elders shall consist of two or three elders going to the sinning member (male or female) and reasoning with him, urging him to repent and to forsake his sinful action. The purpose of this second effort by the elders is to follow the Scriptural pattern in Matthew 18:15-16 and to deliver the straying member from his sinful practice without causing public embarrassment. The elders making the contact shall report to the council of elders the results of their efforts in behalf of the sinning member. If the result is repentance and forsaking of sin, then the matter shall be dropped. However, at least 23 one of the elders who makes the contact shall continue to aid the repentant member in rehabilitation through accountability, encouragement, and support. Should the second effort by the elders fail to produce repentance and the forsaking of the sinful practice, step three shall be initiated.

3. The third effort by the elders shall consist of two or three elders (the same ones in step two or, should wisdom dictate, two or three elders other than the ones who made the contact in step two) going to the sinning member (male or female) and reasoning with him, urging him to repent and to forsake his sinful practice.

A. If the sinning member does not express repentance at the time of the visit, the elders shall read or recite Hebrews 13:17 to him, explaining that they must give account to God for his soul. Then they shall recite or read Acts 20:28, explaining that they are responsible for the local congregation and must answer to God for this body of believers.

B. If this reasoning does not produce cooperation on the part of the sinner, then 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 shall be read, recited or summarized for the sinner. The elders then shall state that they have no choice but to obey this Scriptural command and that, should the sinning member not forsake his sin, he shall be given seven days in which to contact the elders and express repentance.

SECTION II The act of disfellowshipping an unrepentant sinning member If during the seven day period referred to in SECTION I, 3. B, above, the sinner does not contact the elders and express repentance, the elders shall proceed as follows, On the first Sunday following the above mentioned seven day period, a letter shall be read to the congregation, stating that the sinning member is disfellowshipped. Unless the elders deem necessary, the sin shall not be specified in an effort to protect the privacy of the individual, especially where the elders have privileged information. Should the sinning member repent and forsake his sinful practice prior to the reading of the letter to the congregation, the elders shall go to him, expressing their acceptance and at least one elder shall continue to aid him in rehabilitation through accountability, encouragement, and support.

SECTION III A false statement of repentance If during procedures 1, 2, or 3, the sinning member expresses repentance but continues to practice sin, the elders shall contact him and notify him that the next step shall be taken unless he can convince the elders that he has forsaken his sin.²⁴

SECTION IV

Non-publication of disciplinary action The action of disfellowshipping a member shall not be published outside of the local congregation unless another church requests transfer of membership. Should another church request transfer of membership for a disfellowshipped member, the following letter shall be sent to the requesting church, did not leave our church in good standing. We cannot recommend him for membership in your church.

SECTION V

Withdrawal of membership during the disciplinary process Should a sinning member inform the elders that he wishes to withdraw from membership while steps 1, 2, or 3, are in process, the elders shall take no further action, except to advise the sinning member that they will respond to any requests for transfer of membership by sending the requesting church the following letter, did not leave our church in good standing. We cannot recommend him for membership in your church.

SECTION VI

Restoration of a disfellowshipped member Should a disfellowshipped member contact the elders, expressing repentance, he shall be asked to appear before the council of the elders where he will be asked to confess his sin and to confirm his forsaking of it. When this is done, the elders immediately shall extend to him the hand of fellowship and shall on the next Sunday announce to the congregation the reinstatement of the formerly disfellowshipped member.

SECTION VII

Restoration of a sinning member who has withdrawn from fellowship Should a sinning member who has withdrawn fellowship request reinstatement in the congregation, the elders shall deal with him on the basis of a disfellowshipped member who has contacted them, expressing repentance (SECTION VI).

02.00. HOW NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER

HOW NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER James W. Garrett
SECTION ONE: Organizational Relationships Between NT Churches Part One: An Examination of Acts Study #1 The Birth of the Samaritan Church Study #2 The Birth of the Gentile Church in Caesarea Study #3 The Birth of the Church in Antioch Study #4 Church Planting on the First Missionary Tour Study #5 The Jerusalem Council Study #6 Paul's Second Missionary Journey Study #7 Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Conclusions Part Two: An Examination of the Epistles

Conclusion

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Conclusion SECTION III: Financial Relationships between Churches The Antioch Collection The Pauline Churches

Conclusion Conclusions drawn from the overall study All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New American Standard Bible ®

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RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER

James W. Garrett The biblical record of the First Century church presents a picture of a fraternity of local churches, spread throughout the central Roman Empire. This fraternity crossed geographical, linguistic, cultural, national, and ethnic boundaries. Not only was their relationship displayed in attitude, but their actions demonstrated the reality of that fraternity. This fraternity possessed a common doctrine, exhibited a consistent pattern of local church government, recognized the same trans-local ministries, assisted one another financially, conformed to a consistent procedural pattern for bringing converts into the Kingdom, and above all, they were in submission to the same Lord.

Questions of faith and practice were settled by the revelatory apostles (Paul and the Twelve). Denominations were unknown. Even though Jewish and Gentile churches may have had slightly different perceptions of what the future Kingdom of God would look like, all of them were motivated by the expectation of the soon return of Christ and the hope of the resurrection. In those primitive days, everyone knew what was meant by the statement, "He is a Christian."

Unfortunately, such halcyon days are long past. The contemporary Church is a divided Church. Denominational hierarchies and independent kingdoms flourish. Beautiful simplicity has been replaced by complexity. Those who love God and His Church long for a restoration of the simplicity and commonality of the Church's earliest decades. In this brief study, we will explore the subject of inter-congregational relationships as displayed in the New Testament. Our goal is to discover principles and patterns in the New Testament Church that can be applied to our current situation. Of necessity, our conclusions will involve both inductive and deductive logic, some opinion, and, we pray, insights from the Holy Spirit.

02.01. SECTION ONE: Organizational Relationships Between NT Churches

SECTION I ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

Contemporary churches display a variety of trans-congregational models. The monolithic hierarchy of Roman Catholicism dwells at one end of the spectrum. Many isolated independent churches are found at the opposite end. In between these two models there exist many varied degrees of supra-congregational hierarchies. What is the New Testament pattern? Is it that of a network of churches functioning under the oversight of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, or is it a pattern of autonomous churches that have no authority in one another's affairs, or is it something other than either of these?

If the Holy Spirit's plan for the Church included a supra-congregational hierarchy, we would expect to find evidence of this in the New Testament record. We will examine the historical record in search of such an hierarchy. Then, we will examine the Epistles to see if there is evidence of such an hierarchy.

02.02. Part One: An Examination of Acts

PART ONE, AN EXAMINATION OF ACTS In our survey of Acts we will note those instances in which the opportunity was presented for the establishment of some sort of authority beyond that of local church leaders. Of special note will be those cases in which the nature of the situation seemed to call for such a structure.

Case Study #1, The Birth of the Church in Samaria The first inter-congregational event recorded in Acts was the sending of Peter and John to the newly established church in the city of Samaria. The birth of a church in Samaria resulted from Saul's persecution of the Jerusalem Church, causing many Christians to flee the city.

Philip, a deacon of the Jerusalem Church, fled to Samaria, where he immediately preached the Gospel of Christ. His preaching was accompanied by credentialing miracles. As a result, a large portion of the city became believers and were baptized. The Jerusalem Church responded to the news of the newly-born Samaritan Church by sending two apostles to visit the area.

If a supra-congregational authority were to be put into place anywhere, one would expect it to happen here. The main reason for this expectation is the contempt that Jerusalem Jews held toward the Samaritans. Samaria was inhabited by mongrel Jews whose religious history was mixed. At certain points, their theology and interpretation of the Law of Moses conflicted with Jewish orthodoxy. Because of this history, it would not be surprising if the "Mother Church" in Jerusalem and the apostles in particular were suspicious of the Samaritan's ability to remain true to the essentials of the faith. So, some sort of oversight from Jerusalem would seem to be a responsible action.

Another reason for us to expect the apostles to institute some sort of supra-congregational authority was the apostolic government of the Church. Up to this point, the entire church had been located in Jerusalem and the apostles were the government over the Church. Given their special place in the Kingdom, it would be a very natural and expected action for the apostles to extend their governmental role to Samaria, thus continuing to be the government of the entire church. Contrary to our expectations, Acts records no imposition of Jerusalem authority upon the Samaritans. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.... And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

2 No statement is made as to why Peter and John were sent to Samaria. Judging by their activity, they went to Samaria to enlarge the Kingdom by bestowing the Holy Spirit and by preaching in villages. However, the above account pictures neither the Jerusalem church nor the apostolic team as exercising authority over the Samaritan church. After imparting the Holy Spirit, they left

Samaria in the hands of the Spirit.⁴ Case Study #2, The Birth of the Gentile Church in Caesarea The second opportunity for supra-congregational authority to be put into place is recorded in Acts 10:1-48 and Acts 11:1-30. This is the record of Peter's preaching the Gospel to the household of Cornelius, and the Jerusalem church's response to this event. For our purposes, we are interested only in the Jerusalem church's response.

Peter had been directed, sovereignly, to travel to Caesarea and to preach Christ to those gathered in the home of Cornelius, a Roman Centurion. This was the first time that the Gospel had been preached to Gentiles. When Peter returned from Caesarea, he reported to the Jerusalem Church leaders what had happened in the home of Cornelius. Initially, he was criticized for fraternizing with Gentiles. He quieted his critics by describing God's sovereign bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles. When they heard Peter's report, the Jerusalem leaders responded, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

3 That was it. Once again, where one might expect some sort of paternal extra-congregational oversight to be imposed, there was none. Even though the Christians in Caesarea were uninstructed Gentiles, they were left in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

Case Study #3 The Birth of the Church in Antioch The third opportunity for a Jerusalem-based ecclesiastical hierarchy is found in the Acts 11:19 ff. This is the record of the spread of the Gospel to Antioch. At the same time that Philip had fled to Samaria, other Christians fled to Antioch. At first, these refugee evangelists preached only to Jews. However, in a short while, some also preached to Gentiles and a large church quickly came to exist. When the Jerusalem Church heard that a large number of Antiochans had become believers, they sent Barnabas to look in on them. Again, observe the absence of any hint of a "Jerusalem is headquarters" mentality. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

4 Why did the Jerusalem church send Barnabas to Antioch? Again, we are not told.

However, judging from Barnabas' described activity, it was to encourage the new church and to teach new converts the things of God. Note that when a company of Jerusalem prophets came to 5 Antioch, they did not come in the role of ecclesiastical authorities. Instead, they brought a prophetic word to the church, especially about coming world conditions. So, once again, we find no

record of supra-congregational authority in the relationship between Jerusalem and Antioch.

Case Study #4 Church Planting on the First Missionary Journey The next account in Acts that presents a situation in which supra-congregational authority could have occurred is the record of Paul & Barnabas' first missionary journey. Here, home-base is not Jerusalem, but Antioch. At the instruction of the Holy Spirit, the leadership in Antioch released Barnabas and Saul (Paul) for the work into which the Holy Spirit had called them. They set out on their first missionary trip, taking the Gospel to many cities in various Roman provinces. There were converts in every city in which they preached. Paul and Barnabas were not allowed to remain long in each city. Persecution by the Jews forced them to preach and then to move on. This was an area quite removed from both Jerusalem and Antioch. The new churches had not enjoyed the benefit of a sustained visit from an apostle. There had been no opportunity to disciple the converts and to firmly ground them in matters of the faith. All were new converts who would face opposition and possible persecution. Surely here was a situation that called for some sort of supra-congregational or apostolic oversight. Again, our expectations are not fulfilled. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:23) As Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps, they exercised their apostolic authority by ordaining elders in every city, leaving each congregation under the oversight of its local elders. No accountability network between the churches nor over the churches was established by Paul & Barnabas. Significant to our discussion is the description of Paul & Barnabas' return to Antioch. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples.

5 There was not the slightest suggestion that Paul and Barnabas should have set up some sort of accountability network. The local leaders under the oversight of the Holy Spirit was considered to be sufficient.

Case Study #5 The Jerusalem Council

Acts 15:1-41 is extremely important to the question of supra-congregational authority. When Judaizing teachers from Judea came to Antioch, telling the Gentiles that they must follow the Mosaic Law in order to be saved, Paul and Barnabas had "great dissension and debate with them." The entire ministry of grace was being challenged by these Judaizing teachers. The fact that these teachers had come from Jerusalem gave credence to their teaching. Yet, Paul, Barnabas, and the Antioch Church knew that hundreds had been saved and given the Holy Spirit, apart from the Law. What was to be done? The Antioch church responded in a responsible manner. They decided to send to Jerusalem a group of respected men from their church,⁶ including Paul and Barnabas. This group would discuss with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, the controversy caused by the Judaizing teachers from Judaea. The record does not report whether or not the Antioch church considered the Apostles and elders of Jerusalem to be authoritative in this matter. Did they send their delegation to work out the problem, as "brother to brother," or did they send the delegation to hear from "headquarters"? We are not told. For certain, there was a desire to know the truth and, by implication, there was a desire to avoid a schism between Antioch and Jerusalem. Our Lord had told His disciples how to handle differences (Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 18:15-18). Although the teachings of Jesus did not fit this situation

literally, the Antioch Church displayed the spirit of what Christ taught.

How did the apostles and elders of Jerusalem view themselves in this matter? Were they an authority to which all churches had to submit? The revelatory apostles 6 (the Twelve and Paul) were the means of solving all problems of orthodoxy. However, this was a situation in which the Judaizers had challenged Paul's revelatory role and the accuracy of his teaching. Galatians 2:1-2 describes Paul's attitude and motivation toward the Jerusalem conference, Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. And it was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.

Outwardly, Paul went up to Jerusalem because he had been appointed to do so by the brethren in Antioch. Inwardly, however, he had been prompted to do so by the Lord. The Antioch church's sending Paul to Jerusalem was confirmation of what Paul sensed in his spirit, i.e, that he and Barnabas should go to Jerusalem and settle this matter once and for all. When he and the Antioch delegation arrived in Jerusalem, Paul wisely consulted with the apostolic leaders before entering the council. Paul knew that the source of his teaching was the same as that of the Twelve (the Holy Spirit).

9 He assumed that he and the Twelve would be in agreement, unless someone's flesh got in the way, as it did with Peter and Barnabas in Antioch.

10 Paul and Barnabas knew where they stood with the Twelve, when the deliberations described in Acts 15:6 ff began. The outcome of the council seems to have been a foregone conclusion.

It must be said that the Twelve and the Jerusalem elders occupied a position that no one else ever has occupied. The Twelve were chosen by Jesus in a very public manner to be his revelators 11. The church was born in Jerusalem, under the Holy Spirit directed ministry of the Twelve. Until Paul's call and commissioning, all of the spreading Church was an outgrowth of the Jerusalem seed-bed. Therefore, if there were any challenges to Paul's orthodoxy, this was the place to settle it. In this sense, the Jerusalem council had authority.

After the council reached consensus, they decided to record their decision in a letter to the Gentile Christians. The terminology used in reference to the letter and the terms used in the letter itself shed light on our question. First, in Acts 15:20, where the letter is proposed, James is quoted as saying, "...we write to them that they..." The Greek verb used here, *ejpistei-lai* 12, means simply, to write, or, as the word is used in some instances, to write instructions. James' proposal does not imply a command. The terms used in James' proposal are more along the lines of instructions given by one who is an authority on a subject, rather than as a decree from one who is in authority over someone. For example, one might ask an experienced carpenter how to build a staircase. He would write, "Do it this way..." These are instructions, not commands.

James' proposal implies that he and the others considered themselves to be authorities on the truth of the matter that the council had debated.

However, the letter itself contains language that bears a greater sense of authority, For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials. 7 The

Greek terminology translated, It seemed good...to us, is the language used by rabbis when making a pronouncement.

13 As F.F. Bruce points out, "But the form of the words used... is authoritative enough: it was a form widely used in the wording of imperial and other government decrees. Moreover, the four abstentions prescribed are said to be necessary."

14 The expression, lay upon you, implies that the writers of the letter had the ability (authority) to lay these things upon the recipients of the letter. This being true, the Jerusalem conference pictured in Acts 15:1-41 was no mere debate. The council established forever the truth that the Mosaic Law is irrelevant to the issue of salvation. Grace, rather than law, was affirmed as the Good News of Jesus for all nations. This was an issue that could have been resolved only by the Twelve (which by now numbered only eleven, James having been beheaded by Herod Acts 12:1-2).

So, even though the letter is gentle, it does carry authority. Does this mean, therefore, that the New Testament pictures a "mother church" that has authority over other churches? I think not. This was an unusual situation, involving unique people (revelatory apostles), before the existence of Scripture.

15 They met to resolve a basic misunderstanding of the Gospel. This council never was repeated again. Neither the Jerusalem Church nor the Twelve considered themselves as being overseers of Paul and the spreading Kingdom of God.

Case Study #6 Paul's Second Missionary Journey The next opportunity for supra-congregational authority to be expressed was during Paul's second missionary journey. When Paul suggested to Barnabas that they make the trip, he proposed, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

16 There is no sense of oversight by an authority, it was to see how they do. When the trip took place, Silas rather than Barnabas, accompanied Paul. Note how Acts describes the team's activity on the trip. And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches...Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily. (Acts 15:41; Acts 16:4) Paul is not described as traveling among these churches as a monarchical bishop, overseeing and supervising the churches under his authority. He delivered the letter from the Jerusalem council and he strengthened the churches. The picture is one of an encourager and teacher, rather than that of a ruler.

Case Study #7 Paul's Third Missionary Journey The same picture prevails in the description of Paul's third missionary journey. His visits to the churches strengthened all the disciples.⁸ And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch. And having spent some time there, he departed and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. (Acts 18:22-23) A very telling scene occurs toward the close of this journey. On the way to Jerusalem, while waiting at Miletus for the ship to sail, Paul sent for the elders in nearby Ephesus. The record of Paul's meeting with these elders is recorded in Acts 20:18-38. It is one of the most touching scenes in the New Testament. And when

they had come to him, he said to them, “You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

“And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

“And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they were accompanying him to the ship.⁹ What is atmosphere of this meeting? Is Paul meeting with them in the role of a ruling prelate? That certainly is not the sense of this meeting. Paul is pictured as relating to these men as a spiritual father. He is not pictured as relating to them governmentally. He exhorts them and brings a prophetic warning about the future.

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE ABOVE CASES

These seven case studies exhaust the record of instances in Acts in which the possibility of a supra-local hierarchy could be displayed. The remainder of Acts is an account of Paul's arrest, imprisonment, journey to Rome under Roman guard, and his imprisonment in Rome while awaiting trial before Caesar. None of the case studies in Acts records the existence of an hierarchy in which churches are overseen by more mature churches, a network of bishops, or a single prelate over several churches. Where there is an intimation of authority, it is in the person of one or more of the revelatory apostles, whose authority is that of being communicators and protectors of truth.

17 The revelatory function that rested in the apostles now is fulfilled through the Holy Spirit inspired Scriptures. The Acts picture is of autonomous congregations linked to one another spiritually, not organizationally.

02.03. Part Two: An Examination of the Epistles

PART TWO, AN EXAMINATION OF THE EPISTLES

Having found no evidence of a supra-congregational hierarchy in Acts, we now turn our attention to the epistles. We will survey the epistles to look for any examples of hierarchical structure or authority.

Romans The origin of the Church at Rome is uncertain. We can be certain, however, that Paul had no direct involvement in its planting. There is no hint in the Epistle of Paul's being in an overseer or governmental role in his relationship with the Roman Church. Their relationship was fraternal and horizontal, as exemplified by his statements in Romans 1:8-12 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. The Epistles to the Corinthians In both of the letters to Corinth, Paul does assert his authority in the Corinthian Church.

One of the situations that Paul dealt with in his Corinthian letters, was the presence in Corinth of some individuals who declared themselves to be superior to Paul. They argued that Paul was not an apostle because he was not a good orator, because he was timid, because he did not allow the church to support him financially, etc. These "super apostles" (this is the term Paul applies to them in 2 Corinthians 11:5) obviously were very charismatic, good orators, and insisted that the church support them financially. Paul probably would have tolerated this, as he did at Philippi, 18 had it not been for the fact that these super apostles were preaching a different Gospel.

Another situation that Paul attacked strongly was the church's toleration of incest. The Corinthian Church seems to have been rather boastful of its tolerant attitude. Paul's response to these situations is instructive.

Paul is careful to declare that the church belongs to Christ, not to him or to any other minister of the Gospel.

What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. (1 Corinthians 3:5) and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God. (1 Corinthians 3:23) Even though he declares that Christ's ownership is supreme, Paul asserts his place of authority in the Corinthian Church. This is seen in how he responds to the situation in Corinth.

Instead of focusing on the sinners themselves, be they false apostles or the incestuous man, Paul scolds the church for tolerating such things. In each instance, he asserts his authority and

chastises them for not respecting that authority. The Authority of A Father in the Corinthian Epistles Paul wrote to the church as a loving father, but also with the authority of a father, who has both the right and the responsibility to chastise misbehaving children.

I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

16 I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me. (1 Corinthians 4:14-16) What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness? (1 Corinthians 4:21) Ecclesiastical Authority in the Corinthian Epistles Paul also wrote to Corinth as one who had ecclesiastical authority over the Corinthian Church. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 5:4-5) Note that Paul says, I have decided. He was not present in Corinth, but he decided what was to be done and he expected them to carry out his decision.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. (1 Corinthians 16:1) The word translated, directed, is the Greek word, *diata>ssw*, which is used in the New Testament to refer to an “order” or a “command.” It clearly implies authority.

1911 In the Second Letter to the Corinthians we find a continuation of Paul’s discussion of his authority in the Corinthian Church. Early on, he assures them that he does not want to lord it over their faith. Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm. (2 Corinthians 1:24) Even in the matter of the collection that he ordered in 1 Corinthians 16:1, noted above, in 2 Corinthians, he softens the terminology.

I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. (2 Corinthians 8:8) The word translated, command, in this verse is a compound of the word used in 1 Corinthians 16:1, *ejpita>ssw*. Paul had the authority to give orders, but he did his best to avoid the appearance of heavy handed authority. Throughout the epistle he uses language that pictures Paul as having authority in the Corinthian Church. Note these examples, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. (2 Corinthians 10:6) For even if I should boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame, for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive, and his speech contemptible.” Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present. (2 Corinthians 10:8-11) I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest as well, that if I come again, I will not spare anyone, (2 Corinthians 13:2) For this reason I am writing these things while absent, in order that when present I may not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me, for building up and not for tearing down. (2 Corinthians 13:10) Given the language that Paul uses in both of the letters to Corinth, we can only conclude that Paul did have authority in the Corinthian Church.

β He is the founder, the father, of the Corinthian Church β He is one of the revelatory apostles Galatians In the Galatian Letter, Paul spends the first two chapters defending his message of grace and his credentials as a Revelatory Apostle. He defends his role as a revelator only to credential the message that he preached to them. There is no assertion of ecclesiastical authority, as is found in the Corinthian Letters. Instead, Paul reasons with the Galatians and appeals to the tender heart 12 that he has for them, as the motive for their positive response to his letter. My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you-- (Galatians 4:19) is the tone of the letter.

Ephesians The Ephesian Epistle is a beautiful paternal letter. In Ephesians 3:1-13, he defends his credentials as a revelator, but there is no assertion of authority.

Philippians The Philippian Letter displays both a fraternal and a paternal relationship. There is one note of authority in Php 2:12. So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; (Php 2:12) Given the mood of the letter, the sense of this verse is that they obeyed Paul as an obedient child would comply with the instructions of a father.

Colossians In the Colossian letter there is no hint of Paul's exercising authority over the Colossian Church. It is a letter of encouragement and exhortation. The Epistles to the Thessalonians The First Epistle to the Thessalonians contains very tender language, but does state that Paul had the right to assert his authority nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children... just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children...(1 Thessalonians 2:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 2:11) and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; (1 Thessalonians 4:11) II Thessalonians has the same mood about it, but does contain clear evidence of Paul's authority to give commands to the church.

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. (2 Thessalonians 3:6) The term translated, command, in 1 Thessalonians 4:11 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6 are identical, παραγγελλω, meaning, to command, to order, to charge.

Letters to Timothy and Titus¹³ These are letters to Paul's apostolic delegates. They are not written to churches and do not contain material that is relevant to our pursuit.

Hebrews, James, Jude, & Philemon The nature of these letters is not relevant to our study. There is no evidence of extra-local authority in these letters.

Peter's Epistles Both of Peter's epistles are exhortations and reminders. He does not assert ecclesiastical authority over the churches in his letters. However, the tone of the letter is that of the authority that resided in him as a revelator.

John's Epistles The only hint of extra-local or apostolic authority in John's letters is in III John.

3 John 1:9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. The phrase, does not accept what we say, literally translated states,

does not accept us.

John had written instructions to the church; Demetrius did not respect John's apostolic authority.

02.04. Conclusion

CONCLUSION As a result of our survey of the Epistles, we must conclude that there was no organized hierarchy over the local churches. There was apostolic authority. Furthermore, Paul clearly was a spiritual father to the churches that he planted. With the possible exception of a large portion of the Corinthian Church, all of them viewed him as God's infallible agent for delivering ß theological truth (truth about God), ß soteriological truth (truth about salvation), ß ecclesiastical truth (truth about the Church), and ß moral truth (the standards that governed the personal lives of believers).

Paul was viewed as an infallible authority because the information that he imparted had been given to him by Divine revelation. It was the truth. Anything that deviated from this, was error and those who advocated the deviation were described as agents of Satan.

20 In this Godgiven role, Paul did not hesitate to function as an extra-local authority. He instructed, rebuked, and confronted local churches and their leadership, when teaching or practice strayed from the truths and patterns that he had given to the churches.

All churches viewed the Twelve as being in the same role. It was their infallible revelatory role that gave them authority over the churches. Even so, there is no evidence of an organized apostolic hierarchy over local churches. There were certain "apostolic agents," such as Timothy, Titus, Mark, etc, who exercised temporary authority in certain churches, because a Revelatory Apostle had sent them to do a specific thing in a specific church. They did not continue as a permanent extra-local authority over a church or a network of churches.¹⁴ Even though New Testament Churches did not relate to one another through an organized hierarchical structure, they were united around the revelation that the Revelatory Apostles delivered to them. They had a common source for doctrine in all of the four areas outlined above. This is one of the things that united them, the common salvation...the faith, which was once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:2).

02.05. APPLICATION

APPLICATION

How does this apply to contemporary New Testament Churches? No one occupies the place of the Revelatory Apostles. They still exercise authority in the Church through the Scriptures, written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When local church leadership exercises responsible exegesis and follows a sound hermeneutic, then the apostles are exercising authority in that local church. In the New Testament era, the apostles had to confront β False Theology (Dualistic Gnosticism [John wrote his Gospel and I John to confront this false theology]), β False Soteriology (Judaizing teachers), β Improper Ecclesiology (One-man rule [Diotrephes]), β Defective Moral Values (Cerinthian Gnosticism, and cultural influence [evidence of these is seen in the Corinthian Epistles and the writings of John]).

Today, the Holy Spirit inspired Scriptures do the same thing, β False Theology - Example: Oneness Doctrine, as expressed by Jehovah's Witnesses, United Pentecostals, etc.; Ultimate Reconciliation; β Soteriology - Example: Roman Catholicism's salvation by grace and merit; various sacramental churches' view of baptism; β Ecclesiology - Example: Catholicism and most of Protestantism's hierarchical structure; some of the extreme elements of the Open Church Movement; β Morals - Example: The contemporary church's accepting cultural values as the standard for Christians (homosexual and lesbian lifestyles, easy divorce, etc.)¹⁵ Contemporary New Testament Churches will be united in their relationship to the truths given by the Revelatory Apostles.

We find no warrant in Scripture for the formation of structured supra-congregational fellowships, denominations, or other such organizations. However, there is warrant for translocal ministries, who travel among the churches, teaching, prophesying, evangelizing and assisting local leaders. As local churches relate to these travelling ministries, they also relate to one another through these ministries. Apollos, frequently mentioned in the New Testament, ²¹ is a prime example of such trans-local ministry. As far as we know, Apollos never did plant a church. He is called an apostle, ²² but he was not one of the Revelatory Apostles. His apostleship consisted of travelling among the churches, evangelizing, teaching the Scriptures, and encouraging the brethren. He was highly regarded and apparently well known by all of the churches that related to Paul.

Contemporary New Testament Churches will avail themselves of the gifts of recognized trans-local ministries. Local churches often become acquainted with one another through their mutual relationship with and, in some cases, mutual support of these ministries. In a time of crisis, local church leadership may choose to invite such ministries to come to their aid. During the time of crisis, the local leaders may ask the visiting ministry to exercise some degree of authority in that local church. However, for the visiting ministry to occupy a permanent oversight role, in my opinion, is not warranted. It does not fit the New Testament pattern (as exemplified in all of the cases studied in Acts).

02.06. Part Three: An Examination of the Post-biblical Era

PART THREE, AN EXAMINATION OF THE POST-BIBLICAL ERA When did the supra-congregational hierarchies, exemplified by today's denominations, begin? Hints of such a structure are found in the early years of the Second Century. However, it was slow in being fully developed. It is not until the Third Century that we find the concept of a bishop overseeing a full-blown hierarchy over larger geographical areas. One of the problems in discovering the details of this development is the unreliable character of most of the documents from the period immediately following the death of the apostles. Some are genuine, but others seem to be written years later, with the name of one of the early fathers appended to the document to give it credibility. The question must be asked, Was the episcopate and its hierarchy established by the apostles, as a replacement for their presence, or did it evolve as an individual elder first became the "president" of a local council of elders, and then ascended to the role of overseer of several congregations? The answer to this question is very important. If the apostles did establish an episcopal hierarchy, then we must conclude that denominational hierarchies are God's will for the Church.

If, on the other hand, the hierarchy is an evolution of the eldership from the biblical pattern of local autonomy to a more formalized supra-congregational institution, then we must consider the human element in its development.

Even though Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Orthodox Catholics, and others contend for the apostolic origin of the hierarchy, the evidence presented to substantiate this view requires interpretation and some assumptions. As Philip Schaff states, "The latter view is more natural and better sustained by the facts."

24 16 In other words, an inductive examination of the body of evidence available leads to the following conclusion, Early in the Second Century many local councils experienced the rising in prominence of one of their council members; he became the "president" of the elders council. He was *primus inter pares*, "the first among equals." In time, perhaps because of age or gifting, one of these presidents rose in importance, and became the "bishop" over all of the churches in the city. After about two centuries, the concept of a plenary bishop began to develop. The primary reason for the development of the episcopate was the rising number of heresies in the First Century. When the Revelatory Apostles were living, they passed judgment on any questionable doctrine and instructed the Church to reject it. As in the case of Paul's Corinthian Epistle, and in his letter to the Galatians, these doctrinal aberrations were called "a different Gospel" (2 Corinthians 11:4 ff; Galatians 1:6 ff). Many varied doctrines arose shortly after the death of the apostles. In the earliest years of the Second Century, the New Testament Scriptures had not been collected and uniformly distributed. The churches felt a need to have someone who could declare what was true and what was false doctrine. One of the elders in each locality became that person. In time, a bishop over a region occupied that role. Cyprian (died 258 AD), wrote that there was general unity among the bishops (Cyprian was among the first to describe the bishops as a superior clergy, even

expressing the view of modern day Roman Catholicism that the clergy are the Church). It must also be noted that those who today view the early church councils as the origin of doctrinal orthodoxy are only partially correct. In most instances, the councils only made official what had become the consensus of the Church at large.

It should be noted that even Cyprian described the bishop as being closely related to the elders. The Fourth General Council, held at Carthage in 398 AD, declared that any pronouncement made by a bishop, without the concurrence of his local elders, was null and void.

Another thing that promoted the rise of the episcopacy was persecution. In the time of persecution, the church felt a demand for compact unity. The principle, "union is strength, division is weakness," prevailed. This need occasioned the rise of strong leaders, usually a single individual, who held the church together. This leader became the bishop.

Other motivations and forces promoted the rise of extra-local hierarchy, but these two are the most obvious.

CONCLUSION

Even though there is no evidence of a supra-congregational hierarchy in the New Testament, an hierarchy did develop in the first two centuries (the Second and Third Centuries) after the death of the apostles. The rise of the episcopate was the result of need. It was not long before this hierarchy began to depart from the New Testament concept of "church."

β By the time of Cyprian, the spiritual unity of the Church was blindly identified with unity of organization.

β The scriptural principle, "Out of Christ, there is no salvation," was replaced with, "Out of the (visible) church, there is no salvation." The next step was, "out of the Roman Church, there is no salvation."

β Some bishops became poor examples of godliness. Hippolytus (ninth book of Philosophurmena) reproached the Roman bishops, Zephyrinus and Callistus (202223), with charges of corruption, avarice, and lax discipline. Paul Samosata was deposed in 269 on charges of false doctrine, and bad moral character. Origen 17 complained that in the larger cities the bishops surrounded themselves with bodyguards and were inaccessible to the poor.

We must conclude that although the need for the development of a supra-congregational hierarchy seemed to be overpowering, the means of meeting the need became a mixed blessing; in some ways, it became a curse.

02.07. SECTION II: Relationship Indicators in NT Churches

SECTION II RELATIONAL INDICATORS IN NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

If New Testament Churches were not tied to one another through an organization, how were they related? How aware of one another were they? Did each church just “plow its own row,” or was there a sense of mutual fraternity? The answer is apparent in the biblical record.

They knew about one another, identified with one another, and considered themselves to be organically connected in the Kingdom of God on Earth.

INDICATOR #1, APOSTOLIC TRAVEL

One of the ways in which the churches became acquainted with one another was a result of apostles' and apostolic delegate's constant travel among the churches. Anyone acquainted with the New Testament record immediately will affirm this truth, but just for the record, here are some examples, Acts 9:32-43 Peter toured the churches in Judaea, Galilee and Samaria, teaching, visiting, performing miracles. The record intimates that the churches in these areas kept up with his itinerary among them.

Acts 11:22-30 Prominent members of the Jerusalem Church, apostles and prophets, travelled back and forth between the churches.

Acts 13:1-52; Acts 14:1-28 Paul and Barnabas travelled in Galatia planting churches, then returned to Antioch and told that church about the new churches that had been planted.

Acts 15:3 Paul and a committee from Antioch travelled through Phoenicia and Samaria, informing the churches about the new churches that had been planted in Galatia and Pisidia.

Acts 16:1-4 Paul & Silas travelled among the churches Galatia, delivering the letter from Jerusalem.

Acts 17:1-15 Paul travelled in Macedonia, preaching the Gospel and planting churches, often accompanied in each place by believers from his last stop.

Acts 18:23 Paul travelled among the churches of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening the disciples.

Acts 19:1-41, Acts 20:1-38 Paul visited Ephesus, Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, in a general tour. 18 Acts 21:4 Upon arriving at Tyre, Paul and his company looked up the disciples.

Acts 21:7 At Ptolemais, Paul and his companions greeted the brethren and spent a day with them.

Acts 21:8 Paul and his companions spent several days at Caesarea.

Acts 21:17-20 a Paul reported to the Jerusalem Churches all the news about the Gentile churches.

Acts 27:3 While travelling as a prisoner to Rome, Paul was allowed to visit his friends in Sidon.

Certainly, in all of these visits, Paul spoke of the brethren in other places. Since he was a man of prayer, he probably solicited prayer in each place, for churches that were facing struggles.

INDICATOR #2 IN HIS TRAVELS, PAUL FREQUENTLY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY COMPANIONS FROM SEVERAL CHURCHES These homogenous teams represented a mind-set that said, "We are in this together."

Here are some examples of Paul's travelling companions.

Acts 13:4-5 Barnabas and John Mark, both originally from the Jerusalem Church, began the journey with Paul.

Acts 15:2; Acts 15:32 A group from Antioch accompanied Paul and Barnabas to the Jerusalem Council.

Some prophets from Jerusalem travelled back to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 16:1-3 On the second missionary journey, Paul had Silas from Jerusalem as his initial companion. They quickly were joined by Timothy from Lystra or Derbe in Galatia.

Acts 16:11 Luke joined Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy, as they set sail for Macedonia (note the "we") Acts 19:29 Gaius and Aristarchus, from Macedonia, accompanied Paul to Ephesus.

Acts 20:4 On his trip through Macedonia, Syria, Asia, and to Jerusalem, Paul was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy (Lystra or Derbe), and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. With such a combined team, often commissioned by a local church, there was a sense of "being in this thing together."¹⁹ **INDICATOR #3 CHURCHES COMMENDED TRAVELING MINISTRIES TO ONE ANOTHER** The most obvious example of this is found in Acts 18:27-28 And when he [Apollos] wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he helped greatly those who had believed through grace; for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. This is a very significant example, because Ephesus was located in Asia; Achaia was across the Aegean Sea, on another continent. For the Ephesian brothers to know the Achaian brothers well enough to write a letter of commendation for Apollos, indicates that a genuine relationship existed. Not only did the churches know one another, but they trusted one another.

INDICATOR #4 COOPERATION IN MINISTRY

There are various hints of co-operation in ministry, the most outstanding being the collection for the saints at Jerusalem. We will elaborate on this in the next section.

INDICATOR #5 VISITORS TO A CITY SOUGHT OUT FELLOW BELIEVERS The many exhortations to hospitality reflected this practice. When believers from one city, travelled to another city, it was customary for them to stay in the homes of believers.

Paul's exhortation to the Roman Church concerning Phoebe is a clear illustration of a church's caring for believers visiting their area.

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; (Romans 16:1) INDICATOR #6 WRITTEN GREETINGS TO ONE ANOTHER Apostolic Epistles often include greetings from one church to another. Here are some examples.

β From Corinth and the other churches of Achia, greetings to the Church in Rome, All the churches of Christ greet you...Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother. (Romans 16:16 b, Romans 16:23)²⁰ β From Ephesus and the churches of Asia, greetings to the Church in Corinth and Achaia, The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Prisca greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. 1 Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:19-20) β The date of Paul's letter to the Galatians is either 49 AD or about 57 AD. The setting allows for either date. If the earlier date is correct, it was written from Antioch, and contains greetings from the church there. If the later date is correct, it contains greetings from either Ephesus or Greece. In either case, brethren from one of these churches sent greetings to the Church in Galatia.

Paul, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, (Galatians 1:1-3) β The Church at Rome sent greetings to the Churches in Asia Minor.

She who is in Babylon [Rome], chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. (1 Peter 5:13) INDICATOR #7 THE CHURCHES SHARED APOSTOLIC LETTERS The letters written by the apostles came to be viewed as more than just occasional letters. The churches understood them to be repositories of Divine Revelation. Of special importance is Peter's comment concerning the writings of Paul. By way of background, Peter's two letters were written from Rome to the churches of Northern Asia Minor: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. In his First Epistle, Peter discussed the coming persecution that these churches were going to face. Second Peter was dispatched to these churches after the threat of persecution had passed; the new threat was the danger posed by itinerant teachers of false doctrine. In his warnings about those who distort Scripture, Peter described Paul's writings as being in the same class as the Old Testament. Of special relevance to our discussion is Peter's assumption that at least some of Paul's letters were known and shared by these churches.

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Peter 3:14-18)²¹ Paul seems to have dispatched a letter to Colossae at the same time that he sent another letter to its nearby neighbor, Laodicea. The Colossians were Phrygian Gentiles who religious antecedents were highly emotional and mystical. They were seeking to attain to the fullness of God and when teachers came among them with a philosophy

that promised a mystic knowledge of God, they were entranced by it. The Colossian letter was written to address this problem. Evidently it was a problem that plagued the other churches as well, because Paul instructed the Colossians to pass their letter on to Laodicea and then for the Colossians to read the letter that he sent to Laodicea.

Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house. And when this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea. (Colossians 4:15-16) Clearly, this exchange of letters implied a relationship between the churches as well as a common relationship to the writings of Paul.

Paul's Second Epistle to Corinth is addressed not only to Corinth, but to all of the saints who are throughout Achaia. (2 Corinthians 1:1) In like fashion, Paul's Galatian Epistle was not written to a single church, but to the churches of Galatia. (Galatians 1:1-2) The Revelation of John was not written to a single church, but was written to seven churches in Asia.

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne; (Revelation 1:4) I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." (Revelation 22:16) From these examples, it can be seen that the churches of the New Testament viewed themselves as being a part of a fraternity that was linked together by a common revelation and a common body of Scripture.

INDICATOR #8 APOSTOLIC REPORTS The New Testament Churches had knowledge of one another because Paul referred to various churches in his letters. Here are some examples, Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, (2 Corinthians 8:1) And we have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is 22 being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, (2 Corinthians 8:18-19) therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. (2 Thessalonians 1:4) INDICATOR #9 UNIFORM PRACTICE

Paul stated in his letters that that there was uniformity of practice in the conduct of church services and in behavioral matters. Here are some examples. For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church. (1 Corinthians 4:17) The instruction that Paul and Timothy gave to the Corinthians, whether it be the impartation of information or instruction in conduct, conformed to what was practiced in all of the churches. This was a gentle nudge on the Corinthians, who throughout the letter are pictured as a church that was on a maverick course. This verse brings to mind Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 3:15, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches. (1 Corinthians 7:17) In this passage, Paul is discussing

whether or not a believer should leave his unbelieving spouse, whether an uncircumcised person should be circumcised, whether or not a slave should seek freedom, etc. He concludes in verse 24 by stating, Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called. Relevant to our study is the statement in verse 17, and thus I direct in all the churches. Each church in which Paul had a role, had received the same instruction on this point.

Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. (1 Corinthians 11:2) The word translated traditions (*paradoxeiv*) refers, in this passage, to traditions that have to do with the worship service.

25 Paul is stating that the tradition which was handed down to him and the one that he passed on to them was that women should have some sort of head-covering when they prayed or prophesied in church gatherings. This was the instruction that he gave to all of the churches. He concludes this discussion by writing, But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God (verse 16). In other words, this was the uniform practice of all New Testament Churches.²³ for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. (1 Corinthians 14:33) 26 This is the conclusion of Paul's discussion of the use of tongues in a worship service. The Corinthian Church had a disorderly service. Paul says in essence that a worship service should reflect the character and personality of God. The Corinthian Church's disregard for order was a violation of God's character. Paul urged them to quit marching to the beat of a different drum, but to get in line with the rest of the churches. From these and other statements, it is clear that there was uniformity, perhaps even conformity, in the New Testament churches. A believer from one region, visiting a church in another region, would have felt quite at home, whether in Galatia, Achaia, Macedonia, Syria, Asia, Rome, or Judea. This conformity was an indicator of their being a part of the one Universal Church.

INDICATOR #10 LOCAL CHURCHES VIEWED THEMSELVES AS VESSELS OF THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT Paul said that one's salvation was evidenced by his possession of the Holy Spirit. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14) Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22) Paul also spoke of the shared Christian life as the fellowship of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:4; Php 2:1) When the Galatians began to succumb to the false teachers who were advocating circumcision as a requirement for salvation, Paul challenged them about how they received the Holy Spirit.

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain-- if indeed it was in vain? Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (Galatians 3:1-5) This was one of Paul's strongest arguments, in his discourse against the gospel of legalism. They knew that they had received the Holy Spirit. His presence was an evident part of their private lives and of the corporate life of the church. From these and many other statements in the New Testament, it is apparent that the

presence of the Holy Spirit 24 was an essential element of "Church." Three Temples of the Holy Spirit are mentioned in Scripture.

β The individual believer's body (1 Corinthians 6:19) β The local church (1 Corinthians 3:16-17) β The world-wide church (Ephesians 2:21-22) Each local church, and thus the world-wide Christian community, is a dwelling place for the Spirit. A survey of Acts would reveal that a constant element in the life of the New Testament Church was "the Spirit said to them." Without the presence of the Holy Spirit, a church is just a dead organization. Even as twins receive life and nourishment from the same mother's breast, so each local church is dependent upon the Holy Spirit for its life. Having a common source of spiritual life, so richly experienced by the New Testament Churches, gave them a sense of oneness.

CONCLUSION A survey of Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation of John, reveals many indicators of the fraternal relationship that existed between the New Testament Churches.

None considered itself to be an isolated entity. They viewed themselves as constituting an Empire-wide spiritual network.

02.08. SECTION III: Financial Relationships between Churches

SECTION III FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES The most obvious expression of fraternity is the sharing of material possessions.

Scripture's consistent message is that a believer should be more concerned about another's wellbeing than about his own financial security. In the Kingdom of God, having a personal surplus while another believer is in need is an anomaly. When the Jews inquired about behaviour in the Kingdom of God, John the Baptist said, "And the multitudes were questioning him, saying, 'Then what shall we do?' And he would answer and say to them, 'Let the man who has two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise.'" (Luke 3:10-11) In similar vein, John the Apostle wrote to the Church at the close of the First Century, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. (1 John 3:16-18) The post-Pentecostal converts in Jerusalem demonstrated their familial relationship through a communal economy.²⁵ And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. (Acts 2:44-45) And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them...and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:32-37) As we proceed into Acts and the Epistles, we discover the same fraternal expression occurring between churches.

THE ANTIOCH COLLECTION The first record of a church's taking up a collection for another church is found in Acts 11:27-30.

Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders. (Acts 11:27-30) The believers in Judea already faced hardship because of persecution and discrimination.

So, when the prophecy about a famine was given, the Antioch believers responded by taking up a collection for Judea. It is significant that the Antioch brethren gave no thought to their own welfare. The famine was going to engulf the entire Roman Empire and the Antioch Christians were going to face hardship themselves. However, instead of beginning a frenetic spasm of hoarding, they took up an offering for Judaea. Their generosity was not in response to an appeal from Jerusalem, but an expression of the Christ who dwelt in their hearts and the fraternal relationship between churches.

THE PAULINE CHURCHES In Galatians 2:1-21, Paul describes details of the Jerusalem council that are not mentioned in the Acts 15:1-41 record of the event. One of these

added details is that the Twelve had urged Paul to remember the poor.

...and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. They only asked us to remember the poor-- the very thing I also was eager to do. (Galatians 2:9-10) The gathering of a benevolent offering for Judaea was one of Paul's main concerns as he made his third tour of the churches that were an outgrowth of his ministry. Paul wrote to the Romans that one reason he was making a trip to Jerusalem was to deliver the offering that had been raised among the Gentile Churches.²⁶ But now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. (Romans 15:25-26) Details concerning the gathering of this collection are recorded in several of Paul's epistles, especially in his letters to Corinth.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week let each of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomever you may approve, I shall send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me. (1 Corinthians 16:1-4) Paul had travelled through Galatia on his way to Macedonia and Achaia. As he travelled through Galatia, he had urged these churches (Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and probably Antioch of Pisidia) to gather a collection for the Jerusalem church. From 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, it is apparent that Paul had a set pattern for gathering this collection, ...as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week let each of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. It is probable that Gaius of Derbe brought the offering to Paul, as he was traveling to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4).

Evidently, the Corinthian Church, and those surrounding it in Achaia, had started to gather a collection for the Jerusalem Church, but in the characteristically Corinthian way, they had faltered (the Corinthian Church seems to have been one that was governed more by emotion, experience, and impulse, rather than steady commitment). So, in his Second Epistle to Corinth, Paul urged them to complete what they had begun in the previous year. To motivate them, he described the churches of Macedonia and how the Macedonians, even though they themselves were in a time of deep poverty, urged Paul to receive from them an offering for the poor of Jerusalem.

Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. Consequently we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. And I give my opinion in this

matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it. But now finish doing it also; that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability. For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not 27 according to what he does not have. For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality-- at this present time your abundance being a supply for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want, that there may be equality; as it is written, "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little had no lack." (2 Corinthians 8:1-15) Note that Paul speaks of reciprocity. at this present time your abundance being a supply for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want, that there may be equality. In coming days, should their roles be reversed, Paul anticipated Jerusalem's taking up a collection for Corinth. To further motivate the Corinthians, Paul tells them that their sending an offering to Jerusalem is a mark of obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ. He lists the fraternal results that they will experience as a consequence of their obedience in this matter, For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. Because of the proof given by this ministry they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. (2 Corinthians 9:12-14) Paul asserted that their obedience to their confession, expressed through the giving of the offering would produce the following results, ß There will be great thanksgiving and glory given to God; ß The Jerusalem Church will pray for them; ß The Jerusalem Church will experience a fraternal yearning for their brethren in Corinth.

Interestingly, Paul said that the collection that was taken up in Corinth was a reflection of generosity to all, not just to the saints in Jerusalem. The implication is that other similar offerings had been or will be collected.

CONCLUSION An important expression of the relationship between New Testament Churches is thorough the sharing of finances. They care for one another, financially. In my experience, I have seen this operate time and time again. One event that stands out in memory is an offering that Communion Fellowship, a Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana, collected for the aid of Tulsa Christian Fellowship. In the 1980's, Tulsa's petroleum based economy was devastated by OPEC. Many Tulsans lost jobs. Some left town, abandoning their homes and surrendering their property to mortgage holders. Because TCF's members were impacted by these circumstances, the church faced a serious financial crisis. Communion Fellowship had received spiritual ministry from TCF, through one visit of three TCF elders (Bruce Clutter, Jim Barger, and Jim Garrett), and then my own frequent visits to the church. Communion Fellowship was looking to TCF as a model and for apostolic guidance. Upon learning of TCF's financial struggle, Communion Fellowship took up an offering amounting to \$5000.00 and sent it to TCF.²⁸ Another example that comes to mind is an event in which TCF' was on the giving end of the exchange. Berean Fellowship, a relatively small Tulsa congregation, led by Jim Curtis and Rich Manganero, had purchased a piece of property consisting of a few acres that had been neglected for several years. There was a spacious house on the property. The house had been remodeled years before to serve as a kennel and a veterinarian's office. One Saturday, scores of TCF members showed up at the property. Before the day was over, all of the brush that had grown up over the years had been cleared. Trash was

hauled off. While work was going on outside, other TCF volunteers were busy gutting the building so that it could be remodeled for use by Berean Fellowship. Some carpenters from TCF then donated their services, working nights, doing some of the basic remodeling. Berean Fellowship could not have done this alone.

They had neither the manpower nor the money.

Few things express the fraternal relationship that exists between New Testament Churches as does the caring for one another materially and financially.

02.09. Conclusions drawn from this Study

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM OUR STUDY OF HOW NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER

None of the New Testament Churches considered themselves to be independent, and isolated. They were a part of a fraternity, a living organism, the breath of which was the Holy Spirit.

β Relationships within the local churches, relationships with apostolic and other travelling ministries, relationships between the churches, these were a very real and vital part of their identity. That same perspective continued into the post-biblical era.

β The relationships were not expressed organizationally. They were expressed organically and spiritually. It was not until the Third and Fourth Centuries that organization became more important than relationships.

β There was enough conformity of doctrine and practice to give them a rather uniform identity. As members of a family resemble one another, so the churches throughout the Empire resembled one another.

β Genuine fraternal concern for one another existed among the churches. This was expressed by their praying for one another, assisting one another financially, and encouraging one another through letters and visits.

β There was unity. Jesus High Priestly Prayer, recorded in John 17:1-26, was answered with a, "YES," between the New Testament Churches. Of course, there were exceptions to this idyllic picture, but this is the general description of the relationships between the churches.

It is easy for us to make application of these truths to contemporary New Testament Churches. We must be "family" to one another. Here are some ways that we will experience our relationships, β Praying for one another. Internet and email have made it quite easy for us to alert one another to our special prayer needs. It especially is important to pray for sister churches during the Sunday worship service.

β Encouraging one another. A phone call, an email, or a letter for no reason other than we are on one another's minds is a wonderful way to share life together.

β Assisting one another financially. There may be times in which the Holy Spirit will prompt us to take up an offering for a particular church.²⁹ β Sharing trans-local ministries. There are certain brothers that God has gifted and called to the ministry of edifying local churches; some are gifted in helping churches to put things in order; some are gifted in evangelism; some are teachers. Local churches should pray and seek God about whether or not to invite and whom to invite.

β Inviting elders from one church to come and teach at another church. One way for our churches to have a sense of belonging to one another is to receive ministry from one another's leaders.

β Recommending or warning against certain teachers. It is dangerous to invite into a local church someone about whom leadership knows little. Great sorrow can be avoided if we ask one another about outside ministries.

β Helping one another to sort out theologies and movements that seem to rush across the landscape with great speed, these days. Some are blessings, but some distort the truth, in some cases, even “preaching a different Christ.”

β Respecting one another’s church discipline. If a brother or sister is under discipline in a particular church, sister churches should respect that and not provide a safety valve for the one being disciplined.

β When members move to another locality, sending letters of commendation to the leadership of the church where they will be living. In summary, let us carry one another in our hearts.

1 “Supra-congregational” is the term that we will use in this section to describe an authority over a local church, something that is above the local eldership. Webster defines supra, “a prefix meaning above, over...”

2 Acts 8:14-17; Acts 8:25-29 Acts 11:18 b 4 Acts 11:20-28 Acts 14:27-28 We use the term, “revelatory apostles,” to describe those whom the Holy Spirit used to give the foundational revelation of God’s will and the Gospel.

7 Paul: Galatians 1:11-12; Galatians 1:15-17; The Twelve: John 14:25-26; Galatians 2:11 ff 9 Paul: Galatians 1:11-12; Galatians 1:15-17; The Twelve: John 14:25-26 10 Galatians 2:11 ff The public aspect of Jesus’ choice of the Twelve as his revelators is multifold. This is in contrast to Paul’s being chosen by Christ as a revelator, which, for the most part, was done in private. Note the following, β The Twelve experienced a forty-two month public ministry with Jesus.

β At the baptism in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit spoke through the Twelve.

β During the earliest months of the Church’s life, all miracle ministry was restricted to the Twelve.

12 Infinitive, aorist, active 13 Knowling, R.J, The Acts of the Apostles, in Volume Two of The Expositors Greek New Testament, W. Robertson Nicoll, editor (Grand Rapids, Rerdmans, 1976) p 328 14 Bruce, FF, The Book of Acts, in The New International Commentary on the New Testament (William B. Rerdmans, Grand Rapids) 1988, p. 299 15 The “necessary things” were determined by the fact that “Moses...has in every city those who preach him...” The Gentiles were not to conform to the Law, but they were to avoid doing those things that offended Jews. The desire, of course, was to remove barriers to the Gospel, as well as do all possible to insure peace.

16 Acts 15:36-17 The revelatory function that rested in the apostles now is fulfilled through the Holy Spirit inspired Scriptures.

18 Php 1:12-18 In this passage, Paul notes that some are preaching out of envy. In other words, they were taking advantage of his imprisonment. While he was confined, they were trying to out do him. They were trying to show that they were equal or superior to Paul. However, what they were preaching was the truth. So, Paul did not feel any reason to make an issue of their motive.

19 Examples of such usage: Luke 8:55; Acts 18:2; Acts 20:13; Acts 23:31; Acts 24:23; etc.

20 2 Corinthians 11:4; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 21 Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 1 Corinthians 4:6 ff; 1 Corinthians 16:12; Titus 3:13; 1 Corinthians 4:6-9 23 Most of the material in this section is a summary of material in Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Volume II (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1996; originally published by Charles Scribner & Sons 1858) pages 133f. Also, the original documents involved this period may be found in Lightfoot, J.B. The Apostolic Fathers, 5 volumes (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson, 1989, originally published by Macmillan, 1889, 1890.

24 Schaff, p 135 25 Fee, Gordon, The International Commentary on the New Testament, I Corinthians (Grand Rapids, William B.

Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987) See footnote 29, page 499.

26 The NIV translators chose to tie this phrase to the next verse, As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. All other versions render the phrase, As in all the congregations of the saints... as being the conclusion of the discussion of tongues. For comments on the grammatical preference for the traditional rendering, see Fee, page 698. Which ever position one takes, the point is made that there is uniformity of practice in all churches.

03.00. MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CORPORATE MEETING

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CORPORATE MEETING James W. Garrett TERMS REFERRING TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS doron dorea merismos charisma(ta) THE PERMANENCY OF THE CHARISMATA The Cessationist View Evaluation of the Cessationist Argument AN EXAMINATION OF I CORINTHIANS 12-14

Chapter 12

Chapter 13

Chapter 14 Conclusions Drawn from Paul's Instructions in Chapter 14 A Word of Advice All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New American Standard Bible ®

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03.01. Terms Referring to Spiritual Gifts

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CORPORATE MEETING James W. Garrett In Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-40, Paul describes gifts of the Spirit. The Romans passage is an exhortation to individual believers to function diligently in the functional gifts that each one has received. The term, functional gifts, refers to the spiritual equipping that has been given to each Christian, enabling him to function in a particular role in the local church. This is an equipping that continues throughout the believer's earthly life. Some call these motivational gifts, because they are what motivates the believer in his arena of ministry. In 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, 1 Corinthians 14:1-40, Paul discusses spiritual manifestations in the corporate meeting of the local church. These manifestations are the means whereby the Holy Spirit, through various believers, manifests Himself in the corporate meeting. These may be spontaneous occurrences or something that the Holy Spirit does in a believer prior to the meeting (a prophetic word to be presented, for example).

These two portions of Scripture (Romans 12:1-21 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-40) have become an arena of intense debate in recent decades. What one teaches on this topic can make him joyously embraced by some and excommunicated by others. Those who are committed to Our Lord and the authority of Scripture are represented on both sides of the debate.

Leaders who yearn to see the New Testament Church displayed in their own generation cannot avoid facing the questions related to this topic. In this paper we will seek to face several of the questions surrounding the gifts and seek to determine the biblical teaching concerning the multiple facets of the overall topic.

TERMS REFERRING TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS A common Greek term for gift, is *doron* (dw~ron), which is used only one time in the New Testament in reference to a spiritual gift. This one instance is in Ephesians 2:8, referring to the gift of saving faith, For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. All other occasions of the term in the New Testament refer to gifts between individuals, or offerings presented to God. The term used for the gift of the Holy Spirit Himself is another common Greek word, *dorea* (dwrea)>.

1 This term, means simply, gift, and is not restricted to any special usage in the New Testament. The Gift of the Holy Spirit is not within the purview of this study. The topic of this paper is the manner in which the Holy Spirit manifests Himself, and the gifts that He bestows upon believers.

1 Examples of such usage: John 4:10 (compare with John 7:37 ff); Acts 2:38; Acts 8:20; Acts 10:45; Acts 11:17. Some also would include Hebrews 6:4 in this list.³ A term that is within the purview of our study is, *merismos* (merismo>v), meaning, distribution. is found in the plural in Hebrews 2:4, by various miracles and by gifts [merismo>v merismos distributions] of the Holy Spirit, according to His will. The term that the New Testament uses most frequently to refer to gifts that the Holy Spirit bestows on believers is *charisma* (ca>risma), which, in Romans 12:1-21 and 1

Corinthians 12:1-31, occurs in its plural form, charismata (carismata). This term emphasizes the fact that something is given, as opposed to something that is due a person because he has earned it. The term excludes the idea of giving a gift to honor someone, as for example, one would give a gift to honor a king. The act of giving a charisma arises exclusively out of the will of the giver (as if a king, strictly out of the goodness of his heart, decided to bestow treasures upon his irresponsible subjects).

Charisma occurs seventeen times in the New Testament, therein describing a variety of gifts. In each passage, the context must be considered in order to determine the meaning of the term. In most instances, the meaning is quite clear. Here are the seventeen occurrences of the term and the definitions as determined by context.

- The unique gifts that God had bestowed on Israel (listed in Romans 9:4) Romans 11:25-29 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery -- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation -- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob... This is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins." From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

- The gift of celibacy (free from the sexual need to be married) 1 Corinthians 7:7 Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

- God's favor in circumstances 2 Corinthians 1:11 you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.

- The benefit a church receives from the general ministry of an apostle Romans 1:11 For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;4 · The free gift of salvation Romans 5:15-16 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift 2 by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift 3 is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Divinely imparted abilities to be used in ministry Romans 12:6-8 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Timothy 4:13-15 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. 14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. 15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

4 2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

5 1 Peter 4:10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

2 This is the Greek term, *dorea* (dwre>a).

3 ditto

4 Because the exhortation to not neglect the gift is bracketed by reference to teaching and preaching, the obvious conclusion is that the gift which Timothy received by the laying on of hands of the presbytery was that of preaching and teaching. In the NAS, the word, "spiritual," preceding the word, "gift," was added by the translators. All other popular versions do not have this addition. The term is not in the Greek text.

5 Paul's days were numbered when he wrote this epistle. He was passing on the baton to the next generation.

Timothy had been set apart to ministry by Paul and the presbyters. A spiritual impartation, equipping Timothy for the ministry to which he was being set apart, took place with the laying on of the apostle's hands. Paul was exhorting Timothy to recommit, with fresh enthusiasm, to the ministry to which he had been set apart and for which he had been equipped by the Holy Spirit.5 · Gifts and/or Manifestations of the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians 1:4-7 I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

1 Corinthians 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

QUESTIONS

Those who seek to lead contemporary New Testament churches face many questions related to the charismata. The most obvious are, · Is 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 a description of a normal church service in the First Century, or was this just a "Corinthian" service and not the norm for all First

Century churches?

- Are the manifestations described in 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-40, and elsewhere, something that should be expected in every age, or were they just for the First Century?
- If the manifestations are for every age, should church leaders seek to do what they can to promote the type of meeting described in 1 Corinthians 14:1-40, or are Paul's instructions more in the vein of, "if you do have these things, here is how to manage them in a Godhonoring manner"?

We will research the second question first, and allow the answers to the other two questions to develop as we proceed through out study.

03.02. The Permanency of the Charismata

THE PERMANENCY OF THE CHARISMATA

Two views prevail, concerning the question of the permanency of the charismata. Those who hold to the cessation of the gifts argue that with the death of the apostles, supernatural ministry (including the charismata) ceased. Those who hold this view do not consider supernatural ministry and answered prayer to be the same thing. Others contend that the charismata, as well as miraculous ministry, in some form, continues in every age. We will consider this question of permanency by first presenting the cessationist argument and then evaluating it.

03.03. The Cessationist View

THE CESSATIONIST VIEW

Miracles characterized the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. These supernatural events credentialed their teaching. Mark 16:17-18 records Jesus as declaring, These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Mark 16:20 then reports the experience of these first generation Christians And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.

Even if these verses were not in the original text (there is strong evidence that they were not) 6 the fact that they were added (possibly as early as the Third Century) reflects a general understanding that this is what had happened among the early believers.

Clearly, the apostles could bestow miraculous gifts on believers, through the laying on of the apostles' hands. However, those to whom the apostles passed on miraculous gifts were not able to pass them on to the next generation. These gifts were just for the First Century when it was necessary to have the miraculous as credentials. They were intended for obsolescence. We now have the Bible whereby one is credentialed. The question today is not, “Do miracles attend his ministry,” but “Is his teaching faithful to the Word?”

Cessationist argument from Acts 8:1-40 Prior to Acts 6:1-15, only the apostles are described as working miracles after Pentecost (Acts 5:12).

Philip, along with Stephen and the other deacons had received a miraculous ministry through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 6:1-15). When the church was scattered, Philip went to Samaria and preached the Gospel with signs following (Acts 8:6-7) and many were saved.

Because he was a second generation miracle worker, Philip was not able to pass on the miraculous Gift of the Holy Spirit, and the miraculous power that attended this gift. Only apostles could do this. Two apostles, Peter and John, came from Jerusalem and accomplished the impartation. Philip could not execute this impartation, or he would have done so.

6 Acts 8:9-20 are not contained in the oldest manuscripts. Four different endings of Mark are found in various manuscript families.⁷ Cessationist argument from 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 states that the miraculous manifestations are temporary and will pass away Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully

just as I also have been fully known.

Prophecy, tongues, and supernatural knowledge will cease when God's full revelation is given. The full revelation described in this passage is the Bible.

Here is how one cessationist presents this portion of the argument. His presentation is a very common one offered by those of this persuasion.

1 Corinthians 13:9 speaks about that which is partial, but in contrast, 1 Corinthians 13:10 speaks about that which is complete. In showing this contrast, the best way to translate *teleios* in 1 Corinthians 13:10 is "complete." Since revelation, at the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, was only partial, through the miraculous gifts of knowledge and prophecy, the perfect must refer to the finished and complete revelation of God. In other words, at that time the Christians had pieces and parts of God's revelation, but Paul was saying that there was a time coming when they would have the total...prophecies, tongues, knowledge – and all the rest of the gifts shall pass away when the "perfect" is come, namely, the gospel fully revealed and the church fully instructed. The gifts came in with the apostles and went out with them...Every other time this word [*teleios*] appears in the New Testament in the neuter gender, it refers to the will of God or the law of God (Romans 12:2; James 1:25). Thus, it is not unusual for God's revelation to be called perfect (*teleion*)⁷ Here is the argument, · Miraculous knowledge, prophecy, tongues, etc, will be done away when the perfect comes.

- The Greek term translated, the perfect, is in the neuter gender.
- This term is used in the neuter only two other times in Scripture, and in both instances it refers to the will of God or the law of God (Romans 12:2; James 1:25).
- Thus, the term refers to the Gospel fully revealed and the Church fully instructed, i.e, the completion of the canon.

⁷ Robert B. Blazek, "The Perfect Has Come," *The Christian Standard*, July 17, 1977, page 9-108 Cessationist argument from Church History The absence of the mention of the *charismata* is noteworthy in all of the post-biblical literature.

None of the apostolic fathers mention them. Not until the writing of Tertullian, sometime after 200 AD, do we find any hint of *charismata*. Tertullian was a member of an heretical group, the Montanists, so his description cannot be construed as meaning that this is what the church at large experienced. Not only that, Tertullian's description of a prophetic manifestation does not in any way resemble Paul's 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 description of the *charismata*.

03.04. Evaluation of the Cessationist Argument

EVALUATION OF THE CESSATIONIST ARGUMENT The argument from Acts 8:1-40 Why did Peter and John come to Samaria to impart the Holy Spirit? We are not told. Therefore, we must look for any patterns or statements that might reveal why they were the ones to participate in the impartation.

First, the statement that only the apostles could impart spiritual gifts is erroneous. Paul wrote to Timothy, Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. (1 Timothy 4:14) The term, the presbytery, (presbute>rion –presbuterion) occurs three times in Scripture. In addition to 1 Timothy 4:14, it is used twice to refer to the council of Jewish elders who lived in Jerusalem (Luke 22:66; Acts 22:5). Thus, the event to which Paul refers in 1 Timothy 4:14 would not be an assembly of prophets, apostles, and other first-generation trans-local leaders.

8 It probably referred to the council of elders in Lystra, Timothy's home church, men who had been ordained by Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:21-23). No doubt, when Timothy joined Paul (Acts 16:1-3), they followed the custom of laying on of hands when one was released into trans-local ministry.

9 Be that as it may, 1 Timothy 4:14 clearly refers to men other than apostles, imparting a spiritual gift. A much more likely explanation for why Peter and John made the trip to Samaria and imparted the Holy Spirit relates to Peter's role in exercising the "Keys to the Kingdom." Jesus told Peter that He had given Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. Keys open doors. Peter was the one who opened the doors of heaven to the Jews (Acts 2:1-47) and opened the doors of heaven to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48). Because of his role, it was important that he credential the opening of the

8 The practice in some churches of having apostles, prophets, etc. gather to have a presbytery, for the purpose of ordaining people to ministry or to impart gifts, etc, may not be wrong but it is not a proper understanding of what Paul describes in 1 Timothy 4:14.

9 In Acts 13:1-52 we see an example of a presbytery's laying on hands when ministers are sent forth. The prophets and teachers in Antioch comprised the leadership of the local church, which was instructed by the Holy Spirit to release Barnabas and Saul for the work for which I have called them. When they prayed and fasted, they laid hands on them and sent them on their way. Acts 13:4 beautifully describes the origin of their being sent, So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit they went down to Seleucia... 9 doors to the Samaritans (Acts 8:1-40). Great animosity existed between Samaritans and Jews.

Samaritans were neither Jew nor Gentile, they were despised half-breeds. The Jerusalem church sent Peter and John, to look into the Gospel explosion among the despised Samaritans. Unless the Jerusalem Church had put its stamp of approval on the emerging Samaritan Church, it always would have been considered to be spurious. The fact that Peter and John imparted the Holy Spirit, caused the highest imprimatur to be put upon the reception of this hated half-breed race. This is a

much more likely explanation than Philip's inability to execute the impartation. The argument from 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 The First Flaw The first thing wrong with the cessationist argument from 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 is the allegation made concerning the neuter gender of teleios (te>leiov). Teleios is an adjective. An adjective must agree in gender and number with the noun that it modifies. Teleios occurs nineteen times in the New Testament, describing various things as being perfect or complete, in each instance agreeing in gender and number with the noun that it describes or replaces (when an adjective is used in place of a noun [technically called, "substantive use of the adjective"] it is in the gender of the implied noun).

10 Thus, teleios is found · thirteen times in the masculine gender · twice in the feminine · four times in the neuter Here are the four New Testament instances of teleios in the neuter gender, Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect In this verse, teleios describes will, which in the Greek language is a neuter noun.

Therefore, teleios must appear in the neuter gender.

1 Corinthians 13:10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. This the verse under debate.

James 1:4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Here, teleios describes result (the Greek term, e]rgon ergon - literally, work) a neuter noun.

10 For example, the adjective, good, can be used in place of good things (as in, "let us always seek the good") or in the place of good men (as in, "the good die young.").10 James 1:17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. In this verse, teleios describes gift (the Greek term, dw>rhma dorema), which is a neuter noun.

It is obvious that the cessationist assertion is faulty. Instead of two neuter uses of teleios, in addition to 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, there are three. One of the examples cited by the cessationist (James 1:25), does not contain a neuter, but rather a masculine gender teleios.

11 Looking at the three examples of a neuter teleios, listed above, one would be hard pressed to find any sort of commonality in what the neuter teleios modifies or describes, · In one instance it refers to the will of God which is discerned through a renewed mind · In one instance, the term refers to the result of living through trials, i.e. a mature character · In one instance it refers to any gift that God bestows – all perfect or complete gifts come from Him.

We can only conclude that the neuter use of teleios in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 is of no help in determining the identity of the perfect. The Second Flaw The second thing that is wrong with the cessationist argument from 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 is a diminishing of Paul's statement concerning our total knowledge, when the perfect comes. When that happens we will know everything clearly, rather than having to be content with our present state in which all that we see is but a reflection of heavenly truth. When the perfect comes, we will know all things fully, even as God now knows us fully.

Today we have the Bible, the canon is complete. Untold hours are spent in meditating on Scripture as well as detailed and reverent study of the Word. Yet, can anyone honestly say that he has no questions, that we know all things clearly, that we know everything as fully as God knows us? Certainly, not. The perfect must refer to something other than the completed canon. When will this perfect, complete knowledge come? We can reach but one conclusion. It will come when we die and face Our Lord, or when Jesus comes for His Church. In either of these cases, we no longer will need spiritual gifts because we will be experiencing full knowledge. No other option can measure up to Paul's statement concerning full clarity of knowledge and understanding.

11 The form of teleios found in James 1:25 is, the form of teleios is teleion (te>leion). This is the spelling of the adjective in both the neuter and masculine, singular, accusative, the forms. The reason that teleion in this verse must be understood as masculine, is because it modifies nomon (no>mon), the accusative singular form of the masculine noun nomos (no>mov).¹¹ The argument from Church History The argument from Church History is the cessationist's strongest argument. Mention of the charismata, as well as the miraculous, is very scanty in the records of the early Church. The fact that Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius of Antioch, Barnabas, Hermas, the writers to Diognetus, and the Didache, make no mention of the phenomena, is considerable evidence in favor of the cessationist view. The strongest evidence for the cessationist argument is the writing of Justin Martyr (c.140 AD). Justin penned a detailed description of a Second Century church service and he makes no mention of Charismata.

Even so, the argument from Church History is not as consistent as the cessationists claim. There is evidence of miraculous activity in the post-New Testament era. First is the evidence of the longer ending of Mark 16:1-20 (verse 9 and following). If this ending were written by Mark as a part of his Gospel, then clearly the early believers did experience the phenomena described. On the other hand, if these verses were not in the original, as evidence seems to indicate, and were added a century later (c. 185 AD they were alluded to by Irenaeus in, *Adversus Haeresus*, Book 3, Chapter 10, section 6), then those who added them considered tongues to be a part of the missionary movement of the Church.

There is even more conclusive evidence in Irenaeus' writing against the heresies of his day.

Sometime around 185 AD, Irenaeus wrote, *Adversus Haeresus*. In Book 2, he contrasts the magicians that were rampant in his day, with those who by the power of God perform true miracles.

...For they can neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons — [none, indeed,] except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this. Nor can they cure the weak, or the lame, or the paralytic, or those who are distressed in any other part of the body, as has often been done in regard to bodily infirmity. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur. And so far are they from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity — the entire Church in that particular locality entreating [the boon] with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints...and inasmuch as those who are cured very frequently [i.e. cured by the miraculous ministry of the Church] do not possess the things which they require, they receive them from us¹²

...Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles], so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the

12 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 2, Chapter 31, excerpts from sections 2 & 3 (\The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, The Master Christian Library, Albany, OR, AGES Software, 1997)12 Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years. And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered], throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ... directing her prayers to the Lord, who made all things, in a pure, sincere, and straightforward spirit, and calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, she has been accustomed to work miracles for the advantage of mankind...the name of our Lord Jesus Christ even now confers benefits [upon men], and cures thoroughly and effectively all who anywhere believe on Him.

13 Without any ambiguity, Irenaeus stated that in 185 AD, miraculous activity continued to the degree that the Church has been accustomed to work miracles for the advantage of mankind. In addition to raising the dead and casting out demons, gifts of miracles, gifts of healings, and prophecy are mentioned. Noticeably absent from this record is mention of tongues. In Book 5, Chapter 6, section 1, of *Adversus Haereses*, Irenaeus does mention tongues as phenomena heard in his day, For this reason does the apostle declare, “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,” terming those persons “perfect” who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare... The statement that Tertullian’s evidence is not valid because he was a Montanist, is inaccurate.

Prior to his becoming a follower of Montanus, when he was a staunch defender of Orthodoxy, Tertullian used the contemporary existence of tongues as evidence in his argument against the heretic, Marcion.

Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his God, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made 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; let him show to me also, that any woman of boastful tongue in his community has ever

13 Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, Book 2 Chapter 32, excerpts from sections 4 & 5. (The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, The Master Christian Library, Albany, OR, AGES Software, 1997). Irenaeus also commented on the phenomena in Book 5, Chapter 6, section 1: For this reason does the apostle declare, “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,” terming those persons “perfect” who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren

in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare...13 prophesied from amongst those specially holy sisters of his. Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty...14 To quote Christopher Forbes, Clearly “all these signs” which Tertullian claims he can produce with ease from the assemblies of “his side” include the “interpretation of tongues”; it is hard to see how this could be the case if glossolalia itself were not also present 15.

Forbes also notes the geographical distribution of the evidence just noted. The longer ending of Mark is testimony from the region of Jerusalem; the statements of Irenaeus are evidence from western Europe (Lyons); Tertullian’s work is evidence from North Africa.

16 In 257 AD, Novatian, a Roman elder, wrote a treatise on the Trinity. In Book 29, he speaks of the Holy Spirit and the charismata. And because the Lord was about to depart to the heavens, He gave the Paraclete out of necessity to the disciples; so as not to leave them in any degree orphans, which was little desirable, and forsake them without an advocate and some kind of protector. For this is He who strengthened their hearts and minds, who marked out the Gospel sacraments, who was in them the enlightener of divine things; and they being strengthened, feared, for the sake of the Lord’s name, neither dungeons nor chains, nay, even trod under foot the very powers of the world and its tortures, since they were henceforth armed and strengthened by the same Spirit, having in themselves the gifts which this same Spirit distributes, and appropriates to the Church, the spouse of Christ, as her ornaments. This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, often discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts...17 Several other early writers refer to the experience of Pentecost and the cloven tongues of fire, but describe the phenomena as something that occurred on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47), rather than something that they were experiencing in their own era. In an allegorical and poetic description of the creation, Augustine, writing near 400 AD, implied that tongues did exist in his day (born c354, died 430). Yet his statements are so veiled that not much can be made of it.

18 Elsewhere, Augustine declared in unmistakable terms that Pentecostal phenomena did not exist in his day.

14 Tertullian, *Contra Marcionem*, Book 5, Chapter 8 15 Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (Peabody, Mass, Hendrickson Publishers, 1997) page 80 16 Forbes, page 80 17 Novatian, *deTrinitate*, Chapter 29 (The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, The Master Christian Library, Albany, OR, AGES Software, 1997) 18 “For indeed, to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, as if the greater light, on account of those who are delighted with the light of manifest truth, as in the beginning of the day; but to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, as if the lesser light; to another faith; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues. And all these as stars. For all these worketh the one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man his own as He willeth; and 14 In the earliest times, “the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed: and they spake with tongues,” which they had not learned, “as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

These were signs adapted to the time. For there behooved to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to shew that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening, and it passed away.

19 Since, therefore, the Holy Ghost is even now received by men, some one may say, Why is it that no man speaks in the tongues of all nations? Because the Church itself now speaks in the tongues of all nations. Before, the Church was in one nation, where it spoke in the tongues of all. By speaking then in the tongues of all, it signified what was to come to pass; that by growing among the nations, it would speak in the tongues of all 20 Augustine was a bishop in the Western Church. He knew the condition of the church worldwide, both in its Western and Eastern branches. We must accept as authoritative his statements that in his lifetime Pentecostal manifestations were unknown Chrysostom, one of the greatest expositors in all of Church History, was a contemporary of Augustine (born 347, died 407). He was a prelate in the Eastern Church. He wrote a series of homilies on I Corinthians. In his introduction to 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, he wrote, This whole place (1 Corinthians 12:1-31) is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now?

Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more? This however let us defer to another time, but for the present let us state what things were occurring then.

21 Augustine and Chrysostom, representing both the Western and Eastern Churches, make clear statements that the charismata no longer were functioning in the Church It would be a great help to us if Chrysostom had pursued the answer to the question he raised, i.e, as to why the charismata were absent. Augustine argued the tongues of apostolic times were a sign that the making stars appear manifestly, to profit withal. But the word of knowledge, wherein are contained all sacraments, which are varied in their periods like the moon and the other conceptions of gifts, which are successively reckoned up as stars, in as much as they come short of that splendor of wisdom in which the fore-mentioned day rejoices, are only for the beginning of the night.” Augustine, The Thirteen Books of Confession of St. Augustine, Book 13, Chapter 18, section 23 (The Master Christian Library, Albany, Oregon, AGES Software, 1997) 19 Augustine, Ten Homilies on I John, Homily 6, Part 10, (The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series One, as contained in Master Christian Library, Albany, OR, AGES Software, 1997) 20 Augustine, Tractates on St. John, Tractate 32, Part 7 (The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Master Christian Library) 21 Chrysostom, First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians Homily 29, 1 Corinthians 12:1-2 (The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series One, Master Christian Library)15 Gospel would be preached in every language. He declared that since the Church in his day existed in many nations, and that in each of those nations a different language was spoken, that the Gift of Tongues no longer was needed as a sign that the Gospel would reach all nations. It already had done so.

There are many reports of the charisma in the Middle Ages, even though one might debate the reliability of the data. Several were canonized as saints, on the basis of their speaking in tongues. However, the Roman Catholic Church during this era generally regarded speaking in tongues and interpretation as a mark of demon possession. The difference between demonization and

sainthood-qualifying charismata seemed to turn on the reputation of the individual involved.

22 There are general reports of tongues among the medieval mendicants, the Waldensians, and Albigensians, but when one seeks to identify the specific individuals among these groups about whom these claims are made, no information can be found. As Stanley Burgess has written concerning his pursuit of this information, "...we are frustrated time and again by teasing generalities, inadequate information, and unanswered questions."

23 A popular report repeated in some Charismatic writings states that Luther spoke in tongues.

However, a study of the primary Luther documents proves this to be untrue. As a matter of record, Luther seemed to be confused by the Pentecostal phenomena.

24 In his Commentary on Galatians, he made clear that he considered all physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit to be obsolete. In the early Church the Holy Spirit was sent forth in visible form. He descended upon Christ in the form of a dove (Matthew 3:16) and in the likeness of fire upon the apostles and other believers (Acts 2:3). This visible outpouring of the Holy Spirit was necessary to the establishment of the early Church, as were miracles that accompanied the gift of the Holy Ghost. Paul explained the purpose of these miraculous gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 14:22, "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." Once the Church had been established and properly advertised by these miracles, the visible appearance of the Holy Ghost ceased.

25 How do the declarations of Augustine, Chrysostom, and Luther relate to our question concerning the permanence or non-permanence of the charismata? All that they tell us is that in 400 AD (Augustine and Chrysostom) and in the Fifteenth Century (Luther) the Church did not experience this manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Prior to the 20th Century, most American Church leaders

22 Stanley M. Burgess, *Medieval Examples of Charismatic Piety in the Roman Catholic Church*, in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism* (born 347, died 407)ism Russell P. Spittler, Editor (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1976) pages 14-26 23 Stanley M. Burgess, *Medieval Examples of Charismatic Piety, Part One, Chapter One, Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler, (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1976) page 17 24 Martin Luther, *Works*, ed. Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehman (St. Louis: Concordia 1955) XL, 142 25 Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, comments on Chapter 4, Verse 6, translated by Theodore Graebner (Concordance of Great Books; <http://www.concordance.com/cgi-bin/1wdr.pl>)16 would have said the same thing and would have found virtually no one to disagree with them.

26

If such a statement were made today, however, the disagreement would be huge. Since we do not know why the charismata were absent from the Fifth Century Church and the Fifteenth Century Church, we cannot draw any conclusion other than that they were absent. So, in order to determine if the charismata were only for the era of the apostles, we must look back to the data that we examined earlier and come to the only conclusion possible, Scripture declares that the charismata will be obsolete when the perfect comes.

· we see all things clearly · we know God as we now are known by Him The only condition that meets these criteria of the perfect is when we meet Christ face to face, either in death or at His appearing.

It therefore is valid to conclude that we should anticipate supernatural activity in the present day Church.

03.05. An Examination of 1 Corinthians 12-14

AN EXAMINATION OF 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 The epistle that we know as I Corinthians was Paul's third contact with the Church in Corinth. The first contact was Paul's visit to the city, resulting in the founding of the Corinthian Church (Acts 18:1-18). Paul spent at least eighteen months in this endeavor (Acts 18:11).

27 Only the Ephesian Church was the recipient of a longer apostolic presence.

About two years after his departure from Corinth, while he was in Ephesus, Paul received a troubling report. Certain strong, ambitious men had sought to elevate themselves over the church and the church had begun to manifest a variety of aberrant practices.

28 Paul wrote to Corinth, seeking to bring correction (1 Corinthians 5:9-11). This was his second contact with the church. We do not know the entire contents of the letter, because it was not preserved. Even so, 1 Corinthians 5:11 informs us of one of the issues addressed in Paul's letter, But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler -- not even to eat with such a one.

26 There would have been some who would have disagreed. See Stanley Howard Frodsham, With Signs Following (Springfield, Mo, Gospel Publishing House, 1946 [a revision of earlier versions published in 1926 and 1928]), for substantiated reports of tongues in the last half of the 19th Century.

27 Two understandings of Acts 18:11 are possible, · The entire visit was eighteen months in length · Eighteen months refers to the time that Paul remained in Corinth after the church was founded 28 The Church in Corinth had become very carnal, suffering from internal strife and division based on personality cult, sexual misconduct of the worst type, disrespect for the Lord's table, disorder in the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit, and false teaching that denied the clear doctrine of the resurrection of the body.¹⁷ Paul's letter was not well received in Corinth. For one thing, those who were seeking to elevate themselves to places of authority sought to discredit Paul.

29 They tried to make his statements appear to be absurd by interpreting his letter as saying that Christians were forbidden from having any intercourse with immoral people.

30 To abide by that rule, Christians would have to go out of the world. The majority of the church had come under the influence of these slanderers and thus were at odds with Paul. However, there always was a Pauline minority. The Corinthians responded to Paul's letter by sending him a letter, delivered by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Corinthians 16:17). Chloe's people also informed Paul about the Corinthian Church (1 Corinthians 1:11).

31 Even though we do not have a copy of the Corinthians' letter to Paul, his response to the letter (the epistle we call, I Corinthians) provides information concerning its content. The Corinthians were not asking Paul to arbitrate between various factions, as some have assumed. Paul's

response implies that the letter was somewhat disrespectful, perhaps even hostile. It raised several issues concerning his authority and apostleship. One issue seems to have been whether or not Paul was a pneumatikos (pneumatikōs), a spiritual man.

32 The Corinthians, had come to view themselves as being spiritually superior. They had become enamored of Sophia 33 (divine wisdom), whereas Paul, with his poor rhetoric (at least that's how they regarded it), was only capable of providing "milk." They had moved on to headier stuff.

34 They also challenged some of the positions that Paul had taken. In I Corinthians Paul lashed out on one hand 35 and wrote conciliatory words on the other.

36 He declared that they were a carnal church: brethren, I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ (1 Corinthians 3:1). This is the spiritual and emotional setting that surrounded Paul's discussion of the proper conduct of the charismata in the assembly.

Six times in I Corinthians Paul introduces a topic with the words, Now concerning, 37 indicating that he is responding to something in their letter.

38 Such is the case with the discussion of the charismata (1 Corinthians 12:1).

We now turn to an examination of Paul's statements concerning the charismata in I Corinthians Chapters 12-14.

29 I Corinthians Chapter Four reflects this condition 30 1 Corinthians 5:10 31 Chloe probably was an Ephesian business woman whose agents traveled to Corinth on business and visited the Corinthian Church while in the city. Upon their return to Ephesus, they told Paul about the divisions and aberrations that were developing in the Corinthian Church.

32 1 Corinthians 2:15 seems to be a sideswipe at them, stating that the pneumatikos (Paul) is not subject to anyone's judgment 33 *sofi>a* 34 Thus, Paul's argument in 1:17-2:5 35 Note, for example the sarcasm of 1 Corinthians 4:7-8 and 1 Corinthians 6:5 36 From the sarcasm of 4:7-8, Paul moves into tender images in 1 Corinthians 4:14 ff 37 *peri< de* 38 1 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Corinthians 7:25; 1 Corinthians 8:1; 1 Corinthians 12:1; 1 Corinthians 16:1; 1 Corinthians 16:12 18 Chapter 12 In 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 Paul tries to get the Corinthians to understand that the local church is like a human body. There is diversity, interdependency, and unity in a body. This chapter echoes the lesson of Romans 12:1-21. The particular items that Paul discusses in this chapter tend to grab our attention with such force that we are prone to miss the central truth of the section. This is much like remembering all of the funny stories that a preacher told in his sermon, but forgetting the point that the stories were intended to illustrate. We must pay attention to the point that Paul makes in this chapter.

03.06. Chapter 12

Chapter 12 can be summarized as follows, · The Holy Spirit imparts gifts to Christians · These are gifts · The Holy Spirit sovereignly chooses to whom each gift is given · Each gift is important · No believer has all of the gifts · No believer should feel that his gift has made him superior · All gifts are given for the good of the body Verse 1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. The challenge presented by this verse is the definition of the term translated in most of the popular versions as, spiritual gifts. The Greek term is *ton pneumatikon* (tw~n pneumatikw~n), the genitive, plural form of the adjective, *pneumatikos* (pneumatiko>v). Since the genitive plural of this adjective is spelled the same way for masculine, feminine, and neuter objects, the meaning has to be determined by the context. The term translated literally is, the spirituals, but that doesn't make any sense. If it is the masculine form, then the term refers to spiritual men. If it is the neuter form, then it refers to spiritual things. Paul used this term both in the neuter and masculine genders in Chapter 14 (neuter in verse 1 and masculine in verse 37).

Some would argue for spiritual men, since one of the conditions that Paul faced was the Corinthians' contention that they were spiritual men, whereas Paul was lacking. The repeated, you, of verses 2-3, and the fact that Paul speaks of, to each one, as he lists manifestations of the Spirit in verses 7-10, point toward spiritual men. Furthermore, the point of 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 is the management (not control) of these manifestations, which requires the obedience of men. The immediate context, however, would allow for spiritual things. Howard M. Ervin suggests, Now concerning supernatural endowments, brethren...

39 as a means of encompassing both the spiritual things and the spiritual men (and women) who were manifesting the spirituals.

39 Howard M. Ervin, *These are not Drunken as ye Suppose* (Plainfield, NJ, Logos International 1963) p19 Verses 2-3 You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led 40. Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. As pagans, they had worshipped inarticulate idols. However, these idols did represent evil spirits (1 Corinthians 10:20-21) who spoke through their devotees.

41 Thus, inspired speech was not evidence of being led by the Holy Spirit. They already knew that from their pagan past. The cognitive content of speech was the evidence of being led by the Holy Spirit.

Many pages could be written wrestling with the various explanations of Paul's citing someone as saying, "Jesus is cursed" (when, where, why, who, etc.) and being able to say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit, which is something that even a hypocrite could say. One way that this could be explained is that this refers to making such a confession in truth requires revelation from the Holy Spirit (as described in 2 Corinthians 2:10-13). It is not profitable for us to get involved in

this discussion here. It is important, however, that we not miss the point of this paragraph. Gordon Fee has written, 42 ...it continues to stand as a particularly important word for the church, in which many of these spiritual phenomena are recurring. The presence of the Spirit in power and gifts makes it easy for God's people to think of the power and gifts as the real evidence of the Spirit's presence. Not so for Paul. The ultimate criterion of the Spirit's activity is the exaltation of Jesus as Lord. Whatever takes away from that, even if they be legitimate expressions of the Spirit, begins to move away from Christ to a more pagan fascination with spiritual activity as an end in itself.

43 Verses 4-7 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

40 Verse 2 is one of the most difficult verses in the Bible, because it is an anacoluthon (it doesn't follow grammatically) since the "when" clause has no main verb. As Gordon Fee comments, "Either something dropped out in the transmission of the text, or else Paul himself intended his readers to supply a second 'you were' at some point in the sentence. Literally, the verse reads, you know that when you were pagans, to mute idols whenever you would be led, being carried away. The best solution is to repeat the verb 'you were' with the final participle 'carried away,' so that the sentence reads, When you were pagans, you were carried away, as you were continually being led about to mute idols." Gordon Fee, *First Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1987) pp. 576-77.

41 One clear difference between the inspired speech of idol worshippers was the ecstatic state of idolaters, when uttering inspired speech. Idolatrous inspired speech occurred when the devotee was possessed by the spirit of the idol and spoke in an ecstatic state (not in control of himself). Paul points out that the believer is responsible for his behavior, even when speaking in tongues or when prophesying (the entire argument of Chapter 14 assumes this to be true, or else the chapter makes no sense).

42 Gordon Fee, one of the finest exegetical scholars of our generation is an ordained Assemblies of God minister.

43 Fee, op. cit, p. 58220 The question has to be asked: "Are the members of the Trinity (the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and God), each mentioned in connection with one of the three terms, gifts, ministries, and varieties of effects, because each of them individually is the source of the element described, or is Paul using a rhetorical device for emphasizing unity in diversity?"

If Paul meant to describe each Divine Being's part in this arena, then here is the delineation, · The Holy Spirit bestows varieties of supernatural abilities on believers.

- The Lord determines when, where, and how these abilities are to be used.
- God the Father determines the results.

Whether or not Paul intended to make such a partitioning of roles can be debated. However, the main points of the paragraph are clear, · The charismata are manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the manner in which the Holy Spirit ministers to the Church is through human instruments who have control over their own behavior.

· There is unity (the Divine source) in diversity (different believers manifest different charismata); · The purpose of the charismata is to bless the corporate church.

Verses 8-10 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

Because the Corinthians were experiencing the nine manifestations listed, and probably even more than nine, Paul is not concerned with the question as whether or not the manifestations were valid. What Paul is moving toward is the conclusion that there should be unity in diversity. Because in our day there is confusion and controversy concerning the nine listed gifts, it is fitting for us to consider them individually.

· The Word (Logos) of Wisdom (Sophia): literally, Utterance of Wisdom The phrase means either, an utterance conveying wisdom or an utterance originating in wisdom. It is significant that this gift does not occur again in any other list or discussion. The reason seems rather clear. The language points back to the earlier portion of the epistle in which Paul addresses their viewing of wisdom (as characterized by the Greek Gnostic understanding of the term) as a mark of spiritual superiority. Because of this, many rejected Paul's Gospel (1:17-2:16). Paul defined true wisdom, not as some special understanding or deeper mystery (as the Greek Gnostics would define it), but the recognition that Christ crucified is the true wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:30-31; 1 Corinthians 2:6-9). Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that this revelation (more than mere 21 intellectual acceptance of facts) can come to us only by the Holy Spirit. So, any spiritual utterance that declares what God has done in Christ fits Paul's description of an utterance of wisdom.

However, can the term be limited to this? The question is not easy to answer. Since the gift of wisdom occurs only here, and is not included in the spontaneous charismata described in Chapter 14, we are not compelled to consider it as something restricted to the occasional manifestations described in that chapter. Personally, I have known individuals who have wisdom beyond their years. They could not have gained it from experience, the normal source of wisdom. An example is Bruce Clutter, one of the elders at TCF. Bruce was ordained an elder in September, 1983, one week before his 29 th birthday. Even though a young man, Bruce at that time had the wisdom of a man who was in his senior years. I believe that this wise man is a gift of wisdom to the church.

· Word (Logos) of Knowledge (Gnosis) In the opening paragraph of the epistle, Paul had thanked God that the Corinthians in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge (1:5). Speech and knowledge, the Greek terms logos and gnosis, are the same the terms that describe this charismata. It seems that this is another effort by Paul to rescue them from their Greek fascination with wisdom, knowledge, and rhetoric (the point of 1:182:16), as well as confronting the pride that accompanied these obsessions.

How this gift differs from revelation is not clear. In 14:6 this gift is listed between revelation and prophecy, so it is clear that the word of knowledge and revelation cannot be the same thing. This also is one of the gifts that Paul states will cease when the perfect comes (13:8). Some have argued that since gnosis (knowledge) is in the descriptive genitive case, that this refers to the Holy

Spirit's imparting of insight into Scripture. However, because of its location in the lists just cited, it usually is understood to mean more than this.

Most would consider this gift to refer to manifestations such as Peter's knowledge of the misdeeds of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), or Jesus' knowledge of Nathaniel's whereabouts before they met (John 1:47-50).

- Faith Elsewhere, Paul speaks of saving faith as being the work of the Spirit.

44 Here, however, as confirmed by reference to this gift in 13:2, this is the gift of faith to move mountains. Jesus spoke of mountain moving faith on two occasions,

44 The Greek word, pistis (pistis) is the word that we translate as, faith. Note that in each of the following passages, faith has a different meaning.

Galatians 1:23 but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." In this sentence, faith means the Gospel²² 1. Matthew 17:20, after casting out a demon 2. Matthew 21:21, after cursing the fig tree (also reported in Mark 11:22). This measure of faith is a gift, something imparted by the Holy Spirit. This not something that can be worked up or volitionally exercised. In Romans 12:3, as a prelude to a discussion of functional gifts of the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote of God's having allotted to each a measure of faith. We readily think of men such as George Mueller, to whom God gave faith for providential provision for the care of thousands of orphans and the legendary Smith Wigglesworth who seemed to know in various situations what God was doing and in that knowledge ministered supernaturally.

- Gifts of Healings In the Greek text, both gifts and healings are plural. This guides our understanding of this manifestation. Often people pray for The Gift of Healing, as if they can become endowed with the ability to heal. The terminology here is better understood as describing a group of healing gifts that the Holy Spirit presents to a particular believer for him to distribute to others. God stays in control. He hands the person chosen to administer these gifts, a gift of healing to be given to this sick person, and another gift of healing to be given to that sick person. The one to whom the Gifts of Healings are given has the privilege of dispensing the gifts. A sick person may come to the servant of God chosen to distribute the gifts, receive the laying on of hands, and not be healed. Our Sovereign God had not given His servant a Gift of Healing for that particular individual. If someone, with all good intentions, approaches church leadership, asking for the laying on of hands in order to receive the Gift of Healing, the appropriate question should be, "Why, are you sick?"

- The Effecting of Miracles (Literally: operations of powers) In 2 Corinthians 12:12, Paul wrote of himself, The signs (semeia - shmei~a) of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs (semeia - shmei~a) and wonders (terata - tera>ta) and miracles (dunamis - du>nameiv).

It is interesting to observe that in this self-description Paul made a distinction between signs, wonders, and miracles. The term translated miracles is the common Greek word

Romans 14:23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin. In this context, faith refers to the conviction that this is what God wants me to do.

1 Timothy 5:11-12 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. (KJV) In this passage, faith refers to a pledge or a promise made to the Lord. In both the NIV and the NAS, the “dynamic equivalency” style is used in this verse. Therefore, neither of these versions have the word, faith, in their translations. The NAS says, pledge; the NIV first pledge. In the Greek, however the word is faith (πίστις) for power. Once again we must note that both terms, operations and powers, are in the plural. This would imply that there are varying operations of powers. Certainly this would include supernatural healing, exorcism, and any of the broad range of events that we would call, miraculous. Jesus’ ministry was filled with such manifestations. In the post-Pentecostal apostolic ministry, most miracles were healing miracles. One has to ask if the healings resulting from this gift are a different manifestation than the gifts of healings. It would seem to be so. For example, cloths that had touched Paul’s body were distributed in Ephesus and everyone who touched the cloths were healed (Acts 19:11-12).

Peter and the apostles had such a flamboyant and consistent healing season in Jerusalem, that sick people were placed beside the path, hoping that Peter’s shadow would fall on them (Acts 5:12-16).

45 Be that as it may, Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit gives to certain ones the operations of powers. This can only describe a ministry that is characterized by supernatural activity.

· Prophecy After the close of the Old Testament canon (Malachi), prophecy ceased in Israel.

46 On the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared that prophecy was restored, in fulfillment of Joel’s prediction (Acts 2:16-18).

... but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on My male slaves and My female slaves, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy. The Greek term, propheteia (προφητεία), refers to speech that emanates from divine inspiration and declares the purposes of God. It can include prediction, but that is not the essential nature of prophecy. Joel declared that when God’s Spirit was poured out, prophecy would not be restricted to prophets but that it would become a widespread phenomenon among God’s people.

45 The Western Text of this verse 15 concludes with, “for they were being set free from every sickness, such as each of them had.”

46 Here are some quotes from I Maccabees, the most reliable history book of the Jews, written during the intertestamental period, 4:46 and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until there should come a prophet to tell what to do with them.

9:27 Thus there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.

14:41 And the Jews and their priests decided that Simon should be their leader and high priest for ever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise...²⁴ · The Distinguishing of Spirits The Greek term rendered, distinguishing or discerning, is the term, diakrisis (διακρίσις), which has as its primary meaning, a separation, thus, a judging. Since the term is in the plural, a literal rendering is

discernments of spirits.

Interestingly, the term rendered discernments is the noun form of the verb used in 14:29, which speaks of judging whether or not prophecy is from God. Thus, discernments of spirits must include judging of prophecy. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 and 1 John 4:1 ff fit into this category.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21a Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. In II Thessalonians, Paul declared the necessity of judging the spirit behind both doctrinal teaching and miracles: that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, ... that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:2-3, 2 Thessalonians 2:9) Thus, Paul states that some believers will be given the ability to discern spirits, whether it be the spirit behind a prophecy, a teaching, or a miracle.

- Various Kinds of Tongues The Greek terminology is important. Gene glosson (ge>nh glwssw~n), translated literally, families of languages, fits the Acts 2:1-47 experience, in which the disciples began to speak with other tongues (languages that were not their native tongue) and were understood by visitors from various countries. The term refers to actual languages, not just ecstatic utterances, a phenomenon seen in pagan rites.

47 Because of the terminology, we must conclude that tongues refers to a language spoken somewhere in the world, or formerly was spoken somewhere in the world, or a language spoken by angels (13:1). It is neither gibberish, nor uncontrolled mutterings.

48

47 Many modern commentators have sought to demonstrate that the expression, tongues, refers to the ecstatic speech or unintelligible speech, found in the Greek religions. In a very detailed scholarly work, Christopher Forbes has demonstrated that this is not case: Christopher Forbes, Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment (Peabody, Mass, Hendrickson Publishers, 1997) 48 The renowned scholar, A.T. Robertson makes the following comment: Acts 2:4 - With other tongues (ejte>raiv glw>ssaiv) Other than their native tongues. Each one began to speak in a language that he had not acquired and yet it was a real language and understood by those from various lands familiar with them. It was not jargon, but intelligible language. Jesus had said that the gospel was to go to all the nations and here the various tongues of earth were spoken. One might conclude that this was the way in which the message was to be carried to the nations, but 25 This manifestation never was used for preaching or proclamation of the Gospel. It always was manifested in praise or prayer. Interestingly, in the earliest days of the Pentecostal movement, the belief persisted that God would give earthly languages to baptized believers so they could quickly evangelize the world. Those who went to foreign fields with this expectation experienced failure.

49 In this present era, there are many credible reports of the Holy Spirit's bestowing a "foreign" language upon a believer, which was understood by an auditor. Dr. Howard Ervin, a respected scholar whom I know personally, has written of his own experience in this realm. We include this extensive quote because of the controversy over this point. In our own day, there is an increasing number of testimonies by Christians who have spoken known languages "in the Spirit." On one occasion the present author was participating in a healing service in a church on the West Coast of the United States. As he prayed in tongues, an Armenian Baptist woman listened to his "tongue," and identified it as prayer in Russian. Again while praying with a small group for the healing of a missionary who speaks Spanish fluently, the missionary identified his "tongue" as a Spanish dialect. The vocabulary was clearly identified, but the inflections were strange to her. On another occasion, while praying for the healing of the little daughter of a Japanese Buddhist woman, he spoke a "tongue" she later identified to mutual friends as Japanese. Still more recently, in a ministry service in his own church, an Armenian man, for whom he prayed, identified two foreign languages spoken in prayer. The one was a dialect spoken by the Indian colonial troops of the British Empire which he had heard as a young man in the seaport cities of the Orient. The second language he described as Kurdish, a language he himself speaks. Most recently of all, in fact just a few weeks ago, the future developments disprove it. This is a third miracle (the sound, the tongues like fire, the untaught languages).

There is no blinking the fact that Luke so pictures them. One need not be surprised if this occasion marks the fulfillment of the Promise of the Father. But one is not to confound these miraculous signs with the Holy Spirit.

They are merely proof that he has come to carry on the work of his dispensation. The gift of tongues came also on the house of Cornelius at Caesarea (Acts 10:44-47; Acts 11:15-17), the disciples of John at Ephesus (Acts 19:6), the disciples at Corinth (1 Corinthians 14:1-33). It is possible that the gift appeared also at Samaria (Acts 8:18). But it was not a general or a permanent gift. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 14:22 that "tongues" were a sign to unbelievers and were not to be exercised unless one was present who understood them and could translate them. This restriction disposes at once of the modern so-called tongues which are nothing but jargon and hysteria. It so happened that here on this occasion at Pentecost there were Jews from all parts of the world, so that some one would understand one tongue and some another without an interpreter such as was needed at Corinth. The experience is identical in all four instances and they are not for edification or instruction, but for adoration and wonder and worship. A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 6 Volumes, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932) III Page 22 49 Charles Parham, first advocated this view. The leaders of the Azusa Street revival also had this expectation.

These sent out missionaries based on this premise. However, they found difficulties when putting the belief into practice. For example, A.G. Carr, the first white man to speak in tongues at Azusa, went to India, expecting the Spirit to enable him to speak Hindi. When this didn't happen, Garr and his wife moved to China and studied Chinese. The consistent experience of the early Pentecostal missionaries was that if foreigners did understand them, it was a rare exception, rather than the rule.²⁶ phenomenon repeated again. While praying with a young man, acquainted with both Spanish and Portuguese, the writer prayed in a language identified by the young man as Portuguese. When asked what was said, he replied: "You told God my need in high Portuguese."

Needless to say all of these languages are unknown to the writer, and consequently were spoken “as the Spirit Himself gave utterance.” The same author identified the last sentence of a song sung “in the Spirit” as Biblical Greek, although the man who was singing knows no Greek. A Norwegian woman received the baptism in the Holy Spirit at a service in the present writer’s church. The next day she prayed in tongues in the presence of some Italian friends who identified the “tongue” speaking as Italian, a language with which she is not conversant. In charismatic services in the author’s church, other languages have been identified on several occasions. It is also significant to note that each participant in these services prays in a distinctive and clearly recognizable tongue.

Vocabulary, inflections, intonations are all distinctive and clearly distinguishable.

50 We have to disagree with those who speak of a “prayer language” as something other than the same manifestation as was experienced on Pentecost (see footnote 20).

· The Interpretation of Tongues Those who claim that tongues are ecstatic utterances, rather than genuine languages, argue that tongues require interpretation, rather than, translation.

51 This is a faulty argument. The Greek term, *ermeneia* (εἰρμηνεία), can mean either interpretation or translation. It is much the same in idiomatic English. When a missionary travels among people whose language he does not know, he works with an interpreter, whom the missionary trusts to translate.

52

Thus, we have to conclude that this manifestation is an Holy Spirit given ability to translate/interpret the languages being spoken by the tongues speakers. This becomes more evident and crucial in Chapter 14.

50 Ervin, op. cit. pages 127-128 51 Paul’s statements in Chapter 14, which instruct tongues speakers and those prophesying to regulate their activity, clearly speak against an ecstatic state.

52 Kittel cites all of the possible understandings of *εἰρμηνεία*. He then concludes that in this passage, it must mean interpretation rather than translation, since tongues speakers are in an ecstatic trance when manifesting a tongue. He argues that tongues are “non-speech.” This violates the Paul’s description of the phenomenon as argued above.

Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964) Volume 1, pages 661-665 Verse 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. The three truths of this verse are foundational to our understanding of this section, · The Holy Spirit is the source of the charismata · The Holy Spirit gives charismata to individual Christians · The choice of the charismata that is given and the choice of the individual to whom it is given rests solely in the will of the Holy Spirit. This verse is a verse of great hope. As Gordon Fee has written, The hope, of course, lies with verse 11, that the one and the same Spirit will do as He pleases, despite the boxes provided for Him ...

53 Verses 12-26 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to

drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Much could be written concerning the controversies that have arisen over verse 13, For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. The questions raised by these expressions are not the topic of this study. Be that as it may,

53 Fee, p. 60028 the point of this paragraph is quite apparent. Paul is arguing for unity in diversity and in this section, he emphasizes diversity. The Holy Spirit has given diverse manifestations to diverse individuals, and each of these manifestations has been given for the good of the church. No one "has it all." Each one is deficient without the others. This is by Divine design.

Realizing our common origin, the common possession of the Holy Spirit which makes us one, and the common source of our gifts, there should be no division among us. When we care for one another and rejoice when one of our members is honored, either by God or man, we really are caring for and rejoicing for ourselves – for all of us constitute the body. This paragraph is a virtual summary of Romans 12:1-21 (or vice versa).

Verse 27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it · You (plural – the local church at Corinth) are Christ's body; · Individually (focusing on each individual Christian) are members of it Verse 28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

Paul continues to emphasize the diversity. The first three, apostles, prophets, and teachers, he ranks, one, two, three. Paul saw these as the order of precedence in founding and building up the church.

Miracles and gifts of healings are in the reverse order of Paul's previous list, thus suggesting the irrelevancy of rank in the list from this point on.

Helps and administrations are not mentioned in the list of charismata, nor are they mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament.

54 Paul ends the list with various kinds of tongues. It is not surprising that he lists tongues last, since this charismata, and the pride associated with it, was the source of controversy in Corinth.

The manner in which Paul constructed this list, mixing charismata with ascension gifts (Ephesians 4:11), listing things not listed elsewhere, and listing them in a different order from the other lists in this section, emphasizes the point that he is making – diversity.

54 Kube>rnhsiv, here translated as helps, means to govern, or to offer wise counsel. A related word from the same root, kubernh>thv, means helmsman or sailing-master. This is a different term from the one used in Romans 12:8, proista>menov which means, the one taking the lead.

Ajnti>lhyiv, here translated, administrations does not occur in any other New Testament passage. However, it is found in the Septuagint with the meaning of aid or help. Romans 12:1-21 has a different term, diakoni>a, which conveys a similar idea. Because Romans 12:7 uses the term, diakoni>a some argue that this is referring to the work of deacons. Although this may include the work of deacons, it certainly cannot be limited to deacons.²⁹ Verses 29-30 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they?

All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? The rhetorical questions in verses 29-30 are questions to which Paul anticipated a negative answer. We know this by the manner in which he asked the questions. In Greek one can ask a question in a manner that indicates whether the questioner anticipates a “yes” or a “no.” If a “yes” is anticipated, the question begins with ou (ou)j. If a “no” is expected, the question begins with me (mh)>. By using this technique, Paul thus stated that not everyone is an apostle, not everyone is a prophet, not everyone is a teacher, not everyone works miracles, not everyone has gifts of healings, not everyone speaks in tongues, and not everyone interprets tongues. God determined that it should be so.

Paul made these statements for one purpose – to emphasize the diversity in God’s design and the mutual dependency of believers. Paul declared that this is so because of the will of the Holy Spirit. This is God’s deliberate decision. For our era, his statements are important for an additional reason. The contemporary assertion, made by some Pentecostals and Charismatics, that everyone can and should speak in tongues flies in the face of Paul’s argument. If everyone could or should, then Paul’s argument that God willed this diversity, would be a failed argument. Of special interest is the inconsistency in the lists found in Chapter 12.

· Paul lists nine charismata in verses 8-10 · He presents a mixed list in verse 28, including two that are not found elsewhere · In the rhetorical questions in verses 29-30, the list is different from the previous two lists.

Because of this, we should not assume that any of the lists exhausts the manner in which the Holy Spirit manifests Himself in the Church.

Verse 31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

What are the greater gifts? Dr. Ervin, argues that the greater gifts are those enumerated in verse 28, God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, etc.

It intimates that when he said, “first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers,” he was expressing a value judgment upon this specific category of gifts. The apostles therefore are possessors of the most important spiritual gift...⁵⁵

55 Ervin, p. 14130 Dr. Ervin's position doesn't fit the context of Paul's discussion in Chapters 12-14. Paul is correcting and instructing the church concerning the manifestation of gifts in the public service.

Exhorting all of them to have an earnest desire to become apostles would be totally irrelevant and even contradictory to the point that he is making. It also would be contrary to the heart attitude of any true apostle.

56 Much more appropriate is the traditional understanding of the greater gifts, i.e, those mentioned in Chapter 14 as being more beneficial to the church in its public meeting.

03.07. Chapter 13

CHAPTER 13

Chapter Thirteen is an interlude in the discussion, yet an important one. The essential point is that unless love is the motivation and the atmosphere in which one ministers a gift, the ministry is of no benefit to anyone, including the minister himself. This point is not a part of the focus of this paper, beyond the fact that the point is made. The material in this chapter that is relevant to our discussion (tongues of men and of angels and the duration of the gifts) have been addressed earlier.

03.08. Chapter 14

CHAPTER 14 The statements made in Chapter 14 bring us to the heart of the matter. From Paul's statements in this section it becomes apparent that the Sunday meeting must have been some sort of a vocal melee.

- Tongues speakers were exercising this gift in the meeting without interpretation · Given Paul's statements at the close of Chapter 12 and the entire argument of Chapter 13, we can only conclude that there was controversy over the hierarchy of gifts. Pride was rampant.
- There was general disorder in the meeting. More than one person was speaking at the same time: prophets prophesying, tongues speakers praying out loud, a general noise without any edification of the general body taking place.
- Some were trying to silence the tongues speakers, fearing that they might be blaspheming God

56 Paul consistently made the point that he did not choose to function as an apostle, but that such was God's sovereign choice, 2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...

Colossians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God...

1 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope, 2 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,³¹ The point of this chapter is that all things done in the meeting should be for the edification of the gathered body, not for the edification of the individual exercising his gift.

Verse 1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. The imperatives in this verse serve as a transition from the previous arguments to the matter at hand, which is the abuse of tongues. They should seek to be vessels of love, yet they also should seek to function in a manner that benefits the body. For that reason they are exhorted to desire, earnestly, spiritual gifts. The term translated, spiritual gifts, is the same word that Paul used in the beginning of this section in 1 Corinthians 12:1, pneumatikos. Here, since it clearly is referring to the topic of gifts, as is seen in the following verses, it is neuter in gender, and refers to things, rather than, men. Given the context, spiritual gifts is the best rendering. A second question: is the exhortation distributive or collective? If it is distributive, Paul urged each individual believer to earnestly desire to prophesy. If it is collective, he is urging the Church to desire that prophesy be fluent in their gathering. Nothing in the Greek leans one way or the other. However, since the balance of the chapter addresses the performance of individuals, it is best to understand this as an exhortation to individual believers to desire to receive gifts that bless the gathered church, of which

prophecy is the prime example. Chapter 12 always must be in the forefront of their desire: the Holy Spirit will distribute manifestations as He wills.

Verses 2-5 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

These verses set forth the basic contrasts and the central themes of what follows.

· The concern is for edification (vv. 3-5) · The issue is intelligibility.

Uninterpreted tongues (v. 5) is not understandable (v. 2) hence it cannot edify the church (v. 4).

Prophecy is addressed to people precisely for their edification (v. 3) and in that sense it is the greater gift.

57

57 Fee, op.cit. page 65332 Notice the contrast displayed in these verses, · The one who speaks in tongues speaks not to people, but to God He speaks mysteries by the Spirit · The one who prophesies speaks to people (he speaks) edification (he speaks) encouragement (he speaks) comfort · The one who speaks in tongues edifies himself (because he is praying) · The one who prophesies edifies the church (because he brings the word of God) 58 Even though Paul seeks to decrease their zeal for congregational tongues speaking/praying, he is not demeaning the gift itself. He states three positive things about tongues.

· The tongues speaker is communing with God. Paul understands the phenomena to be a form of prayer and/or praise · The content of the tongues can be mysteries. The Greek term translated, mysteries, is the term, musterion (musth>rion). This term refers to something that God has revealed and it could only be known by revelation. So, the one praying in tongues may be speaking truths that could only be revealed by the Spirit.

· Tongues speech (prayer) is edifying to the one manifesting the tongue. This is not a negative thing, it is just not the purpose of manifestations in the meeting. This is appropriate for one's private devotions, but not for a public gathering. The edifying benefit of prophecy is in the flow of Chapter 13. Love is expressed by our serving one another through those things that build each other up. The two words translated exhortation and comfort, are quite synonymous. The first of the two, paraklesis (para>klnsiv) can be rendered, encouragement, comfort, exhortation, or appeal. The second term, paramuthia (paramuqi>a) may be rendered, comfort or consolation. So, by using these three terms in this fashion (edification, encouragement, comfort), Paul describes prophecy as a rather full-orbed love gift from God. When Paul states that the one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, this is because of the intelligibility of prophecy in the language of the audience. When one prays in a tongue and it is interpreted, then the congregation can say, "Amen." So, it would seem that this would refer to a public prayer in tongues that is a prayer on behalf of the congregation (much as the public prayer offered in a traditional service today), and it then is interpreted so that the congregation can affirm what has been spoken in the

prayer. The next paragraph expands this thought.

58 Adaptation of Fee, page 65533 Verses 6-12 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?

Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning.

If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church.

Much could be noted here concerning how this paragraph relates to the Corinthians' attitude toward Paul, but this is not the goal of our study. The only thing to note here is Paul's emphasizing the importance of intelligibility in verbal elements of a meeting. We also could involve ourselves in seeking to determine the meaning of revelation and how it differs from prophecy, but whatever conclusion we reached could only be speculation.

Since Paul continually presents tongues speaking as communication between the believer and God, we must conclude that his comment about coming to them with revelation, prophecy, or teaching in tongues is an hypothetical statement, an argument by analogy. He uses this common debating technique to advance his point concerning intelligibility. To decide otherwise would force us to go against everything else he has said in this section concerning the use of tongues. The point of the paragraph is that unintelligible speech/prayer is of no profit to the Church.

Throughout this section Paul keeps emphasizing the purpose of a gathering of believers. It is to edify one another. This emphasis is presented strongly in Hebrews 10:23-26 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins... The meeting is not convened so that people can exercise their gifts, but rather so that saints can edify one another. Exercise of the gifts is one way that this is done, but it is a means, rather than an end in itself.

Verse 13-19 Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say 34 the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified. I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may

instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue. This paragraph continues the argument of the previous one. Here, Paul becomes more specific concerning corporate worship. Several things catch our attention.

- This is the first time that we are advised of the possibility that one who speaks/prays in a tongue also may interpret – should the Holy Spirit grant that charismata. The reason for a tongues speaker to pray for the ability to interpret is so that he can bless his fellow believers in the corporate meeting. Otherwise, he is out of the loop as far as public ministry is concerned.

- The particular faculties that are in operation when one is praying in a tongue or in one's known language are the spirit of the one praying or the mind of the one praying. So, when one is praying in tongues he is praying with his human spirit. When one is praying in his known language, he is praying with his human mind. This is not the same thing as saying that one is praying in the Holy Spirit. The difference between these concepts is seen in the following passages, For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also. (I Corinthians 14:14-16.) Paul speaks here of the human spirit and the human mind (i.e, my spirit, my mind). He states that when he prays in a tongue, his human spirit is praying. When he prays in a language that his mind understands, his mind is involved in the prayer. He makes the same statement about singing. There is no mention of the Holy Spirit in these verses. The key term is, "with." The next verse [16], speaks of blessing "in spirit." Since the definite article is missing, and this is in the context of the previous two verses, it is obvious that Paul is speaking of a prayer of blessing in tongues.

..."In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. (Jude 1:17-21) After reminding the believers that there is a world full of those who are devoid of the Holy Spirit, Jude highlights the blessing of praying in the Holy Spirit; he states that this is one of the activities related to our remaining strong and faithful in the faith. This reminder clearly refers to "praying in the Holy Spirit." As contrasted with 1 Corinthians 14:14-16, the human spirit is not referenced by Jude.³⁵ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, (Ephesians 6:18) Paul states that all prayer and petition (all kinds of prayer) are to be prayed in the Spirit. This clearly refers to the Holy Spirit, because of the use of the definite article and the preposition, in (consistent with the exhortation of Jude). Thus, we conclude that all prayer at all times is to be prayed in the Holy Spirit, whether it is with the human spirit (tongues) or with the human mind (known language). It also is possible to pray in tongues or to pray with the human mind and not be, "in the Spirit."

Whether one is praying with his mind or his spirit, all prayer should be in the Holy Spirit.

Failure to recognize this has resulted in an inappropriate elevation of tongues. Paul does not present such an hierarchy.

- Paul continues to present tongues as being addressed to God, but in this paragraph he also presents praise, in addition to prayer, as something that can be done in tongues. This is seen in

his mention of singing, and blessing. Yet, he restricts his singing in tongues to a private activity, not something to be done in a gathering of the Church – unless interpreted.

· Paul continues to emphasize that uninterpreted tongues, of any type, is inappropriate in a church meeting unless interpreted. What takes place in the gathering of the church should be intelligible.

Verse 20-25 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. In the Law it is written, “By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me,” says the Lord. So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.

Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you. This paragraph is one of the most misunderstood sections of Scripture. There seems to be a contradiction between the statement tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers and the following warning on the impact on unbelievers who enter a meeting in which uninterpreted tongues are being manifested, will they not say that you are mad? How can tongues on one hand be a sign to unbelievers and on the other hand be something that will drive 36 unbelievers away? The question is answered clearly and easily when we take note of the passage that Paul quotes in his argument. The passage is Isaiah 28:11-12. These verses are in a section of Isaiah in which there are many Messianic promises and glowing words about the future remnant. However, woven among these glorious promises are gloomy scenes of judgment. In Isaiah 28:1-13, Yahweh condemns the drunken excesses of the rulers and religious leaders of Judah. They reel and stagger about like men at their wits end. They befoul the tables of Yahweh with their vomit and then wallow in their filth. They make sport of the prophet whom God has sent to rebuke their sin. In the Hebrew their drunken song has an insulting lilt. The Smith-Goodspeed translation tries to convey the mocking of God in the drunkards’ insulting song, To whom would he impart knowledge, To whom would he explain the message?

Babes just weaned from milk, Just drawn from the breasts? For it is rule by rule, rule by rule, Line by line, line by line, A little here and a little there.

Yahweh had sent them clear, pleading words by the prophet, but they did not listen. Therefore, God declared that he would send different words to them. These would be the words spoken in languages that they did not understand. These tongues would be spoken by the nations that would conquer them. When they heard these tongues, they would know that they were under judgment. As a part of his argument for the restriction of uninterpreted tongues, Paul employs this judgmental promise to Israel. In essence, he states that the only time that God will send messages in a language that cannot be understood is when He is judging those among whom He sends these tongues. If God Himself sent a flurry of tongues activity into the Corinthians’ midst and withheld interpretation, that would be a sign that He considered the Corinthians to be unbelievers. It would be a sign of judgment. To conclude anything other than this is to ignore the message of his quote from Isaiah 28:1-29. Intelligible prophecy, on the other hand, is something that God sends to believers (following the figure of Isaiah 28:1-29).

Therefore, there is no contradiction between this declaration and Paul's next argument for banning uninterpreted tongues from the meeting, i.e, the impact uninterpreted tongues will have on strangers who might enter their meeting. Those who are uninformed about manifestations of the Holy Spirit, or unbelievers, will be repulsed by uninterpreted tongues – they will say that you are insane.

59 In contrast, prophecy understood by the hearers might be a word bringing them under conviction.

59 The term Paul employs in verse 23, *mainomai* (*mai*>*nomai*), is a term used to describe the ecstatic state of various pagan oracles when they delivered their sayings, as well as the ecstatic state of worshippers of various pagan gods. That being true, Paul seems to be urging them to avoid behavior that was the same as worshippers of pagan gods. For comment on this term, see H. Preisker, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1967) Volume IV, page 36037 Verse 26-33 What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation.

Let all things be done for edification.

If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

What is the outcome then, indicates that Paul is tying up all that has been said thus far. The emphasis of this paragraph are two, · Everything should be done in a manner that edifies the church · A God approved meeting will be one that reflects God's orderly character There is the implication that some may come to the meeting with a song, a prophecy, etc, already received or prepared, planning to present it in the meeting.

Paul does not instruct them to speak in a tongue and then wait to see if someone can interpret, a common practice today. His instruction is that if a known interpreter is not present in the meeting, then tongues speakers/prayers should remain silent.

Neither tongues nor prophecy should dominate the meeting. The usual understanding of Paul's guideline is that only two or three of each should be allowed to speak in a meeting, and they should speak only one at a time. However, some hold that Paul is saying that two or three should speak, then some discernment should be pronounced on what has been spoken thus far, then two or more can speak, etc.

Although Paul used the term, prophets, in the expression, let the prophets speak (verse 29), he probably wasn't referring to the Ephesians 4:11 category of prophet. He probably was referring to those members of the church through whom prophecy was manifested in a given meeting. This seems apparent from the fact that throughout this section he continually uses the term, all,

referring to the entire church.

There should be a careful weighing of what has been said prophetically. Note that this is not required of interpreted tongues, because tongues are used for prayer and not prophetic messages. The verb used here is the same one used in 1 Corinthians 12:10, distinguishing of spirits. There are scant guidelines as to how this to be done. A view that has become quite popular is that prophets are to be the one's doing this discerning. If that is the case, then the term, prophets (verse 29),³⁸ would refer to Ephesians 4:11 prophets, not to the general membership through whom prophecy was manifested in a given meeting. As stated above, such a conclusion is outside of the flow of Paul's earlier statements, which refer to the general congregation and the manifestation of gifts through the general membership. The phrase, for you can all prophesy one by one, in the context of the rest of the chapter and the points made in Chapter 12, could not mean that all will or do prophesy. It refers to Paul's focus on the church as a whole, not just on a group of prophets, and that an orderly conduct of the meeting will allow members to move in the manifestation of the gift, in their proper turn. The sense is that all who have a prophetic word, if they conduct themselves in an orderly fashion, will have opportunity to deliver their word. There is no need for many to be speaking at once.

Three other points stand out in this paragraph, - Those who receive a manifestation are not possessed by it and unable to restrain themselves, i.e, they are not in an ecstatic state, they have their wits about them.

- Just because a prophecy is received, doesn't mean that it has to be delivered.

- God is a God of order and a meeting of the Church should reflect that order. Corinthian disorder was an aberration, since order characterized the meetings of all other churches.

Verses 34-35 The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. 35 If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.

Because of the controversy surrounding these verses, and because we have given them extensive treatment in an earlier conclave paper, we will not comment on these verses here. To do so would draw us away from the focus of the paper. However, these verses cannot mean that women cannot prophesy. Otherwise, Paul's comments on female attire when prophesying would be meaningless (1 Corinthians 11:5).

Verses 36-40 Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

Paul's long response to their letter concerning spiritual things now draws to a close. The basic issue was the Corinthian's view that to be spiritual was to speak in tongues. For this reason, they had great zeal for this gift. They insisted that it be practiced in the assembly. Paul informed them that he was a frequent tongues speaker, so he was not opposed to tongues because there were benefits attached to the exercise of this gift. He was opposed to prayer and praise in tongues in a

congregational setting, unless it were accompanied by interpretation.³⁹ In Chapter 12 he had urged them to realize that being spiritual recognized a great variety of gifts and ministries in the church. In Chapter 14 he pointed out that the purpose of having church gatherings is for the edification of the congregation. Doing this is an expression of love. In these verses (36-40), he used some very strong language. First, he hit them with a verbal putdown, a bit of sarcasm, Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? In other words, “Who are you to tell the rest of us how it should be done? Is Corinth an exception to the rules that govern all of the other churches?”

Then, he declared that the instructions that he gave are not his, but that they are God's command, given through Paul. This is followed by a prophetic sentence of judgment, But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized (the thought is very close to his statement in 1 Corinthians 8:2-3).

Paul is not going to try to convince them, or waste time arguing the point. He is going to ignore them. If they don't recognize his commandment as being from God, they will deal with God, not Paul. The closing exhortation is to conduct an orderly service, and to not forbid spiritual manifestations. These two verses (39-40) hit both the groups that want no spiritual manifestations in their midst and those who want nothing but these manifestations without guidelines.

So, we return to our two unaddressed questions, 1. Is 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 a description of a normal church service in the First Century, or was this just a “Corinthian” service and not the norm for all First Century churches? This question cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. The only description that we have of such a service is in the Corinthian letter and the Corinthian Church certainly was not a model church. A very telling item is the fact that the rather complete description of a church service given by Justin Martyr (c140 AD), and passing accounts by the other early Second Century writers, make no mention of such manifestations in their meetings (this is treated more fully in the paper, The Meeting, from the 1999 conclave).

Yet, even though there is no record of charismata in any other New Testament Church, or in the very earliest of the post-biblical writings (prior to 185 AD), this proves nothing.

If the Corinthian Church had been handling things properly, we would not have Paul's extensive discussion of the charismata in I Corinthians. Paul clearly stated that all of the other churches practiced order in their services. With the exception of Justin Martyr's detailed description (which presents itself as a very detailed record of all that went on in a church meeting), it could be argued that the reason there is no mention of charismata in the earliest post-biblical writing is because there was no need to bring any correction in this area.⁴⁰ We are led to ask, “Why did the Holy Spirit and the early Church choose to preserve Paul's comments on the charismata?” The most obvious answer is because the churches of that age needed and the Church in all ages will need these guidelines.

2. If the manifestations are for every age, should church leaders seek to do what they can to promote the type of meeting described in 1 Corinthians 14:1-40, or are Paul's instructions more in the vein of, “if you do have these things, here is how to manage them in a Godhonoring manner”?

Frequently, we hear leaders in Charismatic churches stating something to the effect that we need to, “stir up the gifts.” There is no exhortation anywhere in the New Testament to that effect.

Timothy was urged to kindle afresh (KJV – stir up) the gift that was in him (2 Timothy 1:6) and to not neglect the spiritual gift that was in him (1 Timothy 4:14).

However, the context of these exhortations makes it clear that Paul is referring to the gifts (and calling) that were given to Timothy for the special ministry to which he had been called, especially that of preaching and teaching. Paul's exhortation to Timothy is closer to the functional gifts referred to in Romans 12:1-21, where Paul urges diligence in the fulfilling of these spiritual enablements. This is not the same thing as stirring up the charismata in a corporate gathering of the Church.

Two extremes are possible, neither of which fits Paul's guidelines, · a meeting that is so ordered and controlled that there is no opportunity for the charismata to function, should the Holy Spirit desire to manifest Himself. This certainly is far from the picture that Paul paints of a meeting in which the Holy Spirit is present and active.

· a meeting in which there is little of substantive value, but a weekly parade of folks popping up and speaking whatever comes to their mind, and calling it prophecy, or "a word." This cheapens the entire concept of prophecy, etc.

03.09. Conclusions Drawn from Paul's Instructions in Chapter 14

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS

Conclusion #1 The Holy Spirit will manifest Himself throughout the Church Age. He may manifest Himself in one way here, and in another manner there, but manifestations always will be present in the Church. When God rings down the curtain on the present age, these things no longer will be taking place, because the need for them will be gone.

Conclusion #2 Individual Christians and the corporate meeting are unlike anything else in the world. The living presence of God dwells within. Prior to His departure, Jesus did not dictate a host of rules and religious ceremonies which His followers had to obey in their own strength and discipline.

Instead, He promised an ongoing living relationship, to be experienced through the presence of the Holy Spirit within each believer and manifested through the charismata in the corporate meeting. A church meeting is not just a group of people with a common faith and purpose. It is 41 a time in which believers encourage and edify one another, but it is even more than that. A church meeting is a time when Our Lord, through the Holy Spirit, ministers to His people.

Conclusion #3 The Holy Spirit imparts various abilities to various individuals, enabling them to be instruments of edification to the church. These abilities are freely given gifts, which the Holy Spirit dispenses according to reasons within himself. Not everyone will manifest every gift. Some may manifest more than one. We do not have in the Bible a single exhaustive list of the ways in which the Holy Spirit will manifest Himself.

Conclusion #4 It is appropriate for believers to have a passion for blessing the corporate gathering. One way that this is done is through prophecy. Therefore, if the motivation is to be a blessing to the body, a desire for the gift of prophecy is appropriate.

Conclusion #5 Church leaders should not control a service to the point that there is no liberty for the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself through various members of the congregation. A service constructed in a manner that forces everyone to be a spectator is not the New Testament model. This does not mean that the meeting cannot be planned or organized, but flexibility is important.

Elders should realize that they are responsible for overseeing the service, but that the service does not belong to them. It belongs to Our Lord Statements such as, "Holy Spirit, we invite your presence here," and "Jesus we invite you to move among us," imply that the meeting is ours and we are inviting Him to attend. He clearly said that when we meet in His name, He will be in our midst (Matthew 18:20). A better perspective is that this is God's meeting, and we thank Him for allowing us to come into His presence.

Conclusion #6 Regardless of what the elements of a service might be, all things should be done in an orderly manner. God is a God of order; disorder neither represents Him nor glorifies Him. A meeting that is a disordered cacophony is exactly what Paul proscribes in 1 Corinthians 14:1-40.

Conclusion #7 Prayer in tongues is praying in a legitimate language, spoken somewhere on the globe, either in the past or in the present, or a language spoken by angels. Tongues truly are, “prayer language.”

Conclusion #8 Tongues are given for the purpose of communicating with God. Tongues are not for communicating with the church. One should not pray out loud in tongues in the corporate gathering unless a known interpreter is present. Only one person at a time should pray in tongues and then be interpreted, so that the congregation can “amen” the prayer.

Conclusion #9 Praying in the Spirit, and praying with the spirit do not mean the same thing. Praying in the Spirit means praying at the impulse and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Praying with the Spirit is praying in tongues. All prayer at all times is to be prayed in the Holy Spirit, whether it is with the human spirit (tongues) or with the human mind (known language).

Conclusion #10 Tongues, and perhaps all charismata, may function apart from the Holy Spirit. This is seen from the following, · Charismata should be ministered in a manner that edifies the body, as an expression of love.

- Paul's corrective statements make it obvious that some of the Corinthians were seeking to elevate themselves through the public display of tongues, which was neither edifying to the body, nor an expression of love · The Holy Spirit would not motivate anyone to exercise a charismata in order to build someone's fleshly pride or to display an attitude of competition.

- The one exception would be in a case of judgment on the church. If the Holy Spirit motivated a plethora of tongues speakers to display uninterpreted tongues in the corporate meeting, this would be a sign of judgment on the church.

- Since God was not pronouncing judgment on the Corinthian Church, and the Holy Spirit was not motivating those who were displaying the gift of tongues in a divisive manner, then those who were speaking/praying in uninterpreted tongues were functioning apart from the Holy Spirit.

03.10. A Word of Advice

A Word of Advice

Elders should teach on this topic so that the people will be informed, including God's guidelines and restrictions as presented in 1 Corinthians 14:1-40. In small group meetings, church members should grow and mature in their expressions of the Holy Spirit. They thus can learn the difference between a manifestation of the Holy Spirit that is growing within them on one hand, and when it is something of their own soul, on the other. By being taught and growing in the exercise of their gifts, members can be a blessing in larger gatherings.

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