

The Christian and Missionary Alliance



Statement of Faith Study Guide with Notes

by
Pastor Brad Stephenson

Introduction

As a church planter one of the frequently asked questions one receives is, “what does your church believe?” That is a good question, perhaps the best, as it betrays the truth that the church has a reputation of being in the “believing” business. The need to know what we believe is what led to the development of this study.

Like many projects, once things get started they many times take on a life of their own. Such is the case with this study. This study began as a series of teachings during the Wednesday night Bible Study at Resurrection Church in Bowling Green, KY. It began as lessons on the Trinity. However, as weeks went by it soon snowballed.

Nothing is more important than for God’s people to know who God is, and nothing is more crucial to discernment than knowing the truth of what the Bible teaches. With those two goals in mind this study will be made available to members of the congregation at the new members orientation course.

The format is simple. The Statement of Faith is printed in large bold italic type. The corresponding primary scripture references follow immediately in a parenthesis. Several of the points are expanded upon with extensive study material and quotations that follow in context. In addition there are certain definitions, etc. footnoted in appropriate places. Hebrew and Greek words are written phonetically with English characters.

All for Jesus,
Brad Stephenson

Statement of Faith

1. There is one God, who is infinitely perfect, existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **p. 1**
2. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died upon the cross, the Just for the Unjust, as a substitutionary sacrifice, and all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. He arose from the dead according to the Scriptures. He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest. He will come again to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace. **p. 8**
3. The Holy Spirit is a divine person, sent to indwell, guide, teach, and empower the believer, and to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. **p. 9**
4. The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice. **p. 10**
5. Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God. He fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death. All men are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God, and can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prospect of the impenitent and unbelieving person is existence forever in conscious torment, and that of the believer in Christ is everlasting joy and bliss. **p. 10**
6. Salvation has been provided through Jesus Christ for all men, and those who repent and believe in Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life, and become the children of God. **p. 12**
7. It is the will of God that each believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit and be sanctified wholly, being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to the will of God, thereby receiving power for holy living and effective service. This is both a crisis and progressive experience wrought in the life of the believer subsequent to conversion. **p. 12**
8. Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body. Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil are taught in the scriptures and are privileges for the Church in this present age. **p. 19**
9. The Church consists of all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, are redeemed through His blood, and are born again of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church, which has been commissioned by Him to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the gospel to all nations. The local church is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together for the worship of God, edification through the Word of God, prayer, fellowship, the proclamation of the gospel, and observance of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. **p. 22**
10. There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust; for the former a resurrection unto life; for the latter a resurrection unto judgement. **p. 23**
11. The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent and will be personal, visible, and premillennial. This is the believer's hope and is a vital truth that is an incentive to holy living and faithful service. **p. 23**

1. There is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), **who is infinitely** (Psalms 147:5 [understanding] Ephesians 3:20 [power] Isaiah 40:28; 46:5, 9) **perfect** (Matthew 5:48), **existing eternally** (Psalms 90:2), **in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit** (see below).

THE TRINITY

The Doctrine of the Trinity is the most fiercely contested Christian doctrine. The attention this doctrine has received signifies its importance. Still today it is usually the first truth that false teachers and heretical groups pervert. This is a testimony that the enemy of our souls fears the knowledge of God among His people. Therefore, as one engages this worthwhile study two Bible passages are noteworthy - II Timothy 2:15 and Jeremiah 9:23, 24¹. Also it is helpful to remember that what is being taught here is that God has a Triune Personality.

Old Testament (O.T.)

“What we will be seeking here are indications, hints, of the understanding of God by O.T. writers that go beyond the mere normal understanding of God on a monotheistic model. To put it another way, are there any indications of the complexity or the composite character of God in the O.T.? . . . Are there hints within the O.T. revelation of this Trinitarian understanding that await the fuller revelation of the N.T. to make it complete?”²

I. Hebrew concept of unity in plurality

A. Numbers 21:4-5 - The people had a common “soul” not “souls”.

B. Elohim - Deuteronomy 6:4; (cf. Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:1ff) a primary name of God in O.T. . It is the plural form of El.

C. Echad vs. Yachid - Both are translated “one”, but the former (echad) clearly refers to a compound unity, and the latter (yachid) a simple unity. Genesis 2:24 and Proverbs 4:3 illustrate these respectively. cf. Deuteronomy 6:4 which uses echad

D. The admixture of plural and singular verbs - Genesis 1:26 “God said” (singular) “let us make” (plural). cf. 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8

E. Closely read, Isaiah 48:12-16 is meaningless apart from an understanding of God as a compound unity of Triune personality. This is a crucial passage in the O.T. regarding this doctrine.

II. Summary

“In short, may one not suggest with a degree of probability that any Israelite who thought this ‘Elohim’ to be Many also thought this ‘Elohim’ to be One?”³

¹ A good quote is found in Millard Erickson, God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Study of the Trinity, Baker 1995, p. 25ff, too lengthy to reproduce here.

² Erickson, pp. 159-60.

³ Aubrey Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), p.28. Quoted in Erickson, p. 171.

New Testament (N.T.)

It is in the N.T. where the triune nature of God is more fully revealed.

I. Formalized Doctrinal Statements

A. One of the common objections to formal doctrinal statements (creeds) is that creedal formulas postdate the N.T. time by many years, and are an artificial creation of the ancient church. However, a close look reveals that in N.T. times there were accepted doctrinal systems understood by the church, two allusions follow.

B. “The Gospel” (“the”-definite article) (euangellion-“good news” otherwise translated “gospel”) is a phrase referring to an understood body of truth to which Paul had given a title as indicated by the definite article “the”. cf. Romans 1:16; 16:25; I Corinthians 15:1; Galatians 2:2

C. Prior to the time of mass publication, it was common for people to be taught doctrine through the use of singing. Philippians 2:6-11 and I Timothy 3:16 both have a parallel structure similar to Hebrew poetry with a rhythm that suggests they were early hymns designed to disseminate fundamental doctrines.

II. Representative Trinitarian References throughout the New Testament

A. Gospels

1. Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22 - The Father, the Son, and the Spirit work in concert with one another at Jesus’ baptism.

2. Matthew 28:19 where “name” is singular with a definite article "the" for each of the distinct persons. One Name for one Being of three persons.⁴

B. Epistles

1. Paul - II Thessalonians 2:13, 14; II Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:10,11; cf. Isaiah 45:22, 23. These passages illustrate how Paul saw the three Persons of the Godhead working in concert for our salvation with no contradiction in understanding the God of the O.T. to be One and the same as Jesus of Nazareth.

2. Peter - I Peter 1:2

III. The Deity of Jesus in John's Writings

“more than any other N.T. author, (John) appears to pay more explicit attention to the issues of the Trinity.”⁵

A. Greek Grammatical Considerations in John 1:1 (in arche hen ho logos kai ho logos hen pros ton theon kai theos hen ho logos) *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

1. “was” (= hen) which is the imperfect tense of ‘eimi’ (= I am) which conveys no thought of origin for God or the Logos but continuous existence. Compare with v.14, “egeneto” (=became) which is the aorist tense which refers to a ‘point in time’ action (Luke 1:35). The simple understanding being that the Word (Jesus) who preexisted at a point in time took on

⁴The references in Acts where baptism was said to be done in the Name of Jesus are considered contradictions to this text. However, if Acts is a description and Matthew is a prescription then Matthew 28:19 would illuminate the Acts passages. Also, to do something in someone's name is significant not just as a title but as representative of doing it under the authority of that person. Baptism was not unique to the ministry of Jesus, therefore it had to be referred to as distinct with regard to being done with reference to faith in Him as Messiah, Lord, and Savior as opposed to other baptismal purposes. cf. Acts 19:1ff.

⁵Erikson, p.198.

human flesh when conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb.⁶

2. "God" (= theos) is anarthrous (without a definite article) . . . "*statement as one of predication or quality. The same quality of deity is true of the Word as is true of the one, God, with whom He is present.*"⁷

3. "with" (= pros) "*used (in a prepositional phrase) with the accusative case presents a plane of equality and intimacy face to face with each other*" cf. I John 2:1⁸

4. "*We would seem to have in this one verse possibly the strongest intimation of the Trinity found anywhere in scripture.*"⁹

B. Relationship or Action between the Father and the Son.

1. Equivalent- John 10:30; 12:44, 45; 14:7, 9-11;

I John 2:23 (also Matthew 3:16, 17) He always works in concert with Himself.

2. Distinct

a. "*And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor me.*" (John 16:3) Notice in this sentence there is equality yet distinction. (cf. John 5:19)

b. "We" passages teaching that Jesus saw not only unity between Him and the Father but also distinction ". . . *that they may be one just as We are one.*" (John 17:11, 22) ". . . *We will come . . . We will make . . .*" (John 14:23)

c. John 15:26; 16:12-15 indicate distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

IV. Deity and Personality of the Holy Spirit.

Ruach (Hebrew) and pneuma (Greek) each translated 'spirit' in English are both words meaning wind or breath that suggest power in action which the English word spirit misses.

A. Personality of the Holy Spirit

1. Various references to the Spirit's intelligence

(I Corinthians 2:10-13; Acts 13:2; 15:28), emotion (Ephesians 4:30), morality (Acts 15:28; John 14:17), and will (Acts 16:6,7) are found throughout the N.T. as well as juxtaposition with other persons in the Godhead (John 16:8; Matthew 28:19).

2. References to His Masculine Personality

a. "Parakletos" (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) is a Greek masculine noun, a compound word meaning 'one who is called alongside'. It is usually translated comforter or helper.

b. "Allos" (= another), is a Greek word meaning 'another of the same kind' as opposed to 'heteros' a Greek word which means 'another of a different kind' (John 14:16).

c. "Ekeinos" (= he), is a Greek masculine pronoun used incorrectly in the following verses to modify the neuter noun "pneum." (= spirit), (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8, 13, 14). In John 14:17 John uses the grammatically correct neuter pronoun "hauto" (=it) demonstrating John's grammatical competence. This makes the aberration

⁶A. T. Robertson, The Fourth Gospel The Epistle to the Hebrews, Vol. V of Word Pictures in the New Testament, (1932; Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention) p. 4.

⁷Erikson, p. 200.

⁸Robertson, p.4.

⁹Erickson p. 201.

an obvious emphasis of the Spirit's masculine personality.

*“So I plead: Never think or speak of the Holy Spirit in less than personal terms! My heart sinks and I wince, when I hear Christians, as I sometimes do, calling the third divine person ‘it’ rather than ‘he.’ . . . For you cannot understand the Spirit's ministry till you have grasped the fact of his personhood, and it is where no strong sense or clear grasp of the Spirit's work is found that his personhood comes to be denied. One does not want to see any wavering at this point among biblical Christians.”*¹⁰

B. Deity of the Holy Spirit

1. He shares Divine titles with the Father and the Son (I Corinthians 2:8 “Lord of Glory”; Ephesians 1:17 “Father of Glory”; I Peter 4:14 “Spirit of Glory”; Acts 7:2; Psalms 24:7-10; 29:3).
2. He shares with the Father and the Son in the total work of salvation of persons (Ephesians 1:3-6 *planned* by the Father; 7-12 *purchased* by the Son; 13-14 *pledged* by the Spirit).
3. All three Persons are mentioned as working simultaneously (II Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 3:16, 17).
4. The singular noun, “name” is used to refer to all three persons of the Godhead (Matthew 28:19). “*God's Christian Name*” --Karl Barth
5. Peter refers to the Holy Spirit as God. (Acts 5:3, 4)
6. In passages from John 14 - 16 explained earlier we see that His ministry was an equivalent continuation of Jesus'. So just as Jesus was God, so is He who is an “allos parakletos” (= another comforter).

2. Jesus Christ is true God and true man (see 1. III. p. 4) ***He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.*** (Luke 1:26-38) ***He died upon the cross*** (Luke 23:32-46), ***the Just for the unjust*** (I Peter 3:18), ***as a substitutionary sacrifice*** (Mark 10:45; II Corinthians 5:14), ***and all who believe in Him are justified***¹¹ (Romans 5:1) ***on the ground of His shed blood*** (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:13, 14; I John 1:7). ***“He arose from the dead according to the scriptures.”*** (I Corinthians 15:3,4) ***He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest.*** (Hebrews 1:3; 4:14-16; 7:23-25) ***He will come again to establish His kingdom of majesty and peace.*** (Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 19:11-20:6)

3. The Holy Spirit is a divine person (see 1. IV. A. p. 6) ***sent to indwell***, (John 14:17), ***guide***, (John 16:13; Romans 8:14) ***teach*** (John 14:26) ***and empower*** (Acts 1:8) ***the believer*** (Romans 8:9), ***and to convince the world of sin***¹², ***of righteousness, and of judgment*** (John 16:8-11). This is the only place in scripture where the spirit is spoken of doing a

¹⁰J.I. Packer, Keep in Step with the Spirit (Old Tappan, New Jersey, Fleming H. Revell, 1984) pp. 62-3.

¹¹Just or Justified are theological terms meaning declared not guilty. In the original Greek they are translated from the same root word as is also translated righteous/ness.

¹²Sin is a Biblical term meaning to disobey God and fall short of His will for one's life.

work in the world. “Elegxei” (=convince), is a legal term used for the for the purpose of pronouncing a judicial verdict of guilt. Unbelief in Jesus is a classic illustration of person’s sinfulness. The resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God the Father is vindication of His true righteousness which those who crucified Him denied (cf. John 19:38; Mark 15:29; Luke 23:41; Romans 4:25; Acts 3:14,15). Satan's overthrow is not an arbitrary exercise of power but a legal judgment. Justice is done in the overthrow of the evil one. The accuser no longer has basis for accusation against Christ or those who are His because of His atoning work on the cross. “Kekritai” (=judged or condemned) is a verb in the perfect tense which means a settled act which is ongoing. Even though he is allowed to temporarily operate, Satan has already been judged (cf. John 3:18; 12:31; Hebrews 2:14). The conviction of the sinner is with regard to the futility of serving a defeated foe, as one recognizes that Jesus is the only true King. As J. I. Packer summarizes well by saying, “*The essence of the Holy Spirit's ministry, at this or any time in the Christian era, is to mediate the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”¹³ (cf. John 16:12-15)

4. *The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice.* (Genesis 1:3; II Peter 1:19-21; II Timothy 3:16; John 19:24, 36; John 5:46, 47; 14:26) “Inerrant” means without any error. “Verbally inspired” means that God led them to use the words that He wanted used, i.e. within their existing vocabulary God brought the words to their mind He wanted used to compose the Bible, without dictating or innovating language.

5. *Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26) he fell through disobedience (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6), incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death (Genesis 3:19; 5:5). All men are born with a sinful nature (Romans 5:12-19)* It must obviously be assumed that all sin originated in the fall (Adam and Eve Genesis 3). Matthew 18:1-14 teaches that inherited sinfulness and personal guilt are two different things. Degrees of guilt seem to be related to the personal knowledge of the sinner. Look at Jesus' words in John 9:41 and Luke 12:47, 48. To clarify: at whatever point in their lives individuals are able to choose between obedience and disobedience to God (i.e. old enough to know better), given their inherited proclivity from Adam, will, of themselves, always choose to disobey, and thereby become personally responsible for their sins. In other words, willful disobedience is truly “*sin properly so called.*”¹⁴ Further light is shed on this as one examines the first 6 chapters of Leviticus and Numbers 15:22-29 compared with vv. 30, 32. Additional insight is found in Leviticus 16, illuminated by the comments in Hebrews 9:7. Even under the Mosaic covenant all sin was not treated equally; sins of ignorance were covered by the sacrificial system, but willful disobedience had no such atonement apart from the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 9:15) ***are separated from the life of God (John 10:10; Ephesians 2:1), and can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ***

¹³Packer, p.55

¹⁴John Wesley quoted in annotation on I John 3:6 in Wesley Study Bible, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson , 1990).

(Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:12-14; I John 2:2; John 1:29; 14:6). ***The prospect of the impenitent¹⁵ and unbelieving person is existence forever in conscious torment*** (Matthew 25:41, 46; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:11-15; 21:8)¹⁶ ***and that of the believer in Christ is everlasting joy and bliss.*** (John 11:25, 26; Matthew 25:34; Revelation 21:3, 4, 6, 7; also consult Luke 16:19-31)

6. *Salvation has been provided through Jesus Christ for all men,* (Matthew 11:27; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; I Timothy 2:5) ***and those who repent and believe in Him are born again of the Holy Spirit,*** (Mark 1:14, 15; Acts 2:38; John 1:12, 13; 3:3; Ephesians 2:1; Titus 3:5) ***receive the gift of eternal life,*** (Romans 6:23; John 6:47) ***and become the children of God.*** (John 1:12, 13; Galatians 4:4, 5)

7. *It is the will of God that each believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit* (Ephesians 5:18) ***and be sanctified wholly*** (I Thessalonians 5:23), ***being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to the will of God*** (Romans 12:1, 2), ***thereby receiving power for holy living*** (Acts 1:8) ***and effective service*** (II Timothy 1:7). ***This is both a crisis¹⁷***

(I Thessalonians 5:23; Ephesians 3:16, 19) ***and progressive experience*** (II Peter 1:5-9; 3:18; Colossians 1:10; II Thessalonians 1:3; I Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14; Philippians 2:12, 13) ***wrought in the life of the believer subsequent to conversion.*** One of the greatest blessings God has given His people is the indwelling presence of Christ through the person of the Holy Spirit. Sadly, the definition, description and understanding of the full measure of this blessing has been one of the most controversial of Christian subjects. Why is it controversial? The obvious answer is that Satan knows where the power lies, and wants to distract God's people. In addition there is confusion over our various experiences of the Holy Spirit's ministry, and confusion over terminology used to describe this Biblical reality.

Confusion Over Experience

Throughout the history of the church there have been four main sources of authority for Christians: the Bible, church tradition, man's intelligence or reason, and personal experience (scripture, tradition, reason, experience).¹⁸ All four are valid sources, however, to elevate any on a plane equal or superior to scripture leads to false teaching. With that background, let us consider the proper role of experience in relationship to life in the Spirit of God.

God works His saving work in each of us, by grace through faith, but the personal experience of that work is unique to each of us. Some came to Christ at home through their parents' witness, some at a Sunday morning church service, some in a Sunday School class, and some at an evangelistic meeting. For some it was quite emotional, for some it was calm and rational. Does that

¹⁵"Impenitent" means someone who is aware of his sinfulness but unwilling to denounce and turn away from it. It is a synonym for unrepentant.

¹⁶It is profitable to consult a reputable Bible Dictionary on Jesus' use of the word Gehenna as the primary reference for hell. It is used twelve times in the N.T., eleven by Jesus. Therefore, the basis of this teaching comes directly from Jesus.

¹⁷"Crisis" is used here in a theological sense, meaning 'point in time' not in the common sense of emergency or disaster. The intent being to emphasize that sanctification is not just a gradual reality in the life of the believer, but is also an instantaneous work of God received by faith.

¹⁸This known as the "Wesleyan Quadrilateral".

mean that each individual experience becomes a standard for others? Does everyone have to be saved in the same setting? Furthermore, look at the recorded instances of healing by Jesus in the Gospels. No two were alike. In each case Jesus healed the body, but He didn't do any two the same way. So it is with life in the Spirit.

Many persons have been robbed of the joy of knowing the certainty of the Holy Spirit's presence and power because they have been taught to seek the experience of another person rather than simply Jesus Himself. Just as with salvation or healing, the way Jesus imparted the full measure of the Spirit's power to believers was similar yet unique. Compare the disciples of Acts 2, the Samaritans of Acts 8, Saul in Acts 9, the Centurion in Acts 10, and the Ephesians of Acts 19; the same reality--yes, the same experience--no.

The question then is not, did this person have the same experience as I did when Christ's Spirit took full control of their life, but is the fruit of the Christ life (Galatians 5:22,23) evident within them. Are they walking in victory over willful sin by the power of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16); are they boldly witnessing for Christ with their lives (Acts 1:8)? Are the supernatural gifts of the Spirit resulting in ministry to others (I Corinthians 12)? If so then one cannot deny the reality of the Spirit's fullness in their lives just because their experience of His filling was different from our own.

Confusion Over Terminology

Many times two people use the same word meaning different things. The result is they fail to communicate, even though they assume otherwise. Or, they may use different words and mean the same thing. Again, the result is a failure to communicate.

Christians tend to develop a vocabulary based on their particular denominational, theological, and cultural backgrounds. Just as there are regional dialects, accents, word meanings, and phrases, so there are with Christians. One could put a Pentecostal, Baptist, and Episcopalian in the same room, talking about the same spiritual reality, expressing it in radically different fashion, thinking they are at odds, but all the while be in complete agreement. So it is with discussions about life in the Spirit. We must hear the admonition of James the Elder when he reminds us to “. . . be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath . . .”

Following are the most familiar phrases used to describe life in the Spirit. First, those directly from the Bible:

- ▶ Baptism of the Holy Spirit;
- ▶ Filling of the Holy Spirit;
- ▶ Entire Sanctification.

Second, some non-Biblical terms used to describe Biblical realities:

- ▶ Deeper Life;
- ▶ Second Blessing;
- ▶ Second Work of Grace;
- ▶ Christian Perfection.

Anytime we attempt to define spiritual realities in non-Biblical terms we run the risk of controversy -- unnecessary controversy. So, try to avoid the use of non-Biblical terminology, especially in conversation with someone who may have certain preconceptions or prejudices. We will not take time to attempt definition of the latter, but will attempt some definitions of the former.

One of the most challenging of Biblical word studies is the definition and relationship of

these three phrases -- Spirit Baptism; Spirit Filling; Entire Sanctification. Looking at some exemplary passages in context is the best way to discover Biblical definitions.

Baptism¹⁹ of the Holy Spirit - Acts 1:5

- ▶ baptisthsesthe = baptized - Future tense Passive voice Indicative mood Verb
- ▶ paraphrase = ‘allow yourselves to receive the immersion with the Holy Spirit in the future’ - I Cor. 12:13
- ▶ ebaptisthmen = baptized - Aorist tense Passive voice Indicative mood Verb
- ▶ paraphrase = ‘you have allowed yourselves to receive the immersion by the Holy Spirit’

Filling of the Holy Spirit - Eph. 5:18

- ▶ plerousthe = filled - Present tense Passive Voice Imperative mood Verb
- ▶ paraphrase = ‘you are ordered to allow yourself to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit’ In this passage context indicates that filling = control as it's contrasted with being “drunk with wine”

Entire Sanctification²⁰ - I Thessalonians 5:23, 24

- ▶ holoteleis = entirely - a compound word from ‘whole’ and ‘complete’ a functional equivalents are baptize, fill, or saturate
- ▶ agiasai = sanctified - Aorist tense Active voice Optative mood Verb
- ▶ terhythein = kept/preserved Aorist tense Passive voice Optative mood Verb
- ▶ paraphrase = ‘may God make and keep you holy in every aspect of your being’

Notice first, that each of the references are addressed to believers. So, baptism, filling, and entire sanctification are realities that are a present possibility for believers in this life now.

Second, all three terms indicate complete saturation of persons with, in, or by the Holy Spirit. So, the result is His ability to be in control of believer’s lives.

Thirdly, believers are the passive recipients of the baptizing, filling, and sanctifying. We receive it from God as a result of exercising faith.

So, they all describe different aspects of a similar reality. Let us not get ‘hung up’ on terminology, but focus on the reality of the Spirit filled life. As one well known Christian leader once said, “*however you might define the experience, are you now ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit?*”²¹ We must ‘take the meat’ of life in the Spirit, and ‘leave the bones’ for the theologians to pick over.

¹⁹Biblical Greek dictionaries universally define baptize as dip, immerse, plunge, saturate, etc.

²⁰"Sanctify" in the original Greek is a verbal form of the noun holy. So it means to be actively holy-functionally separate from all that is not of God. In practical terms this means to be like God in our victory over sin and of our acting in accordance with right relationship with Him and others.

²¹Dr. David Rambo former president of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Quoted from a sermon.

Conclusion

The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is something God does for us, and something to which we obediently respond in faith. His work is to make us holy, both in who we are and what we do. This is the will of God (I Thessalonians 4:3). The admixture of present and aorist verb tenses in pertinent passages says that this is both a point in time, and a gradual/progressive/ongoing reality. This is the essence of point #7. Sadly, in the process of confusion over terms and experiences we too often throw out the 'baby with the bath water.'

Have you learned that even as a Christian you still struggle with sin and defeat? Do old sinful habits still dominate? Do you long for the powerful manifestation of the Spirit's gifts, bearing fruit that lasts? Read Romans 8:9, realize that as a believer God has come to live in you in the person of the Holy Spirit. Read Ezekiel 36:25-29, realize God knows that the only way for His people to willfully obey Him is by the power of His Holy Spirit within them. Read I John 1:5,7, realize that the blood of Christ now cleanses you from all sin. Read Acts 1:8, realize that Jesus spoke of the Spirit bringing power to the life of the believer to provide living evidence of His resurrection to the world. Read John 14:16-18; 16:13, 14 and realize that the power Jesus spoke of is His own life and power, and that He, through the Holy Spirit, wants to share His life with you. Read Luke 11:13 and realize that God wants YOU to ask so that HE can give you the Spirit's fullness. Read Romans 8:14, realize that the question is not do you have the Holy Spirit but does the Holy Spirit have you? Read Romans 12:1, 2 and realize that you can surrender your life entirely to God, you can give all of you for all of Him.

Believe and surrender today. God wants you to have a victorious, fruitful life in Christ.

8. Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body.

(Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:17) For an excellent study of the Biblical doctrine of Divine Healing see Dr. Keith M. Bailey, The Children's Bread, (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications 1977). The following italicized quotations for point #8 are all from Dr. Bailey's book with page numbers noted. Most negative reactions to this point of doctrine stem from the question-if healing is in the atonement, why aren't all believers healed all the time? Following are some helpful quotes on this subject:

The benefit of healing in the atonement does not demand that all who exercise faith must have perfect health any more than the benefit of salvation in the atonement demands that all who believe must manifest complete sinlessness. p. 46

The Biblical doctrine of healing does not claim to conquer death. Death is defeated by the resurrection--the ultimate result of the atonement. All of the people Christ healed had to die. Certainly no serious scholar would discredit His miracles of healing on the ground that the recipients of that blessing ultimately died. pp. 48, 49

Physical healing is related to vicarious atonement because sickness in man is the direct result of his fallen state. p. 54

No one would argue the fact that the translation of the believer is in the atonement, but that fact is not sufficient to claim that blessing at any time. p. 37 .

A helpful perspective is gained by asking, how does the appropriation of this blood-bought blessing of bodily healing fit within the larger context of God's primary purpose for our lives (see

Romans 8:28, 29)? For example, God may choose to delay healing grace in favor of using the humility and/or dependency brought about by sickness to appropriate a full measure of sanctifying grace, always remembering that the great first cause of broken relationship with God is sin. ***Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil are taught in the scriptures and are privileges for the church in this present age.*** (James 5:13-18; Mark 6:13)

The anointing with oil has sometimes been interpreted as medical therapy rather than ecclesiastical (meaning church related) unction. If such were the case, it would introduce an element completely foreign to the context. Everything about the passage points to a spiritual ministry. The nursing care of the sick is not under discussion here. That the elders of the church should perform the nurse-care function is unrealistic. The elders anointing with oil in the name of the Lord for healing by means of divine intervention, is the teaching of this passage.

The ecclesiastical view of anointing is further sustained by the statement in Mark 6:13: . . . The use of oil by the apostles resulted in instantaneous healing. Oil, as a medical treatment, does not produce immediate healing. The apostles no doubt used anointing with oil to encourage faith in those seeking healing. Those scholars who contend for a medical use of oil in James 5 admit that the usage in Mark 6:13 cannot be medical. The same Greek verb is used in both passages . . .

the apostle emphasizes the relationship of healing and prayer. . . . The elders have a special responsibility to pray the prayers of faith when anointing. The whole assembly is called upon to pray for one another when some member suffers from a physical malady. The pattern of prayer for healing, according to the Scripture, is a ministry shared by the whole church. p. 133

With regard to the sick person initiating the request matters of obedience, faith, preparation of the heart, humility, and dependence upon God, are key ingredients.

The apostle was not suggesting that on rare occasions one might hope that anointing would result in healing, but he asserts a positive expectation that anointing will result in healing. p. 134

The anointing oil symbolizes the direct and immediate work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit not the oil gives life to the body. . . . When a group of elders pray, no one knows who prayed the prayer of faith for healing. . . . No one gets a reputation as a healer. . . . It is a local church affair. Extracurricular meetings find no authorization in the Scriptures. Healing sign miracles did occur in the Book of Acts. But these were not meetings called for healing. Healing occurred incidentally on these occasions.

The only authorized healing service for the church is James 5:13-18. It is a church meeting, not a public affair. It is for believers. p. 135

Confession is the heart preparation for prayer . . . The original language suggests rather that the prayers of the church now cleansed and spiritually renewed are prayers of worship and adoration. The purpose of the prayer meeting, then, is not to persuade God to heal but to prepare the hearts of the saints to receive the blessing of healing . . . Since the text does not say, the Lord Jesus Christ, it can be implied that the whole Trinity is involved when the sick are anointed . . . It seems from this passage that it is appropriate to anoint the sick in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. p. 136

Herman Hoyt translates the verse in these words: The prayer of a righteous man, which is energized (wrought) in him accomplishes much. It is true that righteous men pray effectively, but James is saying also that the kind of praying needed on this occasion finds its inspiration in God Himself. p. 137

Like anointing, the laying on of hands symbolizes spiritual reality. It speaks of the communication of divine blessing through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. p. 138

9. *The Church*²² (Matthew 16:18) *consists of all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 16:31; 2:47), *are redeemed through His blood* (Colossians 1:14), *and are born again of the Holy Spirit* (Titus 3:5) *Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church* (Colossians 1:18), *which has been commissioned by Him to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the gospel to all nations* (Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15). *The local church is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together for the worship of God, edification through the Word of God, prayer, fellowship, the proclamation of the gospel, and observance of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper*²³ (Acts 2:38, 41-47).

10. *There shall be a bodily* (Philippians 3:20, 21) *Resurrection of the just and the unjust* (John 5:28, 29; I Corinthians 15:44; I Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Revelation 20:11-15); *for the former, a resurrection unto life; for the latter; a resurrection unto judgment.*

11. *The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 1:9-11) *is imminent* (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20) *and will be personal* (Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20), *visible* (Revelation 1:7; I John 3:2), *and premillennial* (Revelation 19:11-20:10). *This is the believer's hope and is a vital truth that is an incentive to holy living and faithful service* (Titus 2:11-14).

Definition of Terms

A. Second Coming - As opposed to His incarnation and birth or what is called His first advent or first coming.

B. Imminent = soon. Obviously this presents some difficulties as almost 2,000 years have transpired since His first coming. However, we must remember that according to II Peter 3:8 God's perspective is different from ours regarding the passage of time.

C. Personal - The Lord Jesus Himself will return in His resurrected body.

D. Visible - As opposed to invisible or secret.

E. Premillennial - Meaning before the inauguration of the 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth. In other words the Kingdom is not fully manifested on earth until King Jesus returns. This term assumes the literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth before the final judgment.

F. Following are additional terms not listed in point #11, but helpful in understanding discussion about end times doctrines.

1. Great Tribulation - A 7 year period of great persecution of God's people spoken of by Jesus immediately preceding Christ's second coming. During this period the earth is ruled by the malevolent person called (among other things) "the Antichrist".

2. Rapture - A term used to describe the true believers (the Church) being caught up in the air with the Lord prior to His second coming.

²²The primary word translated "church" in the nt is the Greek `ekklesia' which means `one who is called out.'

²³The pastor will talk with you specifically about any questions regarding the meaning and practices in your church regarding "ordinance, baptism, Lord's supper".

- a. Pre-tribulation Rapture - The catching away of the church to the Lord before the beginning of the seven year tribulation period.
- b. Mid-tribulation Rapture - The catching away occurs three and one half years after the seven year tribulation begins.
- c. Post-Tribulation Rapture - The catching away occurs at the end of the seven year tribulation just before the return of Jesus to the earth.

Conclusion

This 11 point statement of faith is by no means exhaustive. But since it was developed and adopted by the Christian and Missionary Alliance churches it represents foundational Biblical truths that not only characterize C&MA core beliefs, but also represent typical truths that have been adopted by Bible believing people at large.²⁴

It is helpful to remember that the starting point for believers when discussing potential differences about Bible teaching should not be what we may disagree over, but rather what we agree upon. We may then discover that what unites us is far more important than what may divide us. Thus we may have unity without necessarily expressing unanimity.

This sentiment is especially reflected in the historical values of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. One former leader said it this way: *“We must not waste time quarreling over matters that do not lead to the salvation of those who are perishing without Jesus.”*²⁵

To that we say, “Amen, come Lord Jesus.”²⁶

²⁴Points # 7 & 8 are the only possible exceptions to this statement.

²⁵“Shooting at the Real Enemy,” Editorial, Alliance Life, 19 January 1994. p. 31, col. 1. This article by Dr. Maurice Irvin is an excellent summary of the point made in the last section.

²⁶Revelation 22:20