

Part 3

Foursquare Declaration of Faith Discussion Guide

The Holy Scriptures

“Declaration of Faith” (Article 1)

“We believe that the Holy Bible is the Word of the Living God. Immutable, steadfast, unchangeable, as its author, the Lord Jehovah; that it was written by holy men of old as they were moved upon and inspired by the Holy Spirit; that it is a lighted lamp to guide the feet of a lost world from the depths of sin and sorrow to the heights of righteousness and glory; an unclouded mirror that reveals the face of a crucified Savior; a plumb line to make straight the life of each individual and community; a sharp two-edged sword to convict of sin and evil doing; a strong cord of love and tenderness to draw the penitent to Christ Jesus; a balm of Gilead, in-breathed by the Holy Spirit that can heal and quicken each drooping heart; the only true ground of Christian fellowship and unity; the loving call of an infinitely loving God; the solemn warning, the distant thunder of the storm of wrath and retribution that shall overtake the unheeding; a sign post that points to Heaven; a danger signal that warns from Hell; the divine, supreme and eternal tribunal by whose standards all men, nations, creeds, and motives shall be tried.”¹ (Matt. 24:35; Ps. 119:89; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; John 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15; Phil. 3:16; 1 John 4:1; Isa. 8:20; 1 Thess. 5:21; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:6; Jude 3; Eph. 6:17; Ps. 119:59,60; Phil. 1:9-11).

Interview Questions

- What is your view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible?
- What role would the Scriptures play in your ministry?
- What are your beliefs about the Biblical record of creation and the virgin birth of Jesus?
- What is your method for discovering the meaning of a passage of Scripture?

Introduction

Discovering God’s will for our lives, being led by the Spirit, hearing God’s voice, ministering to other people, resisting temptation, and virtually every other aspect of walking with the Lord will develop largely as a result of spending time reading the Bible. The Bible contains all the promises God has made to us (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:33) and is also the touchstone that protects us against false teachings and/or ideas spawned by demons (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 1 Tim. 4:1). The Word of God must be the only standard by which we judge revelation and prophetic utterances. We welcome and promote the gifts of the Spirit in our churches; however, sincere or persuasive people who claim to have received revelation from the Lord can too easily lead congregations into error. We insist that all gifting, revelation, insight, and prophecy conform to the written Word of God.

¹ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

Questions for Discussion

A. Why is the first article in the “Declaration of Faith” a statement on the Holy Scriptures?

We place this article first because the Scriptures are the foundation of all we believe. All of the other articles of our faith are derived by coming to the Bible in a humble and straightforward manner and letting it reveal its truths to us. As a movement we are determined to believe what the Word intends to teach, and we are determined to live our lives according to its principles. We consider the Word of God our final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

B. How is the Bible different from other books?

The Bible is unlike any other book in the world because it is the Word of God, not of man (2 Tim. 3:16). Though it was penned by human authors, it is a work inspired by God Himself (literally God-breathed). He has overseen its formation and transmission through the centuries and continues to “watch over” it to assure that it does what it is supposed to do (Jer. 1:12). We believe men “moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”; they did not write the Scriptures as an act of human will (2 Pet. 1:20,21).

The ultimate authorship of the Bible is under constant assault by our culture and in our own minds. Why? Because if it is just a good book, an anthology of historical fiction, a moral code, or a treasury of quotable quotes, it does not have any real authority in a person’s life. He or she can take it or leave it; read it or not read it; follow it or dismiss it. But if it is recognized to be God’s Word, it must be submitted to as authoritative on every subject it treats authoritatively; infallibly true in every particular of life, ministry, and spirituality because “there is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel” against it (Prov. 21:30). Since it has such authority, we must be very careful in how we interpret it. The whole Bible must be seen in light of the whole Bible; individual stories or verses can be misleading if taken only on their own.

C. Why did God give us the Bible?

What spiritual benefit do we derive from taking God’s words into our hearts? What can be found in the Bible that cannot be found anywhere else? The Bible is not just paper and ink, words divided into books, chapters, and verses. As simplistic as it may sound, the Bible is the Word of the Lord – what He has said about everything pertaining to real life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3,4). So it has an animated quality that enables it to “perform” and do its intended work in us almost on its own (1 Thess. 2:13). Like a solvent, it gets down and under even the deepest issues in the human psyche, bringing with it God’s restorative and healing power (Heb. 4:12). The truth of God’s Word penetrates beneath our consciousness to sift through all of our feelings and thoughts. Like a lamp shining in the dark, it lights our way so we can see clearly (Ps. 119:105). God did not make people so there would be someone to read His Word. He wrote the Bible, like He made the Sabbath, as a blessing for the sake of people and as a reminder that He is the only One whose words bring us real life – the kind of life He so earnestly desires us to experience (Matt. 4:4). Like the Sabbath, the Bible is only meant to do us good (Mark 2:27). If reading His Word is merely a discipline – a

compulsory exercise of our religion – then we miss all the advantages God wants to bring to us through it:

1. The purpose of true authority is, as Paul puts it, “to build people up” (2 Cor. 13:10), and that is why we are “commended” to God’s Word (Acts 20:32); we are encouraged to place ourselves in its safekeeping and under its benevolent care. As we read the Bible, our spiritual lives are developed and matured (Eph. 4:14). His words increase our strength and confidence until we become firmly established in His ways. Life just works so much better when we read the Bible.
2. Reading the Bible is the best way for us to get to know the Lord – to grow familiar with His voice and His manner of doing things (1 Cor. 10:1-11, especially v.11).
3. The Bible also acts as a magnifying mirror, giving us close-up glimpses of two images. First and foremost, it reflects the glory of the Lord. Second, it holds up a mirror to us, and we are confronted with some not-so-wonderful realities about our attitudes and behaviors. Yet the accurate portraits it gives us of the Lord and of our selves are meant to heal and deliver us, not to condemn us (Ps. 107:20; Matt. 8:8,16).
4. God’s Word is filled with a creative power so life-giving that it framed the cosmos (Gen. 1; Rom. 4:17; Heb. 11:3). The Biblical account of creation revolves around the words “And God said....” He commanded and it was so. Therefore, to believe that the cosmos and life on earth accidentally evolved out of physical matter is more than a science issue; it actually denies the life-quickenning power of God – the power of the Holy Spirit – the power we rely on for resurrection. That power still reverberates in His written words to us.
5. Just as worship has a transforming power in our lives, so too does reading the Bible. His promises not only neutralize corrosive influences in our life but also proactively enable us to become more like Him in how we think and behave (2 Pet. 1:4). They have restorative power to fix the inner damage from wrong ways of thinking (2 Tim. 3:16). Jesus tells us that, the more truth we really know, the more liberated we will be from false and deadly mentalities (John 8:32).

D. What proves the Bible is the Word of God?

Self-definition: The Bible repeatedly claims to be God’s Word (Isa. 40:8; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:25). According to Psalm 19:7-11 the Scriptures are all of the following:

Perfect – exactly right and correct in every detail pertaining to life, wholly complete

Sure – absolutely reliable and trustworthy, a firm foundation on which to stand

Right – precisely as they should be, genuine

Pure – completely free of worldly contaminants or elements of distortion

True and righteous – thoroughly and expertly revealing the way God intended life to work and to be

Sweet and desirable – intensely craved by man’s spirit as the most delightful food imaginable, perfectly nourishing for growth and health

Practical experience: It is impossible to prove that the Bible is the Word of God to those who intend to be skeptical, but, to those who step out in faith on its promises, it proves itself over and over again. People who experience the power of God today seldom find it

difficult to accept the miracles recorded in the Bible. The Bible itself challenges us to “taste and see that the Lord is good...” (Ps. 34:8). It dares us to take Him at His word and see what happens.

History: Jesus points out that the quality of a tree is determined by the quality of the fruit it produces (Matt. 7:17,18), so, since the Bible has existed for thousands of years, we can examine the effect it has had on people and societies. Of course, we must distinguish between those who claim to follow the Bible but act in un-Biblical ways and those who truly live by its principles. Overall, the testimony of history is that “good fruit” is produced whenever the Bible is obeyed.

The inner witness of the Holy Spirit: When people read the Bible with open hearts, they often become aware that the Holy Spirit is personally speaking to them through the words they are reading. Even though this is a very subjective proof, it is so common it must be taken seriously.

Internal consistency: Though the Bible was written by many authors over the course of thousands of years, there is a remarkable consistency in the prophetic themes and spiritual principles taught from Genesis to Revelation. It is truly one book. Such a phenomenon is unique among all human literature and can only be explained by the oversight of God.

Conclusion

- We want pastors and ministers who teach the timeless truths of Scripture, not ideas inspired by culture or human intellect.
- In churches where the Word of God is taught sensitively and sanely, people’s lives change. They become healed and whole so that they are able to minister to those around them.
- We want pastors who instill in their congregations a love for the riches in God’s Word.
- When people discover how practical the Bible is and how applicable it is to their needs today, they develop a hunger to learn more.
- We want pastors who avoid spiritual speculation and extra-Biblical subjects, concentrating instead on what the Bible talks about.
- There is little value and great danger in teaching our congregations anything that goes beyond what we can substantiate with chapter and verse.

Recommended Reading

Bruce, F.F. *The Books and the Parchments*. Fleming H. Revell Co., Westwood, New Jersey, 1950 (reprint 1963).

Bruce, F.F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 1943 (reprint 1975).

Geisler, Norman L., and William Nix. *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Moody Press, Chicago, 1968.

Geisler, Norman L., and William Nix. *From God to Us, How We Got Our Bible*. Moody Press, Chicago, 1974.

Packer, J.I. *God Has Spoken*. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979 (reprint 1988).

The Eternal Godhead

“Declaration of Faith” (Article II)

“We believe that there is but one true and living God; maker of heaven and earth and all that is in them; the Alpha and Omega, who ever was, and is and shall be, time without end, Amen; that He is infinitely holy, mighty, tender, loving and glorious; worthy of all possible love and honor, confidence and obedience, majesty, dominion and might, both now and forever; and that in the unity of the Godhead there are three, equal in every divine perfection executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

The Father – whose glory is so exceeding bright that mortal man cannot look upon His face and live, but whose heart was so filled with love and pity for His lost and sin-benighted children that He freely gave His only begotten Son to redeem and reconcile them unto Himself.

The Son – co-existent and co-eternal with the Father, who, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary took upon Himself the form of man, bore our sins, carried our sorrows, and by the shedding of His precious blood upon the cross of Calvary, purchased redemption for all that would believe upon Him: then, bursting the bonds of death and hell rose from the grave and ascended on high leading captivity captive, that as the great mediator between God and man, He might stand at the right hand of the Father making intercession for those for whom He laid down His life.

The Holy Spirit – The third person of the Godhead, the Spirit of the Father shed abroad, omnipotent, omnipresent, performing an inexpressibly important mission upon earth, convicting of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, drawing sinners to the Savior, rebuking, pleading, searching, comforting, quickening, teaching, glorifying, baptizing and enduing with power from on high those who yield to His tender ministrations, preparing them for the great day of the Lord’s appearing.”² (Isa. 43:10; Isa. 44:8; Ex. 33:20; John 3:16; John 1:1-3; Job 38:4-7; Matt. 1:23; Isa. 43:11; 1Tim. 2:5, 6a; Eph. 2:18; 1John 5:7; John 15:26; 1 Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 8:11; John 16:7-14).

Interview Questions

- How do you define the Eternal Godhead?
- What is your perspective on the functions of the Persons within the Holy Trinity?
- How do you explain the incarnation of the Son of God?

Introduction

There is nothing more foundational to all we believe than the doctrine of the nature of God. To be confused about this doctrine is to be confused about an essential element of our faith. The revelation that God is triune, a trinity of three persons, is the unquestionable result of any honest and scholarly

² This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

examination of the New Testament. It is a mysterious truth, yet one that is boldly and repeatedly proclaimed by Scripture. In this discussion guide, we will try to provide a brief overview of this topic, along with some observations on the related subject of the incarnation. In addition to this discussion guide, we highly recommend that chapter 2, pages 49-114, of *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, by Dr. Duffield and Dr. Van Cleave, be read as an accompaniment. It is hard to find a better or more readable discussion on this subject.

For Discussion

A. Summary Statement

The God whom Jesus came to reveal is relational in nature. At the heart of the gospel message is a relationship that pulses with life; this life is rooted in the love the Father and Son have enjoyed from eternity past in, with, and through the Holy Spirit. The Bible indicates that the life of God is a life of everlasting love, joy unspeakable, and peace that passes understanding. God is so abounding in this life that it is His passionate determination to share it with us. To this end, He sent His Son into the world for the purpose of taking on our humanity, cleansing us by His crucifixion, giving us new life in His resurrection, and lifting us into the fellowship of the triune God by His ascension.

To confess that God is triune implies the following:

1. The life of God is now and has always been one of relationship between persons.
2. There is no God except the God who eternally exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – three persons in a community of love, unity, and common purpose.
3. God has enjoyed this communion of love throughout all eternity and passionately longs to include the human race in this fellowship.
4. In Christ, we hear the voice of the Father saying to us by the Spirit, “I have always wanted a son or a daughter just like you.”
5. To fulfill this passion, He sent His Son to become incarnate as a man, to die for our sins on the cross, and to rise from the dead, carrying with Him all who believe.
6. On account of Christ’s triumph, God summons those who believe and repent into eternal fellowship with Him.
7. We believe in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

B. Unorthodox Views

In the historic creeds it is affirmed that God exists as “One God in three persons.” We believe the creeds *both* for what they affirm *and* for what they deny. To affirm that God is triune is to deny unorthodox views of unitarianism (Orthodox Christians believe in one God, but we are not Unitarians.), subordinationism, modalism, and tritheism. Each of these technical sounding words suggests the nature of the problem it represents.

1. **Unitarianism** – a Unitarian view of God usually denies the Trinity for one of (at least) three reasons. First, classical *Unitarian* monotheism such as Orthodox Judaism or Islam usually reject the Trinity on the basis of the *mistaken* notion that Christians worship three gods. Second, abstract or New Age Unitarianism sees God as an undifferentiated monad (e.g. “the Force” in Star Wars or generic New Age pantheism in which *everything* is God). People who adhere to this

kind of Unitarianism usually object to the exclusivity of the message that Jesus is the only Son of God and Savior of the world. While they may truly believe that there is a God (of some sort), they do not want to confess that Jesus is Lord. And third, we see a form of Unitarianism that poses as a quasi-biblical religion that has the God of the Bible unfolding who he is sequentially (in different time periods); in this view we see God coming out as the Father, for example, in one dispensation, the Son in another age and the Holy Spirit in our day. People who hold to any of these Unitarian views usually reject Trinitarian theology (knowingly or unknowingly) on the basis of ideas that stem from the concept of “the ONE” in Greek philosophy. Both subordinationism and modalism represent somewhat different forms of this same philosophical worldview but, for our purposes, we will deal with them under separate headings.

2. **Subordinationism** - as the word implies, is the idea that there is a hierarchy of gods in the Trinity. This notion is rooted, broadly, in the “triad” of Greek metaphysics and philosophy – a three-tiered God that mediates himself to humanity through descending stages of knowledge, understanding, and power. Subordinationists would say that the names, Father, Son and Holy Spirit describe different levels or ranks of deity, that there is a single great ONE (the eternal Father) with two successively lower ranking divinities or processions (the Son and the Spirit). Such a view, however, conflicts with the New Testament and the historic creeds of the church that affirm (of the Son) that “the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in Christ” (Col. 2:19) and (of the Spirit) that “we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who with the Father and Son together is worshiped and glorified.” Subordinationists may ask, “If the fullness of the triune Godhead is revealed in Christ, what do we say about those passages where Christ is shown submitting to the will of the Father?” We answer with two observations. First, submission does not mean inequality. Second, the Son’s submission to the Father reveals something about God, namely that, incredible as it may seem, God’s character includes humility.
3. **Modalism** - According to most forms of modalism the names, Father, Son, and Spirit are merely “facets,” as it were, of a single “gemstone.” In this view, God is usually seen as an inscrutable force. The manifestations of God as Father, Son, or Spirit are seen as “ripples on the surface” of God’s “deeper” existence. The three “persons” of the Godhead are seen as mere “modes” or “temporary “stages” shining forth from God’s essential oneness. These “modes” or “facets” do not ultimately reveal who God is in His inmost self. There is, thus, an inconsistency between who modalists think God is at a deeper level and who they think He has revealed Himself to be on the surface as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is to say, modalists do not believe that the names, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are meant to reveal the fact that, at the very core of His being, God *is* triune, that He is who He is in loving relation and that He has his being (foundational identity) in communion as one God in three persons. Modalists seem to miss the point that the relationship that exists between the Father and the Son in the Spirit is eternal and *not* just some passing phase in the life of God.
4. **Tritheism** - (or the worship of three gods) is only very rarely, if ever, embraced. The only reason we mention it is that people who do not understand or believe in the Trinity erroneously *think* Christians actually believe in three gods. Tritheism flies in the face of Biblical revelation that God is one. “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE” (Deut. 6:4). According to tritheism, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit represent three separate individual

deities who collectively (like some Greek pantheon) represent the object of Christian faith. The idea that Christians could ever hold such a view appears to be rooted in an unbiblical view of “persons.”

C. A Biblical View of Personhood

Though the Bible clearly reveals three persons in the Trinity, humans tend to vainly imagine that these persons have a nature in some measure like ours. We assume personhood means being as ruggedly individualistic as we are. Sin clouds our thinking so that we cannot conceive of three persons “of one substance, power and eternity...” perfectly loving one another, working in complete cooperation, love and mutual submission. No three humans could operate this way because pride and individualism would immediately destroy the purity of such a relationship. Yet God is absolutely holy, which means His nature is profoundly different from ours and incomprehensible to us. So every human attempt to fully resolve the mystery of the community within the Trinity distorts the Biblical revelation into some form of heresy. Either we tend to absorb the three persons into one (absorptionism) or move to the other extreme by separating them into three independent gods (tritheism). Duffield and Van Cleave strike the humble balance that orthodoxy requires when, after quoting from the ancient creeds, they write: “These creeds and confessions rightly do not attempt to remove the mystery of the Trinity or to reconcile the scriptural statements with finite reasoning. The compilers tried to include all that scripture teaches about the three Persons of the Trinity, without any effort to show how God can be both One and Three” (*Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, p. 87).

D. The Incarnation

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is so inexorably linked to the incarnation that we must inquire further, “If Jesus Christ is a real human being, how can we say that He is also God?” First of all, we must understand that the Bible teaches that it was God the Son who became a human being. It was the Son who shared life throughout all eternity with the Holy Spirit and the Father and who entered the stream of human history in the particular human life of a first century Palestinian Jew from Nazareth named Jesus. He did not undertake this mission on His own; it was a part of the Triune God’s will so that we might be included by the Spirit in the Son’s life of union and communion with the Father. There is no other “will of the God” for humanity except that which we see in Christ. God’s will was to take on our humanity and then, through death and resurrection, lift it to heaven. Since the Son of God, *after* having assumed human flesh, remained and will remain eternally a man, humanity is now irrevocably linked with the life of God. In other words, He has taken hold of our humanity, and He will never let it go. While He will eternally remain the creator and we will eternally remain creatures fashioned in His image, we have, nonetheless, been truly united with God in Christ. By grace we have been adopted into the life of the Triune God. By grace we call Him “Father.”

Here are some essential truths the Bible teaches about the incarnation:

1. God’s Son existed from eternity.
 - ◆ The Father did not become flesh; the Son did.

- ◆ John 1:1-5, 10-14, 18 (1 John 1:1-3)
 - ◆ Col. 1:15-20
 - ◆ A human begins existence in the womb at conception, but the Son of God did not begin in Mary's womb. He came from heaven to earth.
2. The Father's love for us is the primary reason His Son came to earth.
 - ◆ John 3:16-18
 - ◆ It is very wrong to believe our salvation has been made possible because an angry Father was restrained by a loving Son.
 3. God's Son willingly offered Himself to fulfill the Father's purpose.
 - ◆ Phil. 2:5-11
 - ◆ Heb. 12:2
 - ◆ The Father did not compel an unwilling Son to come to save us. The Son joyfully came because He longed to bless His Father and fellowship with those who would be saved.
 4. God's Son truly became a human. He did not just appear to be human.
 - ◆ Heb. 2:9, 14-18
 - ◆ He had to become one of us to die as our substitute.
 - ◆ He had to share our weakness and experience our temptations.
 - ◆ We have already seen in Genesis that He could appear as a human (Gen. 18:2,8 with Abraham; Gen. 32:24-30 with Jacob).
 - ◆ He had to truly die just as we die. His body ceased, but His spirit continued. See Rev. 1:17,18.
 - ◆ He is the "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15); the "seed of Abraham" (Gen. 22:18); and the "seed of David" (2 Sam. 7:12; Rev. 22:16).
 - ◆ Genealogy: Mathew (1:1,2,16) probably gives Joseph's family history. He explains that Joseph was not the father, but that Jesus was born from Mary. Luke probably gives Mary's family history through her father Eli because she is truly His mother.
 5. The conception of God's Son was a miracle performed by the Holy Spirit.
 - ◆ Luke 1:35
 - ◆ Mary provided the egg, and the Holy Spirit caused it to conceive in a totally non-sexual miracle.
 - ◆ Jesus was both the eternal Son of God and the human son of Mary.
 6. At the incarnation God's Son became a man. He is now a resurrected man and will be so forever.
 - ◆ Acts 1:9-11
 - ◆ He is truly and fully God, and truly and fully man.
 7. God's Son will be worshipped forever with the Father.
 - ◆ John 5:23
 - ◆ Rev. 21:22,23; 22:1,3

Conclusion

Practically speaking, what are the results of a person's holding on to heresy concerning the nature of the Godhead? In other words, what is at stake when someone denies that God is Triune? First of all, the

person misrepresents God. Second, in failing to submit to God's word and the wisdom of the Church and ecumenical councils throughout the ages, the person is in danger of becoming unteachable. An unteachable spirit is the root of all heresy. Whenever philosophy, logic, and human knowledge replace revelation, people are on a perilous path. It may be true that many of us have at one time or other (accidentally or on purpose) held unorthodox beliefs. We would like to think that, as we grow in grace, we are being led by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation into all truth.

Our goal is not to get people to parrot "orthodox" formulas; we want believers who know the Triune God by intimate personal experience. We want solid believers who, by knowing the truth, are set free from the bondage of heresy. However, it is also crucial for believers to share in the life of God by participating by the Spirit in the Son's union and communion with the Father to the extent that their life in the Spirit actually overflows to others (John 7:37-39). In the process of knowing God and making Him known, we trust that we will both find our identity in Christ and come into the "unity of the faith." Amen.

Recommended Reading

Mere Christianity – the section called "Beyond Personality" is very helpful.

Church History – any of a variety – especially as they deal with heresy. Latourette is good. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, is excellent.

One brief article that is worth reading is "The Vicarious Humanity of Christ" by James Torrance. This article may be found in *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*, edited by T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1981).

Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy*

Erickson, Millard J. *God in Three Persons*.

Boyd, *Oneness Pentecostals and the Trinity*

The Fall of Man

“Declaration of Faith” (Article III)

“We believe that man was created in the image of God, before whom he walked in holiness and purity, but that by voluntary disobedience and transgression, he fell from the Eden of purity and innocence to the depths of sin and iniquity, and that in consequence of this, all mankind are sinners sold unto Satan, sinners not by constraint but by choice, shapen in iniquity and utterly void by nature of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil, guilty and without excuse, justly deserving the condemnation of a just and holy God.”³ (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 5:12, 19; John 3:6; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:15-19; 8:7; Isa. 53:6; Gen. 6:12; 3:9-18; Eph. 2:3; Rom. 1:18, 32; 2:1-16; Matt. 20:15; Gal. 2:10; Ezek. 18:19,20; Rom. 1:20; 3:19; Gal. 3:22)

Interview Questions

- What do you believe about the moral tendencies in human beings?
- What are the results of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden?
- Do you believe there is a real and personal devil?
- What is your view of demon activity in the Bible and today?

Introduction

One cannot effectively minister God’s plan of salvation without first understanding how deeply the human race has been injured by sin. As Jesus said, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:31,32). Therefore, we who preach the gospel must first understand how “sick” with sin our listeners really are and how desperately they need to be saved. It is the revelation that people are truly perishing apart from Christ that gives urgency and boldness to our evangelism. In this discussion guide, we will examine the dynamics of the fall; what it means doctrinally and practically to be “in Adam,” the origin of sin, the consequences sin has brought to humans and the rest of creation, and finally, the impact our sin has had on God Himself.

³ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

Questions for Discussion

- A. What happened in Genesis 3?** In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed an idyllic life—a perfect relationship with God, a mutually complementary relationship with each other, a harmonious relationship with creation, and a total detachment from the experience of evil. However, by their disobedience, they exchanged the prospect of living eternally in paradise, for years filled with pain and ending in death. After tending Eden for an unspecified period of time, their loyalty to God was tested by the serpent, later identified as the devil or Satan (Rev. 12:9). Through this creature, Satan tempted Adam and Eve to doubt God’s honesty and love for them, and they chose to listen to him rather than to God (Gen. 3:1-5). We are told that their sin arose from a prideful pursuit of wisdom in order *to be like God* (Gen. 3:5,6). This probably refers to a desire not only to experience good and evil but also to *define* what is good and what is evil. “Humans were seeking to gain for themselves the prerogative of determining what was good and what was evil.”⁴ This prideful pursuit of wisdom and moral independence drove them away from the Lord, and He, in turn, drove them away from the “tree of life” (Gen. 3:22-24). Once a rebellious spirit had taken hold of them, living eternally became a horrible prospect. Death would mercifully limit the extent to which each person’s rebellion could grow. Like a disease, the sin of Adam and Eve also spread to their descendants, thus infecting the entire human race. From that point onward, all humans would be born spiritually separated from God and living lives destined to end in death (Gen. 2:17).
- B. How has the fall affected the way people relate to God?** As a result of the fall, there was a break in the relationship between God and humans. This break affected every human ever born and produced severe consequences. It resulted in alienation from God or “spiritual death.” From that moment on, the natural condition for every person is hostility and enmity toward God (Rom. 5:10)⁵. Alienation and hostility are the key dangers about which God warned Adam when He said, “...you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Gen. 2:17). In Romans 5:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:21, Paul indicates that people die physically because of Adam’s sin. Physical death is not a natural part of life but is a tragic consequence of Adam’s rebellion; this is why all humans instinctively long for physical bodies that will not wear away (Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:1-4). It is interesting to note that only the Bible, among all the literature of the ancient Near East, identifies moral failure as the root cause of death. But Adam’s sin produced a consequence even more serious than physical death: as “Adam’s children” we inherit Adam’s nature, which inevitably causes us to sin and become subject to the “wrath of God” (Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3).
- C. How has the fall affected the way people relate to each other?** Because of the fall people have lost the ability to relate to others as God originally intended:
1. Genesis 3:12-13 describes a post-fall breach in Adam and Eve’s relationship, namely, blame-shifting. Adam blamed God and Eve; Eve then blamed the serpent for her own error.
 2. Genesis 4:1-12 calls attention to a serious violation of God’s intentions for humans: Cain murdered Abel.
 3. The last five commandments in Exodus 20:12-17 affirm that people in their natural state after the fall need clear guidelines to relate to others in a godly way: attending properly to parent’s

⁴ Hartley, John, *Genesis* (New International Biblical Commentary Series), Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 2000, pg. 67.

⁵ Torrey, R.A., *The Holy Spirit, Who He Is and What He Does*, pp 76,77.

care and honor; avoiding murder, adultery, stealing, false testimony, and coveting another's possessions.

4. A careful reading of the biblical prophets suggests that people in their fallen state do not naturally relate to others in the way God originally intended in spite of the clear guidelines God gave (Isa. 3:14,15; Amos 2:7; 5:1).
5. In Ephesians 2:1-22 Paul shows how racism and other similar evils are a result of the fall. He states that the problems between ethnic groups are not solved by humanistic tolerance but need a remedy that treats humanity's ultimate spiritual problem: reconciliation to God and each other by being joined to Jesus Christ.
6. A cursory glance at the "deeds of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19-21 reinforces the conclusion that people in their natural state are prone to behaviors that hurt others, something that God never intended.

D. How has the fall affected the inner nature of people?

Since they are alienated from God, humans instinctively follow the "ways of this world" and the "ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Eph. 2:2). In Romans 6:6 and Ephesians 4:22, Paul describes this fallen state as living according to the *old self* and contrasts it with living by the *new self*. It is crucial to recognize that Adam's nature in human beings cannot be changed apart from a spiritual rebirth. Romans 8:5-8 depicts how the *old self* thinks. When Paul uses the expression "those who are according to the flesh" (Rom. 8:5), he means that people who are not born again live their lives and think purely in human terms. Furthermore, people who live and think in human terms have their minds set on what that nature desires (Rom. 8:5); that is, they have minds that are cut off from God (Rom. 8:6); are hostile to God (Rom. 8:7), do not submit to God's law, and cannot please God (Rom. 8:7-8). Thus, those who are *in Adam* neither experience life as God wishes us to live it nor value His perspective (See also: Eph. 4:18; Jer. 17:9; Isa. 5:20; Rom. 3:9-18; and 1 John 2:15-17).

E. How has the fall damaged the way creation operates?

The fall has affected all of creation. Paul says "creation was subjected to *frustration*," not by its own choice, but by the will of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay (Rom. 8:20, 21). The word *frustration* (Greek, *mataiotes*) conveys the idea of emptiness, purposelessness, futility, or folly. It refers to the judgment in Genesis 3:17-19 where God told Adam his disobedience would bring a curse upon the ground and much toil to humans. As a result, all creation is unable to fulfill its designed purpose apart from the redemptive grace of God. This *frustration* includes humans as well. Try as we might, we will never be able to discover or live out the purpose for which we were created apart from God and His grace.

F. How has the fall affected God?

As early as Genesis 6:5, the Bible calls attention to the fact that Adam's fall resulted in an all-encompassing and pervasive wickedness which *grieved* God to such an extent that He decided to wipe people off the face of the earth with a flood. In Exodus 32:7-10 the Lord expressed His desire to destroy the Israelites for their disobedience, idolatry, and generally stiff-necked approach to Him. Since Luke 15:7 reports how heaven rejoices over a sinner who repents, it is likely also true that heaven is sad that others do not come to the Lord. The God who diligently searches for the lost

must also be disappointed that they became lost in the first place. And finally, since God the Father desires that all His children come to Him, it stands to reason that He is saddened when so many do not (2 Pet. 3:9).

Further Discussion

The topic of demonic activity (especially the term “demon possession”) is highly controversial in today’s church. Of particular concern is the relationship between Christians and demonic activity. This subject is too broad to be dealt with properly in this discussion guide. However, a few comments on this matter may be helpful. The New Testament notes that a person can be *demon possessed* (Luke 8:27), that is, be a *demoniac* (*diamonizomai*, Matt 4:24 and twelve other times in the New Testament). This word described people with very strong demonic influence in their lives, some of whom were under the demons’ complete control, having their personalities eliminated by the demons to the point that they were unable to exercise their own wills (e.g. the Gerasene demoniac, Mark 5:1-20). We have no New Testament indication of God’s people being demoniacs (demon possessed), but they can come under demonic torment or influence (Luke 13:11,16). The level of this influence varies, even as the level of the influence of sin varies among believers. Among well-taught believers, the repeated inability to die to a specific sin may indicate demonic influence (Rom. 6:12-14).

Conclusion

- We want pastors who understand how deeply humans have been injured by the fall and believe people desperately need to be saved.
- We want pastors who boldly and regularly minister God’s plan of salvation.
- We want churches that minister in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to release people from the effects of the fall (Luke 4:18,19).
- We want believers who are living free from the power of sin and demonic influence.

Recommended Reading

- Demarest, B.A. “The Fall of Man” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Walter Elwell (Editor), Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI., 1984.
- Duffield, Guy and Nathaniel Van Cleave. “The Fall of Man” in *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. LIFE Bible College @ Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA., 1983.
- Hartley, John. *Genesis* [New International Biblical Commentary Series]. Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 2000.
- Martin, Ralph. *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul’s Theology*. Wipf and Stock, Eugene, OR, 1997.
- Merrill, Eugene. “Fall of Humankind” in *Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Willem VanGemeren (Editor), Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI., 1997.
- Morris, Leon. *Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1965.

The Plan of Redemption

“Declaration of Faith” (Article IV)

“We believe that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, the just for the unjust; freely, and by divine appointment of the Father, taking the sinner’s place, bearing his sins, receiving his condemnation, dying his death, fully paying his penalty, and signing with His life’s blood the pardon of every one who should believe upon Him; that upon simple faith and acceptance of the atonement purchased on Mount Calvary, the vilest sinner may be cleansed of his iniquities and made whiter than driven snow.”⁶ (Isa. 53:5; Titus 2:14; Isa. 55:7; Heb. 7:25; Isa. 1:18).

Interview Questions

- What is the significance of the shed blood of Jesus and of His death on the cross?
- Why was Jesus uniquely suited to be our Savior?
- How does Jesus’ work on the cross address each dimension of human need?
- What is your view of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, its meaning and the implications for all who believe?

Introduction

It is impossible to overstate the importance of a right understanding of the biblical teaching of salvation. It is one of the most vital and crucial doctrines of the Christian faith. To avoid, neglect, misstate or minimize this doctrine is to abandon genuine Christianity for empty religion. There are strong voices in today’s world that insist the Church needs to proclaim a different message in order to remain relevant in contemporary society. They urge Christians to embrace universalism (the belief that everyone will eventually [or is already] saved) or pluralism (the idea that all religions are equally valid and true). In addition, in the western world we often find an obsession with personal improvement, self-affirmation, and individual fulfillment. In such an atmosphere it is easy to be seduced into abandoning the offensive and exclusive (only one way) message of the cross. As Foursquare ministers we must clearly understand this central, New Testament truth and be committed to boldly proclaiming it to this generation.

Questions for Discussion

A. Why is salvation necessary?

The reality of human sinfulness extends beyond the concrete examples of particular acts, attitudes, thoughts, intentions and words that are contrary to the will of God. There is also a very real barrier

between God and humans because of the fall. This state of being “fallen” results in the following: guilt for having violated God’s law (Gal. 3:22; Rom. 3:23), which carries with it certain condemnation (Rom. 5:16-18); God’s wrath – terrible and terrifying punishment due to unredeemed humanity by a righteous Judge (Rom. 2:5,6; Eph. 2:3); captivity to sin, which we are powerless to break (John 8:34; Rom. 6:15-22); a state of estrangement and alienation which we are unable to overcome on our own (Isa. 59:2; Eph. 2:11-16); and the prospect of eternal separation from God, the unending continuation of existence apart from the source of real life.

B. Why is salvation possible?

First, salvation is possible because it was the plan of God to provide a solution to the problem caused by the fall (Acts 2:22,23). The suffering and death of Christ were not accidents. They were predetermined events that were prophesied in the Old Testament and predicted by Jesus to His disciples (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 52:13-53: 12; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 24:44-46). In His wisdom, God demonstrated in the death of Christ on the cross both His justice in punishing sins and His mercy in forgiving the unjust (Rom. 3:21-26). Second, salvation is directly the result of the extension of God’s love to humans (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-10; Titus 3:4-6). Because God is perfectly holy, He cannot tolerate sin; because He is perfectly righteous, He must punish sin completely and impartially. But because He is perfectly loving, gracious and merciful, He has also provided a way for humans to escape the penalty of judgment and be reconciled to Himself. Therefore the source of salvation is the love of God.

C. How is salvation obtained?

There are two aspects that must be comprehended in order to understand this question: the basis upon which salvation is founded and the means by which salvation is secured.

The Basis – The core truth of the Christian faith is the message of the cross; it is this truth that establishes the basis for salvation. The doctrinal terminology most often employed to express this truth is “substitutionary atonement.” Atonement refers to a sacrificial means by which forgiveness is secured. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament, which prefigured the sacrifice of Christ, depicted the need for the shedding of blood to obtain forgiveness (Heb. 9:1-10:19). Original and subsequent sin rendered a person guilty before a holy God, and his or her life was forfeited as a result (Ezek. 18:4). But through the sacrifice of an innocent animal, that person could acknowledge faith in God’s provision of a perfect sacrifice by which he or she could be forgiven and cleansed of guilt. At the heart of this sacrificial system lay the notion of substitution. The sacrificial animal died in the stead of the guilty person. The life of the animal was substituted for the life of the sinner (Lev. 17:11). In the same way, the sacrifice of Christ is a substitution but with even more significance. The gospel proclaims that Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8), the Righteous for the unrighteous (1 Pet. 3:18). Jesus Christ, the sinless One, suffered and died in our place; He died the death that was due us because of our sin. He died as the representative for all humanity as well as

⁶ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

for each individual human; however, the benefits of His atoning death are obtainable only through personal appropriation by grace through faith (Mark 10:45).

The Means – Salvation is personally secured by means of repentance and faith in Christ’s atonement (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37,38; Rom. 4:5,16,22-24; Eph. 2:8,9).

D. What does salvation include?

The purpose of the atonement is to provide a solution to the dilemma of the previously stated effects of the fall: guilt/condemnation, God’s wrath, captivity to sin, estrangement/alienation and eternal separation. It is necessary, therefore, for the atonement to be multi-faceted in its effects in order for it to address the various problems that result from human sin. To reveal this to us the Bible employs three powerful images: justification, adoption and eternal life. Together they describe the fullness of God’s gracious gift to us.

- 1) Justification: This answers the problem of estrangement/alienation. The term comes from the law court and pictures God as a judge declaring the guilty sinner to be righteous by virtue of personal faith in Christ (Rom3:21-26, 28; 4:5; 5:1). A person’s faith in Christ results in being identified with Him so that God now attributes Christ’s righteousness to the believer, enabling his or her relationship with God to be restored. In the heavenly courtroom the believer now stands acquitted (not innocent) of any sins committed and may rightly claim to be righteous because of being in Christ. The sins that were committed have not been overlooked (amnesty) or ignored (indifference); they have been paid for. Jesus has become our Substitute and has taken our sin upon Himself. We, therefore, receive His merciful gift by faith, which results in the elimination of the enmity between us and God (Rom. 5:8-11). When we realize we are no longer God’s enemies, we experience a great personal peace.
- 2) Acceptance/adoption: This image comes from family life. Reconciliation with God is spoken of as acceptance (John 6:37; Eph. 1:5,6) or adoption (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15,16; Gal. 4:5,6; Eph. 2:19). Having forgiven our sin and restored us to a right relationship with Himself, God now welcomes us into His household as His children (Gal. 3:26; 4:6,7; Luke 15:11-32). This image conveys the warmth some might find lacking in the judicial image of justification. It also points to the reality that God’s love for His people is not simply a matter of cold choice or impersonal will but has a deep emotional aspect as well. We are wanted and valued by God. Salvation was not something He was obligated to offer (against His better judgment) but something that He deeply and earnestly desired for us (Hos. 11:8,9). It was God’s initiative to reconcile us to Himself; He was the one who was concerned that we were estranged and was unwilling that such a state should continue (2 Cor. 5:18,19; Titus 3:4,5).
- 3) Eternal life/born again: This final image of salvation overlaps somewhat with the previous one. The prospect of eternal separation from God is met with the provision of eternal life that is given to those who have been born again by the Spirit of God as a result of believing in Christ (John 1:12; 3:3-6; 16, 17; 5:24; 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5,6; 1 Pet. 1:23). Prior to conversion the sinner is said to be dead – lacking spiritual life (Eph. 2:1). The absence of a right relationship with God is likened to being absent from physical life. Since God is the only source of life, to be separated from Him is to be dead – cut off from the life of God. In contrast, eternal life is life in the presence of God, beginning at the moment of new birth and continually enjoyed forever. In this present age believers are indwelt by the living God when the Holy Spirit joins Himself to their spirits and they are made alive or regenerated (John 14:17,23; Rom. 8:9). This deposit of

the Spirit's presence is a promise of the greater experience to follow (Eph. 1:14). After death, or upon Christ's return, we will enjoy the unmediated presence of God in fullness forever (John 14:1-3).

Conclusion

- We want ministers who clearly understand the plan of salvation and regularly proclaim it.
- We want ministers who realize it is incumbent upon them to graciously yet ardently resist universalism or pluralism and firmly preach Christ-crucified as the only way to salvation.
- We want believers who are bold in their prayers and joyful in worship because they are confident their salvation rests on the imputed righteousness of Christ.

Recommended Reading

Duffield, Guy P., and Nathaniel Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. Los Angeles: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1987, 173-260. Chapter five ("The Doctrine of Salvation").

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. One-volume edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985, 761-841. Chapters 36-39 form Part 8, "The Work of Christ."

Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Theology*. Leicester, England and Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981, 431-509.

Morris, Leon. *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*. Third revised edition. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988 reprint.

Stott, John R. W. *The Cross of Christ*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986. See particularly 15-251, especially 85-163 ("The Heart of the Cross") and 164-251 ("The Achievement of the Cross").

Salvation Through Grace

“Declaration of Faith” (Article V)

“We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly through grace; that we have no righteousness or goodness of our own wherewith to seek divine favor, and must come, therefore, throwing ourselves upon the unfailing mercy and love of Him who bought us and washed us in His own blood, ‘pleading the merits and the righteousness of Christ the Savior, standing upon His word and accepting the free gift of His love and pardon.’”⁷ (Eph. 2:8, 13; Rom. 3:10, 23-24 and 6:23; Is 64:6; John 6:47).

Interview Questions

- What does the New Testament mean by being “justified by faith”?
- What benefits does God give to people who are justified?
- What place should good works have in a believer’s life?

Introduction

In our preaching of the gospel, we want to emphasize the truth that salvation finds its basis in God’s grace and not in human works or performance of religious rituals. This does not mean we exclude the rightful place of good works in a Christian’s life, but we clearly separate the works a believer does *because* he or she is saved from what someone does in a misguided attempt to earn salvation by works. For us, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross is God’s only provision for our salvation. Christ alone is the Righteous One whose righteousness is imputed to believers who have no righteousness of their own.

Questions for Discussion

A. How is grace best defined?

The most common definition of grace (Greek, *charis*) is “unmerited favor.” This phrase points to the fact that salvation is a *gift* given by God rather than a reward that someone has earned or deserved. When someone receives “salvation through grace,” it means God favorably looks upon that person though he or she has done nothing to deserve this favor. Salvation is a free gift from God (Eph. 2:8, 9). In Romans 11:6, Paul says, “And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.” From this we see that earning salvation and receiving it as a gift are entirely opposing concepts.

⁷ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

B. What is the scriptural foundation for salvation through grace?

Grace is inseparably linked to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It does not arise merely from a loving disposition from God. It was not possible for Him to simply choose to overlook human sin; to do so would be unjust. For justice to be satisfied, it was necessary for those who sinned to be punished, and the only alternative to each person's dying for his or her own sin was for God's Son to die.

The two clearest New Testament passages teaching salvation through grace are Romans 3:21-26 and Ephesians 2:8, 9.

- In Romans 3, Paul explains that righteousness (right standing before God) is *apart from law* (v.21). By this he means right standing before God is not achieved by any system of defined human conduct – Mosaic or otherwise.⁸ Rather, salvation comes *freely by His grace* (v.24). God has acted in Christ to provide the only possible means for salvation, and it is totally unmerited. It can be attained only through faith.⁹ It is a matter of grace on God's side and faith on the human side.
- In Ephesians 2:8 and 9, Paul teaches the same truth. However, here he explains the faith aspect of salvation by noting, “[it is] not by works, so that no one can boast (v.9).” *Works* here is not referring just to the “works of the Mosaic law.” It would certainly include this for Jewish readers, but Paul's largely Gentile audiences would also have to be warned against trusting in their own categories of works. So *works* in Ephesians 2:9 must be used in a broader sense for “human effort” in general – anything human beings attempt to do to earn salvation. God's purpose, Paul tells us, in providing salvation through grace rather than human effort, is to exclude the *boast* – humans taking credit for their salvation. Boasting leads not only to self-congratulation but also to pride before God (Rom. 4:2) and a sense of reward (Rom. 4:4). But, because our salvation is by grace, God has shut out any and all hint of boasting. He does not owe us anything. Everything we receive from Him is a gracious gift.

C. What must we do to receive this grace?

Personally embracing God's plan of salvation through grace begins with an acknowledgement that we are spiritually dead and that there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation. We must understand that we can never merit God's favor, no matter how

⁸ See Morris, Leon, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (The Pillar New Testament Commentary), William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI., 1988, pg. 174. See also Romans 8:3-4.

⁹ “Hallelujah for the cross! There is power in the blood of the Lamb. It doesn't matter who you are or how great your sin. Jesus can wash you and make you whiter than the driven snow” (Aimee Semple McPherson, “The Scarlet Thread” sermon transcription in *op. cit.*, pg. 90).

hard we try. Next, we must trust that Jesus Christ's work on the cross is God's provision for our salvation. And, finally, we must receive it by repenting and embracing God's *gift* by faith.

Conclusion

- We want believers who live in the freedom of knowing we do not have to earn God's salvation.
- We want unbelievers to know that, no matter how troubled or sinful their lives have been, they may receive God's salvation through grace.

Recommended Reading

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. LIFE Pacific College, pages 232-233.

Grudem, Wayne. "Regeneration," "Conversion" and "Justification" in *Systematic Theology*. Zondervan Publishing House.

Ridderbos, Herman. "The Revelation of the Righteousness of God" in *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Trotter, Andrew H. Jr. "Grace" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Walter Elwell [General Editor], Baker Books.

Repentance and Acceptance

“Declaration of Faith” (Article VI)

“We believe that upon sincere repentance, godly sorrow for sin and wholehearted acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ, they who call upon Him may be justified by faith through His precious blood, and that in place of condemnation they may have the most blessed peace, assurance and favor with God; that with open arms of mercy and pardon the Saviour waits to receive each penitent who will in unfeigned contrition and supplication for mercy, open the door of his heart and accept Him as Lord and King.”¹⁰ (1 John 1:9; Rom. 5:1,2; Rom. 8:1; Luke 1:77-79; John 6:37)

Interview Questions

- What are the nature and significance of repentance?
- Is repentance essential for salvation?

Introduction

The expectation within Foursquare is that all those ministering salvation to others will see the necessity of leading people into *repentance*. Specifically, this means turning with sincerity of heart away from evil and toward God. It also includes acknowledging our sinful nature and need for Jesus Christ. This must be accompanied by a personal, heart-felt, and sincere *acceptance* of Jesus as the Son of God (whose death and resurrection are the only provision for reconciliation with God and the eternal life He offers) and an awareness of our unmerited *acceptance* by God through Jesus Christ.¹¹

For Discussion

- A. **Repentance**—biblical *repentance* means to turn to God and away from evil. It involves a change of mind, a sense of regret, and a placing of one’s trust in God and His will; such a choice leads to practicing righteousness. “The [Hebrew] word most frequently employed to indicate man’s repentance means ‘to turn [from sin to God].’ [Another common Hebrew verb] seems to reflect the idea of ‘breathing deeply,’ hence the physical display of one’s feelings, usually sorrow, compassion or comfort.”¹² Honesty lies at the heart of repentance, being honest with God and with ourselves. We can be honest with God because we know

¹⁰ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

¹¹ It is our understanding that Article VI emphasizes both aspects of *acceptance* addressed in this last statement.

¹² Wilson, Marvin in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament—Volume 2*, R. Laird Harris [Editor], Moody Press, Chicago, IL, 1980, pp. 570–571.

He loves us. We can be honest with ourselves because we know we have sinned. Such honesty does not come easily due to sin's deceptive nature (a deception that promotes denial and resistance [1 John 1:8-10]), but it is vital. "Repentance is the will of God for every man (2 Pet. 3:9). Failure [to repent] will result in eternal death. It is also a gift of God. Repentance is not something that a person can bring about of himself. The person who thinks that he can live for self and the world and then repent and turn to God when he decides to is sadly mistaken (Luke 13:3)."¹³

Biblically, there is a close correlation between *confession* and *repentance*, though they are not synonymous. Confession of sin leads to forgiveness of sin. Repentance from sin leads to a decline in the practice of sin. Repentance both precedes and succeeds confession, for repentance is both an inward decision (leading to confession) and an outward act following confession. Inwardly, repentance leads to the decision to live no longer in denial and resistance but to surrender to God's love. Outwardly, repentance leads to the action of obeying God's commandments because we want to respond to His love (1 John 5:3). Thus, repentance is both a change of mind and a change of purpose.¹⁴ It produces a sorrow so deep that it leads to both a confession of sin and a confession of Jesus as Lord; to both a desertion from sin's autocracy and voluntary submission to Christ's authority (2 Cor. 7:9-10). "Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance...."¹⁵ This deeply moving reaction to sin lies at the core of the biblical concept of repentance.

Furthermore, genuine repentance will always bring forth authentic evidence called "fruit" (Matt. 3:8). "In fact, a truly repentant person will begin at once to live a changed life, and we can call that changed life the fruit of repentance. But we should never attempt to require that there be a period of time in which a person actually lives a changed life before we give assurance of forgiveness. Repentance is something that occurs in the heart and involves the whole person in a decision to turn from sin."¹⁶

B. **Acceptance** (in the context under discussion in this paper) most frequently translates a Greek word derived from the root *lambano*. "*Lambano* (take, receive) is theologically significant in its meaning of receive. It corresponds with God's giving (*dionai*). God gives—man receives. [A cognate to *lambano*] *proslambano* (to accept into one's society) has a theological importance when meaning to 'admit into fellowship' (*i.e.*, Rom. 14:4)."¹⁷ God is

¹³ Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, L.I.F.E. Bible College, Los Angeles, CA., 1983, pp. 212–213.

¹⁴ This change of view and change of conduct mark the difference between *remorse* and *repentance*; for *remorse* is simply feeling bad about sin's exposure.

¹⁵ Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Collier Books, New York, NY, 1959, pg. 47.

¹⁶ Grudem, Wayne, *Systematic Theology*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI., 1994, pg. 713.

¹⁷ Brown, Colin, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology—Volume 3*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI., 1978, pp. 747–748, 751.

committed to accept all people into His circle of fellowship. However, in order to actively receive God's acceptance, one must receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior. The acceptance of Christ qualifies us to receive God's full acceptance on a daily basis. Grace and acceptance have nothing to do with our merits or demerits; they are gifts. When we say that God's acceptance and grace are free, we mean that God is free to demonstrate His love and mercy upon us without limitation. It also means that we are unable to earn them, deserve them or pay for them. In understanding God's full acceptance of us by grace through faith, we are free to enter into the fullness of His purpose. In contrast, if we live under the weight of the law and works, we never feel fully accepted, and we struggle in our attempts to do enough to try to please Him. This struggle leads to an uneasy existence void of confidence and assurance.

Receiving God's unmerited acceptance leads naturally to the question, "What does it mean to accept one another?" The Bible is clear that such is incumbent upon us—**accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God** (Rom. 15:7). Within Romans 15:7-18, Paul cites Psalm 18:50, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10 in order to build his defense for full acceptance by God for all people who repent and seek Jesus, an attitude which we also should embrace without ethnic or gender partiality. "In these passages Paul finds ancient forecasts of the reception of the Gentiles into the faith. It is Paul's conviction that, just as Jesus Christ came into the world to save all men, so the church must welcome all men, no matter what the difference may be. Christ was an inclusive Savior, and therefore His Church must be an inclusive church."¹⁸ "Because we are accepted in the Beloved, we must be accepting of the beloved. I can't give up on you till God does and He won't. We're safe with God, and we've got to be safe with one another."¹⁹

Specific Questions

A. Is repentance a one-time event prior to salvation, or is it an ongoing experience?

Repentance is usually the first issue over which we must stumble in order to fall at the feet of Jesus. Repentance was John the Baptist's message, sparking fires of renewal (Matt. 3:2) and was the torch message transferred to Jesus (Matt. 4:17). Repentance was the first response to the first sermon preached by the apostle Peter (Acts 2:38) and was the last requirement given by Christ to the last church addressed by Him in Asia Minor (Rev. 3:19). Therefore, while repentance is the first step, it also entails continual practice—repentance leads to justification (2 Cor. 7:10) *and* repentance leads to sanctification (2 Cor. 12:21).

B. Is it possible to repent so sincerely and deeply that repentance ushers us into a "second work of grace" by which we no longer sin? "Historically, some Pentecostals have proposed a

¹⁸ Barclay, William, *The Letter to the Romans*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1955, pg. 217.

¹⁹ Cook, Jerry with Baldwin, Stanley C., *Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness*, Regal Books, Ventura, CA., 1979, pg. 18.

'second work of grace' by which a believer's sin nature is entirely eradicated thus eliminating any further need for repentance."²⁰ This is not our understanding in Foursquare. Rather, we believe that as Christ-followers practice daily confession and repentance, they will progressively mature through growing in His grace (2 Pet. 3:18).²¹

C. Does understanding unmerited acceptance by God foster a lax climate in which we provide believers a license to sin? This thinking is based upon a law-centered assumption that conditional acceptance will restrain impulsive behaviors. When we hold this position, we are in essence saying, "Grace is good for justification, but works (law) are better for sanctification," a repeat of the devastating, yet common Galatian error. Let's remember Paul's assessment of such thinking—**are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?** (Gal. 3:3). Withholding an understanding of unmerited acceptance does not motivate individuals to live rightly; it is only by understanding God's kindness that one is moved to repentance and righteousness (Rom. 2:4). It is this motivation of love rather than fear that fueled Aimee Semple McPherson's evangelistic fervor.

One evening my voice was weary from strain. A young Christian gentleman who was standing beside the truck as we rolled tent-ward said: "Sister, give me the megaphone and I will shout an invitation." Rather dubiously I surrendered the megaphone. Just then a man rounded the corner at which we were parked. Aiming the megaphone right at him, my "helpful" friend, to my horror, cried out: "Say, Brother! Do you know that you are on the way to hell?" The man jumped as though shot, opened his mouth and closed it again without saying a word, fairly gasping with surprise and sudden shock. I seized the megaphone and called to the driver: "Go on! Go on, quickly." As soon as we rounded the corner I said to the young man: "Brother, why did you do that?" "Well, he was on the way to hell, wasn't he?" he asked defensively. "But how do you know he was? And even if he were, that is no way to win souls for Christ! One can do far more with the bait of love than with the club of bombastic, untactful preaching."²²

²⁰ Hollenweger, W. J., *The Pentecostals*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, MI., 1969, pg. 319.

²¹ In this same vein, we as Christ followers are encouraged to repent from **acts that lead to death** (Heb 6:1). Though a somewhat vague statement, the author of Hebrews seems to be encouraging us to turn away from any religious ritual that holds a false promise of giving life, for religious ritual does not bring life or sanctification.

²² McPherson, Aimee Semple, *The Story of My Life*, Echo Park Evangelistic Association, Los Angeles, CA, 1951, pp. 131–132.

Conclusion

Our Burden

Historically, Foursquare has promoted balance in both principle and practice. Such is the case when it comes to repentance and acceptance. While some stress righteousness through repentance, others emphasize mercy through acceptance. We want to accentuate both, for both are prioritized in Scripture. “Christ’s reception of the Jews led to God’s being glorified for His faithfulness; His reception of the Gentiles to God’s being glorified for His mercy.”²³ If there is one grand example of God’s acceptance and humankind’s repentance displayed together, it is seen in Jesus’ parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32). Here we find a father’s accepting love releasing his son with reluctant bounty (Luke 15:12). Experiencing failure and ruin, the young man repents: he comes to his senses (Luke 15:17) and confesses (Luke 15:18), which leads to a decisive return to his father who fully embraces him (Luke 15:20). In this parable, we discover both God’s accepting love in receiving us back with redemptive blessing as we repent and seek Him and our assurance of His unmerited acceptance of us (Luke 15:22-24).

Our Goals

- We want our ministers to minister the message of repentance in a loving yet clear manner, teaching that humankind repents and God receives.
- We want our church members to live in the security that their acceptance is not based upon their performance but on what Christ performed at the cross.
- We want believers to proceed from denial to honesty, from repression to confession, as they progress in the freedom found in repentance and acceptance.

Recommended Reading

Cook, Jerry, with Stanley C. Baldwin. *Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness*. Regal Books, Ventura, CA., 1979.

Roberts, Richard Owen. *Repentance: The First Word of the Gospel*. Crossway, Wheaton, IL, 2002.

Schlink, M. Basilea. *Repentance: The Joy-Filled Life*. Bethany House, Minneapolis, MN, 1984.

Yancey, Philip. *What’s So Amazing About Grace?* Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1997.

²³ Denny, James, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament—Volume 2*, W. Robertson Nicoll [Editor], William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974, pg. 709.

The New Birth

“Declaration of Faith” (Article VII)

“We believe that the change which takes place in the heart and life at conversion is a very real one; that the sinner is then born again in such a glorious and transforming manner that the old things are passed away and all things are become new; insomuch that the things once most desired are now abhorred, while the things one abhorred are now held most sacred and dear; and that now having imputed to him the righteousness of the Redeemer and having received of the Spirit of Christ, new desires, new aspirations, new interests, and a new perspective on life, time and eternity, fill the blood-washed heart so that his desire is now to openly confess and serve the Master, seeking ever those things which are above.”²⁴ (John 3:3; 1 Cor. 5:17; John 15:19; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 3:24,25; Ps. 1:1,2)

Interview Questions

- What are the nature and implications of the new birth?
- What must a person do or believe to be born again?
- What personal changes should we expect after a person is born again?
- Can a person backslide, apostatize, and be lost? If so, how?

Introduction

At first glance, a contemporary reader might not fully understand why our founder included this category since so much has already been said in the previous articles about the central elements of salvation. But, once we understand the truth she captured here, we realize Article VII is the fruit of Articles IV, V and VI. In Article IV, we celebrate the fact that the Son of God has become our *substitute*, dying in our stead in order to pay the penalty for our sins. Article V reminds us that this salvation offered us has been completely accomplished by God. We contribute nothing to it by our good works. It is a *free gift*. Then Article VI describes the proper human response to this gift. We receive this salvation by sincere *repentance* for rebelling against Him, and by *acceptance* through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Once we have understood and responded to these wonderful truths, we experience the internal miracle called the new birth that takes place in our hearts. By highlighting this transformation, our founder emphasized the importance of faithfully presenting the gospel. The truths of the gospel must remain pure and uncompromised so that those who respond will indeed be “born from above” (John 3:37) by an infusion of God’s Spirit. Christians are not meant to be people who have merely changed their orientation toward God or even those who merely feel sorrow for their sins. Rather they are intended to be people so changed by the Holy Spirit it can be said they are “born-again.”

²⁴ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

Questions for Discussion

E. What does it mean that humans have been created in God's image?

There is no truth more foundational to understanding human nature than that which God states in Genesis 1:26,27 "Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness...." In the next verse Moses writes, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." King David marveled at this same truth when he wrote: "What is man that you take thought of him...yet you have made him a little lower than God..." (Ps. 8:4,5). There must be many dimensions to this wonderful revelation, but the most central is this: we are *persons* as God is a person. This means He has placed within us the equipment to relate to Him as one person to another. He has given us everything necessary to know Him, love Him, obey Him, enjoy Him, fear Him, talk with Him, and fellowship with Him. Many animals are also conscious living beings, but, because they are not made in His image, they are not designed to fellowship with Him as we do. Only humans possess the elements necessary for full personhood:

1. Mind--We have the capacity for rational thought and retaining knowledge.
2. Heart--Like God we have affections – the capacity to love and hate.
3. Will--We make choices that are based on information but that are not simply the logical result of that information. We are capable of making good choices and bad choices, of being obedient or rebellious, selfless or selfish. This is why we are morally responsible for our choices.

The fact that God has created us in His image also means we are spiritual beings who continue to exist even after our bodies die. Our existence is spiritually based, not physically based. It is this fact that gives the greatest urgency to the preaching of the gospel. Without Christ some will exist forever separated from God.

A final observation that reveals the extent to which we have been made in God's image is this: God so fashioned us that His only begotten Son could become a man and remain one of us forever as a resurrected man. In our "likeness" (Phil. 2:7), He remains able to fully express the personality of God (John 1:14, 18; 14:8-11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15,19).

F. How has God's image been corrupted in humans?

Since the rebellion of Adam and Eve, all humans are born severely damaged in their essential natures.²⁵ Our conscious personalities have been separated from the direct influence of the Holy Spirit and come automatically inclined to rebellion and preoccupation with self. According to R.A. Torrey's writing on the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (*The Holy Spirit, Who He Is and What He Does*, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1927) we are born with the following limitations:

- 1) A mind that is blind to the truth of God

²⁵ Torrey, R.A., *The Holy Spirit, Who He Is, and What He Does*, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1927, p.76

Paul tells us, “but a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Cor. 2:14, NASB).

- 2) A heart (affections) set on things that displease God (Eph. 2:3)
“We love the things we ought to hate, and we hate the things we ought to love.”²⁶
- 3) A will set on pleasing self, not God (Rom. 8:7,8)
Even when the things that please us are not necessarily evil in themselves, the fact that we disregard the will of God and seek our own fulfillment is the essence of sin.

C. Why must we be born again?

Until the Holy Spirit miraculously transforms us, we are hopelessly trapped in a vicious cycle: our minds, hearts, and wills are corrupted and lead us to sin against God. This sin then brings condemnation and further separation from Him (Rom. 3:10, 23; 6:23; Isa. 64:6). In addition to our own inclination to sin, there are also other powerful forces that further enslave us and prevent us from obeying God. The New Testament describes us as being in bondage to the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13), the spirit of sin (Rom. 6:18; Eph. 2:2), the flesh (Gal. 5:16; Rom. 6:12,13), and demonic powers (Eph. 6:12). Apart from the new birth, people are unable to obey God; they fall into increasing bondage and condemnation.

What occurs in the new birth?

The new birth is the immediate result when a person repents and accepts by faith the atonement of Jesus Christ. He or she becomes positionally holy before God and is no longer separated from the presence of God by a barrier of sin. Instantly the Holy Spirit enters the person, and His indwelling provides the resources and care needed to reverse the damage done to the image of God. From that moment on He is constantly present and available to help. Some of the changes of the new birth are listed below:

1. A new mind--He provides inspiration, guidance, and revelation. Where we once relied on the corrupted reasonings of our natural minds for all such information, we can now, at any time, set our minds on the Spirit (Rom. 8:6) who lifts our thought processes to an entirely new level. God teaches, speaks, leads, comforts, and inspires. We receive wisdom and knowledge far beyond our former capacities. Our old “blindness” is replaced by unfolding revelation.
2. A new heart--When we “walk in the Spirit,” our affections and attitudes are miraculously replaced with God’s. We have an unlimited source of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:16,22,23). We find ourselves loving the things that please God and hating the evil things we once loved.²⁷
3. A new will--Before receiving the atonement of Christ our wills were not free to obey God nor were they even inclined to do so. Powerful forces held us captive: sin (Rom. 6:18), the flesh (Rom. 6:12,13; Gal. 5:16) and the influence of the devil (Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13; 1 John 5:19). As descendants of Adam and Eve, we were all born into this world subject to these

²⁶ Torrey, op.cit.

²⁷ Torrey, op.cit., pp 78,79

forces and are, in one way or another, trapped by them in a downward spiral of rebellion against God. But, in the new birth, the grip of these corrupting forces is broken. Our wills are at last free to submit to God. Although we remain able to choose right or wrong, the Holy Spirit puts God's laws upon our hearts and writes them upon our minds (Heb. 10:16; Jer. 31:33). In fact, the moral inclination of a believer is so profoundly changed by the new birth that it can be said no one who chooses to continue sinning is "born of God" (1 John 3:9). Even if believers sin, they do not want to and, with God's resources available to them, they will stop as soon as they are able. Like a parent, the Holy Spirit teaches, disciplines, convicts, encourages, and comforts until we not only obey God but also come to agree that His ways are right.

Conclusion

Foursquare pastors must recognize the reality of the new birth and the necessity of boldly and regularly presenting the requirements of the gospel. If either repentance or faith in Christ's atonement is ignored or minimized, we run the risk of merely reorienting people toward God at a mental or emotional level. We must be willing to clearly and persuasively present the requirements of the gospel so our hearers can respond fully and receive the new birth. As our statement of faith says, "We believe that the change which takes place in the heart and life at conversion is a very real one." The statement goes on to assert that a person experiencing the new birth will invariably undergo substantial changes of mind, heart, and will: "...new desires, new aspirations, new interests, and a new perspective on life, time and eternity, fill the blood-washed heart." While it is certainly true that born-again people are not perfect, it is not at all true that they are just forgiven. God intends that we be "born of God" with His "seed" abiding in us (1 John 3:9).

Recommended Reading

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. LIFE Bible College, San Dimas, CA, 1983, 1987, see: pp 228-234).

Edersheim, Alfred. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. E.R. Herrick & Co., New York, 1883, see Vol.1, chap. VI, pp 381-389.

Gordon, M.R. "Regeneration" in *The New Bible Dictionary*. J.D. Douglas, ed., Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1962 (reprinted 1971), see pp 1080, 1081.

Hayford, Jack. *Newborn, Your New Life with Christ*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL, 1971.

Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974, see chap. 17, p 224.

Daily Christian Living

“Declaration of Faith” (Article VIII)

“We believe that having been cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and having received the witness of the Holy Spirit at conversion, it is the will of God that we be sanctified daily and become partakers of His holiness; growing constantly stronger in faith, power, prayer, love and service, first as babies desiring the sincere milk of the Word; then as dear children walking humbly, seeking diligently the hidden life, where self decreases and Christ increases; then as strong men having on the whole armor of God, marching forth to new conquests in His name beneath His blood-stained banner, ever living a patient, sober, unselfish, godly life that will be a true reflection of the Christ within.”²⁸ (1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; Pro. 4:18; Heb. 6:1; Rom. 8:5; Isa. 35:8; 1 Pet. 2:2)

Interview Questions

- How does the call to holiness (sanctification) relate to New Testament believers?
- What does “legalism” mean?
- How do the Ten Commandments relate to believers today?
- What counsel would you give someone who is trapped in an addiction?

Introduction

This article in the “Declaration of Faith” expresses an important conviction that is held, modeled, and promoted in all Foursquare churches and ministries: Having been made positionally holy by the blood of Jesus and practically holy through the new birth of the (Holy) Spirit, we are now called and enabled to be holy in our daily lives. Although some Christians may think or behave as though the way we live is of no great importance, our church family believes there is a way to live that makes a huge difference in our relationship to God, for ourselves, for others, and for the honor and effectiveness of the gospel. When human beings harmonize their lifestyles with the life of God and live in ways for which they were designed, they can be healthy, happy, strong, and true blessings to others. This is also pleasing to God. But behaviors that weaken and damage human life ultimately lead to sadness, disease, and death.

Throughout history there have been expressions of Jesus’ Church that have exhibited the extremes of inappropriate license or rigid, deathly “legalism.” The Foursquare Church seeks neither. Instead, our church wants to receive, reflect, and reproduce the spirit and life of Jesus, “The Holy One of God” (Mark 1:24/Luke 4:34) in our daily lives, practicing a lifestyle in harmony with the goodness and rightness of God’s new kingdom and in keeping with the directives of God’s Word and Spirit. It is, therefore, expected that Foursquare ministers will experience, model, and teach the importance and power of

²⁸ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

daily Christian living in a healthy, balanced, and practical way and promote its growth in themselves and others through faith, love, obedience, prayer, and other spiritual disciplines.

For Discussion

We know that we are called not only to Christ but also to holiness:

“Made holy in Christ Jesus; called to be holy” (1 Cor. 1:2).

“As obedient children, do not conform yourselves to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who has called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written, ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (1 Pet. 1:14-16; Lev. 19:2).

But what is holiness? What does it mean to be holy? What does holiness look like?

For some the word “holiness” brings to mind images of an inappropriately narrow, rigid, and even deadly “legalism” that robs human beings of the freedom, joy and power God intends.²⁹ But that is not “true holiness” (Eph. 4:24). That is a false or merely religious holiness typified in the New Testament by some Scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus warned against the dangers of false religion. The negative power of religion is the power to make a person narrow, cold, and hard; it dehumanizes. Jesus harshly criticized the Scribes and Pharisees for carefully following many particular rules while ignoring the larger, more important, and more difficult, issues of everyday right living:

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are so careful to pay a tenth of your spices –mint, dill and cumin – but you have neglected the more important matters of the Law: Justice, mercy and faithfulness” (Matt. 23:23).

He also criticized them for outward observance that neglected interior motivational issues of the heart:

“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and dish; but inside you are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, then the outside will also be clean” (Matt. 23:15-16; cf. also Matt. 15:1-20).

False religion and legalism rob human beings of appropriate and powerful freedom, joy, and life (See John 9:1-34. But Jesus was not like that. His right way of living, in fact, went beyond that of these Scribes and Pharisees (cp. Matt. 5:1-7:29, especially 5:20; also Luke 6:20ff.) but not in a small, diminished, or impoverished way. He was fully engaged in human life. He did not withdraw from life or from people.

²⁹ The term “legalism” can refer to the wrong idea that human beings can be justified with God through successfully following the Law (cf. Gal.1-2). It can also refer to a way of thinking or living that looks only at the written law and not also to God and people.

Instead, he lived with a warm heart of compassion, love, and justice. People were drawn to the freshness, power, and vitality of Jesus' life. And true holiness is attractive: "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!" (Ps.29: 2). Like a pure mountain stream on a hot summer day, true holiness is refreshing, clean, healthy, and powerful.

In fact, the depth, focus, and balance of Jesus' holiness are reflected in the vision and spirit of Mrs. McPherson and the Foursquare Church. Mrs. McPherson was deeply consecrated, devoted to nurture in spiritual disciplines and serious even about such particular, everyday issues as the propriety of using makeup or attending the cinema. She also modeled a "joy of life," a healthy understanding of our positive relation to creation, a full-hearted participation in civic community life, and much more.³⁰

So the holiness recommended in our "Declaration of Faith" is serious, deep, balanced, and healthy. It makes room for and encourages process and growth. And it is practical. The specific characteristics mentioned in the article, such as faith, love, service, humility, "hiddenness," patience, sobriety, unselfishness, and godliness are not mere outward religious ones, but practical expressions of Jesus' character that pertain to everyday life.

When the Old Testament says something is "holy," it means that it is not only "consecrated" or "set apart" but also special and powerful. To say something is not holy is to say it is merely common, desecrated, weakened, or even diseased.³¹ The Lord Himself is incomparably holy (Isa. 6:3) and calls Israel to imitate that holiness (Lev. 19:2), in both ceremonial or ritual cleansing and in the conduct of daily life. Direction for this way of living is found in the commandments and encouraged by the prophets.

For Christians today the Law of Moses is not binding in precisely the same way it was for Israel. But the commandments reveal God's values and character. They point the way to Christ, and they give us good direction for the conduct of daily life. The coming of God's Kingdom in Jesus created a "new situation" in which Jesus has become the supreme Interpreter of the Law and, in fact, calls for a right way of living that, while maintaining continuity with it, goes beyond the standards of the Law.³² With regard to the true spirit of holiness, it is helpful to remember that the commandments were never given so that we could achieve relationship with God. Instead, the commandments were given in order to maintain that relationship, which is already freely established by grace through faith. And, it is given for our good! (Deut. 6:20-25). If, through the power of the Spirit, we follow these directives, things will go better. But if we act out the disordered desires of the lower nature, damage and loss will occur.³³

³⁰ See Edith Blumhofer, "Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister". Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1993, p.325.

³¹ H. Seebass and C. Brown, "Holy", in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. II, pp. 223-238.

³² For some discussion of the teachings of Jesus and Paul regarding a Christian's relationship to the Law, see G.D. Ladd, "A Theology of the New Testament". Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1974, pp.124-125; pp.495-510

³³ See the argument of Ron Mehl, "The Ten(der) Commandments: Reflections on the Father's Love". Multnomah, 1998.

Paul also calls the Church to holy living. His “gospel,” as presented in the letter to the Romans, includes not only justification through faith in the blood of Jesus (chapters 1-5), but also sanctification through inclusion in the death and resurrection of Jesus (6:1-7) and the new life of the Holy Spirit (8:1-14). That gospel also includes a practical, everyday way of Christian living (chapters 12-16). He urges the Corinthians to “be holy” in practical ways that revolve around the larger issues of faith, hope, and love. In his shorter letters as well, Paul calls the Church to a practical and real way of living that is consistent with the character of God, beneficial to ourselves and others, and honoring to the gospel (Gal. 5:1-6,10; Eph. 4:17-6:9; Phil; Col. 3:1ff; 1 Thess. 4:1-12; 5:14-23). The Pastoral Epistles, especially 1 Timothy, the content of which we find reflected in the “Declaration of Faith,” call the Church to reach beyond external religious knowledge to a sober, humble, and godly life of faith and love. In fact, we can say that, apart from actively loving other people, there is no true holiness (cf. 1 Thess. 3:13). The general letters, such as Hebrews, emphasize particular aspects of holiness, and 1 Peter also articulates this universal call.

Specific Questions

1. What is Christian’s relationship to the Law of Moses?

In the New Testament and at various times throughout church history, the question has arisen as to whether a Christian is required to follow the entire Law of Moses, including the so-called “holiness code” of Leviticus. Some churches, such as the Seventh Day Adventist Church, teach that a person must follow the entire Law of Moses, including the keeping of the Sabbath specifically on Saturday, in order to be saved. That is not the stance of the Foursquare Church.

God’s law is holy and was given so Israel could maintain its covenant relationship with Him. It reveals His character, gives guidance for right and healthy living, and prepares the way for Christ by prefiguring Him and helping us recognize our sinfulness. With the coming of Jesus, a new situation occurs where the presence of the kingdom of God is manifest and Jesus functions as the supreme Interpreter of the Law. He did not come to abolish the Law but to “fulfill” it, that is, to live it out in fullness and to make a way for an even greater righteousness. When confronted by the question of whether Gentile converts must first become Jews in order to become Christians, the New Testament church answered, “no,” though the Apostles did issue some fundamental directives for holy living (Acts 15:1-31). Anyone may choose to keep the entire Law of Moses; however, it is not required for salvation. We are saved through faith in Jesus (cf. Gal. 2:14-16).

2. How are Gnostic or libertine heresies reflected in the New Testament and seen at points in church history?

Several of the apostolic letters in the New Testament address the false teaching that Christians are free from all ethical and moral constraints and may conduct themselves in any way they see fit. For example, in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul refutes the deception that Christians may live as they please (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Likewise, John’s first and second letters emphasize the humanity of Jesus, showing that, while He had “come in the flesh,” He perfectly kept the ethical commandments of the law. Throughout church history there have been groups who, on one basis or another, have taught Christian license, but

such teaching is clearly contrary to the heart of the Law of Moses, the teachings of Jesus, and the directives of the Apostles.

3. What is Foursquare's stance on questions of conscience (especially 1 Cor. 8:1-9:27 and Rom. 14:1-21)?

In the Law of Moses, the teachings of Jesus, and the letters of the Apostles specific directions for daily Christian living are given. For example, it is clear that Christians should abstain from adultery or "fornication." Yet there are areas of daily Christian living where serious Christians might honestly disagree. These areas are sometimes known as things "adiaphora," which is Greek for "disputed" (cp. Rom. 14:1). For example, in the letters of Paul we find that in the church at Corinth, some of the Corinthian Christians thought they should not accept invitations to lunch at the pagan temples or buy meat in the marketplace since it might have been originally slaughtered as a sacrifice to idols. Others, however, with a greater sense of freedom of conscience, felt free in certain circumstances to do both. In this matter, Paul counseled them to make their choices on the basis of conscience, i.e. to do that which would be edifying for them, and that which would be best for others. In Romans 14, Paul encouraged those with a greater sense of personal freedom not to look down on those who did not feel as free and to honor their stricter sense of conscience. And those who had a stricter sense of conscience should also refrain from "judging" those who seemed to possess more freedom. Everyone should follow his or her own conscience, not someone else's.

4. What relationship should Christians have with the psychotherapeutic community?

In recent years Christian churches have wondered what the relationship ought to be between the churches and those who practice psychological counseling. It seems that, for whatever reasons, many pastors have entirely abdicated the "care of the soul" to psychologists. On the other extreme, we find pastors who utterly reject any insight gained through the social sciences. Foursquare pastors are, of course, free to make their own judgments. But it seems that there is a wise pathway of moderation that can at once draw on and use in a discerning way the insights and resources of the counseling community while still pursuing the pastoral care of souls in a biblical way.

Conclusion

One of the great gifts the Foursquare Church has to offer the world is a right, balanced, healthy, and practical way of daily living. The Bible offers a way to live that promotes health, happiness, goodness, freedom, and power! To ignore this is to become weak, diseased, damaged, and even destroyed.

- We want our churches to be places where the spirit and life of Jesus are being received, reflected, and replicated.
- We want our churches to be places where people can grow and get practical help through the use of spiritual disciplines and practical life skills.

Recommended Reading

Cole, Neil. *Cultivating A Life For God*. Church Smart Resources, Carol Stream, IL, 1999.

Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974.

Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. Broadman and Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1943 (1996).
Mehl, Ron. *The Ten(der) Commandments*. Multnomah, 1998.
Roberts, Ted. *Pure Desire*, Regal Books, A division of Gospel Light, Ventura, CA, 1999.

Water Baptism and The Lord's Supper

“Declaration of Faith” (Article IX)

“We believe that water baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, according to the command of our Lord, is a blessed outward sign of an inward work; a beautiful and solemn emblem reminding us that even as our Lord died upon the cross of Calvary so we reckon ourselves now dead indeed unto sin, and the old nature nailed to the tree with Him; and that even as he was taken down from the tree and buried, so we are buried with Him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.”³⁴ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:37, 38; Gal. 3:27, 28; Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:20,21; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:41, Matt. 28:19,20)

We believe in observing the Lord's supper by the sacred use of the broken bread, a precious type of the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, whose body was broken for us; and by the juice of the vine, a blessed type which should ever remind the participant of the shed blood of the Savior who is the true vine of which His children are the branches; that this ordinance is a glorious rainbow that spans the gulf of years between Calvary and the coming of the Lord, when in the Father's kingdom, He will partake anew with His children; and that the serving and receiving of this blessed sacrament should be ever preceded by the most solemn heart-searching, self-examination, forgiveness and love toward all men, that none partake unworthily and drink condemnation to his own soul. (1 Cor. 11:26; 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5)

Interview Questions

Water Baptism:

- Is it important to be baptized by immersion in water? Why or why not?
- What takes place for a person when they are baptized?
- How will you teach and practice water baptism?
- When a person who was baptized as an infant comes to personal faith, is it necessary for them to be baptized again?
- What is your understanding of the meaning of Jesus' baptism in water?

The Lord's Supper:

- Is it important for a Christian congregation to take Communion together? Why or why not?
- In your view, what differentiates between this practice as a mere ritual and its observance as a ministry attended by God's presence and power?

³⁴ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

- How will you teach, practice and administrate the Lord's Supper among the people you lead?

Water Baptism

Introduction

Especially since the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, the Church has been divided over precise understandings and the practice of water baptism. In the Foursquare Church we want to possess our understandings and pursue our practices with an appropriate humility, focusing not so much on our precise (and partial! 1 Cor. 13:9,12) understandings as on our obedient and powerful practice. At a time when many churches neglect water baptism, we do not want to neglect calling people to water baptism. Since becoming a Christian includes repenting and being baptized, we are disobedient to the Bible's directives regarding faithful evangelization and full conversion if we do not. In addition, converts who are not baptized or who do not witness baptisms can possess an impoverished and weak Christianity that is based on simply "receiving Jesus" (John 1:14) and ignores repenting of our sins, obeying Jesus Christ, and dying in order to live again.

Questions for Discussion

A. What does the Old Testament teach about water baptism?

In the Old Testament the role of water baptism in end-time salvation is prefigured by the creation of the world out of water (Gen. 1), the salvation of Noah and his family through the waters in the ark (Gen. 6-9; cf. 1 Pet. 3:20-21) and the deliverance of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt into the Promised Land through the waters of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:19-15:22; cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-2).

Ritual washings, in cases of religious impurity (e.g., Leviticus, Num. 19) and as practiced by a person as he or she approached God (e.g. the high priest in Ex. 40:12-15; Lev. 8; Num. 8) were complemented by calls for moral cleansing as well (cf. Isa. 1:6; Ezek. 36:25; Zech. 13:1; Ps. 51:7). Certain sects (e.g. Essenes at Qumran) made use of baptismal cleansings in order to create a renewed and holy people, fit to participate in the dawning of a new age. Also, through proselyte-baptism, a Gentile could be cleansed from sin and made a full-fledged newborn child of Abraham's family.³⁵ The baptism of John, was a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:4), which "prepared" his fellow Jews by cleansing them and making room for the coming of God's rule in Jesus (Matt. 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-18).

B. What does the New Testament teach about water baptism?

All the Old Testament "prefigurements" find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ who began his public ministry with a voluntary submission to the baptism of John, "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:13-17; cf. Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21-23). The example of Jesus as the forerunner of our salvation is full of meaning for believers, but his baptism also represents a powerful entry into full solidarity with imperfect humanity for the purpose of its salvation. The Sinless One voluntarily joins himself with sinful humanity in order to

³⁵ R. P. Martin, "Worship in the Early Church", Eerdmans, 1964, pp.88-90, 98

deliver it to glory.³⁶ After His resurrection, Jesus gave express command to his disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20).

On the Day of Pentecost, following the proclamation of the gospel, those who desired to become Christians asked Peter and the other apostles, “Men and brothers, what should we then do?” Peter replied, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you too shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:37-38). In the detailed conversion stories that follow through the book of Acts, those who believe were baptized (cf. Acts 2:41; 8:12-13; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5). In Acts and throughout the New Testament, baptism is related to repentance, faith and the reception of the Spirit.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul explains that our deliverance from the penalty of sins is accomplished through faith in the blood of Jesus (Rom.1:18-5:9). Our deliverance from the power of sin is made possible by our inclusion in the death and resurrection of Jesus –in order to put “the body of sin” out of operation and to receive the gift of the new Spirit (Rom. 5:9-8:14). This inclusion in the death and resurrection of Jesus, accomplished by God’s putting us “in Christ,” is modeled by water baptism (Rom. 6:1-7).

Being lowered into the watery grave, we are burying our old life and then being raised to newness of life in the new creation and power of the Spirit (cf. Col. 2:12). Pharaoh’s army is drowned! Through our faith, by which at baptism we renounce all allegiance to alien authorities, demonic influences that would seek to draw us back are cut off.³⁷ Our sins are washed away. There is established for us and against the accusations of the enemy and even in our own hearts an external and eternal “rock of remembrance” in accordance with the promise of Jesus: “Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark16: 16). God’s Spirit may come upon us in fullness even as it did first upon Jesus Himself, the 120 in the Upper Room and other believers through the ages. Since baptism signifies union with Christ, all that he has accomplished for us is signified and communicated by faith through those waters (Gal. 3:27).

Baptism is a public declaration of the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. From our side it signifies our faith, obedience, submission, and repentance. From God’s side, it proffers and pledges forgiveness, cleansing, and death and new birth in the freedom and power of the Spirit.

Specific Questions

1. What is the relationship of baptism to salvation?

Arguments over whether or not a person who believes but is not baptized is saved do not seem to bear good fruit. What is clear is that all who believe are called to be baptized. There is no question that water

³⁶ K. McDonnell, “The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan”, Michael Glazier/Liturgical Press, 1996, p.241.

³⁷ In the early church and in many historic liturgies, renunciation of Satan and exorcism of demons is performed as part of the baptismal ceremony. (Reference?)

baptism apart from faith can save no one. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Rom. 10:9-10; Eph. 2:8, et al.). But while baptism in itself cannot save, in the New Testament it is closely linked with the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), regeneration (John 3:5; Titus 3:5-6) and “salvation” (1 Pet. 3:20-21). It seems that, in the New Testament, baptism is neither self-operative nor merely symbolic. Both the divine and human sides are given their proper due. In the end, we want to emphasize the call to baptism and the powerful benefits for all who respond to that call.

2. What is Foursquare’s stance on infant baptism³⁸?

In the Foursquare Church we follow the practice of infant dedication and then calling youth or adults who have come to personal faith to make a conscious, informed choice for baptism. In our culture, however, ministers will often encounter people in various stages of full conversion. We may encounter people who believe but have not been baptized. Or we may encounter those who have been baptized but have not yet come to personal faith. If a person, baptized as an infant or small child comes to personal faith as an adult and wishes to obey the call to baptism, we will gladly baptize again. This does not necessarily imply either a negative judgment on another church’s baptism or any lack of respect or gratitude for the loving actions of parents. Rather it represents our support of a person’s conscientious obedience in faith through the Spirit to the call of Jesus.

3. What mode of baptism should be used?

Our understanding of the Greek term *baptizo*³⁹ and the full symbolism of baptism lead us to practice immersion. However, we can imagine God honoring a baptism that, for some circumstantial or personal reason, is performed in the manner of sprinkling or pouring.

4. What baptismal formula should be used?

The “Declaration of Faith” employs the phrase “in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost,” which is taken from Matt. 28:19. This differs from Peter’s (and Acts’) phrase, “in the name of Jesus” (Acts 2:38; cf. Acts 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). At times Pentecostal churches have divided over which of these phrases should be used when baptizing. But it seems that Peter used this phrase only to emphasize the saving role of Jesus. He would not have been uncomfortable with the Trinitarian formula found in Matt. 28:19. This was the formula that predominated in the early church and still does today. Therefore, while the Foursquare Church is Trinitarian and recommends the use of the Trinitarian formula, we would certainly not forbid the use of the formula, “in the name of Jesus,” as long as it does not represent a polemic against a Trinitarian understanding.⁴⁰

³⁸ For a brief look at understandings in favor of both infant and adult baptism, see Hayford’s Bible Handbook, “Baptism”. For a fuller history of different views, see Bridges “The Waters That Divide”.

³⁹ See Hayford’s Bible Handbook, “Baptism”. For the Greek word *Baptizo*, see G.R Beasley-Murray, “Baptism” in New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Colin Brown editor, pp.144ff

⁴⁰ See J.W. Hayford, “Questions on Baptism”, chapter 10 of new book (title?), material from former pamphlet “New Born”.

Conclusion

- Foursquare pastors should possess a good understanding of the powerful benefits of water baptism and teach these concepts to people.
- We want pastors who lead converts into a discipleship that involves not only “receiving Jesus” but also repenting, being baptized, and receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

The Lord’s Supper

Introduction

This sacrament is referred to as “the Lord’s Supper” (1 Cor. 11:20), “Eucharist” (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24, from the New Testament Greek word, *eucharisto*, “to give thanks”), “the breaking of the bread” (Luke 24:35; Acts 2:42,46; 20:7, 11) and “Communion” (Greek, *koinonia*, 1 Cor. 10:16-17). The Church has from its beginning celebrated and received the bread and the wine. These serve as a remembrance of Jesus, a declaration and fresh reception of the benefits of His substitutionary and atoning death, and a means of looking ahead to His coming again to consummate the new kingdom of God (1 Cor. 11:26). While this observance has in certain times and places appeared to degenerate into empty ritual and has been viewed by some as an overemphasized means of unrighteous ecclesiastical control,⁴¹ for our church family the commemoration of the Lord’s Supper is an important and powerful act of obedience to the commandment of Jesus who said, “Take, eat, this is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24).

For Discussion

In the Old Testament, powerful “prefigurements” of the Lord’s Supper can be seen in the wine and bread of the first fruits which were offered as a sacrifice of gratitude to the Lord; the provision of manna for pilgrims journeying through the wilderness to Promised Land (Ex. 16); and c) the commemoration of the Passover feast (Ex. 12:1ff). This important festival of national deliverance both recalled/relived the Lord’s salvation of his people out of slavery and pointed ahead to the Messianic age. Standing “ready” with staff and shoes, in pilgrim garb, the head of the household takes in his hand the unleavened loaf and recites a formula taken from Deuteronomy 16:3: “This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate when they came out of Egypt.” Also at the meal, the story of the exodus was “declared”(Hebrew *Haggadah*, Ex. 13:8).⁴²

Although not all features of a Passover feast are noted as present at the “Last Supper” (Matt. 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23; John 13:1ff.), the gospel reports are full of Passover imagery and form the

⁴¹ For example, Ignatius of Antioch (c.110 A.D.) *To The Smyrnans* 8:1, “Let only that Eucharist be regarded as legitimate which is celebrated under the bishop or him to whom he has entrusted it.”

⁴² For example, Ignatius of Antioch (c.110 A.D.) *To The Smyrnans* 8:1, “Let only that Eucharist be regarded as legitimate which is celebrated under the bishop or him to whom he has entrusted it.”

basis for the Church's later celebration of the Lord's Supper: "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24); "Christ, Our Passover, is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). What distinguishes the Last Supper from the Passover feast are the words of institution, which identifies the bread as Jesus' body and the cup as his blood; the reference to the "new covenant," which interprets Jesus' death as inaugurating the new covenant of Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31-34); and Jesus' command to repeat the meal: "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24-25).⁴³

Other New Testament allusions shed light on the full power and import of the Lord's Supper: the multiplication of the loaves and the superabundance of distinctive bread (Matt. 14:13-21, 15:32-37; Mark 6:30-44, 8:1-10; Luke 9:11-17; John 6: 1-15); the revelation on the Emmaus Road, where Jesus was "made known to them in the breaking of the bread" (Luke 24:35); and the Bread of Life discourse in John's Gospel, where there is contemplated the reception of eternal life through eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood (John 6:1-14, 22-71).⁴⁴

The Lord's Supper is an observance rich in symbolic meaning. Here are a few of the powerful truths ministered to us in the bread and cup:

1. A CELEBRATION of triumph and blessing

While humility, repentance and reverence are always appropriate in our approach to the Lord's Table, it is also appropriate to come in an attitude of celebration and thanksgiving. We eat and drink with gratefulness for the Father's amazing love and for the salvation he has freely and richly provided through the death of Jesus on the Cross. Since Jesus through the Cross has defeated death and hell and secured freedom from guilt and shame for all who believe, Communion is a celebration of eternal victory (cf. John 12:31, 19:30; Col. 2:14-15; Rev. 12:10-11).

2. A DECLARATION of Jesus' atoning and substitutionary death

When we celebrate the Lord's Supper in accordance with the directive of Jesus, we are "proclaiming" (*Gk. katangelo*, 1 Cor 11:26) the atoning and substitutionary death of Jesus, the sinless "Lamb of God" (John 1:29), who offered Himself up to God once and for all for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2), until he comes again. The Communion celebration, therefore, is a proclamation of love, life, and liberty for all who believe.

3. A REMEMBRANCE of God's deliverance

⁴³ Martin, *Worship in the Early Church*, pp.114-115

⁴⁴ Since this section is most likely seeking to emphasize "the scandal of full incarnation" in the face of docetic doctrines of Christ, it is probably not primarily speaking to the Lord's Supper. However, we can certainly see application, for example in the "gathering" of the bread ("Take, eat"), the offer of life, etc. "This passage is not about the Lord's Supper, but the Lord's Supper is about this passage" (C. Brown, NIDNTT, "The Lord's Supper", p.535. Also, Jack Hayford, *Grounds For Living*", pp.139-140: (In Jn.6, "he was not speaking of a literal eating and drinking. He was describing a power-filled way of partaking of the Lord's table-"my body and my blood."

Although the Lord gave the Israelites the yearly Passover to help them remember their deliverance from Egypt, in time many stopped observing the feast. This neglect brought about destruction and the loss of precious gifts. (Deut. 6:12-15, 8:12-20; cf. 2 Chron. 36:21; Jer. 29:10). This should serve as a warning to the Church today not to ignore the Lord's command to "do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24). But "remembrance" in the biblical sense means more than mere historical recollection. It also entails reenactment and even a fresh reception of the benefits provided by Jesus' death. In Communion we "take" and "eat" to ourselves the health, strength, sustenance and life of Jesus and apply to our hearts, lives and homes the forgiveness, redemption and freedom of his shed blood. We re-encounter Jesus by faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. A COMMUNION with God and with one another

In partaking of the Lord's Supper we recognize the Lord's presence not only in the elements but also in His Body, the Church. Believers have a "communion" made possible by the death of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. We are not only united spiritually with God but also with one another--joined together in "one loaf"(1 Cor. 10:16-17, 11:27-34).

5. An EXAMINATION of our hearts and lives. (1 Cor. 11:27-34)

In taking communion, believers are encouraged to allow the Holy Spirit to examine their lives and convict of sin He finds there. This prayerful reflection is not undertaken to determine whether or not we are perfect. We are certainly not. Rather it is a Spirit-led self-judgment undertaken to see if there is any area that might need to be made right before God, or any offense that needs to be reconciled with another. Because of this, the Lord's Supper is also a time for renewal in purity and healing of relationship with others.

Specific Questions

A. How is Christ present in the elements?

Following the New Testament period churches generally celebrated the Lord's Supper in their worship services.⁴⁵ Early Christian thought wisely refrained from exacting explanations of "how" Christ is present

⁴⁵ For a description of a Christian worship service in Palestine c.155 A.D., including the receiving of Communion, see Justin Martyr, *Apology I*, 65-67. ((To the pagan Emperor Antonius, explaining what Christians did: "On the say we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place. The memoirs of the Apostles and writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits. When the reader is finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things. Then we all rise together to offer prayers...for ourselves...and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions and faithful to the commandments so as to obtain eternal salvation. When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss. Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the father of the universe, through the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (Gk. *eucharistian*) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts. When he has concluded the prayers and

in the bread and cup, but their language did reflect an understanding of a real “presence” in the elements.⁴⁶ Sacrificial language was used at times, but the saving, churchly and moral implications of the Lord’s Supper tended to predominate.

By the time of Augustine (A.D. 354-430), a division had arisen between those who saw the bread and cup as merely symbols reminding us of Christ and those who believed He was literally present in the elements. This philosophic question of the precise relation between the “sign” and the “thing signified” tended to dominate Western thinking on the subject for centuries.⁴⁷ Out of the debates and divisions of the Protestant Reformation in Western Europe in the early 1500’s emerged four general ways of understanding this relationship:

1. Transubstantiation

This is the official understanding of the Catholic Church, which believes in a “conversion” or “change” in the substance of the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus.⁴⁸

2. Real Presence or Consubstantiation

This is the view of Luther and Eastern Orthodox churches, which hold that the elements remain unchanged, but that the actual body and blood of Jesus are “present” with the elements.⁴⁹

3. Symbolic

Championed by Ulrich Von Zwingli and other Reformers and followed by the Baptist and Anabaptist traditions, as well as some present day Evangelicals, this view states that the elements are mere symbolic representations and not channels of grace.

thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying, “Amen”. When he who has presided has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the “eucharisted” bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.”

⁴⁶ For example, see Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrnans*, 7.1; cf. also J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp.193-199.

⁴⁷ In the Eastern churches, which possess a more “dynamic” understanding of Eucharist and which place more emphasis on the encounter with Christ Himself through the Holy Spirit, questions about the precise relation between “sign” and what it signifies have never been a focus.

⁴⁸ The doctrine of transubstantiation took final form at the Council of Trent (1551): “because Christ our redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.” Quoted in “Catechism of the Catholic Church”, United States Catholic Conference/Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Vatican City, English Translation 1994, par. 1376, p. 347.

⁴⁹ While not embracing transubstantiation, against those who taught the elements as merely symbolic, Luther would often say, “He did not say, “This represents my body, but this IS my body.”

4. Powerful Sign

This understanding, articulated by John Calvin and other Reformers and also held by the Anglican Church and many of her daughters (Methodist, et al.), views the elements as signs that are also used by God as channels of God's grace through faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. This understanding, which seems to best represent Scripture, reason and experience and is recommended by Dr. Duffield and Dr. Van Cleave in Foundations of Pentecostal Theology also best represents the understanding of the Foursquare Church:

“The elements themselves are only a token, but when received in faith, real communion with the Lord is experienced and the benefits of that communion are mediated.”⁵⁰

B. Should we use wine or juice?

Although Jesus and the early church used wine in the Lord's Supper, some churches, including the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, which were part of the 19th-20th Century Holiness/Temperance Movement in the United States began to use juice instead. While a Foursquare church is not prohibited from using wine in the cup, the alternate use of juice can act as a loving expression of concern for those who are alcoholic, a respectful consideration of those who abstain from alcohol and a statement against the destructive potential of alcohol abuse.

Conclusion

Although in some churches today the Lord's Supper may be neglected, in Foursquare churches we do not want to do that. Like the Passover meal, the Lord's Supper has been given to us to act against the tragic tendency to forget. There is also an impartation of spiritual life through “taking” and “eating” in obedience to the command of Jesus, and the receiving of Communion also serves as a point of examination, renewal and binding together in one body. We want these blessings to be part of the life of every Foursquare church.

Foursquare pastors should possess a good understanding of the powerful benefits of regular participation in the Lord's Supper. They should teach them to the congregation and regularly lead them to the Lord's Table to “remember,” to give thanks and to together freshly appropriate and apply the powerful benefits of Jesus' life.

Recommended Reading

Beasley – Murray, G.R., *Baptism in the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

“Declaration of Faith” (Article X)

“We believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the incoming of the promised Comforter in mighty and glorious fullness to endue the believer with power from on high; to glorify and exalt the Lord Jesus; to give inspired utterance in witnessing of Him; to foster the spirit of prayer, holiness, sobriety; to equip the individual and the Church for practical, efficient, joyous, Spirit-filled soul-winning in the fields of life; and this being still the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the believer may have every reason to expect His incoming to be after the same³ manner as that in which He came upon⁴ Jew and Gentile alike in Bible days, and⁵ as recorded in the Word, that it may be truly said of us as of the house of Cornelius: ⁶the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning.”⁵¹ (John 14:16, 17; Acts 1:5,8; 2:4; 8:17; 10:44-46; 19:6, 1Cor. 3:16)

Interview Questions

G. Doctrinal

- What do you believe the Bible teaches about Pentecost as the fulfillment of “the promise” referred to by Jesus (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5)?
- What terms does the Bible use to describe this experience? Does the Bible teach that this event continues to be available to every Christian today?
- How will you teach this subject and lead people into Holy Spirit baptism?

H. Practical

- What was your personal experience in receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit?
- How might you lead someone in receiving this gift?
- What is your personal expectation regarding speaking in tongues when you pray for someone to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Introduction

For our church family, the intentional reception of the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit is very important. It is this power and fullness of the Spirit that enable us first to be witnesses by equipping us to see and hear God, and then to effectively testify with our lips and our lives to what we have seen and heard (Acts 4:20). In addition, we experience the manifestation of prophetic gifts, and we are enabled to know deeper dimensions of worship, sanctification, prayer, and evangelism.

⁵⁰ “Foundations”, p.438

⁵¹ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

In the book of Acts the reception of Spirit baptism was commonly accompanied by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4; 8:17-18; 9:17-18; 10:44-46; 19:6) and prophecy (Acts 2:18; 19:6). It is our expectation that receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit will bring with it the ability to speak in tongues and to participate in other prophetic manifestations and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18; 1 Cor. 12: 14). It is further expected that a Foursquare pastor will lead people into an intentional reception of Spirit baptism, teach the value of speaking in tongues, and, in concert with the expressed heart of the apostle Paul, encourage believers to speak in tongues (1 Cor. 14:5). Indeed, believers are to seek and tarry for the fullness of the Spirit and to zealously seek after spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1).

While we recognize some diversity in the precise doctrinal formulation of this experience, it is critical to our movement that pastors and congregations actively seek and receive the “coming upon” of the Spirit in power, and that they zealously pursue the manifestation of all spiritual gifts, including speaking in tongues. To this end a Foursquare pastor is expected to model and teach the importance of these things, leading those who are ready into the intentional reception of Spirit baptism. As a practical matter, pastors should provide opportunities for people to have hands laid on them to receive the “coming upon,” anointing or fullness of the Spirit’s power.

Questions for Discussion

The expression “baptize(d) in/with the Holy Spirit” is a term found in all four Gospels. According to the Gospels, John the Baptist emphasized that the One coming after him would not only baptize with/in water, but with/in the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:4; 11:16). In Luke and Acts, where this motif receives special emphasis, “baptism in the Spirit” seems to refer to the “incoming” (“Declaration of Faith”) and refers especially to the “coming upon” of the Spirit. First Jesus is anointed (Luke 3:22; 4:1, 14, 18; 5:17; Acts 10:38), and then successive groups of His disciples are also anointed with “power” to be His “witnesses” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). This coming upon of the Spirit in power created and enabled a prophetic community. Spirit baptism continues today to enable the church to see and hear the things of God and then to testify about them with our lips and our lives.

The Old Testament also witnesses to the Spirit’s presence and work, especially in creation (Gen. 1-11) and in the life of “the early charismatics,” such as Moses, the judges, and the prophets (Welker, *God the Spirit*). Under the old covenant, certain prophets, priests and kings had the Spirit come upon them to anoint them for service. Then, in due time, Jesus, the consummate Prophet, Priest and King, coming to the waters of Jordan, also had the Spirit come upon Him and anoint Him to conduct His unique prophetic and messianic ministry (Luke 3:22; 4:1, 14, 18). Now, as a result of Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension, all believers may receive the coming upon in power of God’s Spirit from Jesus, the Baptizer, not just select “prophets, priests, and kings”...“and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:16-18, 38-39).

1. What is the purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

The Day of Pentecost ushered in the timeless “promise of the Father” which Jesus prophesied would come upon His disciples saying they would be “baptized with the Holy

Spirit.” (Acts 1:5; 11:15,16). The purpose of this “baptism” is to provide spiritual power for living (Jude 20), serving (Eph. 6:18) and bearing witness to Christ (Acts 1:8). Therefore we are unwavering in our passion for pursuing this experience to which Christ calls us, so that we might be enabled to minister His life, truth, and power to our world.

2. Does God intend for every believer to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

We believe that the actions of the apostles reveal the priority of the early church for seeing to it that believers were initiated in Holy Spirit fullness (His being “received” or “coming upon them”). Their converts who had not yet received were taught and ministered to in ways that assisted each one to desire and receive this experience (Acts 8:14-19, 19:1-6). *Therefore, we place great importance on teaching and leading believers to seek Jesus for their own experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and to desire, expect and welcome His incoming “as...at the beginning” (Acts 19:6).*

3. Is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit a grace or experience distinct from and subsequent to regeneration?

We believe that being filled with (or baptized in) the Holy Spirit is an experience distinct and separate from a person’s regeneration. While new birth and baptism in the Holy Spirit may chronologically occur in immediate proximity, these experiences are neither simultaneous nor synonymous (Acts 9:17; 10:44-48). *Therefore, we receive the promise of the “seal of the Holy Spirit” as offered after we believe (Eph. 1:13) and do not see new birth and baptism in the Holy Spirit as one and the same.*

4. What is the purpose of speaking in tongues?

We consider speaking in tongues to be all of the following:

- a) A worthy expression of praise to God (Acts 2:11; 1 Cor. 14:16).
- b) A gift assisting us to pray according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 14:2, 14-16).
- c) One of the signs Jesus said would characterize believers (Mark 16:16-19).
- d) A blessing from God that is nurturing and practical (1 Cor. 14:3; Jude 20).
- e) A gift available to all until the return of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Acts 2:39; Acts 10 44-48, 19:1-6; 1 Cor. 14:5).

Therefore, we urge all believers to receive the blessing of speaking in tongues so that the multiple benefits of this Spirit-enabled resource may edify their daily lives (John 7:37-39).

5. Can every believer speak in tongues?

We believe that God’s Word urges every believer to seek Jesus as the baptizer in the Holy Spirit and to be open to “speaking with tongues as the Spirit gives utterance” (Acts 2:4), not merely as a requirement to verify one’s experience or spiritual worth, but as a grace intended to be a regular part of our daily “walk” in the Spirit.

Therefore, we are not passive concerning the subject of ministering the fullness of the Holy Spirit or in teaching the desirability of speaking with tongues. To us, these bring a dimension intended for every believer as a daily resource in Christ (1 Cor. 14:18). However, if the subject is approached as a dogma in which tongues is required as a proof, something of its beauty is lost and the focus of attention is misdirected.

6. What if someone does not speak in tongues when receiving Spirit baptism?

We want to lead people into a place where they can experience these gifts but we do not want to artificially manufacture them.

Therefore, it is probably best to work with each person individually. We should help people personally and consciously embrace all God has for them. Then, when people do not speak in tongues, we can lead their hearts to restful confidence in God's commitment to them while still encouraging them to be expectant as they continue seeking this gift.

7. Are there different uses for the gift of tongues?

The New Testament clearly distinguishes between the following:

- a) The "gift of tongues" as a public exercise not granted to all believers (1 Cor. 12:10,30) and always to be accompanied by an interpretation (1 Cor. 14:5, 26-33).
- b) The believer's private speaking in tongues "to God" (1 Cor. 14: 2), which enables prayer, praise, and worship (1 Cor. 14:14-18) as well as spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:18-20) and self-edification (Jude 20).

Therefore, we do not confuse the public gift and the private exercise of the spiritual language. We maintain liberty with order regarding "tongues" in congregational life, and constancy with fervor regarding "tongues" in private devotional life.

8. How can a believer remain full of the Holy Spirit?

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not intended to be an isolated event but rather the commencement of a "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16, 25) by which believers are repeatedly refreshed and strengthened. In Spirit baptism, there is an initiatory encounter with the Spirit that awakens a new closeness to God. Yet, the presence of the Spirit must be continually cherished and sought after through prayer, Bible study, and worship if a person is to remain "full of the Spirit."

Therefore, we do not complacently rest on a past experience, but daily pursue being "filled with the Holy Spirit...giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:18-20).

Conclusion

Policy for licensing with respect to doctrine and practice of Spirit baptism and speaking with tongues

- Senior pastors and those who desire an international license must themselves speak in tongues.

This is to a great degree a practical issue: If a person is going to preside over a church and church services where charismata are operating, he or she would also need to move in them. To administer the baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues, it is necessary for the minister to have experienced this as well.

- Those who desire a district license or higher (level 3 or above) must themselves speak in tongues. Those seeking a staff ministerial credential (level 4) need not speak in tongues but must be an “earnest seeker thereof.”

While we can recognize that a person who has not yet spoken in tongues may serve as support staff in a local situation, it is important that he or she be sympathetic to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and spiritual gifts; it is also important that this person be actively seeking God for these manifestations in his or her own life (cf. 1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1).

- All licensed candidates must affirm and be able to teach the “Declaration of Faith” and be willing and able to conduct Foursquare ministry in accordance with the expectations expressed in these discussions.

We realize that there may be some diversity in a pastor’s precise doctrinal formulation of the baptism in the Holy Spirit; but the expectations expressed in the “Declaration of Faith” represent the passion and faithful stewardship of our church.

Recommended Reading

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983, 261-356.

Hayford, Jack. *The Beauty of Spiritual Language*.

Hayford, Jack. *Spirit-Filled*. Wheaton IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995.

Stronstad, Roger. *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*. Hendrickson Publishers, 1985.

Williams, J.R. “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988, 40-48.

Bibliography

Blumhofer, Edith L. *Everybody’s Sister*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993.

Dayton, Donald. “From Christian Perfection To The Baptism of the Holy Ghost” in *Pentecostal and Charismatic Origins*. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975. Vinson Synan, Editor, 39-54.

Dunn, J.D.G. *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970.

Green, Michael. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1992
Reprint.

Hollenweger, Walter J. *The Pentecostals*. London: SCM Pres, 1972.

Hollenweger, Walter J. *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.

Hummel, C.G. *Fire in the Fireplace*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1978.

Lederle, Henry I. “Initial Evidence and the Charismatic Movement: an Ecumenical Appraisal” in *Initial Evidence*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991. Gary Be. McGee, Editor.

Menzies, R. “Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts” in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series*. England: Sheffield Press, June 1991.

Menzies, W.W., “The Non-Wesleyan Origins of the Pentecostal Movement” in *Pentecostal and Charismatic Origins* Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975, Vinson Synan, Editor, 81-98.

Menzies, W.W. *Synoptic Theology: An Essay on Pentecostal Hermeneutics* Paraclete, Spring 1975, 14-21.

Stronstad, Roger. *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*. Hendrickson Publishers, 1985.
Welker, Michael. *God the Spirit*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994.

The Spirit-Filled Life

“Declaration of Faith” (Article XI)

“We believe that while the Holy Spirit is as a mighty rushing wind and as tongues of living flame that can shake and set ablaze whole communities for God, He is also as a gentle dove, easily grieved and wounded by impiety, coldness, idle conversation, boastfulness, a judging or criticizing spirit and by thoughts and actions dishonoring to the Lord Jesus; that it is therefore, the will of God that we live and walk in the Spirit, moment by moment, under the precious blood of the Lamb; treading softly as with unshod feet in the presence of the King; being patient, loving, truthful, sincere, prayerful, not murmuring, instant in season and out of season, serving the Lord.”⁵² (Eph. 4:30-32; 6:18; Rom. 12:1,2; 1 John 2:6; Gal. 5:16, 25; 1 Cor. 3:17)

G. Interview Questions

- What does it mean to be “filled with the Spirit” according to Ephesians 5:18?
- How will you help people walk in Spirit fullness?

Introduction

Jesus Christ baptizes people in the Holy Spirit today just as He did in New Testament times. With that powerful experience comes the ability for Christians to lead wonderfully joyful and Christlike lives out of the “overflow” of the Holy Spirit’s life within them. We, therefore, expect pastors not only to help believers embrace and experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit but also to teach people by example and word how to live a truly Spirit-filled life. Spirit-filled people live grace-filled lives free from condemnation, clearly aware of their intimate relationships with God. They nurture their relationships with God by taking time every day to drink deeply of the Holy Spirit’s life, and they will see the fruit of the Spirit produced in their lives in increasing abundance. Because of the Spirit’s fullness being renewed in them moment by moment, their actions and decisions will be increasingly motivated by love for God and others. They will be people who walk in joyful humility, free from bitter and judgmental attitudes, and deeply committed to serving God with fervor and joy.

⁵² This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

For Discussion

The discussion is framed around the following four aspects of living a Spirit-filled life:

Being Baptized in the Holy Spirit

It is important to remember that it was expected that all believers in New Testament times would be baptized with the Holy Spirit in the powerful, experiential sense that Pentecostals have advocated (Hayford 48). The accounts in Acts 8:14-17 and Acts 19:1-6 demonstrate the importance placed upon the initial experience of being filled with the Spirit. In both passages, the believers' lack of experience with the Holy Spirit was quickly rectified by the Apostles. It was inconceivable to them that a Christian would attempt to live a "Spirit-filled life" without first being baptized in the Holy Spirit! They knew that being baptized in the Holy Spirit was the starting point for a life filled with power for living, loving, leading, serving, and witnessing. While we do not demean other church bodies who choose not to emphasize the importance of this first step, it is our conviction that it is unkind and naïve to ask believers to attempt to live the Christian life without this powerful, first filling of the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit unlocks a believer's ability to hear the Spirit's direction and releases to him/her the power to be an effective witness for Christ.

Being Continually Filled with the Spirit

We would be wrong to think that the Spirit-filled life consists of only a single experience that somehow gives a believer all the power needed for the rest of life. Indeed, Paul, in Ephesians 5:18 admonishes his readers to "be being filled with the Spirit." Because we were created to be dependent upon God, we need to ask Him to "give us this day" portions of spiritual power just as we ask for daily portions of physical necessities. A Christian who tries to live a Spirit-filled life without daily seeking to be filled afresh will meet with disappointment and failure. God never intended for us to be independent of Him. So how can we be being filled daily? Consider the following:

- First, prayerful waiting on the Lord for His Spirit's touch each day is needed. Believers will find it essential to take time each day to get quiet before the Lord and ask Him to fill them again with His Spirit, and then wait until the gentle but discernible presence of God's Spirit comes upon them. Some compare this to taking the time to stop each day and drink from the rivers of "living water" Jesus promised us (John 7:37,38). It is hard to overstate the importance of taking time to be quiet and focus one's heart on the Lord in order to receive fresh infilling of God's Spirit, yet how rare it is that believers, even Christian leaders, do so!
- Second, Ephesians 5:18-20 and other passages also seem to make a close connection between worship and being filled with the Holy Spirit. "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (NKJV). Note here that the command to be filled with the Spirit is followed by the clearly related actions of speaking to one another in psalms, etc. Even in the Old Testament the Spirit’s hand upon a person was linked to worship. A particularly interesting account is found in 2 Kings 3:15 where the hand of the Lord comes upon Elisha while a musician was playing! Certainly, then, a person wishing to be filled with the Spirit on a continuing basis is one who is constantly worshipping.

- Third, there are several references in the New Testament to praying in or with the Spirit (See Eph. 6:18, Jude 20 and 1 Cor.14:15.). The context for the Corinthians passage makes it clear that praying in the Spirit is praying in unknown tongues, so Paul is telling us that praying in a spiritual language is an important part of being filled continually, especially since he had earlier explained that the one who prays in an unknown tongue builds himself up (14:4). Many believers today confirm by their own experience that the regular exercise of a prayer language is an essential part of being continually filled with the Holy Spirit. Prayer beyond praying in tongues is also a part of the Spirit-filled life, of course, particularly if we remember that all prayer is to be “prayer in the Spirit,” inspired and motivated by the Holy Spirit.

Being Led by the Spirit

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13, NIV); “because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14, NIV; see also Gal. 5:18); “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal 5:16 NKJV). These passages make it clear that believers are to be *following* the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are filled to follow. But how do we do so?

- First and most important, we must remember that walking in the Spirit is a “grace walk.” We do not follow the Spirit in order to improve our status with God, stay saved, etc. Rather, we obediently follow the Spirit because we *are* saved--saved by grace. So it is no surprise that there is a frequent connection in Scripture between grace (and faith) and Spirit fullness. Therefore, as we seek to walk in the Spirit, our focus should not be on a list of sins to avoid as if by our own efforts we could avoid them; instead our focus should be on living in the fullness of the Spirit. As Paul reminds us, if we live by the Spirit sinful behaviors and attitudes will not be produced in our lives. But a healthy, joyful relationship with God based on grace gives birth to a life that looks increasingly like Him, reflecting the joyful obedience and consistent good works.
- Second, the phrase “led by the Spirit” clearly implies that the believer is *willing* to follow, that s/he is yielded to God’s plans and direction. “Some ...try to be more committed. What they need is to be more submitted. There is a significant difference between a personal determination to try harder and a complete abandonment of one’s self to God’s purposes” (Blackaby 100). Only those who are yielded to Spirit’s leading will be led by the Spirit!

- Third, being led by the Spirit requires listening to the Spirit. We do this first by thoroughly acquainting ourselves with His “vocabulary,” the Bible. Note again that we read the Bible to hear His voice, not to make ourselves more spiritual to earn points with God. In his book, Steve McVey makes it very clear that being led by the Spirit is a grace walk. Being led by the Spirit also requires us take time to focus on His voice. Every Spirit-filled believer *can* hear the Spirit’s voice, learning to hear the Spirit well does not happen overnight. The two keys to hearing Him well are 1) approaching Him with a complete willingness to obey what He says and 2) obeying quickly and thoroughly what we do hear. When the Spirit guides us, our quick choice to follow will increase the likelihood that we will hear Him more clearly the next time.
- Finally, even though our focus should not be on sin, there are some things that we are to avoid or put out of our lives in order not to grieve the Spirit (see Eph. 4:30-32 and similar passages). If we are full of the Holy Spirit and being filled anew each day, the desire to obey and the desire to put off things that grieve Him will grow stronger. As we put these things off His presence increases — what a wonderful circle of life!

Being Fruitful

A Spirit-filled life is a fruitful life. What do we mean by fruit? There are two primary definitions of fruit in the New Testament: one has to do with harvest (see John 15:8); the other has to do with character (see Gal. 5:22-23).

When Jesus told the disciples in John 15 that they would bear fruit, He was thinking of their being fruitful in the same way that He was fruitful: bringing people into a relationship with His Father. Their mission was the same as His (John 20:21,NIV). This is why the promise of the Holy Spirit baptism is given with reference to power to witness (Acts 1:8, NIV). This power to witness is seen again in Acts 4:23-31, where the believers ask for and receive a fresh filling of the Spirit in order to boldly and supernaturally bear witness to the good news about Jesus. Thus, to be Spirit-filled is to be a witness. Some will be more vocal and visible in their witness, of course, but early believers would not have thought of the Spirit’s fullness apart from their mission to evangelize the world. They knew when the Spirit had come upon them that they had received power to be His witnesses and to bear much fruit.

The Spirit’s fullness is not given for the purpose self fulfillment. It is given to make us more and more like Christ, and no one was more selfless than He! To be filled with His Spirit is to be filled with His character. It is no accident that the end result of a Spirit-filled, Spirit-led life is an increasingly Christ-like life: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23, NIV). A person who claims to be Spirit-filled but who is unforgiving, divisive, harsh, etc., is either lying or self deceived. Those filled with the Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit, not the works of the flesh.

Specific Questions

1. What does it mean to be “filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18)?

The New Testament uses the term “filled with the Spirit” either to refer to the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” or to describe a person in whom the Holy Spirit is strongly evident. Though there is a difference between the “baptism” and the “being filled” experiences, there is also a definite connection between the two. In the early church believers were prayed for to be baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 8, 19), and then were expected to live their lives “habitually governed and controlled by the Lord, the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus was” (Green 149). Though the term “filled with the Spirit” can be applied to either situation, in both cases the term points to the fact that people can be powerfully in-dwelt by the Spirit of God.

2. How will you help people walk in Spirit fullness?

Leadership in this area will touch on your personal life as well as your public ministry and will include at least the following:

Prioritizing: You will need to set a high priority on leading people to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and on being truly led by the Spirit. You will need to prioritize teaching them how to wait upon the Lord in prayer and to expect that the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit will both be present in their lives.

Modeling: A Spirit-filled life is contagious! If you live a truly Spirit-filled life, people around you will notice, and their lives will be challenged and changed. They will be drawn to God and hungry for His fullness in their lives. Most believers in our busy world need to see a living model of how to take the time to allow the Spirit to fill and control them. You are their first and most important example.

Prayer: There is, of course, an obvious connection between prayer and the fullness of the Holy Spirit; this is evident in Luke’s dual emphasis upon prayer and being filled with the Spirit in both Luke and Acts. Thus, teaching your congregation to pray in the fullest sense of the word will be essential. Teach that prayer is listening, not just talking. Use Paul’s prayers as models, praying about spiritual and internal matters rather than merely the material. All of this and more will be part of your teaching in this area. See some of the resource books listed below for more on prayer.

Teaching: Teach the “grace walk” we call the Spirit-filled life. In addition to the brief thoughts in this study guide, consult the resources listed below for more help.

Conclusion

Our Burden

We gladly and fervently proclaim Jesus as Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, so it is unthinkable that we, as Foursquare pastors, would ask people to attempt to live the Christian life apart from the Spirit's fullness. Sad and defeated indeed is the believer who attempts to live the Christian life in his/her own strength. It is our passionate conviction that we must encourage all new believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and then teach them how to be filled continually with the Spirit. As we do this, we must continually remind them that walking in the Spirit is a grace walk and that it takes place as they allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit. He *will* speak to them and He *will* empower them to choose to obey!

Our Goals

- We want it to be unmistakably apparent in every Foursquare congregation that we prioritize the Spirit-filled life and that this begins with every believer's being baptized in the Holy Spirit.
- We want believers who are learning how to draw upon the Spirit's power and guidance for their maturing and ministry in Christ.
- We want our church members to know that "Spirit filled" means grace-filled and that the character of Jesus will be evident in their daily lives if they are Spirit filled.
- We want every Foursquare pastor to prioritize, encourage, model, and teach the Spirit-filled life.

Recommended Reading/Works Cited

Blackaby, Henry and Richard. *Spiritual Leadership*, Broadman and Holman, 2001.
Green, Michael. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Eerdmans, 1975.
Hayford, Jack. *Newborn*, Tyndale House, 1984.
McVey, Steve. *Grace Walk*, Harvest House, 1995.

Works recommended for further study (in addition to those cited).

Cymbala, Jim. *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, Zondervan, 1997.
Cymbala, Jim. *Fresh Power*, Zondervan, 2001.
Cymbala, Jim. *The Church God Blesses*, Zondervan, 2002.
Cymbala, Jim, *The Life God Blesses*, Zondervan, 2001.
Decker, John and Sonja. *Doing What Jesus Did*, Christ's Ambassadors International, 2003.
Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, Life Pacific College, 1983.
Hayford, Jack. *The Beauty of Spiritual Language*, Thomas Nelson, 1996.
Hayford, Jack. *Grounds for Living*, Sovereign World Ltd., 2001.
Hayford, Jack and Sam Middlebrook. *Living the Spirit Filled Life*, Thomas Nelson, 1992.
McPherson, Aimee Semple. *Fire From On High*, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

The Gifts and Fruit of the Spirit

“Declaration of Faith” (Article XII)

“We believe that the Holy Spirit has the following gifts to bestow upon the believing church of the Lord Jesus Christ: wisdom, knowledge, faith, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, interpretation; that according to the degree of grace and faith possessed by the recipient, these gifts are divided to every and severally as He, the Holy Spirit, wills; that they are to be most earnestly desired and coveted in the order and proportion wherein they prove most edifying and beneficial to the church; and that the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, should be put forth, cultivated and diligently guarded as the resultant adornment, the constant, eloquent and irrefutable evidence of a Spirit-filled life.”⁵³ (1 Cor. 12:1,31, 1 Cor. 12:11; Rom. 11:29; 12:6-8; John 15:8; Luke 3:9)

Interview Questions

- What is your definition of the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit?
- What is your view of spiritual gifts?⁵⁴
- How will you teach and administrate the operation of the manifestations of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8-10)?
- How will you encourage people to grow in the fruit of the Spirit?

Introduction

The expectation within Foursquare is that all ministers will both teach and model, by their lives and ministries, the power of the Holy Spirit through His special manifestations as listed in First Corinthians 12. Evidence of these unique manifestations of the Holy Spirit is essential to the continued ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Church—both to its members and to the world.⁵⁵ It is also expected that those moving in such ministry will have lives that reflect the beauty of the fruit of the Spirit and that our ministers will see equal need for both His fruit and gifts in their lives and ministries.

⁵³ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

⁵⁴ Spiritual gifts, as used in this question and defined in this discussion guide, refer to the nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit in First Corinthians 12. It does not include the larger dimension of gifts as delineated in Ephesians 4, Romans 12, First Peter 4, etc. For a discussion of these additional gifts, see Hayford, Jack, *Gifts, Fruit and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1993.

⁵⁵ These manifestations of the Spirit describe means by which resources are provided to expand the dimensions of Jesus’ own Person and power to touch human need through the members of His Body. They thus “edify,” building up the Church as believers are ministered to through each manifestation of the Spirit and as the unsaved are touched supernaturally and brought to the Savior.

Questions For Discussion

A. What are the various manifestations of the Spirit?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit that are delineated in First Corinthians 12 are not to be confused with normal human capabilities. For example, a wise person is not necessarily functioning in the “message of wisdom” when speaking. The original, New Testament text indicates that these *manifestations* are supernatural in source. The Holy Spirit gives them as believers seek and welcome His supernatural operation at points of need. However, though these manifestations⁵⁶ of the Holy Spirit are supernatural in source, it is important to remember God designed them to be distributed via human agency (1 Cor. 12:11). This reminds us that even the most ordinary believer may have occasion to respond to one or more of these extraordinary graces. “Every Spirit-filled believer is given some capacity for the manifestation of the Spirit.”⁵⁷

Although Paul calls the First Corinthians 12 gifts “spiritual gifts” (1 Cor. 12:1), he also terms each a “manifestation” (1 Cor. 12:7). This distinction in terminology can be very helpful when distinguishing these particular manifestations from other biblical gifts; for these nine unique manifestations are not “permanent” like the Ephesians 4 or Romans 12 gifts are (at least one of which every believer is given); rather, they are “come and go” demonstrations of His power displayed through yielded believers as He sees the need. Understanding the distinction between these manifestations and other spiritual gifts given believers therefore “prevents us from confusing our foundational ministry in life and service for God with our purposeful quest for an openness to His Holy Spirit’s full resources and power for service and ministry” (Paul Walker, *Spiritual Gifts in New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, Jack Hayford ([Editor], Thomas Nelson, Inc. Nashville, TN., 2002, pg. 1854).

The stewardship of these nine graces is both a privilege and responsibility.⁵⁸ We are enlisted to help others by means of the Holy Spirit’s distributing gifts through us **just as He determines** (1 Cor. 12:11). Three primary truths are therefore important for effective ministry of these manifestations:

1. We are not to value one another according to the manifestation(s) the Holy Spirit may choose to distribute through any given individual. Rather, each believer is to be regarded as a vessel in his or her own right and is to be valued regardless of the manifestation that may or may not be demonstrated through his or her life or ministry (1 Cor. 12:14-26).
2. Since these manifestations are vital to effective kingdom ministry, we are exhorted to be fully informed of their necessity and function when ministering wholeness to people. We are also to

⁵⁶ **Manifestation** translates a Greek word (*phanerosis*) meaning a disclosure, announcement or flash. One can say then that the Spirit’s nine manifestations in I Corinthians 12 “flash forth from any believer as needed,” **for the common good** (1 Cor 12:7, 11).

⁵⁷ Duffield, Guy and Van Cleave, Nathaniel, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, LIFE Pacific College Publication, San Dimas, CA, 1983, pg. 329.

⁵⁸ The exhortation given in 2 Timothy 1:7 may well be applied here—**God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline**. These words parallel the instruction surrounding the Corinthians manifestations—we are called to minister by the Spirit of power (1 Cor 12); of love (1 Cor 13); and of self-discipline (1 Cor 14). Such provides consistency with the call to balance in ministering these manifestations—passion with discretion and order, yet boldness and expectancy with love and humility.

eagerly desire those gifts that best meet the immediate need facing us in the lives of those to whom we are ministering (1 Cor. 12:1, 31).⁵⁹

3. The intended beneficiary of these manifestations is not the one who manifests or functions in the gift, but the one toward whom a particular manifestation is directed (1 Cor. 12:7). “Gifts are bestowed with the purpose of bringing spiritual profit and edification to [others]. If a gift is exercised without love or merely as a personal display a golden bell is changed into a clanging brazen cymbal.”⁶⁰

The nine manifestations by which the Holy Spirit ministers through believers are listed below:

- **The message of wisdom**⁶¹ is supernatural insight or perspective given to ascertain the divine means for accomplishing God’s will in a given situation, especially where the outcome of decisions would not be known outside this revelation.
- **The message of knowledge** is spiritual revelation of the divine will and plan with insight and understanding of circumstances or a body of facts apart from any human resource.⁶²
- **Faith** is the spontaneously granted, supernatural capacity to believe God without doubt and to meet adverse circumstances with trust in God’s messages and words.
- **Gifts of healing**⁶³ are supernatural acts of physical and/or emotional healing transcending, though not negating or denigrating, human abilities or actions.
- **Miraculous powers** are supernatural power to intervene and counteract earthly and evil forces. This is literally a display of power that extends beyond, yet manifests within, the natural realm.
- **Prophecy**⁶⁴ is supernaturally endowed, spontaneous proclamation in a known language; a divinely motivated and anointed utterance of God’s heart for a specific situation. It is generally more forth telling than foretelling.
- **Distinguishing between spirits** is spontaneous, supernatural insight into the spiritual world to identify spiritual dynamics behind lives and situations, whether such be of demonic, human, angelic or Holy Spirit origin. It *may* also manifest by giving insight into strategies of the Adversary.⁶⁵
- **Speaking in different kinds of tongues** is supernatural utterance in languages not known to the speaker. These languages may be existent or extinct in this world or of angelic origin. They are

⁵⁹ For the Church to convey such ministry, it is needful to heed the admonition of the Scriptures to **eagerly desire spiritual gifts** (1Cor. 14:1). We are directed to earnest, prayerful pursuit of and full-hearted openness to the Holy Spirit. Neglect or passivity born of ignoring God’s desire for the dispensing of the Spirit’s gifts is neither humble nor honorable. Believers are therefore to be disciplined into living a life that is permanently available to the Holy Spirit for the manifestation of these gifts through their lives, witness and service for Christ.

⁶⁰ Duffield and Van Cleave, *loc. cit.*

⁶¹ The designation of the manifestations in this list is based upon the NIV.

⁶² This manifestation and **the message of wisdom** differ from general biblical wisdom and knowledge in that they are spontaneously revealed rather than learned through study or acquired by experience.

⁶³ This is the only manifestation that is plural; the Greek literally reads *gifts of healings*. *Gifts* is likely plural to indicate the various ways healing comes from God, as well as the fact healing is to be abundant; *healings* is likely plural because sicknesses are vast, this manifestation intended for physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual release. (For a more complete understanding of the various ways God heals, see Hubbard, David, *What We Evangelicals Believe*, Fuller Seminary Press, Pasadena, CA, 1991.)

⁶⁴ The overall contexts of Romans 12:6 and Ephesians 4:11 indicate that this is not the same gift as is listed in those texts despite the fact that the same Greek word is used.

⁶⁵ This manifestation is not the discerning of attitudes or motives (hearts).

“unknown” in the sense that they are not cognitively known to the speaker but are enabled utterances granted by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁶

- **The interpretation of tongues** is supernatural ability to relate the meaning of a manifestation of tongues. An “interpretation” is not a translation of words but a summary description of the meaning of a “message in tongues.”

B. What is the fruit of the Spirit?

The term “**fruit of the Spirit**” refers to the identifiable characteristics in a disciple’s life that give evidence that he or she is being conformed to the image of God’s Son (Rom. 8:29). This fruit grows and matures as the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying grace progressively transforms the believer through worship and God’s Word (2 Cor. 3:18). These character traits, listed in Galatians 5:22-23, are contrasted with the vices or indulgences of the sinful nature. To avoid the sinful nature every believer is told to **live by the Spirit**. Paul calls us to **keep in step with the Spirit** (Gal. 5:25). These graces of the Spirit are, therefore, clearly not the result of self-discipline but of the growth into Christ-likeness. They grow out of surrender to His lordship, cultivated by means of an abiding walk in the life of the Spirit, the truth of the Word, and the love of God (Gal. 5:16, 18, 25). This is what Jesus was referring to when He stated, “**every good tree bears good fruit...thus by their fruit you will recognize them**” (Matt. 7:17, 20). He was not speaking of the fruit of a person’s ministry, but of the fruit of character.

Having the fruit of the Spirit in one’s life is hugely important in giving credibility to ministry, especially when demonstrating the manifestations of the Spirit.

The nine character traits that Paul refers to as the “fruit of the Spirit” are listed below:

- **Love** is the essence of God’s Person and the fundamental revelation of His character (1 John 4:8). It is love by choice; a supernatural self-giving for the benefit of others that does not demand reciprocation.
- **Joy** is the ability to rejoice in the Lord always, regardless of circumstance, knowing that God’s plan for our lives is securely under His sovereign oversight and we are being guided toward His will (Phil. 4:4).
- **Peace** is that tranquility of spirit that remains constant in any given circumstance notwithstanding stress, trial or struggle; a sense of personal well-being—between us and God, within our own soul and relationally. It prompts us to do all we can to resolve conflict (Rom. 12:18).
- **Patience** is the virtue of steadfastness and forbearance that is found in God’s character (Ps. 103:8). It is expressed through God’s people when they are lenient, forbearing, and long-suffering.
- **Kindness** is the aspect of God’s love that is expressed through graciousness in attitude, tenderness of spirit, and benevolent action toward people (Eph. 4:32).

⁶⁶ This is a public manifestation given “in church,” primarily for the purpose of praise (1 Cor 14:13-17) and is to be distinguished from “private, devotional tongues” (1 Cor 14:4-5; 15). On occasion its content may be similar to that of a prophecy. For additional information on private, devotional tongues see Duffield and Van Cleave, *op. cit.*, pp. 304 *ff.*

- **Goodness** is the generosity and willingness to forgive an insult, actions so characteristic of God. Goodness is the antithesis of evil's hatefulness and destructiveness (Rom. 15:14). It is expressed in both verbal and practical affirmation.⁶⁷
- **Faithfulness** is the trait of being reliable and trustworthy in all circumstances; it is being godly and strong under pressure. This virtue is rooted in God's nature and demonstrated by His complete reliability and trustworthiness (Lam. 3:23; Rom. 3:3).
- **Gentleness** is that virtue of being even-tempered, tranquil of disposition, and unpretentious; it is strength under control.⁶⁸ This is a quality Jesus modeled (Matt. 11:29). It is manifested as a humble disposition of our will toward God (James 1:21) and toward others (Titus 3:2).
- **Self-control** is the quality of character that allows a disciple to restrain from yielding to the works of the sinful nature (Gal. 5:19) and to voluntarily abstain from anything that might hinder experiencing God's purposes in life.⁶⁹

Specific Questions

Two major issues often surround the matter of the manifestations of the Spirit in today's Church:

- 1) How do we answer those who believe these manifestations ceased with the death of the founding apostles or the canonizing of the New Testament? Though answering this question is beyond the scope of this discussion guide, a good discussion of this can be found in *Surprised By The Power of the Spirit* by Jack Deere (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI.). Deere is a former seminary professor and former cessationist who answers the question well.
- 2) Does one have to be "baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues" in order to be used of the Spirit in the Corinthian manifestations? The answer to this is complex and intricately tied to a person's view of the place of "tongues" as evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁷⁰ The general consensus of the Foursquare Church is that the Corinthians manifestations are the result of yielding to the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life, and that a believer may be used in these manifestations while earnestly seeking his or her private prayer language.

Conclusion

Our Burden

We desire ministers and churches to reflect both the dynamic, power ministry of the Holy Spirit and evidence of His sanctifying presence as encapsulated in the fruit of the Spirit. It is not a matter of either/or but both/and; the result will be that the needs of people are effectively met and wholeness is offered with love, respect, consideration, and gentleness.

⁶⁷ Its antonym is envy.

⁶⁸ The KJV translates this virtue as **meekness**.

⁶⁹ This includes voluntary abstinence from practices that, in and of themselves are not evil, but may be a source of stumbling for less mature believers (Rom. 14).

⁷⁰ See Discussion Guide, "The Baptism With The Holy Spirit."

Our Goals

- We want our ministers to ask God daily to fill them afresh with the Spirit's power to work and witness for Jesus, and to teach and encourage their constituents to do the same.
- We want our ministers to cultivate through daily prayer and worship an availability and sensitivity to being used in the manifestations of the Spirit, and to teach and encourage their constituents to do the same.
- We want our ministers to ask God daily to release the Spirit's manifestations to them as the ministry need arises and He sees fit, and to teach and encourage their constituents to do the same.

Recommended Reading

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. LIFE Pacific College Publication, San Dimas, CA., 1983.

Fee, Gordon, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. [New International Commentary of the New Testament], William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI., 1987.

Hayford, Jack. *Grounds for Living*. Sovereign World, Ltd., Kent, England, 2001.

Hayford, Jack. *Hayford Bible Handbook*. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN., 2001.

Lim, David. *Spiritual Gifts: A Fresh Look*. Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, MO., 1991.

Moderation

“Declaration of Faith” (Article XIII)

“We believe that the moderation of the believer should be known of all men; that his experience and daily walk should never lead him into extremes, fanaticism, unseemly manifestations, back-biting, murmurings; but that his sober, thoughtful, balanced, mellow, forgiving, and zealous Christian experience should be one of steadfast uprightness, equilibrium, humility, self-sacrifice and Christ-likeness.”⁷¹ (Phil. 4:5; Eph. 4:14,15; 1 Cor. 13:5; Col. 3:12,13)

Interview Questions

By moderation we mean walking a middle line between cold, powerless, unexpressive religion on the one hand and wildness, hysteria, screaming, or other unseemly manifestations on the other.

- Is moderation an important value to you?
- In what ways do you express moderation in your ministry?

Introduction

There is no area of pastoring that requires more maturity and courage than leading a church to properly participate in the gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-7). Since the Foursquare Church was founded, it has always been a movement that contends for the Spirit’s active presence. On the one hand, we expect the same powerful gifts and ministries to be available today that we see recorded in the pages of the New Testament (Heb. 13:8). And, on the other hand, we want them expressed in a conservative, reverent, and disciplined manner. We realize the Holy Spirit must always be free to do what He wishes, but we also realize that, unless our pastors maintain an orderly atmosphere, the most important work of the church soon becomes overshadowed by fleshly excess. Beginning with our founder (See Appendix: "The Narrow Line") we have determined to keep our services focused on the Lord and not let our attention be drawn away to the erratic behavior of individuals. In this way, we provide an environment where the people will continue to be saved, baptized in the Holy Spirit, and healed.

Questions for Discussion

It is the responsibility of a Foursquare pastor to shepherd a church so that it can walk “the narrow line” between being so organized that there is no place for Spirit-led spontaneity and

⁷¹ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

being so loosely structured that the services are taken over by immature people trying to display their spirituality. To do this a pastor must possess the following skills and abilities:

- sufficient personal experience in spiritual matters to distinguish between a genuine manifestation of God and something produced by human flesh or a demon
- ability to teach a congregation so that people are not ignorant in these matters and therefore vulnerable to deception (1 Cor. 12:1)
- ability to demonstrate how the gifts of the Spirit should properly operate in a service and personal ministry
- boldness to discipline behaviors that disrupt a service or to correct individuals who are misusing the gifts to hurt others
- compassion and patience to allow believers to make mistakes while learning to move in the Spirit

A. Should the gifts of the Spirit be given expression in our main public services?

Foursquare churches vary widely on how much the spontaneous expression of gifts is allowed during a main service. Some expect that these gifts will be expressed at every gathering while others keep such activity limited to personal, one-on-one situations or small groups. This decision is left to the leading of each pastor and the needs of each church. However, we would never expect a Foursquare church to have a hostile attitude toward the gifts, and we would expect every church to provide some opportunity for its members to grow in their ability to be Spirit-led ministers. Foursquare believers should know how to express a “manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7) and do so in a manner that is “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40).

B. Where would we turn in the Bible to learn about how the gifts of the Spirit should be expressed?

By far the most thorough discussion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is given in First Corinthians 12-14. Here Paul summarizes how he managed these gifts and helps us understand why they should be highly valued. It is important to remember that virtually all of early Christianity was Pentecostal, so leaders were already dealing with many of the same problems we face today. Any pastor would greatly benefit from a verse-by-verse exegetical study of these chapters until the principles contained therein become instinctively held values. Other portions of Scripture containing insight on this subject include Mark 16:17, 18; John 14:12; 16:7; the book of Acts; Romans 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-16; 5:18-21; 1Thess. 5:19-21; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 4:10, 11; 1 John 4:1-3.

C. What questions should I ask that will help me distinguish between good and bad phenomena?

- 1) Is this a scripturally supported activity that God has made clear He wants all believers to experience? Has it been made available to every generation?
Examples: the manifestations of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8-10)
- 2) Is this simply the way a particular individual is responding to the presence of God?
Examples: swooning, trembling, shouting, sobbing

Such responses are not wrong when genuine, but should not be viewed as an ongoing category of ministry. They are merely human reactions, not biblical ministries.

- 3) Is this a phenomenon that runs counter to biblical values?

Example: animal sounds

Some spiritual phenomena actually run counter to biblical principles even when practiced by well-intentioned people. Animal sounds are not explicitly forbidden in Scripture; however, there is a strong separation implied throughout Scripture between animals and humans. Animal powers were never invoked by men and women of God. Humans are uniquely created in God's image, and their worship and spiritual expression should reflect that uniqueness.

D. What are some of the mistaken attitudes that bring trouble to Pentecostal churches?

- 1) *If someone pastors the manifestations, the Holy Spirit will be "quenched."*

This attitude ignores the fact that human flesh competes with the voice of the Holy Spirit and easily confuses immature believers. This is why we are instructed to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God..." (1 John 4:1). Where no pastoral discipline exists, a church will fall prey to dominating personalities. However, there is a point where a pastor must "let go" and allow the Spirit to lead.

- 2) *Being open to the Spirit means anything goes.*

This assumes there are no biblical guidelines for right or wrong expressions of the gifts, but First Corinthians 12-14 shows that is not true.

- 3) *More phenomena mean more power. Phenomena are proof the power of the Holy Spirit is present.*

Surprisingly this is not true at all. Some gatherings where the Spirit's presence is strongly felt may produce few or no manifestations, while others with little such "anointing" produce many.

- 4) *Everybody should experience the same phenomenon I did.*

Some people universalize their own experience with God, believing everyone should experience the same manifestation. This attitude leads to psychological manipulation, shame, and pride.

Conclusion

For our founder, moderation was an extremely important value because she recognized it as a key to the fruitfulness of her ministry. If she were to yield to the criticism of her emphasis on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and its attendant gifts, she would lose the very power that was saving and healing multitudes. If she were to allow Pentecostal fanatics to take over her services, the sinners she sought to win to Christ would be frightened away and the real work of the Spirit quenched. She reached the following conclusion:

"...we are called upon to walk the narrow gauge line, and must be true to the courage of our convictions that to be spirit-filled is to be splendidly sane, clean, wholesome, sober, godly, pious, wise, loving, fearless, consistent, balanced, Christ-exalting, soul-winning, gentle, teachable; and not that wild-mirth-provoking, ridiculous, jumping, screaming, muttering, egotistical, unteachable, impractical, reproach-bringing something which

some mistakenly call being ‘Pentecostal’” (“The Narrow Line or Is Mrs. McPherson Pentecostal?” p.6, Foursquare Publications).

Our Goals

- We want believers who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and who have learned to minister with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- We want pastors who have the discernment and courage to discipline manifestations that “draw eyes off the Lord and the message and fasten them on the individual” (“Narrow Line” p.3).
- We want churches that contend for the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in all their services and ministries.
- We want churches that remain effective soul-winning centers because they are known for their moderation.

Recommended Reading

McPherson, Aimee Semple, “The Narrow Line or Is Mrs. McPherson Pentecostal?”
Foursquare Gospel Publications.

Duffield, Guy P., and Nathaniel Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1100 Covina Boulevard, San Dimas, CA 91773, pp. 261-356.

Addendum

The Narrow Line or “Is Mrs. McPherson Pentecostal?”

Foursquare Gospel Publications

Are you able to keep your balance, and walk a very narrow line? When the writer was a little girl, walking a big Canadian mile to school each morning, she often used to practice walking the steel rails of the railroad track, to see which of the children could go the farthest without losing balance and stepping off on the one side or the other.

In recent years, God has called her to tread a still more narrow line, one which requires even more steadiness, discernment, wisdom and balance. It is the narrow gage line between “Fanatical flesh masquerading as the Spirit” on the side, and “Cold, backslidden, worldly formality” on the other.

The One Side

On the one side are some dear folk who do and allow many foolish unscriptural things bringing discredit upon themselves and the work, believing that this brands them as “Pentecostal.” They have thus brought the very name into such reproach as to make it a by-word to millions. Some are mistaken in believing themselves “Pentecostal” however, and reproach all who have discernment enough to recognize the flesh from the Spirit, and the “manifestations that profit withal,” by bringing conviction and revival power and glory to the Name we hold most dear; from that shameless giving way to fleshly emotions and doing all manner of ludicrous things that drive the sinner farther away, instead of drawing him closer to the Christ, and declare that all who do not approve and do as they do are not “Pentecostal.”

To be Pentecostal in Spirit, however, is to be something far different than many suppose. To be Spirit filled is the grandest, proudest, tribute of sobriety and piety one can possess. The Holy Spirit is not marked by wildness, hysteria, screaming, or unseemly manifestation; but by deep, holy, sober, godly, reverent, prayerful exaltation of the gentle Christ of Galilee, an earnest passion for souls, a biblical and scriptural Holy Ghost boldness and wisdom that will be the means of leading men and women to the Cross in which we glory.

Illustrating my meaning—We held in the city of Wichita some time ago a Spirit-filled revival. For months the meeting had been planned and an inter-denominational committee formed. From our own means, as God provided, we were financing the meeting. Rental of Forum, fares across the continent, advertising, entertainment and remuneration of workers etc., was running into a great sum of money. We were opening in a new city that had never had a real outpouring of the Spirit’s power and whose conception of “Pentecost” was prejudiced and far from flattering because of excesses and erratic actions by those mistakenly labeling themselves by this name.

Before a real revival could come upon such a new field, certain things must be done. First prejudice must be broken down, then confidence in ones sanity, balance, and true spiritual burden for souls must be won, before hearts would open to the message.

Having heard that we had received and believed in the power of the Holy Spirit, many gathered to hear the first message with a great question mark in their dear eyes. What is this power of the Holy Spirit, what are the results and the fruits of receiving thereof?—they seemed to ask.

Oh it was a glorious meeting, the melting power of the Holy Spirit flowed over the whole audience. Scores of sinners rose to their feet, and came to the altar, (a truly Scriptural manifestation of the Spirit indeed) and wept their confessions at His feet. Suddenly on the front seat, (just when all heads were bowed and a deep spirit of holy quiet and melting was upon the people) a blood-curdling scream was heard: “O-o-o-ow! Y-o-o-o-w!”

Cry after cry was given by a large lady with big lungs. She threw back her head and screamed out again and again before my startled self could leap to my feet and with flushing face reach her side. As I went down the steps I embarrassedly noted the effect of her cries, and rigid position, on the meeting. Sinners at the altar were rising and gazing curiously or nervously at the woman. No one praying or weeping now, some one was going out, a sleeping baby woke and began to cry. All eyes off the Lord and on the woman. This is one way one can always recognize the flesh, it takes eyes off the Lord and the message and fastens them on the individual.

“Oh my darling, don’t scream out like that” I whispered in her ear, shaking her gently by the shoulder. “Please, don’t dear. There are too many sick folk here for prayer, some from hospitals and they can’t stand it dear. Oh please.”

Opening her eyes she looked reproachfully at me and said, “Why Sister McPherson, don’t you believe in manifestations? You aren’t ‘Pentecostal!’ You don’t believe in praising the Lord!”

“Oh, but I do believe in praising Him, my dear,” I replied in relief, “and constantly exhort others to do the same. But I don’t consider what you were doing praising the Lord. You do love Him, don’t you dear?”

“Of course I do.”

“And you love to praise Him?”

“Certainly I Do!” she replied.

“Then listen darling, supposing Jesus was right here, right in this chair—“

“Yes.”

“And that you drew very near to Him, as He sat with glistening garments of white, His dear face smiling, His eyes of softness and love upon you. What would you do? How would you go about praising and adoring this Lamb for sinners slain? Would you go up very close to this gentle Saviour you love, and throwing back your head yell: “O-o-o-o-o-w! Y-o-o-o-o-ow!” at Him whom you adore?”

“Why, N-no.” she answered.

“Wouldn’t you say ‘Oh, Jesus, Thou blessed and adorable Son of the Living God, I adore and worship Thee. Glory, Glory, Glory be to Thine high and holy Name. O Master I worship Thee.”

“Now tell me truly, would you not make your voice a caress and your tones as running water?”

“Why—yes I would.”

“Then dear, why should one yell and scream at Him at any other time? He is right here now. Oh I felt His presence so when preaching it seemed my feet were lifted from the floor. He is right here now. But why not say ‘Praise the Lord!’ in a tone of worship instead of screaming in a tone which if you used to a dog, would make it put its tail between its legs and run, or which if used to your baby would make it cry?”

This blessed Sister truly loved the Lord, and during the balance of the meeting became my official “Amen Corner”, praising the Lord so sweetly and deeply that it lifted my hands and heart each time. Her words were a caress to the Holy Name, her praises a fragrant alabaster box, instead of that rough grating thing she had considered the manifestation of the Spirit.

At last the first meeting was over, and we were in the car on the way to our rooms, rejoicing at the victorious meeting. Passing the front of the Forum, we were suddenly startled to see a man, who looked very much in need of a shave, a bath, and a clothes-brush, dancing first on one foot then on the other, lifting his feet each time almost as high as his waist, flailing his arms and going through a series of contortions that would every once and awhile double him up like a jack-knife, shouting words we could not understand. Needless to say, he was getting an audience. Laughing and joking people were running from the restaurants to see what they termed the “Pentecostal holy roller.”

This was our first meeting in a new city and state. Everything was at stake. We had expended many hundreds of dollars, and weeks of prayer for its success. Here was an unshaved, disheveled, shameless crank, masquerading under the name of “Pentecost” doing his best to wreck the true work of the Spirit in the ridiculous manner.

How I ever got out of the car and across the street I cannot remember, but I caught the man by the shoulder and spoke quickly, rebuking the devil of this unseemly spirit that was degrading to the name of religion, and commanded him to hold his peace.

The man became very angry at me, and hurled at me the accusation: “Why you are not Pentecostal!” Instantly he began to denounce me to the hearers, who laughed at him, looked sympathetically at me and went on to their homes.

“Brother what ever possessed you to act so in front of this building?” I asked.

“Why that was the power! I have the power!” he exclaimed.

“Brother do you see that automobile over there?”

“Yes.”

“It has the power, too, of a different nature. It is able to run 70 miles an hour. Because I feel the power in that motor, and because it is able to go so fast, have I any right to open the car up, and tear down main street yonder with its thousands of pedestrians, careless of life, or for the effect of my actions upon others merely because I have the power and the capability of showing it off before others.”

“No-but-you better look out, you are quenching the Spirit now—the Lord will punish you!” he began to yell.

Seeing that he would not be reasoned with, I warned him to be still in the meetings till his heart was right with God, and the dark anger gone from his face, and a teachable spirit within him, and went on to my room. All saw that he was wrong, and these were the only two things of such nature that happened in the entire campaign. The Spirit overshadowed in every service. Hundreds were converted, healed and filled with His presence.

Yet such a man wrote to a “Pentecostal” magazine his own version, quoting a newspaper story and terms, and the heads of this paper had no more discernment that to quote this unreliable man, and ask the favorite question of all that to not conform exactly to their mold – “IS MRS. McPHERSON PENTECOSTAL” – and publish such a thing “as news” with terms and statements we had never used. All this without even the common courtesy, Brotherly love, or Bible taught justice of writing us direct, for truth, preferring to rush into print with untruths and admitting they were based only on reports. Such

hasty and unproven evidence one would not have expected of a magazine—especially one “from Missouri.” It is almost unconceivable that people calling themselves the “General Council of Pentecost” would condescend to such silly and unjust position. How pitiful!

Yet, nevertheless, we are called upon to walk the narrow gauge line, and must be true to the courage of our convictions, that to be spirit-filled is to be splendidly sane, clean, wholesome, sober, godly, pious, wise, loving fearless, consistent, balanced. Christ exalting, soul-winning, gentle and teachable: and not that wild-mirth-provoking, ridiculous, jumping, screaming, muttering, egotistical, unteachable, impractical, reproach—bringing something which some mistakenly call being “Pentecostal.”

Every thing human in one usually longs to be in favor with either the one side or the other. Most everyone wants to play safe with at least one faction. Many follow the line of the least resistance, but our Lord has given us a vision of His will and purpose in pouring out of His Spirit to which we must be true. He bids us

“Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone.
Dare to have a purpose firm,
And dare to make it known.”

Live or die, sink or swim, whether we walk with the crowd or walk alone, by God’s grace we will be true to that vision.

The Other Side

On the other side of the narrow line, there are many who are cold, back-slidden, worldly professors without a real born-again experience or any idea in the world of what it means to be filled with the Spirit. No Amen corner, no Hallelujah’s, no altar calls, revival, spirit or victorious, overcoming life. Filled with concerts, suppers, moving pictures, and higher-criticism instead of prayer meetings, and the old time power that fell on the early church, smoking, telling foolish stories, attending the theatre, card table and dance hall. Denying the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, the atonement, the resurrection, the miracles of the Bible, and the present day power of the Lord Jesus Christ to do the very things He did upon the earth; denying that He is the same today as He was yesterday, and shall be evermore; denying the power of the Holy Spirit or the possibility or necessity of His coming today upon believing saints as He did in Apostolic days—these conditions we positively cannot and will not condone either.

We preach against worldliness, higher-criticism, unbelief and coldness with no uncertain sound, declaring the need of the old time faith and power. Our hearts have bled when at the conclusion of a revival we have bidden thousands of new converts go find a spiritual church home, and they have flooded us with letters relating their experiences while seeking one. The wholesale condemnation of faith in Jesus Christ to save from all worldliness, to heal the sick, to baptize with the Holy Ghost as He did in days of yore, the ridicule of the thought of His second coming, and of testimonies of audible praises, have wounded and bewildered their tender spirits. Converts have written of their conversion in the fire of the Holy Ghost revival, and of their subsequent return to churches wherein they sought food, and have told of the concerts, dances, smokers, suppers in progress and have mourned the lack of spirituality, faith filled, powerful preaching of the gospel and the emptiness they found therein.

On the one hand therefore we cannot condone those poor, grating, jealous, egotistical, criticizing, self-righteous, boasting fanatical spirit manifestations blamed on the precious Holy Spirit. We stand for a sane, wholesome, power of the Holy Spirit which brings credit, honor, and souls to the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, cold professor shaving a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof, we cannot approve.

Thus the narrow gauge line, in the middle of the way, which we have walked without catering or compromising to the favor of either. As we have said before, almost every one longs for the smiling approbation of either the one or the other, but to walk the middle of the road, seeking to give offence to neither, but to keep life and doctrine straight to the word, and take the hand of the one who is burning with fire and zeal, and put it into the hand of they who are cold, backslidden and dead; and by word and Spirit lift both to the sane, sweet, powerful, humble, balanced, soul-winning narrow gauge line—takes courage, wisdom, discernment and keeping power of God. (We thank God that in many cities it has been successfully done.)

And yet it is not so difficult to keep one's balance. For on the one hand your friends (?) hit you a whack and hurl their favorite epithet for those who do not see eye to eye with themselves in all things: "You're *NOT* Pentecostal." And on the other side your friends (?) hit you another whack and say "You *ARE* Pentecostal." And thus it goes whack—"You *ARE*"—whack "You are *NOT*" whack—"Yes you *ARE*" whack—"No you're *NOT*." Whack—whack! And between the two they keep one pretty well balanced on the middle of the line.

"Well are you Pentecostal" you ask? That depends altogether on what you mean by the term. Pentecost really means 50 and I'm only 31. This seems to be an unscriptural term never used by the early church as far as we can learn, no more used because they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, than we would say "I'm Christmas" if we were born again on Christmas day.

But if you mean, do we stand for, believe, preach and rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit, Third Person of the Trinity, blessed paraclete sent from the Father, and for all that happened in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, (and the succeeding revival and spiritual overturn of cities in a day, for Jesus), then we most assuredly do, and have received that same blessed Spirit and results in the same bible way. Never have we "compromised" on the full Gospel message. It grows sweeter and more blessed.

For fourteen years we have believed in, preached and seen outpoured this blessed and glorious power of the Holy Spirit, just as He came to the waiting hearts on the memorable day of Pentecost. But we have never been convinced that God meant any small company to organize "Pentecost" (by which name many refer to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh) or put a corner on it.

We stood first practically alone when God revealed to us that the Holy Spirit (so like unto the Ark of the Covenant which had once blazed with glory in the midst of the Tabernacle, but which had been lost through unbelief and sin) had been isolated in the home of Obbedom and fanned by the dust of the threshing floor long enough, and that it was now to return to the Temple, with singing and dancing. (See "Bringing Back the Ark," in *The Bridal Call of July, 1921*).

Our hearts had caught the vision. Our souls burned with such zeal that for many months the writer has trembled like a leaf with the power of God every time she has touched upon this theme. Many looked askance, and declared this message could not or should not be carried to the churches.

This power could not work there in a practical way, etc. But now, with scores of churches being swept by the old time power, our theory that the Holy Spirit is not only powerful enough to make men act as though drunken with wine on the day of Pentecost, but in sane, level-headed, sober, practical and benefits in a church in which He takes up His abode in a three fold benefit—spiritually, numerically and financially.

We no longer stand alone on this; thousands have seen and caught the vision of the Ark returning to the midst of the congregation. T'was never meant for the house and threshing floor of Obededom, solely, but to be a diadem of power and glory upon God's children. And the Ark is coming up the road. Oh don't be jealous about it, or say mean, hurtful things even under mockery of asking prayer for the one taking it to the temple, to be restored to the household of Obededom, but join the great procession and help us bring it back. Do not always expect they who have this vision of bringing the power back to the church, to confirm exactly to our methods or mould of working. God knows these have had years enough to do the task, but show us a church anywhere into which they have successfully carried the message of the Holy Spirit, and seen both pastor, officials and members baptized with the Spirit, without causing disruption to said church, but leaving this power right there to work, gloriously, harmoniously, in a powerful and permanent revival? If others have neither done this, nor had the vision of it, should they judge the methods or power of those who have been called of God to do it and can point to over a score of such Spirit-filled churches now among almost as many denominations, who are now baptized with the Spirit and bringing in scores of others steadily.

The Ark is coming up the road! Steadily, gloriously up the road! Why, I can see it right this minute! The enemy is raging, but its coming up the road! Not all the scolding and bitter words are going to come from Michaels side we see, but Obededom, as a whole, is not fully pleased to see it either, after feeling he had a monopoly on the Ark for so long. But it's coming, coming up the road! I say lets join the procession, --if we by what we have considered manifestations of power have failed to convince or impress, and if others by conservative, reverent, yet power filled methods are slowly surely getting the message across, let us not try to injure such a one, not judge from some newspaper report or silly letter from a disgruntled crank. "Judge not according to appearances, but give a righteous judgment." But Hallelujah! Alone or in a multitude, "delivered up to the council" or standing alone, there—there--ever just before is the vision. None can stop it—the devil can't detain it—Michael will be barren if she refuses it—Obededom will be left behind if he sulks or rejects it—The Ark, the Ark is coming up the road.

Divine Healing

“Declaration of Faith” (Article XIV)

“We believe that divine healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and the afflicted in answer to believing prayer; that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever has never changed but is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble, able to meet the needs of, and quicken the body into newness of life, as well as the soul and spirit in answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will”⁷² (Matt. 8:17; Matt. 9:5; Mark 16:17,18; Acts 4:29,30; James 5:14-16).

Interview Questions

- Why did Jesus heal the sick and cast out demons?
- How does healing and deliverance relate to your understanding of the Kingdom of God?
- What is the scriptural basis for the healing ministry of the church today?
- How will you encourage and advance this ministry?

Introduction

Few doctrines of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements have engendered more controversy within Christianity than the belief that signs and wonders are a normal part of our lives in Christ. Chief among these concerns are questions concerning the primacy and reality of divine physical healing for the believer.

Throughout the centuries, man has looked to religious belief, philosophical constructs, and the supernatural in order to achieve or restore health and well being. While the medical sciences developed relatively slowly until the nineteenth century, religions and philosophies dating from ancient times sought to discover the means to impede or cure illness, mend broken bodies, and restore life and health to the afflicted. For example, many forms of Buddhism hold that the chanting of appropriate mantras will dispel disease and physical suffering (Bell, 2001). In animism and certain polytheistic religions, the ritualist invokes the worship of ancestors or gods for physical wellness. Despite the advance of modern medicine, numerous “new-age,” occult, and religious practices still seek to help people discover long life and health. Consequently, it is incumbent upon pastors and other Christian leaders to understand the true scriptural underpinnings of divine healing, as well as the considerable differences between a Christian theology of healing and the practice of healing by others.

⁷² This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

An important feature of the Pentecostal revival of the early twentieth century was its endorsement and encouragement of divine healing based upon the Bible. Although some movements and denominations of the Christian faith accepted or tolerated divine healing, the early Pentecostals believed it was integral to the practice of appropriating all God had to offer. To Pentecostals, the conviction that the Lord will heal in answer to faithful prayer was and is rooted in the promises and teaching of God as revealed in scripture. From its inception, the Foursquare Church and its founder adopted these beliefs, placing them within the core of Foursquare doctrine and practice.

Questions for Discussion

Why is healing a cardinal teaching of the Foursquare Church?

The Foursquare Church has always highlighted four cardinal doctrines: Jesus Christ is the Savior, Healer, Baptizer with the Holy Spirit and soon-coming King.

ICFG's founder, Aimee Semple McPherson, was deeply convinced of the healing power of God. She knew that the Lord had miraculously prevented her own impending death when she finally gave in and decided to obey His call to preach the Gospel (Epstein, 1993). In another defining moment, as a teenager Aimee fell down a flight of stairs while visiting Findlay, Ohio, broke an ankle, and seriously injured the tendons, "turning the foot backwards." After a local doctor could do no more than set the bones and apply a cast, she returned to Chicago in excruciating pain. Approaching Pastor William Durham for prayer, she informed him that "the Lord has told me to come over and I would be healed" (McPherson, 1920, p.23). Sensing "the power of God like a shock of electricity," young Aimee "cut off the cast, danced on (the) foot, and praised God" (McPherson, 1920, p.23).

While utterly steadfast in her personal belief of God's healing power, Aimee was, nevertheless, a reluctant practitioner. Her emphasis in public ministry invariably reflected a compelling felt need for salvation and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Despite her best efforts to downplay her role as an agent in God's power to heal, thousands were miraculously restored to health in her meetings from coast to coast and worldwide (Epstein, 1993).

Is healing provided in the atonement?

Virtually all Christians believe that God is *capable* of healing a person. There is, however, a compelling question about which there is no small disagreement: "Has He *promised* to heal?" While cessationists hold that the more miraculous gifts, such as healing, were temporary sign gifts meant only to authenticate the work of the apostles (Grudem, 1994, p. 1031), Pentecostals consider all spiritual gifts, including healing, to be available to any willing Christian through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:7-8). In addition, the Foursquare Church has historically promulgated that physical healing is included in the atonement of Christ: "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17). Consequently, just as anyone may freely receive salvation, believers may also appropriate physical healing through believing prayer.

Why does God heal people today?

While controversy has surrounded the practice of divine healing since the early 1900s, there is considerable biblical evidence supporting and encouraging prayer and the petitioning of God for physical healing. In recent years, a growing number of evangelical scholars, including those from non-charismatic or Pentecostal perspectives, have endorsed the belief that all of the spiritual gifts are undeniably available to believers today, including the “sign” and miracles gifts (Grudem, 1994).

Sickness, disability, and ultimately death, result directly from the fall of humankind (Gen. 3:16-19; Rom. 5:12-21). Although the Bible makes no promise of unending physical life on earth, physical healing was provided and is provided today in order to accomplish the following:

1. It brings glory to God and reminds us that he is all-powerful (Matt. 9:8, 15:31; Luke. 7:16, 13:13; John 11:4-45).
2. It reveals His compassionate character (Matt. 20:24; Mark 1:41; Luke 7:13).
3. It frees us to be whole in order to better minister and serve (1 Cor. 6:9-20).
4. It builds faith in both the recipient and the observer ((Matt .5:25-24; Mark 5:35-43).
5. It reveals the workings of God (John 9:3, 11:1-4).
6. It fulfills the promises of God in the Bible (Matt. 8:16-17).

Why are some people not healed when prayer is offered?

Perhaps the greatest fear of a believer in ministering healing is that the recipient of prayer will not be healed. This fear can sometimes be so daunting as to prevent even an attempt to pray in faith for a sick person. When viewed as a continuum, two extremes exist in the ministry of divine healing: (1) that the person was not healed due to a lack of faith (either on the part of the recipient of prayer or the minister), or (2) that it was not God’s will for the person to be healed. In reality, many cases of unresolved sickness or injury are a result of neither of these extremes. While Duffield and Van Cleave firmly reject the possibility that God ever determines not to heal, they propose the following reasons for any apparent lack of healing (pp. 399-401):

1. Seeking healing before salvation – There is no scriptural promise of healing for those “outside the fold” although God sometimes does choose to heal the unsaved (Matt. 5:45).
2. Seeking healing for the wrong purposes – This could include things such as selfishness or “worldly pursuits” (James 4:3).
3. Focusing on a human minister rather than the Lord – Acts 3:4-6.
4. Disobedience, unconfessed sin, or unbelief – Ex.15:26, Ps. 66:18, James 5:15-16, Heb. 11:16.

Duffield and Van Cleave also suggest that God may withhold healing due to “failure to stand in faith until the answer comes” (p. 400). A corresponding perspective to this view is the concept of *delayed healing*. Might it be that God chooses to heal over a period of time in order to strengthen equip, and broaden the faith of a believer? Delayed healing presupposes that God is in control, that healing is in

the atonement (a longstanding Foursquare belief), and that pain and suffering may be tools for the growth and development of the believer.

In *The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis addresses the reasons that an omnipotent, omniscient and loving God would permit the existence of sickness and suffering. Lewis asserts that sickness and suffering must be juxtaposed with the reality that our limited human understanding will selfishly lead us to the misconception that pain-free lives would prove that God loves us.

However, does the instant gratification of immediate healing always demonstrate the height of God's love for us? Indeed, many Christians have spiritually prospered and matured through experiencing God's grace and power in the midst of trials and difficulties. Paul reminds us "... though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Pet. 6:1-7).

Delayed healing acknowledges that God always heals in answer to believing prayer, while at the same time recognizing that divine timing in the demonstration of God's will may well differ from our personal preferences. To be sure, it is this very fact that points us to the need for submission and obedience in order to mature in Christ.

If God heals, why does everyone die?

There is no scriptural promise of everlasting *physical* life on earth (Heb. 9:27-28). Paul points out that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (1 Cor. 15:50). Although death has lost its "sting" (1 Cor. 15:55-57) through salvation in Christ, the body remains perishable.

Some Foursquare believers have adopted a view that, since the physical body will eventually die (except for those who experience an end-times rapture), we may properly view the death of a Christian as the ultimate healing. This view finds its basis on the idea that at death a Christian becomes whole and complete, never to suffer sickness or affliction again.

How does God heal?

Of course, God is sovereign, and may choose to intervene with physical healing according to His own nature and character. Additionally, the Bible presents several modes and methods for expressing our faith in God to heal. Believers may pray for themselves (James 5:13), for others (James 5:16), and through the laying on of hands (Matt. 8:15; Luke 13:13). God has also chosen to allow our faith to be enhanced and expressed through the use of beneficial symbols of healing such as anointing oil (Mark 6:12-13) and pieces of cloth (Acts 19:11-12). Note that nowhere does the Bible suggest that such symbols possess any special powers or forces in themselves. Also listed as one of the *charismata* (spiritual gifts) in First Corinthians 12:9 and 12:28 are the Gifts of Healing.

The Foursquare Church has never held that healing must occur only apart from medical practice. In fact, one of the first faculty members of the denomination's first Bible college was a practicing physician who taught courses on missionary medicine and divine healing. Through the years, ICFG has further clarified its beliefs concerning medical practice through several denominational statements (Official ICFG Website) including the following:

- Healing of the Sick and Injured--We believe in Divine Healing through the providence of God in response to prayer and encourage all people to believe the Lord for deliverance. We also recognize the medical profession as an instrument in God's hands.
- Operations and Organ Transplants--These are considered to be a personal choice for the individuals concerned.
- Prolongation of Life and "Right to Die" (Removal of Life Support)--These are left to the individuals concerned.
- Dietary Laws--We have no dietary restrictions.
- Sterilization--Sterilization should be left up to the individual. It should not be mandatory.
- Burial/Cremation--This matter is left to the individuals concerned.
- Attitudes toward Medication, Vaccines and Blood--We are sympathetic to medication including blood transfusions and vaccines. We are opposed to the use of narcotics, except under strict medical supervision.
- Attitudes toward Therapies--Generally, we approve of professional therapeutic treatment in recognized and legitimate forms. There probably would be restrictions in "off-beat" practices.

Conclusion

The teachings of the Foursquare Gospel are inherently a holistic approach to understanding the relationships between the Creator and humanity. The Bible is rich with examples of signs and wonders, providing a model for the practice of prayer and the expectation of physical healing. As part of the pastoral practice of building whole people, the Foursquare minister has the opportunity to advance the kingdom and see God's power released through prayer for the sick. Examples include the following:

- Being an example to the flock by personally praying for the sick
- Including the doctrine of divine healing in teaching and preaching
- Encouraging believers to pray for one another, including prayer for the sick
- Allowing public and personal opportunities for people to share with others their healing experiences
- Providing opportunities for both publicly and privately practicing the James 5:13-16 model

Recommended Reading

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. (1983). *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. San Dimas, CA: Life Pacific College. (Chapter 7, The Doctrine of Divine Healing, pp. 363-416).

International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. "Declaration of Faith," Unit 3: The Holy Spirit and Divine Healing. (Distributed by Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, MO.)

(Please note that some viewpoints presented in the following recommended works may not be entirely consistent with the doctrinal positions of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel)

Cherry, R. *The Doctor and the Word*. (1996). Orlando, FL: Creation House.

Lewis, C.S. (1940, 2001). *The Problem of Pain*. San Francisco: Harper.

Pearson, M.A. (1995). *Christian Healing: A practical and comprehensive guide*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen.

Springer, K. and J. Wimber. (1991). *Power healing*. San Francisco: Harper.

References

Bell, Gordon. (1998). *Healing in Buddhism*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Healing Touch.

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. (1983). *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. San Dimas, CA: Life Pacific College.

Epstein, Mark. (1993). *Sister Aimee: The life of Aimee Semple McPherson*. New York: Harcourt.

Grudem, Wayne. (1994). *Systematic Theology: An introduction to Biblical doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

McPherson, Aimee Semple (1920). "The Lord's healing," *Latter Rain Evangel*, 13(3): 23.

Official ICFG Website. (2003). "Our position on current issues: Medical procedures."
[Retrieved 7/1/2003 from the World Wide Web:
foursquare.org/index.cfm?cat=about&subcat=believe&subsubcat=issues.]. Los Angeles:
International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

The Second Coming of Christ

“Declaration of Faith” (Article XV)

“We believe that the Second Coming of Christ is personal and imminent; that He will descend from Heaven in the clouds of glory with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and that at this hour, which no man knoweth beforehand, the dead in Christ shall rise, then the redeemed that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and that so shall they ever be with the Lord; that also seeing that a thousands years is as a day with the Lord, and that no man knoweth the hour of His appearance, which we believe to be near at hand, each day should be lived as though he were expected to appear at even, yet that in obedience to His explicit command, “Occupy till I come,” the work of spreading the gospel, the sending forth of missionaries, and the general duties for the upbuilding of the church should be carried on as diligently, and thoroughly, as though neither ours nor the next generation should live in the flesh to see the glorious day.”⁷³ (1 Thess. 4:16,17; Titus 2:12,13; Matt. 24:36,42,44; Luke 19:13; Luke 12:35-37)

Interview Questions

- What is your understanding of the promise, timing, and manner of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?
- What is your view of the end times?
- Do you believe in the literal resurrection of believers?
- What is the millennial reign of Christ?

Introduction

The Second Coming of Christ is one of the four cardinal doctrines of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. We are waiting for the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory. Although we are warned in Scripture not to set specific dates, we believe that we are in the Last Days and that the signs of His return are being fulfilled. Therefore, we expect our ministers to be able to confidently preach and teach this message so that the church will be ready for His return, doing the work of the Kingdom.

⁷³ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

Questions for Discussion

Jesus *must* come back again. His work of redemption on earth will not be done until He puts all things under His feet. (1 Cor. 15:27). When He returns He will raise the dead, resurrect the saints, judge the devil, and institute the Kingdom of God in all of its fullness and glory. A gospel without the Second Coming is incomplete and without hope.

A. How can we be certain He is coming back soon?

We do not want to be accused of crying “wolf,” only to be proven wrong. It is true Christians have often misinterpreted the signs of the times. But we are guilty of an equivalent error if we stop expecting His soon return. Jesus gave us signs to look for, signs designed to encourage us and help us remain ready and vigilant. Jesus told us, “When these things [signs He had just spoken about] begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28). He warned us against being apathetic toward His return: “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap” (Luke 21:34). Paul picks up this same theme in his letter to the Thessalonians: “for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, Peace and safety, destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But *you* [emphasis added], brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief” (1 Thess. 5:2-4). In other words, Scripture tells us that alert Christians will not be surprised by the return of Christ. Unbelievers and mockers will, but we will not.

B. What are the signs of Christ’s imminent return? Are any of them being fulfilled today?

When asked, most Christians quote Jesus words about wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines and pestilence in various places, false Christs, and persecutions (Matt. 24:4-9). But Jesus said these signs were only the beginning of “birth pangs.” Labor pains are an apt description of these signs, as labor pains come with greater frequency and severity as the time of giving birth approaches. But labor pains can also be confused with “false labor,” which explains why Christians have so often misinterpreted the signs of Christ’s return!

Are there any definitive signs that we can look for or expect? Jesus gave two clear signs that *must* take place before the end will come. The first is, “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to the nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14). Has the gospel been preached in every nation? If our definition of nation means geographical boundary, then yes it has. But the Greek word for nation here is *ethne*, meaning “ethnic group.” World Vision International did a missions research on the ethnic groups that had not yet been reached with the gospel so that missionaries could be sent to them. In 1980 they listed over 16,000 people groups who had not yet been adequately reached. Since that time other missions researchers have continued the task. In 1999, the Joshua Project listed only 199 groups that had not yet been targeted for church planting. But by 2001, every people group in the world had been targeted by a church or mission agency to have churches planted among them! Perhaps this is what Peter meant when he said, “You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and

speed its coming” (2 Pet. 3:11,12). The only thing we can do to speed the coming of the Lord is to make sure every nation has heard the good news!

The second sign is even more definitive. Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews’ exile throughout the world (Luke 21:24). The gospel would then be taken to the Gentiles (Matt. 24:14). But God would not forget His covenant people. Paul explains in Romans that Israel would experience a hardening until the full number of Gentiles would come into the kingdom, but that God’s calling of the Jews was irrevocable and all Israel would then be saved (Rom. 11:25,26,29). Jesus was very clear when this sign would be fulfilled. He said, “They [the Jews] will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). In A.D. 70 Roman legions destroyed the Temple and took control of Jerusalem. The Jews were scattered throughout the world and for the next 1800 years were exiled from their Promised Land. But we have witnessed a miracle of biblical proportions in the last century: the Jews returned to their homeland and, in 1948, nation of Israel was reborn! And in 1967, the old city of Jerusalem came under Jewish authority, no longer “trodden under foot by the Gentiles.”

Since these signs have taken place, the other more general ones begin to take greater significance. Already we are seeing the following events (possible signs) occur:

A great revival--the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in signs and wonders in order to assist the evangelization of all nations (Acts 2:17-21)

The traumatic twentieth century with two world wars, massive famines, new pestilence and diseases, and the greatest persecution of the church in world history (Matt. 24:4-13)

The status of Jerusalem becoming an insurmountable problem for the nations, leading to war (Zech. 12:2-3)

The increase in lawlessness, causing the love of many to grow cold (Matt. 24: 12) and the increase in knowledge and travel (Dan. 2:4)

We are called to be ready. We have enough prophetic evidence to proclaim the pending return of Jesus Christ. We do not know the day or the hour, but we do know that we need to get ready and “do business until He comes” (Luke 19:13).

What should our response be to this message? It is a mixture of joyful hope and sober realization. The Bible says that difficult times will come, doctrines of demons will be rampant, apathy and dissipation will characterize the complacent (1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Tim. 3:1-5, Luke 21:34-36). To combat these pressures, the Bible tells us of our need for fellowship, encouragement, love, and call to action in last days (Heb. 10:24,25). Jesus warns us about the rise in persecution just prior to His glorious return (Matt. 24:9,10).

Our hope lies neither in this present evil age nor its world system but in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Related Issues

Two major issues have arisen in the church concerning the interpretation of biblical prophecy. A full discussion of all the issues involved is beyond the scope of this discussion guide. A bibliography is attached for further study.

First, within the church there are three main theological systems concerning the proper interpretation of biblical prophecy. These systems are known as “premillennialism,” “amillennialism” and “postmillennialism.” While we believe that the premillennial position interprets the scriptures most accurately, we recognize that the proponents of the other systems are godly and intelligent people who can also hold to the inspiration of the Bible. Our differences arise out of our approach to interpretation of the Millennium Age (Rev. 20:3-5). *How* interpreters view this key passage also shows how they approach the rest of prophetic scriptures - as literal or symbolic.

For instance, the amillennial and postmillennial positions view the church as the new spiritual Israel. For them, all of God's promises for the Jews are now symbolically applied to the church. But premillennialists see the historically recent formation of the nation of Israel as the literal fulfillment of biblical prophecy. The very existence of modern Israel proves that God will literally fulfill the rest of prophecy. Therefore, we believe the pre-millennial approach is the proper stance within our fellowship.

Second, within the premillennial camp there are three additional ways of looking at the Scriptures dealing with when the rapture of the church will occur in relation to the tribulation period: pre-, mid- or post-. There are ministers who hold differing opinions within our Foursquare family. We should understand what the reasons are for each position and even engage in lively debate, yet realize that on this issue scripture is not perfectly clear.

Nathaniel Van Cleave sums up the Foursquare position regarding the rapture: “The view of Aimee Semple McPherson was that of a pre-tribulation rapture. Some theologians prefer to believe in a post-tribulation rapture and a few hold to a mid-tribulation coming. The majority view is that of a pre-tribulation rapture, but all three positions are tolerated.”

Conclusion

We do not want to blunt any of the edges of the Foursquare Gospel. The Bible warns us about falling asleep at the watch, dissipating our lives with worldly living (Matt 24:36,42,44; Luke 12:35-37). The preaching of the soon return of Christ benefits the church by keeping us ready and full of expectancy.

Another of the primary benefits of teaching about the Second Coming is hope. Our Blessed Hope is the appearing of Jesus Christ when He resurrects the dead in Christ, raptures the church, and institutes the Kingdom of God. In that future Kingdom there will be no more sadness, tragedy, or pain. We look forward to the time when we will be full of the glory of God, living eternally in the presence of our

Savior!

Our Goals

- We want our ministers to preach the second coming with urgency and conviction, preparing their congregations to be ready for Christ's return.
- We want our ministers to know the signs of the times in order to encourage believers that we are in the last days and to warn unbelievers of the impending judgment.
- We want our ministers to understand that not all Christians have the same viewpoints concerning the exact sequence of events surrounding the return of our Lord and be able to give grace to those who might disagree.
- We want our ministers to hasten the day of His appearing by encouraging and working toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Recommended Reading

Crosby, Chip, *The Door of Judgment*, 1st Books Publishing, 2002.

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, San Dimas, CA: Life Pacific College Publication, 1983.

Gundry, Robert H., *The Church and the Tribulation*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973.

Ladd, George E., *The Blessed Hope*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956.

Pentecost, J. Dwight, *Thy Kingdom Come*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990.

Rosenthal, Marvin, *The Pre-wrath Rapture of the Church*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990.

Church Relationship

“Declaration of Faith” (Article XVI)

“We believe that having accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and King, and having thus been born into the family and invisible body or church of the Lord, it is the sacred duty of the believer, whenever this lies within his power, to identify himself with, and labor most earnestly for the upbuilding of God’s Kingdom with the visible church of Christ upon the earth; and that such visible church is a congregation of believers, who have associated themselves together in Christian fellowship and in the unity of the Spirit, observing the ordinances of Christ, worshipping Him in the beauty of holiness, speaking to each other in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, reading and proclaiming His Word, laboring for the salvation of souls, giving their temporal means to carry on His work, edifying, encouraging, establishing one another in the most holy faith, and working harmoniously together as dear children who are many members but one body of which Christ is head”⁷⁴ (Ps. 111:1; Heb. 10:24,25; Acts 2:47; 16:5; Rom. 12:6-8; Mal. 3:16,17).

Interview Questions

- Do you feel it is important for believers to identify with and join themselves to a local church? Why or why not?
- What does it mean for the Foursquare Church to be “interdenominational in spirit”?
- If you are a senior pastor, how will you participate in the district extension tithe, missionary giving, and ministers’ gatherings?

Introduction

In this article of faith, our founder boldly and unapologetically stated that Christians ought to go to church. In the face of what must be a perennial human aversion to finding time for God in busy schedules, she said simply, “It is the sacred duty of the believer, whenever this lies within his power, to identify himself with...a congregation of believers...” This seems like such an obvious point that it hardly needs to be stated, but we realize that from New Testament times onward some believers have tended to live out their Christian lives in isolation (Heb. 10:25). Because of this, people need to understand why it is important to assemble together regularly and what it is that God wants to accomplish when we gather. After all, the local church is something God initiated. It was not something that was invented by humans.

⁷⁴ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

In fact He's so concerned about the local church that He takes personal responsibility for its development (Matt. 16:18).

It is not possible within the scope of this discussion guide to do a comprehensive study on the church. For a more thorough treatment of this important subject we refer the reader to pages 419-457 in *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*.

Questions for Discussion

A. What is a church?

The Greek word *ekklesia* is almost always translated as "church" in the New Testament. It was a common term for any local assembly of people (Acts 19:32,39,41). In Matthew 18:20, Jesus defined how small a gathering of believers could be and still be considered a church. He said, "For where two or three have gathered in my name, I am there in their midst." At times we find the word used collectively to mean all of the local congregations in a particular area (Acts 9:31), and occasionally it was used to refer to the total number of all believers in all ages (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:2; 5:23-32; Col. 1:18, 24; Heb. 12:23). Still, the New Testament never considers that a believer's membership in this universal family of God will replace participation in the life of a local church. Every Christian, by virtue of the new birth, is automatically a member of the universal family (1 Cor. 12:13), but identification with God's people is meant to be lived out on a day-to-day basis in a home church (Heb. 10:25).

B. What is the purpose of a church?

Before ascending into heaven, Jesus left His followers with a very specific assignment called the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20), in which He points to two basic categories of activity. The first is *winning souls*; the second is *discipling* those souls. Jesus defined His agenda for every church when He said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...." Going and finding people to baptize is *soul winning*, and "teaching them to observe all I commanded you" is *discipling*.

1. Soul winning: There are numerous ways to present the gospel to unbelievers, but churches that seek to obey the Lord's command to "go" will probably incorporate at least four types of activities. They will frequently proclaim the gospel in their services and give people opportunity to respond; train their members to personally present the gospel to others; hold outreach events, which are designed to draw unbelievers; support worldwide mission activities. The importance our movement places on bringing unsaved people to Christ is emphasized in Article XXI, where our founder states, "...soul-winning is the one big business of the church upon the earth...."
2. Discipling: Jesus defined discipling as "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you." The followers He trained were expected to pass on the same character development and ministry training they had received. It is a process geared toward reproducing apprentices rather than simply teaching students. The goal is to send out disciples who will disciple others.

C. How does a church make disciples?

Although healthy churches carry out the Lord's mandate in a variety of ways, their discipling activities will include the following general categories:

1. **Worship:** To be a disciple each person must grow in intimacy with God through worship. When we worship, we are doing the highest thing a human is capable of doing, and we will continue to worship God for all eternity. However, on a practical level, worship releases the active presence of the Holy Spirit that empowers us so we can "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16). Every ministry in a church needs to include some form of worship in preparation for service.
2. **Bible Study and Preaching:** Each person must be taught the Bible in order to know God, understand His ways, and have faith to obey Him. His Word must be our guide in every area of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16,17).
3. **Prayer:** Jesus modeled prayer frequently and, at times, allowed His disciples to listen to Him pray. There is no skill more essential for a disciple than being taught to pray effectively. In prayer we talk to God and listen to Him talk to us. Such communication is vital if members of His "body" are to be connected to the Head of the body.
4. **Healing:** Everywhere He went Jesus healed people, and, since He has asked us to continue His ministry (John 17:18; 19:21), praying for people to be healed should be part of every disciple's life. This ministry includes the laying on of hands and anointing with oil; it can include deliverance where appropriate. But healing will also take place in non-physical ways through pastors' care, prophetic insight, and the loving support of other believers.
5. **Loving One Another:** As disciples we are commanded to love one another as sacrificially as Jesus loved us (John 13:34,35; 15:12,13). This means that we should be willing to die for each other. So less drastic steps such as forgiveness, patience, and kindness ought to be the normal atmosphere of a church. This level of commitment is exactly what we see in Acts 2:41-47 as the first local churches were formed.
6. **Adminstrating the Ordinances:** Water baptism and Communion are the two ordinances observed in Foursquare churches. Marriages, funerals/memorial services, and child dedications are also beautiful acts of worship that best take place in the community of God's people. These God-given symbols, when expressing the sincere faith of believers, bring God's active blessing. They also provide opportunities for member of a congregation to edify, encourage, and establish one another in our "most holy faith."
7. **Equipping for Service:** We are reminded in Ephesians 4:11,12 that it is the assignment of church leaders to equip believers to do the work of the ministry. A properly functioning congregation will search for ways to help its members serve God fruitfully, remembering that each must give an account to the Lord concerning the service rendered to Him (Matt. 25:14-30; 2 Cor. 5:10). In a Foursquare church such equipping would include teaching and modeling in the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-11).
8. **Giving:** As awkward as this subject may be for some church leaders, giving generously to the Lord must be addressed as a very important element of discipleship (Luke 12:16-21; 16:9-13). Giving is a primary way of acknowledging God as our Source; of growing in faith that He is our Provider, as we discover how He blesses those who tithe; of turning the compassion we feel for the poor into tangible gifts of kindness; and of loving the lost in our own cities and in mission fields around the world.

9. Discipline: If discipline is applied only when it is truly required (1 Cor. 6:9,10), and if it is done in an orderly manner (Matt. 18:15-18) and with the proper attitude (Gal. 6:1), it both comforts and protects a congregation (1 Cor. 5:6-13). Discipline should never be used to humiliate or punish, but to warn of the spiritual jeopardy in which people have placed themselves (1 Cor. 5:5). Discipline should be accompanied by an invitation to return when repentance is proven sincere (2 Cor. 2:6-11). Leaders should do everything possible to avoid slander, and personal information should be kept as private as possible.
10. Evangelism: It is virtually impossible to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and not have a deep desire to see lost people saved. After all, the One who models discipleship for us said, "...the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). If that is His passion, it must also be ours. Although we all have differing gifts and ministries in the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-30), each one of us should prayerfully seek to lead unbelievers to Christ and joyfully assist in congregational soul-winning efforts. In fact, Jesus explained that the multiplying of disciples will increase the number of people saved because there will be more laborers for the harvest (Luke 10:2).

D. What are some of the benefits of belonging to a church?

1. Healing Damaged Personalities: In the environment of love, acceptance, and forgiveness, we cease to be lonely or isolated. We are able to change our attitudes toward people and grow in relational skills.
2. Character Development: By watching more mature Christians handle the trials and temptations of life, we discover how to live out the principles of the Bible. By refusing to run from committed relationships, we allow God to mold our characters and teach us the real meaning of love.
3. Prayer Support: When a person moves forward in the service of God, no matter how simple a step is being taken, that advancement of the "kingdom of God" arouses demonic opposition. Yet Jesus has given His church the authority to hold such opposition at bay (Matt. 16:19; 18:18-20), and He expected that authority to be administered through agreeing prayer. It is extremely important that we have people who pray for us when we step out in faith. Ignoring this principle has caused many well-intentioned believers to be defeated as they tried to take steps of faith. Being part of a community that prays is essential to our success in serving God (Acts 13:2,3).
4. Spiritual Refreshment: While it is absolutely necessary that a disciple learn to study the Word and to worship alone, there is a prophetic impact when the Word is preached to a hungry church. Many are fed at once, and, when a congregation worships in "spirit and truth," many experience the Holy Spirit ministering to them personally. In fact, without being provided this spiritual food and drink, God's people tend to grow weak and lose their boldness to minister. This is why the devil works so earnestly to disrupt a healthy church.
5. Enhanced Effectiveness in Ministry: God intentionally designs believers to need the gifts that others possess in order to be successful. Each of us is gifted by God, and each of us is denied gifts by God. This is done to humble us, cause us to work together with other believers, and keep us dependent on Christ (2 Cor. 12:9). No disciple is expected to serve in isolation. All ministry is intended to flow out of community.
6. Enhanced Witness to the World: Of all the things Christians could do to convince the world that Jesus really is the Savior, the most important is that we love one another. Jesus said, "By this

shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). And later He prayed for disciples’ unity “...so that the world may believe that you sent me” (John 17:21; also v. 23). Given the character of human society, there is nothing more noteworthy than a group of people who harmoniously and peacefully work together, loving each other so deeply they would die for one another. The devil always tries to divide a congregation so that its witness becomes ineffective.

7. **Godly Accountability:** James tells us that, if we want to be healed, we should learn to confess our sins to one another (James 5:16). He is not saying that sin is the cause of all sickness, but that unconfessed sin is a hindrance to healing. He says we can expect to pray with authority like that which we see in the prophet Elijah if we will refuse to harbor unconfessed sins (James 5:15-18). For this to happen, church leaders need to provide a culture where people can confess their sins without facing harsh judgment or gossip. If we remain merciful and patient, people will be released to bring hidden things into the open and get the help they need. This simple integrity, says James, will greatly enhance the effectiveness of our prayers.

E. What does it mean that the Foursquare Church is interdenominational in spirit?

A profound blessing has been placed in the foundation of the Foursquare movement. It is a fact about our history that is easily overlooked, but, once you see it, you realize we have a gift that is very unusual. Our denomination did not begin as a “split” from another denomination. It began as churches are supposed to begin: with the winning of lost souls and the organization into a great congregation. In time, as Angeles Temple flourished and demand for spiritual training swelled, a Bible institute was formed. Pastors, missionaries, and evangelists were soon headed across North America and around the world to do what they had been taught--to win lost souls and plant churches. We did not begin by angrily rejecting other Christians. Because of this, our pastors have tended to hold a respectful and cooperative attitude toward other congregations and denominations. This does not mean we endorse unorthodox groups, but it does mean we think of Foursquare as only one of many Christian families in God’s great household.

The roots of this humble spirit go even deeper than the manner in which our first church was formed. It is also the continued reflection of the heart of Aimee Semple McPherson, who had engraved on the foundation stone of Angeles Temple: “Dedicated to interdenominational, world-wide evangelism” and who chose as our motto: “In essentials unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things charity.” By these statements she deliberately set a tone that embraces all faithful believers as brothers and sisters in Christ. We are constantly reminded to distinguish between the essentials upon which all believers must agree and those non-essential matters where we can peacefully allow others to do things differently. Her example has made us naturally openhearted toward pastors from other backgrounds and allows us to work side-by-side with those who love Christ as we do. This attitude of greeting other true Christians with open arms is a gift handed to us by our founder, and it is one we must diligently pass on to succeeding generations.

F. What attitude should a Foursquare pastor have toward our denomination?

Just as the effectiveness of a local congregation is dependent upon members who faithfully gather, give, and serve, the effectiveness of a denomination is dependent upon the cooperation of its pastors and the churches they lead. The key to this cooperation is usually the attitude of the senior pastor. If a pastor loves Foursquare, has a submitted heart, and sees the congregation he or she

leads as a vital part of a great family of churches, most of the members of the church will share those same feelings. The congregation will be comforted to know that the pastor is accountable to and cared for by other pastors, that there are duly-established bylaws that govern the way they conduct their life together; they will happily give of their resources to help spread the Foursquare gospel around the world.

We are an organization with distinct family values. We have a culture that allows pastors great creativity and freedom in meeting the needs of the churches and communities they serve, but we also have strong spiritual and legal bonds that hold us together. So, before a person applies for a Foursquare license, he or she should assess both the obligations and the benefits of being in the Foursquare family. It is our hope that a candidate will evaluate whether or not he or she can honestly agree to submit to our leadership and bylaws, attend our leaders' gatherings, submit monthly reports, send in the district extension tithe, and send offerings for Foursquare Missions International.

Recommended Reading

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1954.

Cordeiro, Wayne, *Doing Church as a Team*. New Hope Publishing, New Hope Christian Fellowship Oahu, 2826 Kaihikapu St., 2nd Floor, Honolulu, HI 96819-2010, 1998.

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. *The Vine and the Branches*. Ronald D. Williams General Editor, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel Publishers, 1910 W. Sunset Blvd., Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA 90026, 1992.

Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49530, 1995.

Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Life*. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49530, pp. 117-167, 2002.

Watson, David. *Called and Committed*. Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, 1982.

Civil Government

“Declaration of Faith” (Article XVII)

“We believe that the civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that governors and rulers should be prayed for, obeyed and upheld at all times except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the ruler of the conscience of His people, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords”⁷⁵ (Rom. 13:1,3; Deut. 15:18; 2 Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21-23; Jer. 30:21).

Interview Questions

- What attitude should a Christian have toward civil government?
- If you are a senior pastor, how will you involve your congregation in civic community life?
- Is it appropriate for a congregation to take a formal, public position on political questions? Why or why not?

Introduction

Jesus prayed that His followers would not be “of the world,” meaning that He did not want us to conform to the degraded cultures in which we live (John 17:14). Yet He went on to ask the Father to leave us in the world, saying, “I do not ask you to take them out of the world; but to keep them from the evil one” (John 17:15). We need look no further than His own example to understand what He meant. On the one hand, He lived as a humble citizen submitted to the religious and civil authorities placed over Him (e.g., Matt. 17:24-27). On the other hand, when human government asked for things that belong only to God, He firmly ignored their requests. He obeyed the higher laws of God and was prepared to pay the price for His disobedience. The lesson He modeled is clear: as His followers we are to submit peaceably to human authority until doing so requires us to disobey a specific command of God. In that case, our submission to God takes priority over our submission to secular authority.

⁷⁵ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

For Discussion

A. Our response to civil authority

One of the most serious responsibilities of a Foursquare pastor is the role of teaching a congregation how to balance the tension between faith and the demands of civil government. In most situations pastors will find themselves teaching believers to submit to governing authorities, including paying taxes and honoring basic laws. We want to be known as peaceable, law-abiding citizens whose character of life points to the power of Christ to tame our rebellious natures. But certain moments of tension may come when the things being required or encouraged by those in authority are grievous to God and cannot be submitted to passively. In this case a pastor must be both wise and bold in challenging believers to follow God instead of human authority. However, even in such severe crises, it is necessary for a Foursquare pastor to lead *by example* rather than by demanding a particular response from the congregation. As a movement we recognize an individual's freedom to follow conscience in such matters; however, in matters of severe moral failure we are responsible to discipline our members in a biblical fashion. So, while affirming that obedience to civil government is a biblical virtue, we consider obedience to God a higher virtue. We do not want to emphasize submission to the point that believers lose the ability to withstand real injustice or blasphemy; nor do we want to give permission to those with a rebellious attitude so they can defy civil authority whenever a law is disagreeable. Some believers engage in behavior that brings shame on Christ and His Church while piously saying, "I only do what God tells me to do." Neither posture (blind submission or rebellious attitude) is the posture Christians are to have toward civil government.

B. Our Guidelines

There are six principles that guide a believer's relationship with civil government:

1) God's authority is supreme above all human government.

Dan. 2:21; 4:17

Matt. 22:21

Acts 4:18-20

2) Believers are, first of all, citizens of heaven and children of God. We live here as sojourners, not residents. We are strangers passing through.

1 Pet. 2:9, 10

Heb. 11:13-16

3) While on earth, we are to be submitted and peaceable toward those in authority whenever possible.

Rom. 13:1-7

1 Pet. 2:13-17

Titus 3:1

This specifically includes paying taxes.

Luke 20:21-25

Matt. 17:24-27

Rom. 13:6,7

4) *We are to endure personal injustice if doing so will help us win people to Christ.*

Matt. 5:38-42

1 Pet. 2:19,20

5) *Sometimes a government becomes so unjust, oppressive, or blasphemous that conscience will not allow us to cooperate any further, and we must resist.*

1 Pet. 4:12-19

Matt. 5:10-12

Acts 4:18-21

6) *We must be willing to die rather than compromise on matters essential to our faith.*

Luke 9:26; Mark 13:9-13

Luke 21:12-19

Luke 14:26,27

Rom. 12:11

The Bible is full of examples of such men and women:

Moses (Ex 2:23-3:10)

Nehemiah (Neh. 2:1-5)

Esther (Esth. 4:13-5:4)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3:12-18)

Daniel (Dan. 6:7-11)

Peter and John (Acts 4:1-12, 19-22)

Conclusion

Our Burden

It is important that people in our churches be perceived as peaceable, law-abiding citizens. Still, it remains true that believers must resist when laws are passed that forbid us to obey God's clear commands. A wise Foursquare pastor will work diligently to preserve a good reputation and will avoid conflict with civil government whenever possible, all the while reminding believers that their true citizenship is in heaven and their first allegiance is to God. Sometimes civil disobedience may become unavoidable if we are to remain true to Scripture and conscience. In these decisive moments, much prayer should precede any action, and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit should be earnestly sought to determine a proper response. In all situations, however, we remain confident that He is able to guard what we have entrusted to Him until that day (2 Tim. 1:12).

Our Goals

- We want believers who are loyal to God above all human institutions.
- We want believers who bring glory to God by being model citizens in their communities.
- We want pastors and congregations who pray for and submit to those who lead our civil government.

- We want cities that are glad to have Foursquare churches because of their positive influences in their communities.
- We want believers who “turn the other cheek” and “go the second mile” to show the love and humility of Christ to unbelievers.
- We want pastors who wisely guide their congregations to work against injustice, oppression, or blasphemy.
- We want churches that correct members who flaunt civil laws and give Christians a bad reputation.

Recommended Reading

King, Martin Luther Jr. *Strength to Love*. Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1963. This may be the most basic and life changing of King’s many books. It is a collection of 15 sermons and writings.

McPherson, Aimee Semple. “The Four Freedoms,” *The Foursquare Crusader*, February 1942, p. 4.

McPherson, Aimee Semple. “Foursquaredom and Uncle Sam,” *The Foursquare Crusader*, February 1942, p. 24.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941. Niebuhr examines the duties of the person who is informed by an understanding of the will of God when confronted by social institutions that are unrighteous and unjust.

Judgment, Heaven and Hell

“Declaration of Faith” (Articles XVIII, XIX, XX)

“We believe that the dead both small and great shall be raised up and stand with the living before the judgment seat of God; and that then a solemn and awful separation shall take place wherein the wicked shall be adjudged to everlasting punishment and the righteous to life eternal; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or in hell on principles of righteousness as set forth in His holy Word” (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 13:41-43).

“We believe that Heaven is the indescribably glorious habitation of the living God and that thither the Lord has gone to prepare a place for his children; that unto this foursquare city, whose builder and maker is God, the earnest believers who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and have overcome by the word of their testimony will be carried; that the Lord Jesus Christ will present them to the Father without spot or wrinkle; and that there is unutterable joy when they will ever behold His wonderful face, in an everlasting kingdom where unto comes no darkness nor night, neither sorrow, tears, pain, nor death, and wherein hosts of attending angels sweep their harps, sing the praises of our King, and bowing down before the throne, cry: ‘Holy, holy, holy’” (2 Cor. 2:9; John 14:2; Rev. 22:5; Rev. 21:4; Rev. 7:15-17).

“We believe that hell is a place of outer darkness and deepest sorrow, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched; a place prepared for the devil and his angels, where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, a place of grief and eternal regret on the part of them who have rejected the mercy, love and tenderness of the crucified Savior, choosing death rather than life; and that there into a lake that burns with fire and brimstone shall be cast the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers, sorcerers, idolaters, all liars, and they who have rejected and spurned the love and sacrifice of a bleeding Redeemer, passing the cross to their doom, in spite of every entreaty and warning of the Holy Spirit”⁷⁶ (Matt. 13:41,42, Rev. 20:10,15; 14:10,11; Mark 9:43,44; Ezek. 33:11).

Interview Questions

- What is your view of the final judgment? Of heaven? Of hell? Of the eternal nature of these issues?
- What will happen to those who have never heard the gospel?
- What happens to a believer’s spirit when he or she dies?

⁷⁶ These extended versions are quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

Introduction

The teachings of the Bible unmistakably point to a time when our choices and behaviors will culminate in a judgment by God, resulting in either eternal bliss or everlasting anguish. It is true that no consensus exists in Christendom concerning the specific timing of such a judgment. However, the belief that such a judgment or judgments do exist and will lead to an irreversible outcome is practically undisputed among all believers.

The doctrine of judgment closely connects with those of redemption, grace, and the new birth (See other study guides.). To comprehend the *judgment* of God, we must understand the *justice* of God as well as the forgiveness He brings through Jesus Christ. Apart from the work of a loving and redeeming Savior, judgment day would be nothing more than an event in which God tabulates good acts and bad, a notion often held in popular culture.

Although there remains some disagreement among evangelical scholars as to the specifics and timing of judgment, most Christians agree that there are two general domains of life to be judged: (1) the good and bad actions or behaviors of the person; (2) the spiritual standing of the person. In other words, has the person experienced salvation in Christ? According to Scripture, God reserves His judgment of a person's eternal destiny (Heaven or Hell) to the question of salvation alone: "Is a person's name written in the Lamb's book of Life?" It is also apparent that God will judge the actions and behaviors of Christians. This "believer's judgment" will examine our lives in accordance with God's holy Word (2 Cor. 5:10), but it is not a judgment that can lead to eternal death or separation from God. That particular kind of judgment is reserved only for those who have rejected the gift of salvation offered through Christ's atonement (Matt. 13:41-43).

We believe that Heaven and Hell are real and literal places that will exist throughout eternity. Some philosophers and theologians have attempted to reduce Heaven and Hell to symbols, spiritual metaphors, or myths. In recent years, the idea of *annihilationism* has become popular in some charismatic circles. This is the naturally appealing notion that unbelievers will ultimately cease to exist, rather than suffer the punishment of an unrelenting separation from God. According to Grudem (1994) "...we cannot accept as faithful to Scripture (this) doctrine. Although the idea initially sounds attractive ... and avoids the emotional difficulty concerned with affirming eternal conscious punishment for the wicked, such an idea is not explicitly affirmed in any passages of Scripture (Rev. 14:11; 20:10)."

Questions for Discussion

According to the Scripture, whom does God judge, and when will judgment occur?

Duffield and Van Cleave (1983) proposed that the Bible speaks of multiple future judgments, including the judgments of believers, gentile nations, Israel, the wicked dead, Satan, and the fallen angels. Regardless of the specific manner or precise agenda of judgment, it is clear that all humans, dead or living, will ultimately experience judgment. The definitive result of God's holiness, justice, and love is that all people will stand before

the Judge and receive verdicts resulting in a binding and irreversible pronouncement of “guilty” or “not guilty.” There is no court of appeal for the final judgment. The effect of the verdict is also unambiguous: true believers and unbelievers are separated from one another and are rewarded on the basis of relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

What will be the result of a final judgment?

Just as the sentence is irrevocable, so is the resulting final state for all people. Accordingly, “the wicked shall be adjudged to everlasting punishment and the righteous to life eternal.” Moreover, “this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in Heaven or in Hell on principles of righteousness as set forth in His holy Word” (See Article XVIII.). The Bible also provides us with the locations of the possible outcomes: God prepares Heaven for those adjudged righteous (1 Cor. 2:9; John 14:2), and Hell for those pronounced wicked (Matt. 25:41).

Why does God judge all people?

Everlasting judgment is a frightful thing. With our limited capacity to comprehend things eternal, it is an ongoing struggle for believers to reconcile the seemingly polarized characteristics of a loving God who forgives (Isa. 55:7) and a wrathful God who is just. It is often painful to accept the reality of justice. Yet God is both just and loving, and no philosophy or theology can do away with the reality of His nature.

The *just* element of His character requires that He act as judge, while the *loving* element results in the freely given gift of salvation. If the full satisfaction of God’s judgment required certain behaviors and deeds on our part, then the sinful human nature would forever exclude us from the possibility of a finding of “not guilty.” However, the redeeming act of Jesus on the cross has forever provided mankind with the possibility of eternal life (1 Thess. 5:9). Any person may freely partake of this gift of life, thus satisfying the need for justice. Perhaps the greatest distinguishing feature of Christianity is the fact that the Judge Himself satisfied this need for justice by allowing the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, for the sins of those same people He would judge. (See also the Foursquare study guides for *The Fall of Man*, *The Plan of Redemption*, *Salvation through Grace*, *Repentance and Acceptance*, and *The New Birth*.)

What are the characteristics of Heaven?

Although the Bible does not paint a completely detailed picture of Heaven, numerous Scriptures provide its characteristics in broad-brush strokes. The human senses and mind cannot fully grasp the future experiences of and participation in the place called Heaven (1 Cor. 2:9). God places great emphasis on our future home. It belongs to Him, contains “many mansions” for us that He personally prepared, and is made in advance of our actual need (John 14:2). Heaven is a place where God provides the light. There is, therefore, no need for artificial or human-made light, or even the sun. Moreover, believers will “reign forever and ever” (Rev. 22:5). The suffering of mortal life will cease in Heaven. It is a place where we will no longer experience death, sorrow, or crying. Pain will no longer exist (Rev. 21:4). Our role in Heaven will include the joy of worshipping and serving God and living in close

union with God. He will exchange hunger, thirst, and the struggle of working in the hot sun with “living fountains of waters” (Rev. 7:15-17).

What are the characteristics of Hell?

Following a final judgment, God will deploy an angelic army to gather all unbelievers to be “cast ... into the furnace of fire (where there is) wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:41,42). Certain specific beings are also thrown into the Hell, including the *devil*, the *beast*, and the *false prophet*. Revelation describes Hell as a “lake of fire and brimstone where (unbelievers) are tormented day and night forever and ever.” The Bible further states, “anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:10,15). Hell is forever. Its existence and the existence of its residents never end (Rev. 14:10,11). The torments and punishments of Hell are so extreme that the Bible uses severe language to communicate the need for avoiding it: “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to Hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched – where the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched”(Mark 9:43,44). Scripture clarifies God’s opinion concerning Hell: “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?” (Ezek. 33:11).

Conclusion

Today, few pastors emphasize the doctrines of judgment and Hell in their Sunday morning sermons. The idea of eternal punishment has little appeal, even to those who affirm its truthfulness. These are among the most difficult doctrines, and will likely always be so. Our own emotions, as well as our desire to present the loving and accepting aspects of God’s grace, may preclude references to Hell and judgment in presenting the gospel to unbelievers. The doctrines are negative, and their use in evangelism often appears to take on a “stick” approach as opposed to the more accepted “carrot” of grace and forgiveness.

Nonetheless, Hell and judgment are Biblical realities, and we cannot ignore them in our ministries both to believers and to unbelievers. In 1741, the fiery revivalist Jonathan Edwards preached one of the most famous sermons ever recorded concerning Hell and judgment. In “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” Edwards preached:

The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is Hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of, there is nothing between you and Hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

Likewise, few Foursquare pastors in the pulpit would attempt language comparable to what followed:

The God that holds you over the pit of Hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; ... you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours ... and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into Hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to Hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into Hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in Hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

Notwithstanding Edwards's colorful and forceful eighteenth-century imagery, judgment and Hell remain potent reminders of the conclusion of a non-believer's life. Likewise, the reality of an eternal Heaven for the righteous serves as a powerful reminder of the everlasting fellowship we will experience in union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Foursquare ministers can use these truths of the Word of God in the following ways:

1. Personally studying the Biblical implications of eternity for all people
2. Including the balanced doctrines of Heaven, Hell, and judgment in teaching and preaching
3. Encouraging believers to understand the eternal dimensions of salvation within the context of evangelism and discipleship.

Recommended Reading

Brown, D. (1999). *What the Bible reveals about Heaven*. Ventura, CA: Regal.

Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel Van Cleave. (1983). *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. San Dimas, CA: Life Pacific College. (Chapter 10, "The Doctrine of Last Things," pp. 511-552).

Grudem, Wayne. (1994). *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (Part 7, "The Doctrine of the Future," pp. 1091-1158).

International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. "Declaration of Faith"

Shedd, W.G. (1990). *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth.

Evangelism

“Declaration of Faith” (Article XXI)

“We believe that seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, and that the end of all things is at hand, the redeemed children of the Lord Jehovah should rise and shine forth as a light that cannot be hid, a city set upon a hill, speeding forth the gospel to the ends of the earth, girding the globe with the message of salvation, declaring with burning zeal and earnestness the whole counsel of God that when the Lord of Glory shall appear, they shall be found standing, with their loins girded about with truth, their activities and ministry laden down with the wealth of jewels they have won and guarded for Him, the precious souls, whom, by their faithful testimony they have been instrumental in leading from darkness into light; that soul winning is the one big business of the church upon the earth; and that therefore every weight and hindrance which would tend to quench the flame or hamper the efficiency of world-wide evangelism should be cut off and cast away as unworthy of the church, detrimental to the most sacred cause of Christ and contrary to the great commission by our Lord.”⁷⁷ (2 Tim. 4:1-2; Eph. 5:16; Pro. 11:30; James 5:20; Ezek. 3:17-18; John 4:35-37; Matt. 9:38; Mark 16:15)

Interview Questions

- What is your view of the Great Commission, and what are your convictions about the need to spread the gospel?
- What is your view of the spiritual condition of an individual without Jesus Christ?
- How would you extend an evangelistic invitation in a public service?

Introduction

The first component of the Foursquare Gospel is Jesus Christ as Savior. Scripture leads us to the conviction that bringing the good news to people is the primary task of every church. The second aspect of the Foursquare Gospel, Jesus Christ: Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, serves to emphasize this conviction because the description of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts 1, indicates that the result of the baptism would be power to bear witness to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). We fully expect, therefore, that all Foursquare pastors will do the “work of an evangelist”—that is, present the gospel in a clear, biblical fashion and to be engaged in bearing witness consistently and often. Foursquare pastors should have a noticeable passion for “making disciples of all nations.” This passion is based upon the firm belief that, apart from Christ, men and women are indeed “lost” and separated from God and able to be saved from this condition only by faith in Jesus Christ.

⁷⁷ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

For Discussion

Evangelism should be the church's first priority. Jesus' mission was to "seek and save what was lost" (Luke 19:10), and He looked upon lost people as a "harvest" to be gathered (for example, John 4:35-42 and Matt. 9:35-38). Jesus' final command to His followers was to "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere" (Mark 16:15 *New Living Translation*). Why is there little mention of the evangelistic mandate beyond the words of Jesus? First, it takes only one command from Jesus for something to become a priority—especially if it is His final commission to His followers. Second, sharing their faith was so "natural" for New Testament believers that there was no need for them to be reminded to do this. The gospel was such "good news" to the early Christians that it was too good to be kept to themselves (Acts 8:4; Col. 1:6-7). Third, a careful reading of the New Testament will that reveal evangelism *was* prioritized both by example (1 Cor. 9:19-22; 10:31-11:2) and by admonition (1 Pet. 3:15). Evangelism was, without question, the early church's first priority.

Evangelism should be intentional and strategic. Since evangelism is the church's first priority, the church must be *intentional* about sharing the good news and making disciples. Early believers counteracted the natural tendency for Christians as they mature to have fewer and fewer non-Christian friends. They were *intentional* about building new relationships and bridging the gap between them and those who did not yet believe (Acts 8:4; Acts 11:19-21). Evangelism was also *strategic*: God gave a beginning strategy to the disciples (Acts 1:8) and the early disciples were not haphazard in their approach to it. Acts shows that Paul had an intentional strategy that focused on unreached people in metropolitan areas and that he started whenever possible at Jewish synagogues. Paul's strategy was always open to revision by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:7-10), but there was nothing haphazard about his overall approach; his approach was intentional and strategic.

Evangelism should be inclusive. Most believers acknowledge that evangelism should include everyone—after all, Jesus said to preach the good news to all creatures, all nations (ethnic groups). And Paul said he had "become all things to all men." But the obvious needs to be stated because churches often give only lip service to inclusiveness, practicing it until certain less lovable types start appearing among them. The Bible makes no provision for boundaries to the good news; it compels us to proclaim the good news so that *all* people may hear and respond.

Evangelism should be holistic. Matthew's report of Jesus' last words makes it clear that the goal of evangelism is the making of disciples (Matt. 28:19). Biblical evangelism is holistic, affecting a person's entire life. Biblical evangelism is more than just telling people and more than just counting decisions; it must include the process of making fully devoted disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Evangelism should be Spirit-empowered and Spirit-led. As noted above, Jesus told His followers that the Holy Spirit would come upon them to *empower* them as witnesses (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; compare John 20:21-23). When the early church faced opposition to its primary task, people prayed for fresh power from the Holy Spirit, and God answered their prayers decisively and powerfully (Acts 4:23-31). The book of Acts is also full of examples of the

Holy Spirit's *leading* the believers as they spread the gospel (Acts 8:26-40; Acts 10; Acts 16:6-10).

Evangelism should be motivated by love. Love motivated God to send His Son into the world. It must, therefore, be love that motivates us to share the good news. Paul reminded the Corinthians that all things must be done in love if they are to be effective (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Peter tells us that Jesus prepared the hearts of people to hear the good news by going "about doing good" (Acts 10:38). The sharing of good news is primarily a "relational transaction" whether it is done publicly in a group setting or one-on-one. The early church knew very well that "they won't listen to you share until they know that you care."

Evangelism should be presented in a multi-faceted way. The New Testament shows the good news being presented in a number of different venues. In John, chapters 3 and 4, we see Jesus relating to *individuals*, and the pattern of individual presentations of the gospel continues in Acts (Acts 8: 26-40, 13:4-12). The gospel was also presented in *family settings* (Acts 10:23 ff.; 16:25-34) and in *large gatherings* (in religious and secular environments). There seems to be no limit to the ways the good news can and should be presented.

Evangelism should be creative and adaptive. Paul wrote in First Corinthians 9:22, "I have become all things to all men so that all possible means I might save some." Paul's creativity and adaptability were reflected in his ministry as described in Acts. For example, in Acts 13:16-41 Paul preached a message to Jews and God-fearers that is filled with Scripture references; in Acts 14:14-18 (Iconium) and 17:16-34 (Athens) he adapted his message to his pagan audiences, even quoting secular poets in his talk in Athens. Paul was also creative and willing to adapt in terms of the places he chose to present the message. In Philippi (Acts 16) he found no synagogue, so he looked for a place of prayer. In Athens, he went to the marketplace; in Corinth he moved to a house next door to the synagogue. Those serving the Creator should be *creative* in presenting the Creator's message!

Evangelism should be urgent. The fervor and urgency of the early believers as they evangelized cannot be missed in the New Testament. John the Baptist and Jesus both preached a message of repentance because the Kingdom was "at hand." The apostles boldly proclaimed their message in face of rising opposition (Acts 4:18-20, 5:27-32). Why such urgency? First, they were convinced that earth's final days had come (The "Last Days" began with the coming of Jesus.). Second, they were convinced that people were truly doomed to destruction apart from Christ (Acts 4:12). Fervent urgency was driven by the life-and-death nature of their message and the sense that time could run out at any moment. Ted Haggard reminds us that "The apostle Paul lists two major motivations for his effective ministry. One is found in 2 Corinthians 5:11 where he writes, 'Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men' (KJV). This passage reveals that Paul had a sincere understanding of the horrible nature of the wrath of God and the terror that will come upon His enemies. Therefore he feared for those who did not know the gospel. Paul was consumed with the finality of that reality and, therefore was motivated to persuade men."¹

Evangelism should be opportune. Knowing the urgency of the proclamation by the early church, it comes as no surprise to discover Paul's admonition to the Ephesians to make the

most of every opportunity (Eph. 5:16) and Peter's admonition for believers to always be ready to give a reason for the hope within them (1 Pet. 3:15). The early Christians were ready for every "divine appointment" and "prepared in season and out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2) to share the good news.

Evangelism should be supported by prayer. There was an atmosphere of prayer in the early church, and, in Matthew 9:37-38, Jesus tells His followers to ask the Lord of the Harvest to send out laborers into the harvest. He Himself prayed for those who would believe through His disciples' message (John 17:20). Also, Paul requests prayer for his evangelistic work in Ephesians 6:19-20 and Colossians 4:3-4. Paul also hints that he prayed for unbelievers in his address to King Agrippa in Acts 26:29 where he says, "I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." There is no question that there is a vital connection between prayer and the incredible effectiveness of the New Testament church's evangelism.

Specific Questions

A. What is your view of the Great Commission and your convictions about the need to spread the gospel?

The Church's first priority is obedience to Jesus' commission to preach the gospel to every creature and to make disciples of all nations. Therefore, there should be no hesitancy on any Foursquare pastor's part when it comes to making this his or her first priority. We would do well to make John Wesley's charge to the early Methodist preachers our own: "You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most. Observe: It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see God."²

B. What is your view of the spiritual condition of an individual without Jesus Christ?

There is no biblical justification for believing that there is anything other than eternal pain and suffering for those who reject Jesus as savior. Larry Dixon writes, "There is indeed an Other Side of the Good News, and it is being ignored, compromised, and redefined. ...The most severe penalty awaits those who reject Christ."³ We who know Jesus Christ must proclaim both the good and the bad news of the Gospel.

C. How would you extend an evangelistic invitation in a public service?

An effective invitation will include an appropriate transition from the message into the invitation, will be clear, and will plainly require a public response. It will summarize the "basics" of a gospel presentation: every person's need, the solution provided by God through the work of Jesus, the need for repentance and faith (as defined by Scripture: trust, reliance upon, not mere intellectual assent). Some or all of these elements will have been covered in an evangelistic message, of course, but a quick summary of these elements can be given with remarkable effectiveness after any type of message.

D. If you met someone today who was open to receive Jesus, how would you explain the gospel?

You would use the same elements of the gospel listed under question number three to lead someone to a saving relationship with Christ: need, solution through Jesus, response of repentance and faith. Appropriate scriptural support for all of the above should be supplied, of course, and there are many resources available to guide someone in this.

E. As a senior pastor how would you lead your congregation in fulfilling our mandate to “go into all the world”?

Leadership in this area will touch on your personal life, your public ministry and the lives of your congregation’s members and will include the following.

Modeling: Anything said about evangelism will sound hollow unless you are cultivating relationships with non-Christians and leading people to the Lord outside of public services. The late David Watson said: “After years of personal evangelism I have come to learn in particular two basic principles. In the first place, *opportunities come in so far as we really want them*. If we are reluctant to share our faith with others, no matter how plausible our excuses may be, opportunities will not readily come, or else we shall not see them or take them. In the second place, I have learned that *most people, if not all, are basically hungry for God*, even when they show little signs of this on the surface.”⁴ Modeling evangelism will also require you to make evangelism a priority in public services and will be revealed in how you recommend that the budget prioritize evangelism.

Mobilizing prayer: Your own prayer on behalf of non-Christians and for the Lord to send laborers into the harvest will be a good place to start, but true leadership will require you to mobilize your entire church so that prayer for all aspects of evangelism is consistent, continuing and passionate. A good resource for motivating your church to prayer is *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* by Jim Cymbala.

Encouraging relationship-based and service-based evangelism: A “come and get it” approach to evangelism has never been less effective than it is these days, and the cultural shift to postmodernity is making this more and more true. Effective evangelism today requires us to build caring relationships with those we hope to introduce to Jesus. Eddie Gibbs, in *Church Next*, devotes an entire chapter to this entitled, “From Attracting a Crowd to Seeking the Lost.”⁵ Brian D. McLaren reminds us that relationships start with serving: “We can spread the Good News by seeing ourselves not as a privileged, chosen, exclusive elite, but as people called and then sent to be servants of all, following the example of Jesus, who repeatedly said, ‘I have not come to be served, but to serve.’”⁶ For more reading on this vital area, see *Life-Style Evangelism*, by Joe Aldrich, *The Church of Irresistible Influence* by Robert Lewis, *Building A Contagious Church* by Mark Mittelberg and *Evangelism Outside The Box* by Rick Richardson.

Involving everyone: While it is true that not everyone is or should be an evangelist, it is feasible that everyone in a church will be able to understand how his or her ministry serves the church’s first priority. One of many good models for involving everyone in a church in the Harvest can be found in *Doing Church As A Team*, by Wayne Cordeiro. It is apparent from Scripture that although not everyone is an evangelist, everyone is a witness. There are

no exceptions to Peter's admonition to "be ready to give a reason for the hope that you have" (1 Pet. 3:15). Rick Warren says in *The Purpose Driven Life*, "Telling others how they can have eternal life is the greatest thing you can do for them. If you want to be used by God, you must care about what God cares about; what He cares about most is the redemption of the people he made. He wants his lost children found! Nothing matters more to God; the cross proves that."⁷

F. What steps will you take to intentionally plant churches?

Studies repeatedly show that new churches are the most effective at reaching the harvest. Because of this and because of Foursquare's heritage as a church planting movement, we encourage all churches to think of a healthy church in terms of one that reproduces itself through church planting. There is no more biblical way to evangelize than through church planting as revealed by Paul's church planting ministry. Foursquare offers many resources for pastors who wish to parent churches. Contact the church planting coordinator in your district for help with this essential part of fulfilling the Great Commission.

Conclusion

Our Burden

The Foursquare family was founded by an *evangelist* who had the following statement written on the cornerstone of Angelus Temple: "Dedicated unto the cause of inter-denominational and worldwide evangelism." Obviously, then, the genetic imprint of our Foursquare family includes a passion for evangelism. Our website's summary of our doctrinal statement on evangelism says, "We believe that soul winning is the most important responsibility of the Church" (James 5:20). Our burden is to see that statement become a reality for all of our churches.

Our Goals

- We want it to be unmistakably apparent in every Foursquare congregation that the church's primary task is to make disciples of all nations. This is indicated by the behavior of its leaders and members and by the expenditure of funds.
- We want every Foursquare pastor to be "doing the work of an evangelist" by engaging in soul winning and by leading the church into evangelistic pursuits.
- We want to see many wonderful and varied expressions of how the church can "do evangelism," especially in light of our changing world and the multiculturalism that exists in our nation.

Recommended Reading and Bibliography

End Notes

1. Haggard, Ted. *Primary Purpose*, Creation House, 1995, p. 175.
2. Wesley, John. *Minutes of Several Conversations, Works*, 8:310, as quoted by Robert Coleman in *Nothing to Do But Save Souls*, Francis Asbury Press, 1990.

3. Dixon, Larry. *Other Side of the Good News*, Victor Books, 1992, p. 187.
4. Watson, David. *I Believe In Evangelism*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976, pp. 100-101.
5. Gibbs, Eddie. *Church Next*, InterVarsity Press, 2000, pp. 172-192.
6. McLaren, Brian D. *More Ready Than You Realize*, Zondervan, 2003, p. 41.
7. Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Life*, Zondervan, 2002, pp. 283 and 288.

Works recommended for further study (in addition to those cited)

- Aldrich, Joe. *Life-Style Evangelism*, Multnomah Press, 1981.
- Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church As A Team*, New Hope Publishers, 1998.
- Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, Zondervan, 1997.
- Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Power*, Zondervan, 2001.
- Ted Haggard, *The Life-Giving Church*, Regal Books, 1998.
- Robert Lewis, *The Church of Irresistible Influence*, Zondervan, 2002.
- Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian*, Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church*, Zondervan, 2000.
- Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, Zondervan, 2001.
- Steve Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness*, Vine Books, 1993.
- Leonard J. Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000.
- Rick Richardson, *Evangelism Outside The Box*, InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, Zondervan, 1995.

Tithing and Offerings

“Declaration of Faith” (Article XXII)

“We believe that the method ordained of God to sustain His ministry and the spread of the gospel after His command is ‘tithing’ and is generally accepted throughout all Foursquare churches, not only as God’s method to take care of the material and financial needs of His church, but to raise the spiritual morale of His people to the extent that God must bless them. We are commanded in Malachi 3:10, ‘Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.’ In the matter of ‘giving’ and ‘free will offerings,’ they are ordered of the Lord and practiced in all Foursquare churches as part of God’s plan for the church’s material needs and the spirituality of His people. We are admonished in Luke 6:38, ‘Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom, for with the same measure ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.’ Being ‘joint heirs’ with Him we know that giving unto His kingdom which is also ours is an enjoyable thing, it being more blessed to give than to receive, for we are commanded in II Corinthians 9:7, ‘Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for He loveth a cheerful giver’”⁷⁸ (1 Cor. 16:1,2).

Interview Questions

- What do you believe the Bible teaches about tithes and offerings? How do these principles apply today?
- What is your personal practice concerning tithes and offerings?
- Do you believe the principle of tithing can apply to a congregation as well as an individual? If so, will the church you pastor willingly tithe to our denomination?

Introduction

Questions for Discussion

A. What is meant by the term “stewardship”?

Stewardship has to do with handling another’s property. A “steward” is someone who uses delegated authority to manage another person’s assets. Biblical stewardship is first modeled in God’s charge to Adam and Eve to “tend” the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15-17). In the New Testament it is based on the concept of being a servant of Jesus Christ (Luke 12:42-44). We are now servant-managers of Jesus’ assets: His Church (Titus 1:7); His truths (1 Cor. 4:1); His gifts (1 Pet. 4:10); and

⁷⁸ This extended version is quoted from “Declaration of Faith” in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Publications, 1969.

the financial resources with which He has entrusted us (Luke 16:1-13). As His servants we are challenged to manage His assets according to His principles and not according to our own human tendencies. We must manage our possessions with an eye on life's true riches (Luke 16:11), realizing that "no servant can serve two masters...you cannot serve both God and money" (Luke 16:13, 14). There is nothing more fundamental to daily life than the issue of how we manage our money.⁷⁹ Being a good steward requires personal discipline, and includes management of financial resources; avoiding unnecessary debt arising from a lack of self-control; supporting the ministry of the local church through regular, systematic giving of at least 10% of the gross income;⁸⁰ and giving free-will offerings to Christian causes.

B. Why does God want Christians to tithe?

In the New Testament a believer's motivation for all forms of giving is ultimately meant as a tangible expression of appreciation for all Christ has done. It also shows a desire to partner with Him in reaching out to others, "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

C. What biblical principles should guide our giving?

Giving should be done according to the following guidelines:

- with generosity: "whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Cor. 9:6)⁸¹
- with forethought: "in accordance with what (each) has decided in his heart to give,⁸² not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7)
- with regularity and in proportion to financial ability: "on the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made" (1 Cor. 16:2)
- with a desire to support those called to vocational ministry: "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14)
- with a heart to support fellow believers in need: "Joseph...sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:37)
- with a heart to support the needy of society in general "religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27)⁸³

⁷⁹ Hayford, Jack, *Grounds for Living*, Sovereign World, Ltd., Tonbridge, Kent, England, 2001, pg. 202. 2 Corinthians 9:12 notes that giving is an element of worship – **this service that you perform...is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.**

⁸⁰ "Tithing is the practice of giving a tenth of one's property or produce to support religious institutions or the priesthood" (D.K. McKim, *Tithing in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Walter A. Elwell [Editor], Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI., 1999 printing, pg., 1096). It is this technical definition that leads to the understanding that one is to tithe 10% of his or her gross income.

⁸¹ "Giving blesses the recipient in that his or her needs are met and faith and thanksgiving for God's provision are increased; it blesses the *giver* because 'God loves a cheerful giver' and will grant an abundant spiritual harvest" (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI., 1994, pg. 957).

⁸² This statement does not preclude the place of tithing 10% of one's gross income (see below). Rather, this is Paul's way of saying believers should give careful deliberation to giving (i.e., be personally persuaded of the doctrines of giving and tithing) and make the decision to give/tithe on their own and not at the extraction of another.

- with an attitude of trust in God to provide the needs of the giver: “He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness (2 Cor 9:10) ⁸⁴
- with an awareness that financial giving is a privilege: “they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints (2 Cor. 8:4); 8) with an awareness that “each of us will give an account of himself to God” for all of life as a follower of Christ, including obedience to His command to give (Rom.14:12)⁸⁵

D. Should vocational ministers receive financial support?

Paul addresses the matter of financial support for vocational ministers in First Corinthians 9:3-14. In verses 13 and 14 he explains that God intends to provide financial support for those vocational ministers in the New Testament just as He did for the Levitical priests in the Old Testament (Num.18:21-24). By doing so, he reveals that the New Testament practice is in part derived from the Levitical practice. He unmistakably affirms the right of vocational ministers to receive financial support rather than being forced to work (vv. 4,14).⁸⁶ In this same passage he also cites six examples from the natural order of life where a person or animal is “paid” for their labor:

the soldier who is paid while at war

the farmer who eats the fruit of his labors

the shepherd who uses the milk from his flock

the ox that eats while threshing

the plowman and the thresher who both hope to partake of their harvest (vs. 7-10)

Then he asks the question in verse 11, “If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?” The obvious answer to his question is “No, such is not too much to ask.” He concludes all these arguments by saying, “In the same way, the Lord has commanded⁸⁷ that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel” (v.14).

E. Why do Foursquare believers and churches tithe?

- 1) Our founder believed that tithing is God’s plan to support the church.

In Article XXII of the “Declaration of Faith,” Sister McPherson said, “We believe that the method ordained of God to sustain His ministry and spread the gospel after His command is “Tithing”

⁸³ James’ reference is not limited to the needy within the Church community. See Douglas Moo, *The Letter of James* [The Pillar New Testament Commentary], William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI., 2000, pp.96-97.

⁸⁴ In Luke 6:38, Jesus discusses a related principle, the reciprocal law of giving – “**Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.**” “Jesus was not trying to convince His disciples to give with an incentive program that they would get something back if they gave. Instead, He was focusing on the issue of ‘life-release’ – wanting us to understand that an actual, divinely ordered spiritual dynamic is set in motion when we give...[namely], the fullest dimensions *in* life are only released through the action of *giving*” (Jack Hayford, op. cit., pg. 203)

⁸⁵ Although God’s Word does command Christ followers to give, the apostles were overall reticent to command people to give—especially for their own needs (Paul’s one clear demand [1 Corinthians 16:1] was for the socially poor, not for his own support); rather, as leaders they strongly encouraged giving and reminded believers of their responsibility to give (2 Cor 8:7-9).

⁸⁶ They may certainly voluntarily work so as not to burden a church which is truly unable to support them, but they should not be forced to do so because of neglect or indifference on the part of those to whom they minister (1 Cor 9:12,15).

⁸⁷ The Lord’s command here is likely Jesus’ statement in Luke 10:7

and (it) is generally accepted throughout all Foursquare churches, not only as God's method to take care of the material and financial needs of His church, but to raise the spiritual morale of His people to the extent that God must bless them" (emphasis added).

Elsewhere on this same subject she said,

- *God is an orderly God...He put a seed in the heart of the rose, a bulb beneath the lily. He put the kernel on the corn and the wheat...in other words, God is a perfect planner...He did not just make a flower and never plan for it to go on. Everything He makes, He puts the seed within itself—the tree, the flower, that it may go on and on and on. Dearer to God than a tree, dearer to God than a rose, dearer to God than an apple is His church, the apple of His eye. Does it stand to reason that God would give all these other things seed that they might go on and perpetuate themselves and never plan for the perpetuity of His church? Of course not. He planned for the financing of the church. And I believe passing the collection plate is not God's plan. I wish I never had to take a collection. It is a huge undertaking to keep this great work going. But God's plan is not passing the plate and asking constantly for money. God's plan is, 'Bring all your tithes into the storehouse.' If your income this month is \$500.00, then \$50.00 belongs to the Lord.⁸⁸*

2) Jesus endorsed tithing.

The primary exegetical basis for espousing the tithe as a New Testament practice is Jesus' statement in Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. *You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former*" (emphasis added). Jack Hayford effectively connects tithing to Jesus' teachings: "While Jesus shows that biblical giving is no substitute for obedience in matters of justice, mercy, and faith, He points out that tithing remains important and necessary. Biblical giving includes the principle of tithing...Jesus brings it *beyond the Law.*"⁸⁹

3) Tithing arises from our gratitude toward God, not from the Law of Moses.

It is often noted among those espousing the tithe for New Testament believers that tithing pre-dates the Law of Moses (Gen14:20; 28:20-22). It was an expression of gratitude practiced by people of faith more than six hundred years before the law was revealed. So it cannot be said that tithing is a part of the ritual requirements from which Christians are now free. It is true that tithing did become an ordinance as part of the Sinai Covenant (Lev. 27:30-32), but New Testament believers still need to be at least as thankful and generous as Old Testament saints. It is a practice that is gratitude-based, not law-based.

4) Malachi warns of the effects of not tithing.

Malachi reprimanded Israel in 450 B.C. for neglecting this great privilege and responsibility. He noted that failing to tithe is to despise God, to treat Him with less respect than we treat human authority figures (Mal. 1:6-8). In chapter three he elaborated on some of the results of not tithing: it robs God of both respect and assets that are rightfully His (v.8); it desensitizes us to the voice and commandments of God (v.8); and it ties God's hands of blessing in our lives (v.9), to some degree affecting the promise of Second Corinthians 9:10. In addition, in verse 10,

⁸⁸ McPherson, Aimee Semple, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-244. See also Article XXII where it is stated, "We are commanded in Malachi 3:10 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse'" (emphasis added).

⁸⁹ Hayford, Jack, *op.cit.*, pp.208-209.

Malachi explained that God is so committed to principles of sound stewardship as expressed in tithing that He invites people to test the principle and confirm the authenticity of His promises.

Conclusion

Our Burden

We want Foursquare ministers to individually embrace the principles of stewardship, tithing, and giving of offerings, asking the Lord to make them cheerful and non-reluctant givers who model these truths for those they lead. Senior pastors are further encouraged to make it a requirement that all paid staff consistently tithe 10% of their gross wages as an example to the flock and all Foursquare churches. Finally, senior pastors are highly encouraged to receive regular offerings for Foursquare Missions International and to make their congregations aware of FMI as an excellent choice for special gifts.

Our Goals

- We want all Foursquare ministers to personally practice godly stewardship and to graciously, yet unapologetically, instruct those under their influence to be equally good stewards of God's assets in their lives.
- We want believers who are taught to consistently tithe 10% of their gross income and to give offerings as they are able.
- We want believers who understand the importance of godly stewardship, including tithing, in the process of becoming fully devoted disciples.

Recommended Reading

Hayford, Jack. *Grounds for Living*, Sovereign World, Ltd., Tonbridge, Kent, England, 2001.

The Security of the Believer

Creedal Statement

"We believe in the free moral will power of man, who can backslide, apostatize, and be lost."

Interview Questions (See The New Birth Discussion Guide, #7.)

- What are the nature and implications of the new birth?
- What must a person do or believe to be born again?
- What personal changes should we expect after a person is born again?
- Can a person backslide, apostatize and be lost? If so, how?

For Discussion

A. Backsliding and Apostatizing

Our creedal statement reads, "*We believe in the free moral will power of man, who can backslide, apostatize and be lost*" (#24). It is probably best to see backsliding and apostatizing as two distinct realities, both of which can result in the same end.

Backsliding is "a temporary lapse into unbelief or sin following spiritual conversion. Specific causes include unbelief (Heb. 3:12), bitterness (Heb. 12:15), preoccupation with the present world (Matt. 13:22; 2 Tim 4:10)" and refusing to endure persecution for one's faith (Matt. 13:21; Luke 9:23-26). The Bible also warns that there are certain categories of behaviors that, if continually practiced, will reveal that our claims to repentance and faith are hypocritical (1 Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5-7). Furthermore, believers are repeatedly cautioned that they must not, especially in essential matters, embrace false doctrine (e.g., Gal. 3:1-4; 1 Tim. 1:19).

Although backsliding brings untold hurt, most Christians believe that the backslidden believer is not so much lost as in need of repentance. Yet backsliding can, depending on its longevity and severity, lead to becoming eternally lost because of the desensitizing it brings to the heart (1 Cor. 6: 9,10). Still, none of us is given the ability or right to judge when or if a believer's justification has ceased due to sin. Many in the church in Corinth were very carnal, yet Paul addressed them as "brothers and sisters" (1 Cor. 3:1). This is why we tend to call for "re-dedication" of backslidden people, rather than their being "re-saved." Paul also reminds us that our pastoral responsibility to a backslider goes beyond *warning*. We are to seek restoration "in a spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6:1).

Apostatizing is "a deliberate repudiation and abandonment of the faith that one has professed." The Septuagint uses the term to reflect deliberate and calculated renunciation of God. Its cause is most often attributed to syncretistic religious practices that gradually wore away at one's devotion to

Yahweh. The New Testament intimates that apostasy is more often the result of doctrinal error than moral laxity (2 Tim. 2:17,18), although the two often go together (Heb. 3:12, 6:4-6).

B. The Security of the Believer

“Above all else in our Christian life, we must have a positive assurance of our salvation. It is certainly God’s will that we be saved and that we know so. Every spiritual experience—every conflict with the enemy—every prayer that is uttered—every promise that is pleaded—is based on an assurance of our position in Christ. Whenever we endeavor to do anything for God we must be able to stand on the firm foundation of the positive assurance that we are His child” (Guy Duffield, *The Security of the Believer*).

The Bible assures us of God’s power to protect us from all forms of attack on our salvation whether it be condemnation for our failures, demonic assaults, or human persecution (Rom. 8:31-39). No matter how severe these attacks, God has provided resources that should give us a restful confidence in our salvation. Yet, the Bible does not allow this confidence to be built on the philosophical premise that it is impossible for a believer to return to an unsaved condition. Rather, it bases the security of our salvation on the fact that God’s power to protect us is much greater than the devil’s power to tempt, persecute, or deceive. So, we can rest in the knowledge that it is impossible for anything to seize our salvation and tear it away from us.

The only danger we face is from attitudes that form within ourselves. Over these we are to remain diligent by laying hold of the abundant resources that God has provided.

Conclusion

As we look back over past Foursquare licensing applications, we find that a question asking the applicant’s position on the security of the believer has been present in virtually every application from the beginning of our movement. It is one of a few core issues that have always been of concern to our leaders. Historically, we have sought to avoid the extreme positions found on both ends of this issue. We do not wish to produce people who live constantly in fear of losing their salvation, for the salvation we proclaim is based firmly on repentance and faith in Christ (“Declaration of Faith,” V and VI). But neither do we fit on the other end of the continuum that says that, once people are born again, they can never fall away. We have always felt that this teaching was dangerously misleading since it tends to breed a false sense of security that can anesthetize the conscience to the warnings of Scripture. For us the truth is that God is more than able to protect and preserve us, yet, at the same time, we must choose to earnestly pursue a sincere relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our Goals

- We want our pastors to regularly preach a gospel that invites people to repentance and a whole-hearted acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We want believers who are confident of their eternal destinies, able to stand against the wiles of the devil, bold in pleading the promises of God, and progressing in their spiritual lives.
- We want leaders who love people enough to biblically discipline if they are involved in critical moral failure. (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5: 9-13; Gal. 6:1)

- We want believers who wisely choose to feed their spirits through worship, prayer, and the Word of God, and who still fear the Lord and flee temptations (1 Cor. 6:18; 10:14; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22).

Recommended Reading

We would highly recommend the reading of a message that Dr. Guy Duffield presented to the ICFG convention body in February 1967. The message was published in 1968 under the title, "The Security of the Believer." In this message Dr. Duffield captures the distinctive emphases that have historically defined our church on this issue. As he notes, we want to preach a gospel that emphasizes the power and comfort derived from having an assurance of our salvation. We believe the Bible places great emphasis on God's holding power and reveals an overall anticipation that saints will persevere in their faith. However, the Bible also warns us against willfully turning away from the provisions of salvation that Christ has made. We must balance our preaching by including warnings against taking our salvation for granted. What we believe and how we live do matter, and beginning well does not automatically mean ending well. As we see believers straying off morally or doctrinally, or as we see them returning to loving the world, we need to do our best to restore them before their error leads to eternal consequences (James 5:19-20).