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THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH: A STUDY
OF EPHESIANS¹

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This article discusses the role of the Holy Spirit in building up the church and his functioning in biblical theology. Paul's epistles are composed of two cognitive dimensions. The first half of each epistle is theoretical and theological whereas the second half discusses pragmatic and ethical issues. This character appears in Romans, Galatians and other prison epistles. In the case of Ephesians, chapters one to three are theological discourse and four to six discusses ethical issues.² The logic behind this arrangement is that, theory is the foundation of praxis. Christians' spiritual and ethical life should be built upon theology. If there are problems in theology, there will be problems in spiritual life. This article is to investigate the work of the Holy Spirit in the church by analyzing the lexical and grammatical meanings of some biblical terms in Greek. It is aimed to elaborate not only the external manifest power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church (doing), but also the internal transformation deep inside our life (being).³

¹ Scriptures are quoted from the Jerusalem Bible unless it is stated otherwise.

² Ephesians is an epistle that focuses on the Holy Spirit, who is mentioned in every chapter. Chapter one discusses the seal of the Holy Spirit on believers. Chapter two argues that the church is the temple of the God dwelled by the Holy Spirit. Chapter three describes the inner man being strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit. Chapter four explains about the unity in the Holy Spirit. Chapter five teaches about being filled by the Holy Spirit but not getting drunk. Chapter six is about praying at all times in the Holy Spirit. (Paul Shen, *Glimpse of Heaven: A Study of Ephesians* (Hong Kong: China Graduate School of Theology, 1992), p. 242.)

³ David Lim, *Spiritual Gifts: A Fresh Look* (Taipei: Elim Christian Bookstore, 1997), pp. 11-215.

The theme of the Ephesians is ecclesiological. This epistle was written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.⁴ The spiritual guidance to the Ephesians' church was drawn out from his reflection on his suffering. Ecclesiology is about the work of the God of Father through his beloved Son and the Spirit in his church. This process is completed by the grace of being chosen, the work of rebirth, the life of sanctification, the love for each other, the functioning of gifts, spiritual warfare and other dimensions. The growth of the early church was intimately attributable to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost. Nevertheless, the Lord of the Church remains Jesus Christ. The Church is his body and the ultimate purpose of the work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the truth, as Jesus says, "But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead⁵ you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself, but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come. He will glorify me, since all he tells you will be taken from what is mine" (John 16:13-14).

The Old Testament demonstrates the God who speaks to people through prophets and his words were written in scriptures (2 Tim 3:16). He then spoke to the world through Jesus Christ, who was the word incarnate (Heb 1:1-2, 1 Tim 3:16). He now speaks through the Holy Spirit in our hearts according to the principles in the Bible. Since God's word is the solid foundation of faith, the church can grow in the midst of suffering (Eph 4:13-16, 3:17) and becomes a "new man". It can therefore serve the world (περιπατέω)⁶ (Eph 2:10, 4:1, 17, 5:2, 8, 15) and speak to it with God's word (2 Tim 2:15).

To become a "new man" of the time (Eph 2:15, 4:20-24), one must grow in Christ. As it is said in Eph 4:24, "...so that you can put on the new self that has been created in God's way, in the goodness and holiness of the truth." A new man will bring this "wicked age" the mystery of the salvation of the God almighty (Eph 5:16) and even the whole universe, as Eph 3:10-11 says, "...so that the sovereignties and powers should learn only now, through the Church, how comprehensive God's wisdom really is, exactly according to the plan

⁴ There are many arguments about where Paul wrote the epistle, but this is not the focus of this article.

⁵ The Greek word means "enter".

⁶ The Greek terms adopted in this article are taken from *The Greek New Testament* (4th rev. ed.). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998.

which he had had from all eternity in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Jesus has already formed a community of “new man” in the world and it belongs to him only. εἰς ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον means to create in himself one new man out of the two (Eph 2:15). This new man is a new tribe, new human being and a representative of Christ on earth.

To become a servant of the time is to serve the world according to the will of God (Eph 5:17) through ministries, gifts and power from God, “so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12). Moreover, Paul commands that a servant “should try to find some useful manual work” and to do some good by helping others who are in need rather than stealing (Eph 4:28). “Do some good” (τὸ ἀγαθόν) means showing goodness and kindness. It is translated as “God’s work of art” (ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς) in Eph 2:10, which suggests that we are the products created by God in Jesus Christ. This product is meant to give alms and work hard to fulfill our own and others’ daily needs. As Eph 6:6 says, “not only when you are under their eye, as if you had only to please men, but because you are slaves of Christ and wholeheartedly do the will of God.” Those who do good works will be rewarded by God (Eph 6:8), but we can only do so by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit and His Works in Ephesians

Because of the work of the Holy Spirit, our life is changed ontologically. The following analyses the change in four dimensions: the Holy Spirit and new life, the Holy Spirit and sanctification, the Holy Spirit and power, and the Holy Spirit and unity.

1. The Holy Spirit and New Life

Eph 1:13-14 (also Eph 4:30): Now you too, in him, have heard the message of the truth and the good news of your salvation, and have believed it; and you too have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the Promise, the pledge of our inheritance which brings freedom for those God has take for his own, to make his glory praised.

“Heard” and “believed” are both participles. Participles are used to bring a main verb in the same time frame. Verse 13 suggests that as we listen to truth and believe in Christ, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. Being “sealed” (ἐσφραγίσθητε) is the main verb in the

scripture and is the aorist passive indicative of the second person in “you were marked in him with a seal.” This kind of main verb phrase is similar to what is used in Acts 19:2, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit?” (εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες). This verse can be literally translated as “at the moment you believe, did you receive the Holy Spirit?”⁷ In Greek, “believe” is a participle. It co-exists with “receive the Holy Spirit” (main verb), which is more important since it is the sign of rebirth and the indwelling of the Spirit.⁸ It can also mean receiving the filling of the Holy Spirit after conversion, as what happened to the twelve disciples when speaking in tongues and prophesying on Pentecost. “Gain power” in Acts 1:8 (λήμψετε δύναμιν) can be translated as “receive power” as it is derived from the same verb, “λαμβάνω”.

Seal is referred to ownership and a stamp of verification (Jer 32:9-10).⁹ It means that God holds the authority of the life of a Christian who is recognized by God (Rev 7:3). Francis Foulkes suggests that seal in the New Testament has similar meaning as the Jew’s circumcision since it identifies God’s ownership of the people, or as the tattoo used in the ritual of conversion in paganism.¹⁰

Jack W. Hayford suggests that “the seal of the Holy Spirit” bears the same meaning as being filled by the Holy Spirit and receiving the power of the Spirit. He opposes that it is referred to salvation

⁷Ralph Riggs, Tsai Tung Ho (trans), *The Spirit Himself* (Taipei: The China Assemblies of God, 1991), p. 38.

⁸ John Owen, a British Puritan, suggests three aspects of the significance of signs: stamping of image of God, guaranteeing promise, and assuring salvation. (Tan Che Bin, et al, *The Holy Spirit Then and Now* (Taipei: China Theological Seminary, 2001), pp. 278-280.)

⁹ Peter T. O'Brien, Chen Chi Wen and Pan Qiu Song (trans), *The Letter to the Ephesians* (California: A Kernel of Wheat Christian Ministries, 2009), p. 234.

Gordon D. Fee, Cao Ming Xing (trans), *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship, 2001), p.83. Fee suggests that stamp is referred to the Holy Spirit and represents ownership.

¹⁰ Francis Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to The Ephesians* (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), p. 56.

because “have believed” in verse 13 suggests rebirth. A person will subsequently receive the filling of the Holy Spirit as a seal of God receiving the authority of his life.¹¹ He refers to Martyn Lloyd-Jones saying that the seal of the Holy Spirit is the second step of the work of the Holy Spirit.¹²

Verse 14 suggests that God uses the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit as a guarantee, deposit and pledge (ἀρραβών) (see also 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5) for two purposes. First, it guarantees that after we are resurrected spiritually and physically, we will definitely receive the rest of the inheritance that God has prepared for us. Secondly, the pledge of the Holy Spirit is aimed for the praise of God’s glory. To say that the Holy Spirit is the seal, deposit and pledge is the same as saying that the Holy Spirit is the “first fruit” (Rom 8:23).

The day of Pentecost marks the beginning of the universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit “on all flesh” as promised by Jesus. Those who believe in God and repent will receive the Holy Spirit as the disciples. The rebirth in the Holy Spirit happens only once as a seal which indicates that the believers are rescued from the power of Satan and become God’s children (Eph 5:1, Rom 8:16) and possession. God has also promised his children “the inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away” (1 Pet 1:3-4). By faith we experience the Holy Spirit unceasingly; even now we taste the unspoilt inheritance of heaven. Paul says that Christians are brought “to life with Christ” (συνεζωποποίησεν), raised up with him (συνήγειρεν) and given “a place with him in heaven” (συνεκάθισεν) (Eph 2:5-6). These three verbs are written in simple past tense in Greek¹³ to indicate that something happened already and to emphasize the timing of the event. In other words, whoever truly believes in Jesus at any time will be given the three experiences with Christ mentioned above. Apparently Paul applies the concept of a “realized eschatology” to illustrate that Christians have already possessed the “spiritual blessings of heaven” (Eph 1:3) and the Holy Spirit is the “initial evidence” of our endowment of the inheritance.

¹¹Jack W. Hayford, Jammie Siu (trans), *The Glorious Church of God* (Taipei: Elim), pp. 77,130.

¹²Ibid.

¹³The tense of the verb is aorist, in active voice and indicative mood.

To conclude, Eph 1:13-14 suggests that a Christian is God's possession, or "God's own" (verse 11). He will be heir of God's inheritance and his life will be the praise of God's glory. The concept of God's possession first appears in Moses' prayer in Exodus 34:9, "If I have indeed won your favour, Lord...let my Lord come with us, I beg. True, they are a headstrong people, but forgive us our faults and our sins, and adopt us as your heritage." Also, in Num 18:20, "Yahweh says to Aaron, 'You shall have no inheritance in their land, no portion of it among them shall be yours, it is I who will be your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel.'" Another parallel scripture is Col 1:12, "Thanking the Father who has made it possible for you to join the saints and with them to inherit the light." To endow God's inheritance is to inherit all sorts of spiritual goodness and blessings in heaven.

2. The Holy Spirit and Sanctification

Eph 5:8-10: You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth.

Christians leading a holy life means endowing the nature of God, both kindness (Mark 10:18) and righteousness, as Moses announces, "He is the Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are equity. A God faithful, without unfairness, upright itself and justice." (Deut 32:4). Christians are to live a life that pleases God in truth, which can be translated as honesty (ἀλήθεια), and to do so, they should be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

George Fox (AD 1624-91) initiated a revival movement with an emphasis of inner light in the 17th century. According to his biography, he was a charismatic person who always prophesied.¹⁴ Fox stressed that a true Christian and disciple had the light of the Holy Spirit and knew about truth authentically, which was the "inner light". He stated that since the Bible was written through the inspiration of the Spirit of God, Christians should come close to the Spirit in their hearts, so that they could know about God and Christ like the disciples and

¹⁴ George Fox, Moses Hsu (tran), *Quaker Classics* (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Council Ltd, 1991), p. 71. George Fox prophesied that the British parliament would be disbanded in two weeks in 1653 and it happened when General Oliver Cromwell gave an order to disband it.

prophets in the Bible. Moreover, since the prophets and apostles were inspired by the Spirit to write the scriptures, the same Spirit dwelt in those who understood the scriptures. Because of the indwelling of the Spirit, Christians could be in communion with the Father, Son and other believers; otherwise, they would not know God, the Christ, the word and be in fellowship with others.¹⁵ He also preached about sin being revealed by that inner light (Eph 5:14). Some people sought this light according to his teaching and were filled by the Holy Spirit. Since their bodies were shaking, they were called “Quakers”.¹⁶

Christians are the children of the Light and bear its fruit (Eph 5:9, Gal. 5:22). Although they cannot reach the standard of “not able to sin”,¹⁷ they are “able not to sin” with the help of the Spirit. When a person is saved, he is sanctified at the same time. Hence, Paul addresses the Ephesians “the saints” (τοῖς ἁγίοις) who are faithful to Christ (Eph 1:1).

Ephesians 4-6 teach about the life of sanctification. Sanctification is a terminology of sacrifice,¹⁸ meaning cleansing. For example, the priests had to wash their clothes before seeing God (Ex. 19:10, 14). It also means offering something to be used by God, such as the first born (Ex 15:19) and the gifts offered at the temple (2 Sam. 8:11). In the New Testament, sanctification is referred to transformation of the inner self. It is neither a ritualistic term nor about law (Rom 7:6) because Christian life and deeds are an offering and worship (Eph 5:8-21). Since our lives are sacrifices to God (Rom 12:1), we must be holy; otherwise, we will grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30). In Eph 5:8 and 5:15, 17, there is a contrast between “then” (ποτέ) and “now” (νῦν), and “darkness” and “light”. These verses contain both

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 69-70, 109.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 11, 36. Another reason for being called Quaker was that in 1650, when Fox was questioned by the judge, Bennet of Derby, concerning his faith, Fox warned him that he must shake in front of God. He rebuked Fox and said, “Then you are a Quaker.”

¹⁷ Willian W. Menzies, Robert Yeung (tran), *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Hong Kong: Ecclesia Bible College, 2001), p. 103.

¹⁸ Arnold M. K. Yeung (ed), “Sanctification”, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship, 1997) CD-Rom version.

positive encouragement and negative warning written in imperative tone. As Eph 5: 15-17 says, "...so be very careful about the sort of lives you lead, like intelligent and not like ensile people. This may be a wicked age, but your lives should redeem it. And do not be thoughtless but recognize what is the will of the Lord". The table below shows the contrasts between a life of the Spirit and not of the Spirit according to Eph 5:18.

<p>Eph 5:18, "Do not drug yourselves with wine, this is simply dissipation." This is an imperative sentence. Getting drunk causes a loss of self-control and abnormal behaviour. Alcohol has also brought damages to plenty of lives and families. "Wine is reckless, strong drink quarrelsome; unwise is he whom it seduces" (Prob 20:1, 23:29-30).</p>	<p>Eph 5:18, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit." In the Greek text, it is written in present imperative, so it means a "continuous" filling and control of the Holy Spirit.</p>
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Eph 18:19-22 explains the deeds of the life in the Holy Spirit.

Eph 5:19, "Sing the words and tunes of the psalms and hymns when you are together, and go on singing and chanting to the Lord in your hearts." "Psalms" can be referred to the book in the Old Testament. "Hymns" stresses the praising songs according to the intellectual understandings of God. "Spiritual songs" or "chanting"¹⁹ means the praise sung under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which is not necessarily related to expressions in tongues.²⁰ The verse is coherent to 1 Cor 14:15, "Surely I should pray not only with the spirit but with the mind as well?"

Eph 5:20, "so that always and everywhere you are giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Christians are advised to give thanks to God in Jesus Christ

¹⁹ "Spiritual song" is used in the New International Version; "chanting" is used in the Jerusalem Bible.

²⁰ Stanley M. Horton, Radiant Life Ministries (tran), *What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit*. (Hong Kong: Radiant Life Ministries, 1989), p. 255.

always and in whatever circumstances: life or death, fortune or suffering, “because this is what God expects” us to do (1 Thess 5:18). Also, thanksgiving usually happens before miracles as suggested in John 11:41-44.

Eph 5:21 “Give way to one another in obedience to Christ.” Praising together and giving thanks to God for everything maintains a vertical relationship with God. Being subjected to one another builds up a horizontal relationship with others. These two relationships nurture harmonious characters in a Spirit-filled church.²¹

Eph 5:22, “Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord” (*αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ*). The meaning of this verse is connected to “obedience” (*ὑποτασσόμενοι*) in the previous verse. “As they regard the Lord” implies that the obedience, fear, love and faithfulness that a woman gives to God are also her attitudes towards her husband if she is filled by the Spirit. Similarly, a husband should also treat his wife with these qualities.

3. The Holy Spirit and Power

When Paul talks about the power of the Holy Spirit, he uses the word, “*evnerge,w*”, which means to be active and efficient. Paul uses this word frequently as a noun (five times) and a verb (twenty times). In his teaching, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of power and his work brings about the effects as the following.

a. *The power of resurrection within believers*: Eph 1:19-20 says, “And how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength of his power at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven.” This scripture parallels to Paul’s prayer for the believers in Eph 1:17-19.

b. *The endowment of gifts and tasks*: Gifts are given accordingly (Eph 4:7-10). “Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it” (v. 7). The gift given by Christ to each person is different; so as different garments fit different bodies, but it is all given by grace.

Eph 4:11-12 says, “And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of

²¹ Paul Shen , *Glimpse of Heaven: A Study of Ephesians*, p. 249.

service, building up the body of Christ.” Ministry is both in diversity and unity. In τῶν δὲ ποιμένων καὶ διδασκάλους, there is a definite article for both pastors and teachers, which means a person can be given two tasks.²² The four/fivefold ministries are Christ’s “fulfilling gifts”²³ to the Church for the purpose of serving and nurturing others so that they become mature (1 Cor. 12:28). They are all important in different aspects and functions so as each part of our body. μὲν...δέ means “in this aspect...but in the other aspect”, or “on the one hand...on the other hand”. The following is the analysis of each ministry.

a. *Apostles*: Ulf Ekman suggests that there are regional and national apostles.²⁴ Paul says, “Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to reach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name” (Rom 1:15). Nowadays we do not usually define apostle according to the criteria in Acts 1:21-22 and it is less likely have an apostle directly chosen by God like Paul. We only define apostle from a functional perspective, that he has been given the responsibilities of building up churches, evangelism, pastoring and teaching.²⁵

b. *Prophets*: They are either regional or national. Since they are sensitive to sin, they tend to convey strong messages and teaching, but they are bound to speak for the sake of “improvement”, “encouragement” and “consolation” (1 Cor 14:3). Strong criticisms will only bring about more chaos instead of peace. The Greek word for

²² Frank E. Gaebelien (ed), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 11* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), p. 58.

²³ David Lim, *Spiritual Gifts: A Fresh Look* (Taipei: Elim, 1997), p. 227.

²⁴ Ulf Ekman, *The Prophetic Ministry* (Taipei: Grace Publishing House, 2003), p. 33.

²⁵ Church Growth Research Institute, Zhang Han ye (tran), *Grace and Gifts* (Taipei: Full Gospel Publishing House, 2003), pp. 28-31. In his analysis on the New Apostolic Movement, Peter Wagner suggests four categories of apostle: 1. vertical apostles, who are leaders in the team; 2. horizontal apostles, who build up relationships with peoples with their communication and leadership skills; 3. hyphenated apostles, who have more than one responsibilities such as being an evangelist, a disciple, a teacher, etc; 4. marketplace apostles, like Luke and Lydia (Acts 16:14; Col 4:14). I personally have reservations about these categories.

“peace” in 1 Cor 14:33 is εἰρήνης. Those who prophesy occasionally are not necessarily prophets,²⁶ but those who are chosen to be a prophet should speak according to the Bible. 1 Thess 5:20-21 suggests that we should “not treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything—hold on to what is good”. Nowadays, prophets are expected to be authoritative, accurate, and revelatory. They are not the same as the prophets in the Old Testament. Some Old Testament scholar suggests that there are two types of prophetic messages.²⁷ The first one is “forthtelling”, including encouragement, teaching and refuting errors as found in the Torah and especially Deut. 28 and Lev. 26. The other one is “foretelling”, which is particularly concerned about the eschatological messianic kingdom and the unfulfilled prophecy of the salvation of God’s people. In the New Testament, most of the prophecies are forthtelling, such as Acts 15:32,²⁸ rather than foretelling.²⁹ As far as churches in the present time are concerned, most of the prophecies have become historical. As we seek God’s guidance regarding our daily life, we should discern the prophetic messages based on biblical teaching.

c. *Evangelists*: They are either regional or national. Since they are responsible for pioneering itinerant work, they tend to stay in one place temporarily. However, some scholars disagree that evangelists are itinerant preachers because Paul insists that Timothy should stay in Ephesus to minister churches and teach (1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 4:5).³⁰ The major responsibility of evangelists is to minister to unbelievers first, then believers.

d. *Pastors and teachers*: They are regional and administrative. The tasks of a pastor are different from those of superintendents and

²⁶ Klyne Snodgrass, Yin Miao Zhen (tran), *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians* (Hong Kong: Chinese Bible International Ltd, 2008), p. 219.

²⁷ Payne, J. Barton, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy: The Complete Guide to Scriptural Predictions and Their Fulfillment* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp.11-12.

²⁸ Francis Foulkes. *The Epistle of Paul To The Ephesians* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), p.118.

²⁹ Jennifer H. Sun, *Introduction to the Literature of the Bible* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship, 2001), p. 84.

³⁰ Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary*, p. 219.

elders (Act 14:23, 20:17, 28, 1 Tim 5:17). They remain in a particular church for a long period of time and teach about truth to the congregation systematically to ensure the purity and maturity of faith. They are also regarded as “teaching pastors”.³¹

It is possible for apostles to participate in prophetic, evangelical and pastoral ministry; however, pastors and teachers cannot easily take part in apostolic, prophetic and evangelical works. They are expected to be involved in local ministry faithfully. Frequent travel may cause disorder in their local church unless God calls them to do so. The work of apostles and prophets are foundational.³² They are endowed with the gift of church-planting, as Eph 2:20 declares, “...a building that has the apostles and prophets for its foundations, and Jesus Christ himself for its main cornerstone”. And Eph 3:5 says, “The mystery that has now (*νῦν*) been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations”. They are supposed to follow the principle of the Bible rather than developing their own authority when speaking.³³ Gifts and ministries are given for the purposes of equipping (*πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων*) saints, getting involved in church (*εἰς ἔργον διακονίας*) and building up the body of Christ, which is the most important among all (Eph 4:16).³⁴

An Indonesian Chinese evangelist, Stephen Tong, claims that apostles signify the task of the New Testament period while prophets signify the Old Testament time. Since the Old and New Testaments were written, the tasks of prophets and apostles were accomplished; in other words, prophets and apostles cease to exist though he acknowledges that prophetic and apostolic ministries still remain.³⁵ Some scholars disagree with this view³⁶ because “now” (*νῦν*) in Eph 3:5 is referred to the prophets in the early church instead of those in the

³¹ Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, p. 507.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 377.

³³ Donald C. Stamps (ed), *Full Life Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), p. 1830.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 513.

³⁵ Stephen Tong, *The Spirit Baptism and Gifts* (Taipei: CMI Publishing Co., 2002.), pp. 180, 190.

³⁶ Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, p. 378.

Old Testament. Moreover, it is possible for churches of every era to be granted (ἔδωκεν)³⁷ gifted people from God. This is why apostles and prophets still exist nowadays.³⁸

In addition, Paul says, “I have been made the servant (διδάκονος) of that gospel by a gift of grace from God who gave it to me by his own power” (Eph 3:7). In the New American Standard Bible, “by his own power” is translated into “according to the working of His power” (κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ). “Working” (noun: ἐνέργεια, verb: ἐνεργέω) is referred to supernatural deeds and activities in the Bible. For example, Eph 1:11 suggests that God is the one who “guides all things as he decides by his own will”; Eph 1:19-20 also mentions about the power of resurrection working among us; Eph 2:2 talks about “the spirit who is at work in the rebellious” leading to self-destruction;

Eph 3:20 says, “Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine”. “Can” and “do” are both present middle participles; “ask” and “imagine” (αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν) are both main verbs. This verse refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in our prayers. Paul’s prayers are charismatic in style,³⁹ which means the prayers inspired by the Holy Spirit. Paul always says “through his Spirit (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ)” (Eph 3:16) or “praying in the Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι)” (Eph 6:18). Two of Paul’s prayers are recorded in Ephesians (1:17-19; 3:14-19), which demonstrate the guidance of the Holy Spirit in his life and works.

a. *The first prayer (1:17-19)*: Paul prays that God would give “a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed” to believers, so that they would be given the “full knowledge” (ἐπίγνωσις) of God. The theme of this prayer is about knowing more about God,⁴⁰ including his

³⁷ ἔδωκεν is an aorist active indicative. It indicates an action rather than time.

³⁸ Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, pp. 504, 508.

³⁹ Tan Che Bin et al. (ed) *The Holy Spirit Then and Now* (Taipei: China Evangelical Seminary, 2001), p. 232.

⁴⁰ According to Tan Che Bin, there are four aspects of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and revelations: 1. Inspired speech, words of wisdom, praise, and revelation; 2. The Holy Spirit and power; 3. The Holy Spirit, morality and, justice; 4. The Holy Spirit and salvation. (Tan Che Bin et al., *The Holy Spirit Then and Now*, pp. 229-243.

holiness, (1:4), “kind purposes” to treat each other (1:6), wisdom to understand God’s mystery (1:5, 9, 11) and his power which raised Jesus from the death. This power can also transform us from the old to the new self, and from despair to hope, “by his own will” (1:11). There are three words referring to power and they are synonyms in 1:19: “and how infinitely great is the power (δυνάμειως) that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength (κράτους) of his power (ἰσχύος).”⁴¹

b. *The second prayer (3:14-19)*:⁴² The Greek word, ἵνα, appears three times to indicate the purposes of this prayer (verses 16, 18, 19). Verse 16 says, “Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong.” It means through (διὰ) his infinite glory and the Holy Spirit we can boldly ask God for something. The gift that Paul asks for is aimed at power (δύναμις). He uses δύναμις to describe the way that God’s almighty power is granted to his people so that they can be strong in trials (3:13) and be brave in spiritual warfare (6:10-17). “For your hidden self to grow strong” means our spirit, soul, mind, thoughts, emotion and conscience become strong and confident, so that Christ’s love dwells in our hearts and our faith will be planted and built on his love. “Planted” and “built” imply firmness and dynamic growth. “Faith” and “love” both appear in verse 17. “Faith” suggests the vertical dimension of Christian life with Christ. “Love” suggests the horizontal dimension of the mutual love of believers in Christ. Believers experience the power of the Holy Spirit with faith and this power creates a bonding between people of different origins, the Jew and gentiles, with love. This

⁴¹ δυνάμειως (from δύναμις) means force, ability, abundance, and might (Eph 3:16). It appears 120 times in the New Testament and suggests the power of the Holy Spirit. κράτους (from κράτος) means dominion, might, power and, strength. Heb 2:14 says that Jesus dies in order to destroy the power of death, which is Satan. ἰσχύος (from ἰσχύς) means strength, ability, and might (Eph 6:10). On Greek lexical studies, please refer to Walter Bauer and Wright Doyle (tran), *A Greek-Chinese Lexicon of the New Testament* (Douliu, Taiwan: Conservative Baptist Press, 1986) and *The Word* (<http://www.theword.gr/index.php?home&l=english>).

⁴² On analyses of this prayer, refer to Grant Osborne, *A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship, 2002), pp. 157-163.

fraternal love enhances our understandings of the love of Christ, “which is beyond all knowledge”, and we are “filled (verb: πληρωθῆτε) with the utter fullness (noun: πλήρωμα) of God” (3:19). Since God is love, knowing his love means being filled by his “utter fullness” of the Holy Spirit, love, power, knowledge, faith, and glory. God is pleased to fill the church with all “utter fullness” so that “we are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the *fullness* of Christ himself” (4:13).

4. The Holy Spirit and Unity

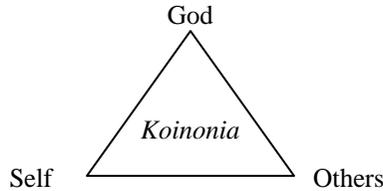
Eph 4:1-6, “I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you therefore to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all”.

The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of unity. He brings about unity to the Body of Christ (John 17:20-22). To discuss unity, it is inevitable to analyze the source, process and result of unity. Paul uses the word, “one”, many times in Eph 4:1-6 (εἷς: masculine, μία: feminine, ἓν: neutral). The unity of the church and fellowship (κοινωνία) reflects the unity of the trinitarian God,⁴³ as Jesus says, “The Father and I are one” (John 10:30) and “I have given them the glory you gave to me, that they may be one as we are one” (John 17:22). Paul warns against the sin that hampers the unity of the church in Eph 4:25-31 because that will grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30).

Acts 2:42 describes the *koinonia* in the early church: “These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers”. *Koinonia* can be translated as “fellowship” (Phil 2:1) or “communion” (2 Cor 6:14). It was not referred to an organization or programme in the New Testament period. The life in *koinonia* is not about ministry and works, but life—the life of the trinitarian God and the relationship of the three divine persons.

⁴³ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, p. 102.

This word is used to suggest participation in fellowship, almsgiving (Rom 15:26, 2 Cor 8:4), and sharing spiritual or emotional burden in ministry as one body (Phil 1:5). For instance,



Paul is comforted when Philemon shares his burden in ministry (Philemon 6, 20). Because of the Holy Spirit, we can uphold each other and are in fellowship in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14).

God aims to build up his church in unity and wholeness. John Scott suggests that there are two characteristics in the new community that is called by God. First, it is a people of unity, formed by Jewish and gentile believers. Second, it is a people of holiness, separated from the world and belonging to God only.⁴⁴ God calls (ἐκλήθητε)⁴⁵ us to be one and to endow with five spiritual characters, which are the criteria of unity, in all circumstances.

a. *Humility*: It is the most important criterion of unity, as Paul says, “Always consider the person to be better than yourself” (Phil 2:3).

b. *Meekness and gentleness*: Gentleness to people is nurtured through obedience to God.⁴⁶ A gentle person does not fight for his own right in front of God and people,⁴⁷ and even bears unreasonable rebuke.

c. *Patience and endurance*: To be patient with people’s weaknesses and injustice, to have self-control and perseverance in suffering and frustration without attempt of revenge.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, pp. 148-149.

⁴⁵ It means “you were called”.

⁴⁶ Archibald T. Robertson, I-Pyng Chang (tran.), *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*, Vol. VII (California: Living Spring, 1991), p. 491.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.151.

⁴⁸ Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, p. 211; Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, p. 473.

d. *Bearing with one another in love*: To accept one another until conflicts end.⁴⁹

e. *In love* (ἐν ἀγάπῃ): Love is not a feeling, but determination.⁵⁰ Love includes all the four characters mentioned above, as Paul says, “Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love” (Col. 3:14).

Patience, gentleness, and kindness are the characters of the fruit of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Gal 5:22-23. If these characters do not exist in the church, unity is in vain. Unity is a calling and command of God and we must accomplish it with diligence (σπουδάζοντες) because there is no “cheap” unity. It cannot be achieved through “just word or mere talk, but something real and active” (1 John 3:18). “Preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together” (σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης) (Eph 4:3) means “the string of peace that binds you together in the unity of the Holy Spirit”. Therefore, unity is the sign of a mature Christian community that desires the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts.

In Eph 4:4-6, Paul uses the word, “one”, for seven times (εἷς: masculine; μία: feminine; ἓν: neutral): one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. These aspects of oneness are related to the oneness of the trinitarian God. (verse 4 ἓν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα, καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιά ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν· verse 5 εἷς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἓν βάπτισμα· verse 6 εἷς θεός καὶ πατήρ πάντων, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πάσιν.) Stanley Horton and John Scott categorize these aspects into three types: the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

a. *Father*: There is only one God because he is the Father of humankind, as Eph 4:6 states, “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all”. Paul uses three prepositions to express the nature and work of the almighty God. “Over all” suggests God’s supreme sovereignty and glory. “Through all” states God’s love to humankind. “In all” refers God’s inspiration and work in human’s hearts.

b. *Son*: There is only one hope, one faith, and one baptism because there is only one Lord. Jesus is the reason of our faith, hope,

⁴⁹ Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Hong Kong: Capstone, 1996), p. 675.

⁵⁰ Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, p. 211.

and baptism. One baptism in this verse is commonly referred to the sacrament, but Horton suggests that it means being baptized in the Holy Spirit and being one with other believers in Christ.

c. *Holy Spirit*: There is only one body because there is only one Holy Spirit, as 1 Cor 12:13 says, “In the one Spirit we were all baptized, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink”.

Ephesians depicts the Holy Spirit as a spirit of wisdom, revelation (1:17, 3:5), power (3:16), and unity (2:18, 4:3). He also sanctifies (4:30) and prays for us (6:18). Pentecostal and charismatic churches have less theological discrepancies on pneumatology, but more on ecclesiology, and consequently division happens. On the one hand, they have been isolated by mainline Protestant churches. On the other hand, some charismatic groups leave their churches and form their own because of different experience, style of worship, or understandings of charismatic experience. Unity has always been a challenge to Pentecostals and charismatics because they think about unity in themselves rather than in Christ. The core value of ecclesiology is unity,⁵¹ or to be specific, unity in diversity. Unity brings about a definite consequence: church growth. This is what Ephesians stresses, “For he is the peace between us and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility” (2:14) and “as every structure is aligned on him, all grow into one holy temple in the Lord; and you too, in him, are being built into a house where God lives, I the Spirit.” (Eph. 2:21-22).

The Moravian Movement in the eighteenth century emphasized pietism and a balanced denominationalism. Its leader, Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, accepted some Bohemian refugees to be members of his church but problems arose when they gathered in services. Since they came from Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran, and other denominations, they had their own understandings and practices of baptism, Eucharist, and liturgy. To resolve the problems, Zinzendorf announced three rules.⁵² First, there must be consensus on things essential:⁵³ one Bible, one Savior, one cross, and one salvation. Since

⁵¹ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, p. 103.

⁵² Shao Zun Lan, *Jesus is Lord* (Singapore: Chinese Church Union, 1985), p. 97.

⁵³ There are five points in fundamentalism: 1. the inerrancy of the Bible; 2. the divinity of Christ; 3. the virgin birth of Christ and bodily resurrection on the

these were the core elements of faith, no compromise was allowed. Second, there must be liberty and flexibility in things unessential, including the rites of baptism, Eucharist, worship, and liturgical styles since these were not core elements of faith. Last but not least, there must be charity in all things. Pentecostal and charismatic churches have had conflicts with one another internally and with the evangelical externally. These three points can be their reminders when differences appear. I believe that the Lord of the church, Jesus Christ, who grants us grace to empower us, gifts to serve each other, and words to encourage and comfort each other, will lead us from doubt to assurance, from division to unity.

The Moravian Movement, the Quaker Movement and John Wesley's Methodist Revival demonstrate that revivals bring about unity and motivate waves of missionary movements. Because of unity, the gospel is spread around the world.

third day after death; 4. his substitutionary atonement; 5. his second coming in human history. Those who accept these five points hold the legitimacy of his/her faith. (cf. Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995.