

## **TTS Foundations 2023/24:** **[S16] "We Believe in the Holy Spirit" (P2)**

### **Contents**

1. Word & Spirit – Gnosticism and Montanism
  - a. Gnosticism – Secret Spiritual Knowledge
  - b. Montanism – Spiritual Experiences
2. Word & Spirit – Radicals and Reformers
  - a. Introducing the Radical Reformers
  - b. The Zwickau Prophets
  - c. On Thomas Müntzer
  - d. The Magisterial Response to the Radicals
3. Word & Spirit – Cessationism and Continuationism
  - a. Establishing Precedent – The Word/Spirit Balance
  - b. Key Foundations & Definitions
  - c. Various Challenges
  - d. Putting on our 'Cessationist Hat'
  - e. Putting on our 'Continuationism Hat'
4. Conclusion – A Word-Centred, Spirit-Filled People

## [1] Word & Spirit – Gnosticism and Montanism

**Our focus today:** *"We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified"*  
– PART TWO!

- **How do the Word and Spirit interact?**<sup>1</sup>
  - How has the Church historically handled the W/S balance?
    - AND – what are the major pneumatological questions facing the Church today?
- **A few things are worth saying at the outset.**
  - **FIRST:** in my experience, this subject can produce almost as much confusion as the doctrine of the Trinity.
    - Just as we said during our session on the Trinity – God's people need the forum to discuss these issues.
  - **SECOND:** in my experience, this subject can produce as much heat as the doctrine of predestination.
    - Why? Upon reflection, because it often touches on moments of formation – upbringing, past hurts, etc.
    - (Remember: *"Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour"* [Rom 12:10])
  - **THIRD:** in my experience, this subject can create deep suspicion between believers.
    - I've seen it – "Oh, he's a charismatic, I don't trust him" / or, "Oh, he's a cessationist, I don't trust him".

**In all that follows, charity is critical here.** We must assume the best of one another. (Indeed, I might sound continuationist one moment and cessationist the next! Though I do have my own convictions.)

All of us want to be faithful to the full counsel of divine revelation.

- **ON THE ONE HAND: the Word is given to us as supreme.**
  - **LOOK:** Ps 119:11 / v25 / v28 / v81 / v105 / v162
    - This is something we need to take seriously.
    - *"The Scriptures cannot be broken"* [John 10:35]

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Word and Spirit' balance mirrors a tension familiar to philosophy of religion – the so-called 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' dichotomy. (E.g. in Greek mythology, the Sons of Zeus, but with contrasting priorities – Logic and wisdom vs. Emotions and instinct. We're talking about the balance between 'Rationalism' and 'Supernaturalism'. Rationalism – the life of the 'noetic', from the Greek adj. νοητικός [*noētikós* – intellectual]. Supernaturalism – the life of the 'numinous', from the Latin *numen* [divine will or power]. (Cf. Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* [1923] + Lewis' *Problem of Pain* [1940].) Many theological systems emphasise one or the other: e.g. Enlightenment deism (the noetic), vs. e.g. Sufism, shamanism, etc. (the numinous).

BUT – we're not talking about philosophy, but theology proper! In other traditions, *the human is cast as the subject of this tension*. It describes the man's experience of the sacred. In Christian theology, however, *the subject is the Triune God*. The Word refers to the eternal Son of God – i.e. we're NOT just talking about a synonym for 'rationalism' in abstract.) The Spirit refers to the co-eternal Triune person – i.e. he's NOT a synonym for 'the numinous' in abstract.) We're therefore handling something different here – NOT: "how do we understand our experiences?" BUT: "how has the living God chosen to express himself?"

- **ON THE OTHER: the NT paints the Xian life as supernatural, and we're too quick to create neat compartments for it.**
  - **LOOK:** Acts 8:39 / Acts 11:28 / Acts 16:7
    - This is also something we need to take seriously.
    - "Greater things than these shall ye do" [John 14:12]

**The Church has long wrestled with this – the 'Word / Spirit balance'.**

At times privileging Word over Spirit, at others Spirit over Word.

This has been a difficult tension. Let's study some key examples.

### [1A] Gnosticism – Secret Spiritual Knowledge

- **REFLECT:** What do you remember about Gnosticism?
  - Comes from the word *gnosis*, meaning 'knowledge'.
    - Not exclusively Christian – re: Platonic influences.
    - Christian Gnosticism – e.g. Valentinus [c. 160AD].
- **Christian Gnosticism was deliberately complicated.**
  - Cultivated a 'mystery' cult, with spiritual *gnosis* [knowledge] replacing *pistis* [faith] as the key to salvation.
    - The divine world (the *pleroma* or 'fullness') – thirty *aeons* or powers.
    - Primordial two (Ineffable/Profundity and Silence) – these create two more.
    - From these four, another four are created – thus making the first *Ogdoad*. (Re: the eightfold Egyptian deities worshipped in Hermopolis.)
    - The *Ogdoad* create eleven pairs of *Aeons* – these made up the thirty.
    - Youngest is *Sophia* – restless, creates the material world and its demiurge, the god of the OT.
    - A Daimonic entity – keeps creatures in ignorance.
- **What did this mean in practice?**
  - The physical was rejected as evil and corrupt.
  - While the spiritual was privileged:
    - "For [the Gnostics say] animal men are instructed in animal things; such men, namely, as are established by their works, and by a mere faith, while they have not perfect knowledge. We of the Church, they say, are these persons. ... But as to themselves, they hold that they shall be entirely and undoubtedly saved, not by means of conduct, but because they are spiritual in nature" [Irenaeus – *Adv. Her.* I.I.11-12]

**KEY POINT: for the early Church, Gnosticism laid a critical theological foundation – the ordinary, public revelation of God is to be preferred over private, spiritual knowledge.**

- Indeed, the early Church's response to Gnosticism? ***The Word***.
  - "It is therefore better and more profitable to belong to the simple and unlettered class, and by means of love to attain to nearness of God – than, by imagining ourselves learned and skillful, to be found [among those who are] blasphemous against their own God... [One] should believe in

God, and continue in his love, [searching] after no other knowledge except Jesus Christ the Son of God, who was crucified for us" [AH III.XXVI.1]

- "A sound mind, and one which does not expose its possessor to danger, and is devoted to piety and the love of the truth, will eagerly meditate upon those things which God has placed within the power of mankind, and has subjected to our knowledge, and will make advancement in them, rendering the knowledge of them easy to him by means of daily study. These things are such as fall [plainly] under our observation, and are clearly and unambiguously in express terms set forth in the sacred Scriptures" [AH III.XXVII.1]

### [1B] Montanism – Spiritual Experiences

- **Even as Gnosticism posed a threat to the Church from the outside, another problem emerged from within.**
  - Few modern Evangelicals are aware of it.
    - AND YET – some aspects bear a striking resemblance.
- **Montanus [c. 150AD]:**
  - A figure wrapped in some mystery – we're indebted to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* [c. 315AD].
    - (And Epiphanius of Salamis [c.310-403AD].)
  - From what we can glean, we know the following:
    - Originated in Phrygia in Asia Minor (W. Turkey).
    - Came from a little village (called Ardebau).
    - He was a recent convert from paganism.
- **The beginning of Montanism:**
  - Montanus one day fell into an ecstatic trance:
    - "He became frenzied and began to babble and utter strange sounds" [Eusebius – *Ecclesiastical History* V.XVI.7]
  - He was met with a mixed reaction:
    - "[Some] rebuked [him] and strove to check his babblings... but others were puffed up, as if at a prophetic gift of the Holy Spirit" [EH V.XVI.8]
  - He eventually attracted a following:
    - Two prophetesses – Maximilla and Prisca.
    - "[He] filled them with the spurious spirit that they too chattered in a frenzied, inopportune and unnatural fashion" [EH V.XVI.9]
  - Presented himself as the authoritative oracle of the Spirit:
    - "[He] pronounced them blessed who rejoiced and prided in him... [and he] taught them to blaspheme the entire universal Church under heaven, because [he] received neither honour nor admission into it" [EH V.XVI.9]
    - I.e. Montanus spoke against the established Church.
  - Quickly became embroiled in controversies over practice:
    - Women were recognised as bishops and priests.
    - Marriages broke up because of personal revelation.
    - Prophetic ministry resulted in gifts of money.
- **The notion of 'New Prophecy' lay at the heart of Montanism:**
  - Rejected [a] because it opposed the Church; and [b] b/c prophetic utterances were given as divinely authoritative:

- "I am the Lord God Almighty, dwelling in man. It is neither angel nor ambassador, but I, God the Father, who am come" [Montanus – Epiphanius *AH* 48.11]
- "The Lord sent me to be the party-leader, informer, interpreter of this task, profession, and covenant, constrained, whether he will or nill, to learn the knowledge of God" [Maximilla – Epiphanius *AH* 48.13]
- **KEY:** Attracted the charge of new scripture [*EH VI.XX.3*]

## [2] Word & Spirit – Radicals and Reformers

**REFLECT:** What do you think connects Gnosticism and Montanism?

- **Not doctrine or theology.**
  - Gnosticism was patently anti-biblical.
  - Montanism was not explicitly doctrinal at all.
    - (Hence Tertullian and Irenaeus' sympathy.)
- **Not practice or discipline – the Church has long valued spiritual disciplines.**
  - In the East:
    - Hesychasm (from *Hesychia* – stillness or rest).
    - Desert Fathers [c. 300-400AD]: e.g. Arsenius the Great, Anthony the Great, Pachomius, etc. (Re: John the Silent)
  - In the West (Ora et Labora / Puritans!):
    - Benedict of Nursia [c. 480-543AD].
    - Bernard of Clairvaux [1090-1153AD].
    - Julian of Norwich [c. 1342-1416AD].
- **Rather, the two are connected by the question of *authority*.**
  - What does the Spirit's *ministry* look like in the Church? And what does the Spirit's *authority* look like in the Church?
    - Can those who claim to be operating by the Spirit 'overrule' those who minister the Word?
    - How do we 'police' diverse appeals to spiritual truth?

### [2A] Introducing the Radical Reformers

- **This question of Word / Spirit authority came to the fore once again during the Reformation.**
  - Three distinct streams of Protestantism:
    - [A] Lutheran stream (Magisterial)
    - [B] Reformed stream (Magisterial)
    - [C] Radical stream.
- **The 'radical' Reformers were an incredibly diverse group.**
  - Anabaptists: emphasis on apostolic martyr Church.
    - E.g. Menno Simons [1496-1561].
    - Return to a normative, apostolic era of the Spirit.
  - Spiritualists: emphasis on future Church of Spirit's leading.
    - E.g. Thomas Müntzer [1489-1525] (More later!)
  - (Rationalists: emphasis on romance humanism.
    - A kind of proto-enlightenment. Not our focus today.)
- **We're not talking about neat categories – e.g. 'Lutheran' or 'Reformed'. Different people, countries, beliefs, etc.**
  - BUT – they were characterised by frustration.
    - "Common to all participants in the Radical Reformation were disappointment in the moral aspects of territorial Protestantism, as articulated by Luther or Zwingli, and forthright disavowal of several of its doctrines and institutions" [George Williams & Angela Mergal]
    - ("The left-wing of the Reformation" [John McNeill & Ronald Bainton])

- To put a fine point on things, even if a bit crudely:
  - The Magisterial Reformers imagined *a renewed, authoritative Church*. The Radical Reformers imagined *a renewal of authority itself*.

**KEY POINT:** For many of the loudest Radical voices, **that renewed authority was nothing less than the rule of the Spirit of God.**

### [2B] The Zwickau Prophets

- **One episode in the early days of the Reformation illustrates this very well – the Zwickau Prophets.**
  - On Dec 27<sup>th</sup> 1521AD, three men arrived in Wittenberg.
    - Nicholas Storch / Markus Stübner / Thomas Drechsel. (*Some uncertainty, re: names.*)
  - They'd walked from Zwickau. (A 35+ hour journey!)
    - In truth, they'd been exiled – for reasons that would soon become obvious!
  - They had stumbled upon a city without a leader.
    - Luther was in hiding in Wartburg Castle – following the Diet of Worms earlier in the year.
- **These men preached a new age of the Spirit.**
  - True authority is found in the "inner light" of the Spirit, and so external means are superfluous:
    - Scripture, Church, Sacraments (against paedo), *etc.*
    - God deals directly with the individual.
  - Scripture has been superceded:
    - Spiritual words, visions, dreams *etc.*
  - Nicholas Storch:
    - Head of new Church / Holds "familial conversations" with God / Prophesied Islamic destruction.

### [2C] On Thomas Müntzer

- **These three guys didn't create such ideas out of thin air – they'd had an encounter with Thomas Müntzer in Zwickau.**
  - Born c.1489AD in Stolberg (N. Germany).
    - Influenced by Luther but also German mysticism.
    - (E.g. Henry Suso and Johannes Tauler [14<sup>th</sup> Cent].)
- **Müntzer was a 'Revolutionary Spiritualist':**
  - I.e. believed the Spirit leading world towards cataclysm.
    - "It is true, and I know it to be true, that the Spirit of God is revealing to many elect, pious persons a decisive, inevitable, imminent reformation [accompanied] by great anguish, and it must be carried out to completion" [*Sermon Before the German Princes* – July 13<sup>th</sup> 1524]
  - Indeed, Müntzer led the German Peasant's war [1525AD].
    - Captured after Battle of Frankenhausen.
    - Tortured, then executed.

- **Müntzer privileged the authority of the Spirit over ordinary, revealed means.**
  - “Oh no, dearest Christians, let us take a good look at the holy Bible, and understand that it is made to kill us and not to bring us to life; it is only the living word which an empty soul can hear, that brings us to life. We should not pick just one piece here and another there; we should take everything together in the teaching of the Spirit” [*On Fraudulent Faith*, 1524]
  - “The son of God said: the scriptures give a witness. The scholars say: they give belief. Oh no, dearest friends, you must have a good look around, otherwise you will have the most foolish belief in the whole world, just like apes. ... [One] can only be taught by God alone. If someone has never heard or seen the Bible their whole life long, then he can still come to a genuine Christian belief by means of the correct teaching of the Spirit. ... To this end, we need to make use of the Scriptures... to determine whether the spirits come from God or the devil” [*The Express Unmasking*, 1524]

### **The Radicals presented a significant challenge to Magisterial Reformers.**

- ON THE ONE HAND
  - The RCC insisted on the authority of tradition.
- ON THE OTHER:
  - The Radicals insisted on the authority of the Spirit.

### **How did the Magisterial Reformers respond to this challenge?**

IN THE SHORT-TERM: Luther responded by putting his life on the line.

He returned to Wittenberg and preached the *Invocavit* sermons ('he called' [Ps 91:15]) – re: *Invocavit* Sunday [Mar 9<sup>th</sup> 1522AD].

Eventually, the Reformers responded to the Radicals by emphasising the very Word/Spirit balance we're studying tonight.

### **[2D] The Magisterial Response to the Radicals**

- **The Reformers appealed to the same Paraclete texts that the Radicals utilised in support of their position.**
  - **LOOK:** John 16:13-14 – “*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you*” [John 16:13-14]
    - **DISCUSS:** How does Jesus describe the Spirit here?
    - The Spirit will not act separately from the Word.
    - The Spirit will not seek his own glory, but the Word's.
- **For Luther, therefore, W+S are an indissoluble unity.**
  - You cannot 'abstract' the Spirit from the Word:
    - “One cannot separate the voice from the breath. Whoever refuses to hear the voice gets nothing out of the breath either” [WA 9, 633]



- Thus, the Spirit does not come without the Word:
  - “[We] must firmly hold that God grants his Spirit or grace to no one, except through or with the preceding outward Word, in order that we may thus be protected against the enthusiasts, i.e. [those] who boast they have the Spirit without and before the Word, and accordingly judge Scripture or the spoken word, and explain and stretch it at their pleasure” [SA III.VIII.3]
- Ultimately, Luther’s response is Christocentric:
  - [A] The Incarnation: God reveals himself through human and historical *means*. WHICH MEANS →
  - [B] The Gospel: if God speaks in any other way, then the HS is free from the Word, and the Gospel is not necessarily Christ-shaped – i.e. there’s another way.
- **For Calvin, the radicals were compromising the Trinity.**
  - “I should like to know from them what this spirit is by whose inspiration they are borne up so high... For if they dare to answer that it is the Spirit of Christ, such assurance is utterly ridiculous. Indeed, they will, I think, agree that the apostles of Christ and other believers of the primitive church were illumined by no other Spirit. Yet no one of them thence learned contempt for God’s Word; rather, each was imbued with greater reverence as their writings most splendidly attest. ... Therefore the Spirit, promised to us, has not the task of inventing new and unheard-of-revelations, or of forging a new kind of doctrine, to lead us away from the received doctrine of the gospel, but of sealing our minds with that very doctrine which is commended by the gospel” [Inst. I.IX.1]
    - A true work of the Spirit exalts the Word.
  - “For by a kind of mutual bond the Lord has joined together the certainty of His Word and of His Spirit so that the perfect religion of the Word may abide in our minds when the Spirit, who causes us to contemplate God’s face, shines; and that we in turn may embrace the Spirit with no fear of being deceived when we recognise Him in His own image, namely, in the Word. So indeed it is. God did not bring forth His Word among men for the sake of a momentary display, intending at the coming of His Spirit to abolish it. Rather, He sent down the same Spirit by whose power He had dispensed the Word, to complete His work by the efficacious confirmation of the Word” [Inst. I.IX.3]
    - Why? The Triune God is united around the Word.

### **So we return to the question of authority:**

Irenaeus’ response to the Gnostics – *look to the sufficient Word!*

Luther’s response to the Radicals – *look for the Spirit in the Word!*

Calvin’s response to the Radicals – *look at the Triune joy in the Word!*

The Spirit is not ‘policed’ BY the Word.

The Spirit ‘polices’ WITH + THROUGH the Word!

And he delights in doing so.

**It’s not that the Gnostics, Montanists + Radicals were *too* Spirit-focused. It’s that they weren’t Spirit-focused *enough!***

### [3] Word & Spirit – Cessationism and Continuationism

All that we've discussed so far constitutes what in the legal world is called 'precedent' – like case studies, demonstrating the principle.

What is that principle? Across the centuries, the Church has never considered pneumatology a 'free-for-all' – consistent with Jesus' words in John 14-16, **the Spirit operates *with* and *through* the Word.**

#### [3A] Establishing Precedent – The Word/Spirit Balance

- **We could, of course, end this TTS session here.**
  - BUT –we need to ask one more question:
    - *What does the Word/Spirit balance look like in the life of the Church?*
- **In many ways, the question is easy to answer.**
  - For example:
    - The HS causes the promises + warnings of the Word to come alive in our hearts, adding us to the Church.
    - The HS unites us to Christ, the living Word, sanctifying the Church through discipleship.
    - The HS inspired the Word with authority, which the Church uses to appoint elders as shepherds.
    - The HS anoints the Lord's Table according to the Word of promise, so that the Church might enjoy X.
    - The HS equips the preacher of the Word, so that the Church might hear the very oracles of God.

**All of these are Biblical examples of the Word/Spirit balance at work in the life of the Church** – the ordinary events and God's chosen means of our spiritual growth. BUT – we can't complete this session without mentioning the other ways in which the NT talks about the HS – namely, ***the spiritual gifts.***

**READ:** 1 Cor 12-14 (re: Eph 4) **REFLECT:** What are your thoughts?  
(On the passage *and* the subject.)

#### [3B] Key Foundations & Definitions

- **As I said before, this subject can produce a lot of heat, and not very much light. The biggest casualty is often precision!**
  - **FIRST:** we must distinguish between the continuation of spiritual gifts and the continuation of certain offices.
    - E.g. 'Is the gift of tongues for today?' ≠ 'Are there apostles today?' (Like conflating predestination with Presbyterianism!)
  - **SECOND:** we must acknowledge variation amongst those who would say the gifts have ceased.
    - I.e. most of the 'cessationists' I know give a large place to the HS and even concede most of the gifts.
  - **THIRD:** we must keep the focus on principle, not praxis.
    - I.e. we should avoid 'So you would...' questions. ("So, you would shut it all down? So, you would be happy with someone barking?"). It's not relevant here.

- **FOURTH:** we must avoid making this about excesses.
  - I.e. we may not *like* how charismatic/Reformed Churches run their services, but that doesn't mean their exegesis of 1 Cor is wrong.
- **With all that in mind, let's define some key terms.**
  - Cessationism – from 'cessation' [Latin: *cessatiō*, rest].
    - The belief that some of spiritual gifts listed in 1 Cor 12 (e.g. tongues, healing, prophecy) were 'sign' gifts, which served to confirm the apostolic preaching of the Gospel, and that these have ceased in the Church.
  - Charismatic (from *χαρισμα* [gift]) / Continuationist.
    - The belief in the continued potential of the Church to practise all those gifts listed in 1 Cor 12.
    - NOTE: 'potential' (not cosmic can machine!) + 1 Cor 12 (not Eph 4, re: apostles + offices).

### [3C] Various Challenges

- **Here at Watchorn, you're going to find different convictions and experiences – AND YET there's unity in Christ.**
  - Unique in context of the wider Church, + worth fighting for.
    - That doesn't mean we should avoid this subject – even as elders, we've thrashed this out.
    - BUT – it does mean having good conversations, in which we're honest about the challenges.
- **First Challenge: we'll all come with different experiences.**
  - I'll explain more about my own experiences later.
    - BUT – some will have positive experiences of charismatic expression, some negative. Some none!
- **Second Challenge: we can all play 'top trumps'.**
  - I.e. outstanding men + women of God have differed.
    - The Cessationist might appeal to the Reformers: "[The] gift of healing, like the rest of the miracles, which the Lord willed to brought forth for a time, has vanished away in order to make the new preaching of the gospel marvellous forever" [Inst. IV.XIX.18]<sup>2</sup> (Re: Warfield, Spurgeon, et al.)
    - The Continuationist might appeal to the likes of MLJ: "Our danger is that we tend to judge and to think of the NT meetings with what we are familiar with in our deadness. Here is joy, here is inspiration, here is illumination, here is something that is given by the power and the work of the HS. There is so much life and power that the apostle has to say, 'Now you have to get control of this. Let everything be done decently and in order'. There were excesses in the Church at Corinth, but what does Paul say to them? Does he say, 'Never speak in tongues again, never prophesy again, never give vent to these feelings that you have within you'. He does not

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<sup>2</sup> "For although we do not receive the Spirit to the end that we may speak with tongues, or be prophets, or cure the sick, or work miracles, yet is he given to us for a better use, that we may believe with the heart unto righteousness, that our tongues may be trained to true confession, that we may pass from death to life, that we who are poor and empty may be made rich, and that we may stand victorious against Satan and the world" [Comm. On Acts 2:38]

say anything of the sort. The whole atmosphere in the early Church was charged with the Spirit and they expressed that in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The really important question for us to face is, are we like the early church, are like the early Christians, rejoicing and praising God, filled with gladness and joy so that we amaze the world and make them think at times that we are filled with new wine? Let us avoid all excesses, let everything be done decently and in order, but above all quench not the Spirit. Rather be filled with the Spirit and give evidence of the fact that you are" [MLJ – *Westminster Record* 43:9]

- **Third Challenge: the history of Charismaticism is confusing.**
  - Azusa Street Revival [1906-15AD] and Pentecostalism.
    - BUT – it didn't begin there. (Re: Puritans + Pietism / First Great Awakening [c1730-55AD] / DL Moody and Wesleyan Holiness (re: Finney).)
  - NOT JUST THAT – UK Charismaticism is different.
    - E.g. Bryn Jones, Terry Virgo – re: Walker's R1+R2 classification of UK charismatic churches (one conservative, the other more liberal.)

It's important that we have clarity – how do we make sense of all this? In what follows, I'll put on my 'cessationist' hat, then 'continuationist'.

**REFLECT:** How might one argue in favour of cessationism?

### [3D] Putting on our 'Cessationist Hat'

#### 1. **Biblical Concerns**

- a. Scripture seems to suggest that the old order is passing.
  - i. **LOOK:** Heb 1:1-2 / 1 Cor 13:8-10
- b. Scripture also suggests that certain offices were for a time.
  - i. **LOOK:** Eph 2:19-20
- c. Scripture also seems to suggest that the 'signs and wonders' of the NT were for the apostles, specifically.
  - i. **LOOK:** Rom 15:18-19 / 2 Cor 12:12 / Heb 2:3-4

#### 2. **Theological Concerns**

- a. Recall above – the Spirit works *per verbum* and *cum verbo*.
  - i. Through and with the Word.
- b. **LOOK:** 2 Tim 3:16-17
  - i. ἐξαρτίζω – *exartizō* (eggs-ar-teedz-oh), equipped.
  - ii. Perfect, finished – Scripture is supremely sufficient.

#### 3. **Practical Concerns**

- a. The NT description of certain spiritual gifts doesn't match what we see in the contemporary charismatic Church.
  - i. I.e. tongues were foreign languages / there had to be order not chaos, etc.

#### 4. **Historical Frequency**

- a. As Church history continues, the gifts become less and less apparent.

**DISCUSS:** How might one argue in favour of continuationism?

**[3E] Putting on our 'Continuationist Hat'**

- **Biblical Concerns (re: 'Paul was a charismatic')**
  - Plain sense of Scripture ['eagerly pursue'] – there's no cessation, in fact there's the opposite! **LOOK:** 1 Cor 13:8-10
  - The NT doesn't frame gifts *epistemologically*, but rather *eschatologically* – **LOOK:** Acts 2:14-18 (Re: Church)
  - If sign gifts were given to confirm apostles, why do we see them at work in non-Apostles? **LOOK:** Acts 15:12
    - (ALSO – Corinthians and tongues!)
- **Theological Concerns**
  - Doctrine of Scripture:
    - The problem of 'non-normative' texts.
  - On the problem of sufficiency:
    - Spiritual gifts no more compromise one's doctrine of scripture than preaching or encouragement does.
    - It's an illumination. Subordinate.
- **Historical Frequency**
  - When we look at Church history, we do not see a cessation.
    - "In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God" [Irenaeus – *AH* V.VI.1]<sup>3</sup>
    - Re: Augustine's *City of God* – XX.8-10.
    - Re: Whitefield, Wesley, Spurgeon.
- **Practical Concerns**
  - No, modern charismatic practice might not match NT.
    - BUT – if we're concerned with matching NT practice, we should be more concerned if we don't make any effort to match it *at all*.
  - Of course, there's also personal experience.
    - I.e. we might have seen this first-hand.

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<sup>3</sup> "[The Holy Spirit] is he who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, offers discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of *charismata*; and thus makes the Lord's Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and complete" [De Trinitate, c.250AD]

#### **[4] Conclusion – A Word-Centred, Spirit-Filled People**

Of course, there's one more factor here – that of personal experience. Perhaps we've seen this in person. Perhaps we've seen it abused.

Again, here at Watchorn there will be different opinions. We must each of us follow our conscience as held captive by the Word.

B+S, we here at Watchorn Church are in a unique position. There is genuine unity here. We cannot allow ourselves to indulge the same entrenched 'warfare'. We must be able to say, 'I'm here at Watchorn because the Spirit has brought me here.' We're here at Watchorn because we see the life of the Spirit amongst us. Because we see the Word preached in power, we see prayers answered in earnest, we see lives changed by the Gospel, we see an emphasis on 'the life of God in the soul of man'. AND – because we know what time of day it is.

I'm not here because WC belongs to a certain 'tribe'.  
I'm here because the HS is building this Church.  
Does it conform to my every preference? No.  
But is it the Lord's own doing? Yes.  
Is there a unity borne of the Spirit? Yes.

AND SO – I see amongst us here a Kingdom people, of Word + Spirit.

**In this city:**

**The Spirit serves the Father in exalting the Son.**

**The Son, with the Father, lavishes the Spirit upon his bride.**

**The Spirit empowers the Church with gifts and anointing.**

**The Church spreads the Kingdom through Word + table.**

**AND SO: The City on a Hill starts to come into view.**

NEXT TIME: Scripture.