

**TRINITY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

# **Cardiphonia**

**Sounds of the Heart: Reflections on the Christian Life**

## **Continuationism: Why We Believe in the Ongoing Ministry of the Spirit through All His Gifts**

**Timothy M. Shorey  
2008**

**“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”  
(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)**

## Series Introduction

This *Cardiphonia* series is presented to provide *pastoral counsel with pastoral heart* for today's Christian. This is part of my intentional pastoral commitment to serve more effectively the theological and character growth of those in my care. I've created this medium to help shine more of *the whole counsel of God* into your hearts.

With its title derived from two Greek words—one meaning *heart* and the other *sounds*—our *Cardiphonia* series expresses the *heart sounds* of the pastoral leadership of Trinity Fellowship Church. In the course of life and ministry, pastors hear God speak through Word and circumstance, and gain perspective for the lives of those entrusted to their care. As they meditate on God's Word and care for God's people, God places within their hearts passions, burdens and joys that are intended for God's church. The *Cardiphonia* booklets attempt to serve both the pastoral team and the congregation of TFC by transferring such joys and concerns from our hearts to yours.

I offer this series in *faith* that God will bless any truth it expresses *and* will guard His church from any error that might creep in. I present it with the prayer that it will help provide more spiritual food for the Lord's flock in ways that will bless and strengthen those I love. May the blessing of God rest upon you as you hear these heart sounds expressed.

Yours in Christ,

Tim Shorey  
Senior Pastor  
Trinity Fellowship Church

## **An Introduction to Spiritual Gifts**

**One biblical teaching that is commonly disputed in our day relates to the matter of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In this booklet we hope to introduce *Trinity Fellowship Church's* reasons for believing that all the gifts of the Spirit continue today for the blessing of the Church. We do so with no desire to be contentious, but with every desire to serve those who are interested in the views and values which we hold dear. We hope this helps to clarify our position and create in each reader an openness to the gifts and an earnest desire for them.**

### **Thinking about Spiritual Gifts**

#### ***What Are Spiritual Gifts?***

***“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”***

***(1 Corinthians 12:5-7; 1 Peter 4:10-11)***

**A spiritual gift is any Spirit-given, Spirit-prompted and Spirit-infused and empowered ability which is useful to edify others in grace, and satisfy others in Jesus Christ; and in so doing, glorify Him.**

**The Body of Christ in action through spiritual gifts is nothing less than the *continuing active and loving presence of Christ* on the earth and in the Church. See how a few faithful men define and describe spiritual gifts:**

- ***“A spiritual gift is an ability given by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to perform the specific function within the Body that God has assigned to each of us” (Jerry Bridges).***
- ***“The truth we must grasp here is that our exercise of spiritual gifts is nothing more nor less than Christ himself ministering through his***

*body to his body, to the Father, and to all mankind. From heaven Christ uses Christians as his mouth, his hands, his feet, even his smile; it is through us, his people, that he speaks and acts, meets, loves, and saves here and now in this world. This seems (though the point is disputed) to be part of the meaning of Paul's picture of the church as Christ's body, in which every believer is a 'member' in the sense of a limb or organ: The head is the command center for the body, and the limbs move at the head's direction" (J.I. Packer).*

- *"What an astounding thought! Jesus ascended, but His Spirit descended to empower His Body – the Church – to do more than He could accomplish as one person" (Charles Colson).*

**With the coming, the living, the doings, the dying, the rising, the ascending and the enthroning of Jesus, the Kingdom of God has begun. And the triumphant Christ is manifesting and advancing His kingdom through the giftings of His Spirit until that Day when His dominion swallows up the kingdom of darkness in consummate triumph, and the eternal, glorious kingdom of heaven is revealed.**

### *No little people*

**We believe that every believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:7). Because of this every believer may rejoice. No Christian needs to say "I have no spiritual gifts of any value". To say this is *not* to think of himself or herself with sober *judgment* (Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 12:15-20). It is a statement neither of fact nor even of humility; it is an expression of either confusion or ignorance or unbelief.**

- *"In the church, there are no little people" (Francis Schaeffer).*
- *"In the second century the 'wool-workers, cobblers, laundry-workers and the most illiterate and bucolic yokels' carried the gospel forth, even more than the bishops, the apologists and the theologians" (Celesius).*

## *Not All Alike*

Though every Christian is gifted, not every believer is gifted in the same way or with the same gifts:

*“And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” (1 Corinthians 12.28-30)*

Clearly this text shows that there is no one gift that is meant for all. Neither is there any formula or method by which Christians may gain gifts that they do not presently have. We recognize the sovereignty of the Spirit in distributing the gifts—both to individuals and to churches—when, where, and to whom He wills.<sup>1</sup> As we shall see, this is no excuse for indifference or passivity in the pursuit of gifts, but it is reason to avoid any attitude that characterizes one person or church as more spiritual than another because one may have certain gifts while the other does not.

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<sup>1</sup> God is sovereignly free to dispense, as He wills, all the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 . . .” **Rationale:** the aim of this addition is to avoid two extremes: 1) that the spiritual gifts of tongues, healings, etc. can’t be authentic today; 2) that churches or services that don’t have all these gifts operative at any given time are disobedient since these gifts are always normative for the church. We do not hold to either of these extremes. We are not cessationists who believe that the supernatural gifts ceased with the apostolic age; nor do we demand that God give any particular gift at any particular time. He is free and sovereign. We should desire these gifts (1 Corinthians 12:8-10) and not forbid their proper use.”

Bethlehem Baptist Church

## The Case for Continuationism

### *Are All the Gifts for Today?*

As spiritual gifts are discussed, there's no doubt that the disputes tend to intensify when the question "*Which gifts are still operative today?*" is raised. The viewpoints represented in this discussion seem to break down into six general categories:

- ***Strict Cessationists***: these almost seem to be functional "binitarians", instead of Trinitarians, as they appear to leave very little if any room for any ongoing gifts, influence, and power of the Spirit for the believer.
- ***Fervent Cessationists***: while these would deny any ongoing manifestations of sign/miraculous gifts, they are nonetheless in active pursuit of other gifts, and of the Spirit's presence and power.
- ***Cautious Continuationists***: open but cautious, these believers would allow for the ongoing exercise of all the gifts, but do not actively seek the gifts and are very—perhaps excessively?—guarded in any practice of them.
- ***Eager Continuationists***: open and eager, these believers not only believe in the ongoing possibility of all the gifts but also are in active pursuit of them for life and ministry.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This would be TFC's position. In our *Statement of Faith*, which is the same as that of our family of churches, *Sovereign Grace Ministries*, we state: "In addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. While all genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion, the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit subsequent to conversion as well. Being indwelt by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are theologically different experiences. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts his supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and for various works of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first-century are available today, are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practiced."

TFC Statement of Faith

- ***Openly Charismatic:*** these brothers and sisters make the exercise of all the gifts a major emphasis, and sometimes seem to credit to these gifts a weight and importance that implies superior spirituality and/or authority. One might hear in their prophetic speech introductions like: “Thus saith the Lord”. One might also sense that a lack of these gifts is perceived as spiritual inferiority or weakness.
- ***Traditional Pentecostals:*** for these, tongues/miraculous gifts are a necessary sign of Spirit baptism. These also may allow for revelation of new truth, modern day Apostles, word-faith ministry, and a prosperity gospel.

In our TFC Core Values presentation we state the following: “We affirm a responsible, Biblically-regulated pursuit of all spiritual gifts which God promises as manifestations of His empowering presence. We believe that all the gifts of the Spirit, as Biblically defined (except capital “A” Apostles), continue today and are to be earnestly desired and responsibly practiced, as God may sovereignly distribute them to us.”

### ***Biblical Texts Supporting Eager Continuationism***

In opening our case for *eager continuationism* here are a few explicit texts of Scripture which we believe support the ongoing promise of all the gifts throughout this present age:

- ***“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy...For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (Acts 2:17-18; 39).***
- ***“For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:9-12).***

- “. . .so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. . .” (1 Corinthians 1:7).
- “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. . .” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

### *Presenting the Case*

TFC’s leaders have not always been *eager continuationists*. For many years we were *convinced* and I trust, *fervent cessationists*, but in recent time we have come to embrace a different view. We now believe that all the spiritual gifts continue to the end of time. Among the reasons are the following:

1. We are still in the “*last days*”, during which these gifts are to operate (Acts 2:17).
  - “For Luke the coming of the Spirit is not associated merely with the dawning of the new age but with its presence, not merely with Pentecost but with the entire period from Pentecost to the return of Jesus the Messiah” (D.A. Carson).
2. The prediction that “*all flesh*” (i.e. – all different kinds of people from all over the world) will experience Acts 2 type gifts has not yet been fulfilled (Acts 2:17).
3. All who are “*afar off*” and who are to receive the promised Spirit and His gifts have not yet been called (Acts 2:38-39).
4. The “*perfect*”, which we believe to be our “*face to face*” encounter with Christ (which is when tongues and prophecy gifts are to cease), has not yet come (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; 1:7)

5. Scripture presents what we believe to be *yet unfulfilled* predictions which state with explicit clarity that pronounced prophetic gifts will be exercised again *before* the coming of Christ (Revelation 11:3ff). This answers directly the objection later mentioned that the doctrines of Sola Scriptura and the unique authority of Apostolic teaching are undermined by further manifestations of prophecy, since God predicts yet further manifestations in the N.T. age.
6. The Church has not yet reached anything like the *maturity* which New Testament gifts are given to produce (Ephesians 4:7; 11-13). The gifts are given to produce a full-fledged spiritual maturity in the whole Body of Christ. Until that happens, we may expect the gifts to continue.<sup>3</sup>
7. The need for spiritual gifts in *evangelism* continues today (Acts 4:29-31; 1 Corinthians 14:23-25)
  - *“The fact that the early Christians prayed so earnestly for signs and wonders (Acts 4:30) is all the more striking when you realize that they, of all generations were in least need of supernatural authentication. This was the generation whose preaching (of Peter*

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<sup>3</sup> Some would struggle to see Paul’s connection between spiritual gifts and spiritual maturity suggesting that typical charismatic imbalances have resulted in common charismatic *immaturity*. It is true of course that many charismatics are immature, but so are many cessationists. Continuationists have not cornered the immaturity market. When applying what he calls a creedal test (what charismatics believe) and a moral test (how charismatics live) J.I. Packer draws a different conclusion from those who discount continuationism, because of perceived immaturity in those who embrace it: “When we apply these tests to the charismatic movement, it becomes plain at once that God is in it. For whatever threats and perhaps instances of occult and counterfeit spirituality we may think we detect round its periphery (and what movement of revival has ever lacked these things round its periphery?), its main effect everywhere is to promote robust Trinitarian faith, personal fellowship with the divine Saviour and Lord whom we meet in the New Testament, repentance, obedience, and love to fellow Christians, expressed in ministry of all sorts towards them – plus a zeal for evangelistic outreach that puts the staid sort of churchmen to shame.”

*and Stephen and Philip and Paul) was more anointed than the preaching of any generation following. If any preaching was the power of God unto salvation and did not need accompanying signs and wonders, it was this preaching.*

*Moreover this was the generation that had more immediate and more compelling evidence of the truth of the resurrection than any generation since. Hundreds of eyewitnesses to the risen Lord were alive in Jerusalem. If any generation in the history of the church knew the power of preaching and the authentication of the gospel from first-hand evidence of the resurrection, it was this one. Yet it was they who prayed passionately for God to stretch for His hand in signs and wonders. Therefore I conclude that in our zeal for the centrality of the word we should not go beyond the word by making signs and wonders enemies of the word of the cross. Nobody was more jealous for the power of the word than Paul. Yet he described his mission as Christ working through him “in the power of signs and wonders (Rom. 15:19)” (John Piper).*

- *“What is needed is some mighty demonstration of the power of God, some enactment of the Almighty that will compel people to pay attention and to look and to listen . . . When God acts, He can do more in a minute than man with his organizing can do in fifty years. Indeed, we are not only confronted by materialism, worldliness, indifference, hardness, and callousness – but we are also hearing more and more, both directly and in the media about certain manifestations of the powers of evil and the reality of evil spirits. It is not merely sin that is constituting a problem in this country today. There is also a recrudescence of black magic and devil worship and the powers of darkness as well as drug taking and some of the things it leads to. This is why I believe we are in urgent need of some manifestation, some demonstration, of the power of the Holy Spirit” (Martin Lloyd Jones).*

8. Other primary purposes for miraculous spiritual gifts still exist today as they did in New Testament times, so we see no reason why the gifts themselves should not.<sup>4</sup>
9. There is no text or teaching of Scripture which suggests that any of the gifts (except capital “A” Apostles) would cease.
- *“It is perfectly clear that in the New Testament times, the gospel was authenticated in this way by signs, wonders and miracles of various characters and descriptions . . . [Was this] only meant to be true of the early church? . . . The Scriptures never anywhere say that these things were only temporary – never! There is no such statement anywhere”* (Martin Lloyd Jones).
  - *“It would be theologically and practically convenient for the church not to make room for current manifestations like these, but the plain import of the New Testament gives no hint that they are limited to the first century”* (Richard Lovelace).
  - *“. . .[Y]ou cannot affirm that any spiritual gift has been permanently withdrawn . . .”* (J.I. Packer).
10. None of the spiritual gifts when biblically defined<sup>5</sup> and practiced<sup>6</sup> pose any threat to the unique role of Apostolic teaching<sup>7</sup> and the final authority of Scripture.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For example, a primary N.T. purpose: of *all Holy Spirit work and gifts* is the honor of Christ (John 16:13, 14; 1 Corinthians 12:3); of *tongues* is the praise of God and His works (Acts 2:11; 10:46; 1 Corinthians 14:2, 13-16); of *prophecy* is the comfort, encouragement and edification of the saints (1 Corinthians 14:3); of *healing* is compassion (e.g. Matthew 9:35, 36); of *miracles* is evangelism (e.g. Acts 4:29-31). Since all of these purposes for the gifts still exist today, we see no reason to assume that the gifts themselves would cease; the presumption is that they will continue.

<sup>5</sup> We would accept as fundamentally sound Wayne Grudem’s definition of the N.T. *gift of prophecy* as: “telling something that God has brought to mind”. We believe that the *gift of tongues* is an ability to speak a language never learned and often not understood. Though the evidence appears inconclusive to us, we believe that since there are different *kinds* of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10), the gift of tongues does not need to be restricted to human languages. It *may* include the ability to speak different “species” of language (human, angelic, as in 1 Corinthians 13:1).

11. The biblical response to the charismatic chaos of Corinth is not a fear-induced avoidance of those gifts, but a faith-inspired correction of their misuse. The Apostolic response to the abuse of spiritual gifts is not *disuse* but right use. And thus Paul repeatedly encourages such right practice with emphatic urgency (1 Corinthians 14:1, 12, 39).

Paul does not call for a gift shut-down but a gift tune up. Fears of charismatic abuse should not create resistance to right and proper charismatic expression, as biblically defined. At TFC we have *not* wanted to be more *afraid* of the enemy's deceptions than we are *confident* in the Spirit's work. Our *eager continuationism* is an intentional stepping forward of our faith in the Spirit's work by which we are trying to confront head-on our fears of the enemy's lies.

12. If we are going to err, we would rather err on the side of over-desire for the Spirit's work, than under-desire. There is an excess worse than too much focus on the Spirit; it is too little focus.

While eager desire for Spirit-life and a full manifestation of the Spirit gifts can sometimes overflow in unguarded practice and unhelpful excess, we believe that an excessive pursuit of the

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<sup>6</sup> The gifts guidelines which Paul asserts in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, if faithfully applied, make the overuse and abuse of the various gifts virtually impossible, and any occasional accidental misuse of those gifts of little or no lasting negative effect.

<sup>7</sup> See how Paul contrasts his Apostolic authority to the lesser significance of prophetic ministry in 1 Corinthians 14:28-32, 36-38. Here Paul assumes a superior authority of Apostolic revelation by which all other revelations are to be tested. See also Acts 21:8-14 where Paul exercises overruling apostolic authority when confronted by prophetic revelations truly received but wrongly interpreted and reported.

<sup>8</sup> The advice of the *Westminster Larger Catechism* is sound and sufficient to guard the unique authority of Scripture: "The supreme judge by which all... doctrines of men and *private spirits* (Puritan-speak for private revelations from God), are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures."

**Spirit's work is much to be preferred to a passive and excessive caution.<sup>9</sup>**

- 13. Though terms and definitions differ, something akin to our understanding of spiritual gifts is commonly experienced and even valued among our *fervent cessationist* brothers and sisters. What we might call *prophetic revelations* they might call Spirit impressions or guidance. What we might call *gifts of faith* and *gifts of healings*, they might call simply *faith* and *healing*. But it is true to say that very similar experiences are being had in cessationist and continuationist churches alike. This suggests to us that the gifts are in fact continuing and that the sovereign Spirit blows where He wills, and graciously manifests His gifts and grace even in the midst of our confusion and doubts.<sup>10</sup>**

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<sup>9</sup> Few have expressed our sentiment better than J.I. Packer when he writes: "What makes charismatics more demonstrative, however, is not lack of reverence for God, but fullness of happy love for Jesus Christ and Christian people; anyone who has shared in the holy hugging of charismatic congregations or seen charismatic bishops dancing in church, as I have, knows that. Granted, charismatic forms of emotional expression can easily become an exhibitionist routine, but then cool bodily stillness, with solemn fixity of face, can equally easily be the expression of a frigid, heartless formalism. Between these two you may make your choice, but by scriptural standards there is no doubt that a disorderly liveliness, the overflow of love and joy in God, is preferable to a tidy deadness that lacks both." Again, Packer writes, "...whatever evils [1 Corinthians 12-14] confront us with, they do in fact show us a church in which the Holy Spirit was working with power. Reading them makes one painfully aware of the degree of impoverishment and inertia that prevails in churches today. If our reaction as readers is merely to preen ourselves and feel glad because our churches are free from Corinthian disorders, we are fools indeed. The Corinthian disorders were due to an uncontrolled overflow of Holy Spirit life. Many churches today are orderly simply because they are asleep, and with some one fears that it is the sleep of death. It is no great thing to have order in a cemetery! The real and deplorable carnality and immaturity of the Corinthian Christians must not blind us to the fact that they were enjoying the ministry of the Holy Spirit in a way in which we today are not."

<sup>10</sup> D.A. Carson is right, we believe, when he observes: "One begins to suspect, then, that prophecy may occur more often than is recognized in non-charismatic circles, and less often than is recognized in charismatic circles".

14. The experience and/or theology of many Christians throughout Church history confirm the continuance of these gifts. The following quotes do not mean to imply that all those quoted would be *eager continuationists*; they only reveal that none of those cited could be called *strict cessationists*:

- *“It is a simple fact that there is no lack of miracles even in our day”* (Augustine, representative of the wide opinion of the Church Fathers)
- *“If you wish to prophesy, do it in such a way that it does not go beyond faith so that your prophesying can be in harmony with the peculiar quality of faith. . . One may prophesy new things, but not things that go beyond the bounds of faith . . .”* (Martin Luther).
- *“The Lord raised up the ...three (apostles, prophets and evangelists) at the beginning of His kingdom, and now and again revives them as the need of the time demands . . . Paul applies the name ‘prophets’ not to all those who were interpreters of God’s will, but to those who excelled in a particular revelation. This class either does not exist today or is less commonly seen”* (John Calvin).

Other notables in Reformation Church history who were open to, and/or at times, practiced supernatural gifts include:

- the Waldensians
- the French Huguenots (Calvinists)
- John Knox
- Richard Baxter
- Samuel Rutherford
- *“Belief in Spirit-prompted, prophetic-like revelations was the standard view of the Puritans”* (J. I. Packer).
- *“The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits (Puritan-speak for private*

*revelations from God), are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures” (The Westminster Confession, parenthesis added).*

- *“Yet I do not know that God hath anyway precluded himself from thus exerting His sovereign power from working miracles in any kind or degree in any age to the end of the world. I do not recollect any scripture wherein we are taught that miracles were to be confined within the limits either of the apostolic or the Cyprianic age or of any period of time, longer or shorter, even till the restitution of all things. I have not observed, either in the Old Testament, or the New, any intimation at all of this kind. St. Paul says, indeed, once, concerning two of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit (so I think that test is usually understood), ‘Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease.’ But he does not say, either that these or any other miracles shall cease till faith and hope shall cease also, till they all be swallowed up in the vision of God, and love be all in all.” (John Wesley)*
- *“I could tell as many as a dozen similar cases in which I pointed at somebody in the hall without having the slightest knowledge of the person, or any idea that what I said was right, except that I believed I was moved by the Spirit to say it; and so striking has been my description, that the persons have gone away, and said to their friends, ‘Come, see a man that told me all things that I ever I did; beyond a doubt, he must have been sent of God to my soul, or else he could not have described me so exactly.’ And not only so, but I have known many instances in which the thoughts of men have been revealed from the pulpit” (C.H. Spurgeon).*
- *“I am one of those . . . who believes that ‘signs and wonders’ and all the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 are valid for today and should be ‘earnestly desired’ (1 Corinthians 14:1) for the edification of the church and the spread of the gospel.” (John Piper).*

We are convinced that all these citations reveal that these men were at least cautious continuationists or perhaps more fairly, fervent cessationists. They show an openness akin to that of our cessationist brother, Vernon Poythress, who argues that while certain spiritual gifts may have ceased, phenomenon very similar to them are happening now and have often happened throughout the centuries.<sup>11</sup>

## Where Do We Go from Here?

Since the Church is exhorted *not* to “quench the Spirit” or despise prophesying (1 Thessalonians 5:19-20), and since it is commanded to “earnestly desire” more gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1, 39), to “strive to excel” in them (1 Corinthians 14:12), and not to neglect them but to *fan them into flame* (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6), it is clear that through prayer (see Acts 4:29-31), genuine desire, and active pursuit, we are to seek new and *renewed* infillings, empowerings, and giftings of the Spirit for the common good and glory of God.

That said, we must always remember that spiritual gifts are not *manufactured* by us; they are given by the Spirit. Consequently we need not and we *must* not force or fake manifestations. God will move when God will move, and move, God will. When He does we should be open to receive all the gifts when biblically defined and practiced.

*Eager continuationists* may differ in defining certain gifts, but they should not differ in desiring them. If these gifts can continue today, and if Paul does in fact command us to earnestly desire them, then all faithful continuationists have no biblical alternative but to earnestly desire them both for the common good, and for the glory of God. With this understanding TFC is committed to prayer and pursuit that these manifestations may be made known in God’s time, place and purpose, for our joy and His pleasure.

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<sup>11</sup> Poythress has written a fascinating article drawing parallels between phenomenon in cessationist and continuationist churches, and arguing that they are analogous. We would not agree with all our brother’s conclusions but see Poythress, “Modern Spiritual Gifts as *Analogous* to Apostolic Gifts: Affirming Extraordinary Works of the Spirit within Cessationist Theology.”

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