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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Shopping for Spirituality *page 3*
- The Gifts of the Holy Spirit *page 8*
- An Alternative Understanding of the Gift of Tongues *page 16*
- On God the Holy Spirit *page 20*
- Singapore News *page 28*
- From the Fathers *page 29*
- Announcement *page 30*
- Services at Holy Resurrection Church in August and September *page 32*

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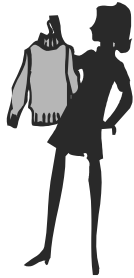
SHOPPING FOR SPIRITUALITY

By Reader Symeon Tan

There are many forms of 'spiritualities' advertised today, probably more numerous than brands of coffee you can find in the supermarket. In fact, modern man is used to the idea of shopping sprees for some kind of spiritual enlightenment, enticed by promises



of almost-instant nirvana or learning secrets that will solve all problems in our lives. The last time I visited the local mega bookstore; even Christian authors have joined the wagon in offering self-help books on keys to finding one's happiness. The list is getting longer.



You would think that mankind has finally found the formula, the answers.

But the irony is that readers who gorge on self-help books are almost addicted to getting even more and more self-help books in the long run. For many, the only relief is hoping that hidden in a self-help book somewhere is one's solution to sufferings and pain.



Has contemporary Christianity invalidated herself? Is Christian spirituality a dead concept that is no longer relevant?

For the Eastern Orthodox Christian, there is a deep well of spiritual life bubbling with vibrancy that awaits the modern man.

The Orthodox Christian approaches the spiritual life first and foremost as participation in the Life of God Who is Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is not an abstract Idea or

Principle or a Force but a Communion of Love. In a sense, God is a Mystery and all our analogies and debate about His existence is futile and nonsensical. The paradox is that this Divine Being who is unfathomable is at the very same time "uniquely close to us, filling all things, present everywhere around us and within us", wrote Bishop Kallistos Ware in *The Orthodox Way*. He further quotes Saint Nicholas Cabasilas that God our King is

*More affectionate than any friend,
More just than any ruler,
More loving than any father,
More a part of us than our own limbs,
More necessary to us than our own hearts.*

The Orthodox Christian trembles at the knowledge that He, whom the heavens cannot contain, chose to become one of us. "*The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us*". God reaches out to us in a personal way when the second Person of the Holy Trinity took flesh in the Person of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ.

It was God who was born in the manger on Christmas day, God who stood in the waters of Jordan, allowing his creature to baptize him. It was God who walked with men, taught among us and healed the sick and broken-hearted. It was God who came to the aid of a woman caught in adultery, loved and forgave her even before she asked. And it was God who eventually went to the cross, suffered, died and rose for our sakes, trampling down Death by death, bestowing Life to those in the tombs.



In the hymn for Great Vespers for the feast of St Photini (*icon on the right*), the Church remembers the meeting of the Samaritan woman at

the well with our Saviour in these words:

*Jesus met the Samaritan woman by Jacob's Well!
He wraps the earth in clouds, yet he asks for water from her!
Wonder!
He who rides on the cherubim speaks with an adulterous woman!
He who suspended the earth on the waters asks for a drink!
He who causes the lakes and springs to overflow is weary with thirst!
Truly He desires to set the woman free from the enemy's snares!
He drowns her sins in the waters of life,
For He alone is the compassionate lover of mankind!*

(Hymn from Great Vespers)

This encounter with our Saviour awakens something within us. When the Apostle Peter's eyes were finally opened to Who this Jesus was as they fished in the same boat, he cried out to the Lord to depart from him for he is a sinful man. Repentance opens our heart to meeting God face to face.

Contrary to pop-psychology that promotes falsification of the self, building more and more layers of ego upon ego (otherwise known as self-affirmation, self-actualization), the man who encounters Christ realizes his own sinfulness and inadequacies, and yet wonders in awe of the God loves him beyond measure. God is almost foolish to love us so much, knowing that we will reject His love.

As Presbyteria Frederica Mathews-Green puts it so well, *"Repentance is the doorway to the spiritual life, the only way to begin. It is also the path itself, the only way to continue. Anything else is foolishness and self-delusion. Only repentance is both brute-honest enough, and joyous enough, to bring us all the way home."*

Well, real love is not only interested in making us 'feel good'. A good doctor aims to cure the root of the disease not by

prescribing medications to remove the symptoms but in a correct diagnosis of the disease.

In the words of Presbyteria Frederica " *This is not condemnation, but right diagnosis. It is not judgmentalism, because the judgment is evenly applied: All are sinners, all have fallen short. It is not false guilt, because a lot of the guilt we feel is in fact deserved; we are guilty. Forgiveness of past sins doesn't cure the sickness in the heart that continues to yearn after more. We will remain sick until that healing begins, and it will be a lifelong process.*"

What a relief it is to admit this. Like the woman weeping at Jesus' feet, we have nothing more to conceal, no more self-justification, no more self-pity. We are fully known, even in the depths that we ourselves cannot see, cannot bear to see. Instead of hoping that God will love us for our good parts and pass over the rest, we know that he died for the bad parts, and will not rest till they are made right. The depth of our sin proves the height of his love, a height we cannot comprehend until we realize how desperately we need it. We are fully loved, and one day will be fully healed, brought into God's presence without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

The heart that is rent in heart-felt repentance longs to be with its Saviour.

We do not recognize that we are sick, for if we did, we would ask to be made whole. Most of the time when we pray, when we come before God, we want to be blessed in every aspect of our lives, but we do not want to know the 'darkness that lurks within our hearts', the selfishness that rules our lives, and the 'heavy stone' that lies between us and our Saviour. We pretend to be spiritual when in fact we have not even begun to truly repent in the depths of our souls.

We may fulfill religious duties by going for church services and such, but unless there is true compunction and contrition within, our actions are similar to trying to fetch water from a well with a

broken pail. Or we may choose to keep ourselves away from church because after all, we tell ourselves, “churches are full of hypocrites, aren’t they?”

False spirituality tends to look first at others and judge them. Like the Pharisees, we thank God that ‘we are better’ than the ‘tax-collectors’. We spend so much time thinking to ourselves how others are so not perfect that we have no time to look within our own hearts.

The lay-Benedictine Christian author Kathleen Norris was once asked by a student how she could “stand to go to church, how she could stand the hypocrisy of Christians”, and her reply was this:

“The only hypocrite I have to worry about on Sunday morning is myself.”

(Kathleen Norris, The Cloister Walk)

The church is a hospital. The liturgical services are therapeutic to our recovery. The sacraments, especially the Body and Blood of our Savior and Holy Repentance are medicine for our souls and bodies. We are all sinners. And there is no one better or worse than the other.

Lent may have passed this year and the Paschal season over. But repentance cannot be confined to one or twice yearly occasions. At every Liturgy, Orthodox Christians pray that we ‘may lead our lives in repentance’ because joyful sorrow is the only way our hearts can be illumined, transfigured in the Holy Spirit.

There was a story about a desert abba who was asked what a monk does all day in the monastery? The wise abba paused, looked within himself and then spoke to the young man, “*We fall down, get up again. We fall, get up again. We fall down and get up again.*”

If the modern Christian has eyes to see and ears to hear, the ‘secret’ to true transformation then is simply this:

“Repentance is a way of on-going transformation for which one must struggle continually, in which one’s heart and mind continuously receive illumination by the Holy Spirit. It is a continuous pathway, a perennial striving, an all-embracing motion, and not merely an occasional emotion. Though it is a mutual, cooperative endeavor between the human being and God, ultimately repentance, like faith, is a gift that a person either accepts or rejects. If a person is open to God and desires Him above all else, the Holy Trinity will come to dwell in that person and gradually transform the “heart of stone” into a heart of flesh.” (Fr. John Chryssavgis, Soul Mending and the art of spiritual direction)

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Christian should be informed of the various gifts given him by God. Gifts are given only to those who believe in the true faith, and not to those who have gone astray by interpreting on their own or to those who believe in superstitions. There is no neutrality in matters of belief; either one believes in the "True God" or in his own man-made gods, such as astrology, fortune telling, witchcraft, greediness, etc., all as objects of worship (*cf. John 17:3*). The difference between the belief in the True God and in others is the acceptance of the gift of the Holy Spirit. For "*No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit*", *1 Corinthians 12:3*. The acceptance of Christ as the Saviour through confession in Christ as the True God is the highest gift given to the believer by the Holy Spirit. If one does not wish to accept this gift, he does not allow himself to understand the reality of the True God as opposed to his own ideas. This acceptance is his own choice through his own free will. This is why one is responsible for his

own fate. As a result, those who believe in superstitions are enslaved in thoughts and feelings by their choice. Their preoccupation with superstitions, astrology, etc. does not permit them to accept the True God. This is true slavery of the mind. If one opens his mind and heart to accept the gift of the Holy Spirit in the belief in the True God, he will realize a great difference in himself, having peace of mind and harmony of living which bring about a living faith.

"There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit", 1 Corinthians 12:4. It is the Holy Spirit from Whom every gift is given with certain abilities and understanding. The faithful one is called to undertake the responsibility of gifts or charismata which are bestowed on him. "And there are varieties of service, but the same Lord, and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone" (vs. 4-6). In addition to the "varieties of gifts" of faith, there are the "varieties of service" by which the faithful one serves his fellow man with love and almsgiving. The one who receives the gifts of "service" considers himself a steward of the Lord. He devotes all his abilities with love in the service of God's commandments. The "varieties" of "service" in everyday life include: medicine, hospital care, nursing, social work, care for the elderly, teaching, missionary work, honest government and in general all services which deal in helping others when done in the name of the "same Lord". The "varieties of working" are the results of the energies and the actions of the "varieties of service". They are the wonderful results which come either in the everyday life of the people or in the spiritual world, when done in the name of the "same God". The varieties of gifts of service and of working, "All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills" (v. 11).

"To each (person) is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (v. 17). Each person is given the energy, charisma and grace to work for the common interest of the people. The successful achievements of this "service" and "working" should be attributed to one and the same power - the Holy Spirit - Who

bestows them. These "varieties", although separate, contribute to the same goal - the helping one another - and depend upon the same authority, the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the God. These are not varieties for destruction, but energies of unification in the service of the Will of God. They are fruits coming from the same root - the inspiration of God Himself.

The "varieties of gifts" are many: *"To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills" (vs. 8-11). The gift of the "utterance of wisdom" means the deeper understanding of the Will of God and mysteries of salvation; the "utterance of knowledge" means the good sense of knowledge; "faith" means the supernatural achievements through the Spirit; "healing" means the ability to heal various sicknesses; "working of miracles" means supernatural achievements; "prophecy" means the miracle in the form of preaching; "ability to distinguish between spirits" means being able to distinguish between good and evil spirits by which various spiritual expressions exist; "various kinds of tongues" means the gift of speaking in many dialects of which the meaning is known only to him who speaks them, not even an interpreter; "interpretation of tongues" means the ability to interpret the language of the speaker of "tongues" to the people who do not understand what is being said.*

Speaking In and Interpretation of Tongues

The gift of the "interpretation of tongues" was needed because the "speaker of tongues", the glossolalist, was not understood by the people. "Glossolalia" is the original Greek word meaning "tongue" (glossa) and "talking" (lalia); it implies the faculty of speaking with tongues (languages). This Greek word "glossolalia" as a

term came into use during the 19th century, although in the New Testament era *"speaking in tongues"* was a common phenomenon. This practice of speaking in languages and dialects is recorded in two places in the New Testament, Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14. Glossolalia in these two passages meant utterances expressed by individuals to God in exotic manner, but in human speech. When a language was unknown to the people, an interpreter was used. However, many who used this glossolalia spoke in unfamiliar tongues, and those who heard did not understand or benefit from what was said.

Apostle Paul speaks to the Corinthians concerning the *"speaking in tongues"*. He said: *"One who speaks in a tongue (foreign language or dialect) speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit"(1 Corinthians 14:2)*. Paul compares the utterances of the speaker of tongues with prophesy (preaching) and he supports the validity of prophesy because: *"He who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation" (v. 3)*. Paul stresses the point that the learning of the teachings of Christianity is first and foremost for the believer; this is the primary mission of the Church. Therefore, those who speak in foreign languages which are unknown to the people are not serving the church but themselves. Paul says: *"He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies (preaches) edifies the church" (v. 4)*. Paul makes the comparison between speaking in tongues and preaching: *"He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues" (v. 5)*. It is clear here by Paul's explanation that speaking in tongues without an interpreter has no value for the people - the Church. Paul emphasizes this point by saying: *"If I come to you speaking in tongues, how shall I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophesy or teaching?" (v. 6)*

The Apostle Paul concludes his admonition: *"If you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will any one know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air.... But if I do not know the meaning of the languages, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a*

foreigner to me", (vs. 9, 11). As it is with teaching it is also with prayer, which must be understood by the people. Otherwise the speaking of prayers in tongues is in vain. *"For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful" (v. 14)*. Therefore, *"I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also" (v. 15)*. The same applies to singing and to blessings. *"Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how can any one in the position of an outsider (without gifts) say the 'Amen' to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? For you may give thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified' (vs. 16-17)*. Apostle Paul discourages the practice of *"speaking in tongues"* inasmuch as the people do not benefit, for *"in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue" (v. 1.9)*.

Paul makes himself clear as being not against *"speaking in tongues"*: *"Thus, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers. "If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?" (v.22)*. If there are speakers in tongues without one to interpret, *"Let each one of them keep silent in the church and speak to himself and to God' (v.28)*. Paul does not oppose the practice of *"speaking in tongues"* provided that the language of the speaker can be made known by the people either by using the languages understood or using an interpreter to convey the meaning to the people. For Paul, religious instruction of the people is the most important work of the Church. *"For you can all prophesy (preach) one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged" (v. 31)*.

The varieties of gifts mentioned here, as well as those in Romans (12:6-8), *"are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills", 1 Corinthians 12:11*. All these *"varieties of gifts"* are interlocked and equal, coming from the same Source - the Holy Spirit.

The Glossolalia Movement of Today

The "*speaking in tongues*" in the New Testament as described above is far different from the new glossolalia, tongues movement, of today. Although the word, glossolalia, is a term which was lately adopted, in the 19th century, the phenomenon of speaking in tongues is very ancient, as mentioned before. The difference is that in the past, and especially in the Bible, the speaking in tongues was the speaking of a human foreign language, which could be understood directly or through an interpreter. Glossolalia today has another meaning entirely. Nor should it be associated with the Pentecostal Church, either. This new movement of glossolalia of today started in 1960 with an Episcopal priest in California. This movement has flourished, but not without opposition. The point of this movement of glossolalia is that the "tongues" are not human languages, but inarticulated speech. Some claim it is gibberish foolish sounds; others say not. All agree that from a linguistic point" glossolalia is not a human language, for one cannot identify any positive language being spoken, and there is no evidence that the glossolalia contains actual speech. Despite the claim of the members of this movement, they cannot provide any case to stand up under scientific investigation.

There is an explicit difference between real human languages and the glossolalia of today. The "interpretation" of the various utterances of glossolalia is not the same for all speaking it; there is no similarity whatsoever between interpretations given. Thus, from a linguistic point of view and through scientific scrutiny the result is that glossolalia does not involve a real human language. Close examination of this new movement reveals that it has attracted many troubled people who display increased anxiety and instability. Their frenzied actions indicate they lose some of their mental self-control, resulting in a turning of their minds to something beyond their control. Studies of this new movement of glossolalia also indicate that the persons involved are seeking a better religious experience, for they are not finding satisfaction in

the traditional church. This may explain the sudden interest in and growth of the glossolalia.

Many people are turning to this glossolalia movement, mystic cults, oriental philosophies, witchcraft, astrology, etc., because they do not find inner satisfaction in the material wealth of our affluent society. This dissatisfaction is partly due to the materialism and technological advances of this present century. It is obvious that material possession cannot satisfy the spirit of many people. People today need an awakening spirit. But the Church seems unable to provide this, because the Church itself is involved with materialism. People today are turning to diverting mystical movements and drugs to get beyond themselves in search of inner satisfaction and contentment. The actions of today's society clearly reflect the lack of spiritual values, and indicate the need to return to the true concepts of Christianity. It is a sad situation that even though more and more people are dissatisfied with material wealth and possessions and are turning to the various cult movements, society strives for even greater materialism.

The more the materialism, the more dissatisfaction and unhappiness. The more unhappiness, the greater the exodus to the occult world. The loud cry from growing numbers of people is a sound that must be listened to by all segments of society, especially by the Christian Church. The question that must be asked is whether or not these people who are turning to the occult - especially the glossolalia movement - are really finding the spiritual satisfaction they are seeking. Examinations of these movements clearly indicate that the people who seek spiritual reawakening through them fail in the long run to realize their quest for the fountain of spiritual life and its inner satisfaction. Studies reveal that the people are turning to this glossolalia movement because they are looking for a new and better religious experience. The desire for these searching people ought to be satisfied in the Church of Christ. Since the Church is the people themselves (the Ecclesia), it depends upon their attitudes

and activities to indicate whether or not the "established Church" is fulfilling their needs.

The "movement" for the reawakening of the spiritual life of the people should start within the Church itself, both by leaders and people. There is no true "satisfaction" outside the Church. It is easier to renovate spiritual methods within the Church than to create new, far-out movements which as the past has already shown, in the end fail anyway. This is a lesson of the past, for these movements are not new, but date back thousands of years. This is why the Apostle Paul puts prophecy - the preaching and teaching of the Church above the "*speaking in tongues*", saying: "*He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues . . . so that the church may be edified*" (1 Corinthians 14:5). Paul clearly indicates that the people who seek spiritual uplifting should not find it outside the Church "*since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church*" (v. 12). This is the answer for those who leave the Church, rather than the present day glossolalia movements, or others. What is needed today to overcome this dissatisfaction of many people is the reawakening and strengthening of the spirit, something that is needed in the Church as well.

Invocation of The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, Who proceeds from the Father, is He Who spoke through the prophets and was the Divine Instrument in the birth of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible; He guides and protects the Church of Christ, having given it life on the day of Pentecost. It is the Holy Spirit Who endows the members of the Church with varieties of spiritual gifts for their illumination and satisfaction. This is why the Christian invokes in times of joy and in times of sorrow the Holy Spirit to strengthen his faith with His Grace to accomplish his purpose in life. The faithful member of the Church humbly should pray that he will not be led astray by "movements" outside the Church, where there is no salvation.

The dire need of the people today is that they be reawakened to the realization that they already possess the greatest spiritual gift they can be given - their Christian faith. The Christian must dedicate himself to the true meaning and practice of his faith in God, and not allow himself to be led astray in moments of weakness. The Holy Spirit bestows gifts only on those who believe in and practice the true faith. The Christian is admonished to "*Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance*", and "*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*" (Ephesians 6:1 8; 6: 10-11).

Note: This article is taken from an Internet website and we were unable trace or confirm who the author is. If anyone claims authorship for the above article, please kindly inform us and we will credit the acknowledgement in the next issue of The Pilgrim.

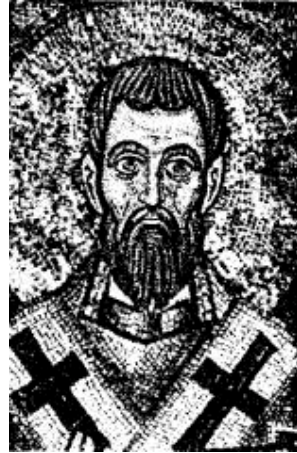
AN ALTERNATIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES

A View from Fr. Alexis, a Monk of Athos: might the modern understanding of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 have started from a flawed translation in the KJV?

From the Editorial team : In Acts chapter 2, we read that the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost and "*they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*" (Acts 2:4). A multitude heard the Gospel proclaimed in languages they understood "*Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?*" (Acts 2:7,8).

The Church Fathers have interpreted this passage in two ways – Saint Gregory the Theologian takes a literal approach in that the Apostles, by the power of the Holy Spirit, spoke in all those languages listed in the text. Saint Gregory of Nyssa is of the opinion that the Apostles preached in Aramaic but the people heard the Good News of Jesus in their native languages. The text can be understood in both ways but the result of what happened is clear – salvation in Jesus Christ was proclaimed and thousands turned to Him that day.

St Gregory of Nyssa



Neither Acts nor Church history ever records a similar occurrence on the same scale. In the rest of Acts, we do hear of the Spirit coming on believers who then speak in tongues and prophesy but the Gift of Tongues in these verses are the result of believing the Gospel and not a means of preaching it.

When Saint Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14, he is clearly referring to something different from that in Acts 2.

There are Christians today who claim that 1 Corinthians 14 discusses the ecstatic utterance of an unintelligible, heavenly language given by the Spirit to believers. This view came to the fore in Protestant circles at the beginning of the 20th Century with the start of the Pentecostal movement in America (although there were hints of it during earlier revivals in the 19th Century).

But is there an alternative view? What if the tongues referred to in the Bible was actually a form of inward silent prayer – the Gift of the Holy Spirit to endow Christians with a constant backdrop of psalms, hymns, spiritual songs (*Colossians 3:16*), Bible verses and thanksgivings that underpin



his consciousness.

This form of inward prayer can be likened to a computer programme running in the background. Something that is always there when the Christian is standing in a queue, stuck in a traffic jam, sometimes bubbling up in Church, appearing strongly at times of stress and just going on so that even when a believer wakes in the middle of the night, she may find a Bible verse, psalm or a prayer on her lips.

This is the view as set forth by Fr Alexis (Trader), a monk at Karakallou Monastery on Mount Athos, in his book *In Peace Let Us Pray to the Lord* (Regina Orthodox Press, 2001).

We have taken the liberty to quote a portion of Fr Alexis' exposition on 1 Corinthians 14 and Ephesians 5 (Pgs 103 – 105 and a bit of 110) to give you a taste of this well-researched book that may show that the whole Western charismatic/Pentecostal preoccupation with Tongues could stem from a translation error in the King James Version of the Bible.

Fr Alexis writes:

Unfortunately, the translators of the King James Version of the Bible, the most influential of the English translations^[1], were unfamiliar with the practice and experience of inner prayer since the West had been cut off from the hesychastic tradition many centuries before. Hence, various crucial expressions in this passage were unwisely translated or mistranslated into English, thus opening the entire passage up to interpretations not fully based in Saint Paul's actual words. The translators of the King James Bible apparently had already decided that the passage in question referred to speaking in unknown foreign languages, so they translated the text accordingly even if this meant infidelity to the plain sense of the original text.

Although the King James Version of 1 Corinthians 14:2 reads "For

he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him,” indicating that the one speaking in a tongue is speaking in a foreign language, the word “unknown” is not present in the original in this case or in the other five cases in which the authors of the KJV insert it.^[2] Moreover, the verb in the last half of the verse is not “to understand” but “to hear”. A more accurate translation would have been, “for he who speaks with a tongue does not speak to men, but to God, for no one hears.” In other words, Saint Paul states quite clearly that when one speaks in a tongue “no one hears,” that is, no one hears, because speaking in a tongue is offered up silently within the heart. In like manner, the authors of the King James Version translate 1 Corinthians 14:10 as “there are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification” again pointing to the incomprehensibility of a foreign language to one who does not speak it, although a more precise rendering of the Greek text would have been “there are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them are mute (or silent)”, again indicating that the inaudible speaking in tongues is an exception, since it takes place without the use of the voice (a phonon literally means “no voice” *Ed notes*: Fr Alexis quotes a passage in Greek text which we are unable to reproduce). In a similar vein, the same translators render 1 Corinthians 14:8 as “for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle,” although Saint Paul here speaks not of an “uncertain” sound, which would be an allusion to speaking in an unknown language or making inarticulate sounds, but of an “unmanifested sound”, which alludes to silent prayer. Thus a better translation would have been “For if the trumpet does not manifest its sound, who shall prepare himself for battle,” with the implication that if one does not use one’s voice and pray out loud (and thus “sound the trumpet”), how will the others who do not yet have the prayer of the heart be edified?

Saint Paul likewise describes the gift of tongues in detail when he writes to the Ephesians, “Be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and

making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:18-20). In other words, Saint Paul is saying that in order to have the gift of tongues the believer must have the Spirit in his heart (making intercessions as we saw in Romans and Galatians). Simultaneously, Saint Paul describes speaking in tongues as speaking to yourself, as opposed to out loud, with the comprehensible words of prayer (psalms and hymns and spiritual songs) in the heart.

Footnotes by Fr. Alexis:

¹ And more to the point, this translation was the one used by the first American Pentecostals

² The word “unknown” is added to the word “tongue” in the KJV version of 1 Corinthians 14:2, 3, 4, 16, 20, and 29 presumably for clarity’s sake. Fortunately, the RSV has removed the additions.

In the view of *The Pilgrim*, what Fr Alexis has written may be controversial but should not be dismissed without serious study. He shows the current beliefs surrounding Tongues to be neither all that watertight, nor the only possible interpretation of the passages in question.

This thought-provoking book was found at Borders in Singapore but it can be ordered direct from the publisher or through online services such as Amazon.com.

ON GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Reader Kelvin Lee

In the Nicene Creed, the Orthodox Church proclaims:

“And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life

Who proceeds from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken by the prophets....”

In Greek, the language the New Testament was originally written in, the Holy Spirit is called “Agio Pneumati”. In Arabic, He is Rouh il Qudos and Ruach HaKodesh in Hebrew. He is the wind, the breath of God. He is without form, beyond gender as we understand it, and yet a Person.

The Holy Spirit was at the Creation of the universe when the Son of God said “*Let there be light!*” The Holy Spirit has spoken through the prophets of the Old Testament, inspiring them to speak of the coming of Christ. When the Son of God became Man, He was incarnate by the action of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary (*Matthew 1:18* and *the Nicene Creed*).

The Holy Spirit appeared as One of the Trinity at the Baptism of the Son of God in the River Jordan, resting upon the Lord Jesus like a dove. He was also at the Transfiguration of the Lord covering the mountain like a cloud.

The Holy Spirit acted as One of the Trinity in the resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Father raised the dead God-Man Jesus to life (*Acts 2:32, Ephesians 1:20*), Jesus as the Son of God took up His own life again (*John 10:18*) and the Holy Spirit acted together with the Father and the Son in the resurrection (*Romans 8:11*). We therefore see the Holy Spirit acts in harmony, unity and love with the other Persons of the Trinity without each losing their unique actions (eg: the Son suffered, died and rose again for us, the Father and the Holy Spirit did not). This is a Mystery and theologians call the interaction *perichoresis*.

At Pentecost (*icon on the right*), the Holy Spirit came as tongues of fire upon the



Theotokos and the Apostles (about 120 men and women in all) and they proclaimed the wonders of God. Thousands in Jerusalem at the time heard the Gospel in their own languages and more than 3,000 people turned to the Lord Jesus on the first day of the Church’s existence (*Acts 2: 1 – 41*).

Since that day 2000 years ago, the Holy Spirit has dwelt in and led the Church which is the Body of Christ. He leads us into all truth (*John 16:13*) and keeps the Church faithful to the revelation of Jesus Christ and the practice of our Christian faith. He gives life-changing power to the words of Scripture, to the Tradition of the Fathers and to our worship. It is through His action in the Eucharist that the bread and wine are turned into the Body and Blood of Jesus so that we may receive the food of eternal life.

The Holy Spirit acts in every Christian’s life because He, as one of the Holy Trinity, loves each of us and cares deeply for our salvation. Saint Paul teaches us “*for as many are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*” (*Romans 8:14–16*)

The Holy Spirit is not a force or a manifestation of God’s power. He is equally God with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, yet He is not the Father in another form. He glorifies the Son of God and is called the Spirit of Jesus Christ (*Philippians 1:19*), yet He is not Jesus coming to us in a new way. He is Lord and God just as Jesus Christ and the Father is God and Lord. But Christians do not believe in three Lords or three Gods (*from the Athanasian Creed*). We proclaim One God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We therefore approach the Holy Spirit as God and King. He is worshipped as One of the Trinity with the same awe and reverence accorded to the Father and the Son. Even when we call on Him to come to us it is a plea to the Almighty Spirit of God, never a casual invitation or worse, a call to spark off the

emotional chaos which is assumed by some to be Spirit-filled worship.

He is the *Parakletos* (in Greek) – the Comforter and Helper -- promised by Jesus to us. He is the Spirit of Truth who will guide us into all truth and He will glorify Jesus (*John 16:13, 14*). He glorifies Jesus by making us Christ-like and does this by creating the fruit of the Spirit in our lives – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (*Galatians 5: 22,23*).

The Work of the Holy Spirit in our Lives

The Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian – for without Him, we cannot even confess Jesus Christ as Lord (*1 Corinthians 12:3*) – and what He does in our lives is by grace for we are not deserving of any good from God by our own merits. However, He seeks our obedience and participation in the process to become Christ-like.

The fruit of the Spirit do not come automatically. It is apt that St Paul, inspired by the Lord, uses the analogy of fruit – fruit has to be grown from seed, it has to be nurtured in good soil, watered, pruned, cared for, it takes time – and so it is with our lives. There are no short cuts but a struggle, the *podvig* (as it is expressed in Russian), to form Christ in us.

And all this is part of working out our salvation with fear and trembling. We need to repent daily. We need to read the Bible, the Word of God, day by day. We pray, we are to do good and God-pleasing works through the strength the Lord gives us. St James teaches us that “faith without works is dead” (*James 2:20*) and St John Chrysostom said “*faith without works is fitly called a mere form without the power...there is only a form, and a type, and hypocrisy*” (*Homily 8, P.G. 62:695*)

It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the power to undertake this struggle. And just as He helps us, He will faithfully produce the

fruit of Godliness in our lives. While simple to write about, this is really a life-long struggle that we all, without exception, are called to as Christians (*and this writer confesses that he is a sinner and his life is anything but like this...*).

But what about the Gifts of the Spirit such as miracles, healings, prophecy and the like?

Fr Alexis (Trader) in his book *In peace Let Us Pray to the Lord* puts the Orthodox Church’s experience of the Gifts of the Spirit in this way, “*He (the Holy Spirit) is quite ready to shed His gifts upon His children but they must first cleanse and ready the vessel (ie. our entire existence body and soul)*.”

This is perfectly Biblical. As St Paul wrote to Timothy: “*Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honour and some for dishonour. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work*” (*2 Timothy 19-20*)

St Seraphim of Sarov



St Seraphim of Sarov said “*acquire the Holy Spirit and a thousand around you will be saved.*”

Reading the Lives of the Saints will show how this has been put in practice and lived out down the ages. First, these men and women gave their all to Jesus in their repentance, prayer, humility, self-denial, service to others and striving for purity. *And then they were given wonderful gifts by the Holy Spirit – not as a reward for good behaviour, but entrusted with spiritual treasures because they were found to be “faithful in a few things”.*

From such lives came forth mighty power resulting in the conversion of many to Christ, the repentance of apostates and the backslidden, moral renewal of communities, casting out of demons, visions, prophecies, healings, signs and wonders, the raising of the dead and even the ability to journey great distances at supernatural speed like the Apostle Philip and Saint Mary of Egypt. It has also been the experience of the Church that the power of the Spirit continues to flow through these Christians through their bodily remains (relics) or their icons because even though departed this life, they are alive in Christ our God.

The experience of the Orthodox Church therefore shows the Gifts of the Spirit to be given to the few, not to the masses. To men and women who have become through “God-bearing” through Christian struggle and are vessels or temples that the Spirit of the Lord is pleased to dwell in.

This may be hard to accept today in a world that craves instant solutions and gain without pain. The idea that all Christians can receive the power(s) of the Spirit without striving and almost regardless of personal holiness is a modern and dangerous innovation (from Fr Alexis Trader’s book).

Saint Peter of Damascus wrote *“in this life, all things go in pairs: practice and spiritual knowledge, free will and grace, fear and hope, struggle and reward. The second does not come until the first has been actualized; and it is seems as if it does, this is an illusion.”*

An understanding of the Work of the Holy Spirit is interwoven with the sacramental theology of the Church – that God bestows His graces through material things because the redemption wrought in Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection is both personal (He has secured forgiveness and eternal life for each believer) but also cosmic as well. All of this fallen and denatured creation has been redeemed by Him.

Because of this, He acts through the people in His Church, through bishops, priests, deacons, monastics and also every Christian – that’s every one of us. He acts also through material things like bread, wine, water, oil and physical touch (the laying on of hands).

It will therefore be a mistake to think that the saints who were used to accomplish great things in God’s Kingdom had to become perfect and sinless before the Gifts of the Spirit were bestowed on them. No man or woman who has ever lived is without sin, only Christ Himself is without sin. But the important thing to remember is these heroes of our Faith strove to follow Christ wholeheartedly through their repentance, their obedience and love for Him and others. We must also remember there are levels of holiness and sanctification set before us (see



The Ladder of Divine Ascent by Saint John Climacus) and the saints our examples of men and women who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, loved God with all their hearts, souls, minds and strength and their neighbours as themselves.

What Gifts they were given and when these

Gifts were ministered to others is God’s choice alone. Or perhaps it could be nothing at all – the Bible tells us that St John the Baptist was commended by the Lord Jesus in this way *“among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist”* (Matthew 11:11) yet John performed no miracles (John 10:41).



There are therefore two extremes to avoid: the first is that anyone can call on the Holy Spirit and receive His gifts quite dissociated from a life of repentance, piety, good works and growth in Christlikeness thinking simplistically “it’s all by grace anyway!”

On the other hand, there is the opposite danger: that we get into a fear-filled paralysis that holds us back from saying “I am a Christian” to those round us, from telling others about salvation in Jesus Christ alone, from praying with and for friends who may be sick or in trouble, from touching peoples’ lives with love and service, maybe bringing them to share our worship in Church.

Our God is merciful and loves each of us and He has called all of us to be His witnesses. No one is ever good enough or knows enough to serve the Lord. But the wonderful truth is that every Christian who clings to Jesus Christ has the ear of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – who will honour the smallest effort we make for Him, just as He rewards the great deeds of the saints before His throne.

Ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit can only be understood in a life of obedience, love and self-denial lived out in accordance with God’s Word and the teachings of the Fathers of the Church. It cannot be learnt out of a book, we can’t get it off the internet or by attending a course.

At this point, this unworthy writer confesses that he has gotten way out of his depth. He confesses he is a sinner and a novice in things of the Lord. He is attempting to deal with deep things outside his experience and Christian walk. It is better for him to stop.

In the end, there is no better expression of the Orthodox Church’s total dependence on the Holy Spirit than this prayer we offer to Him every morning:

*O heavenly King, Comforter and Spirit of Truth
Who art everywhere present and fillest all things*

*Treasury of blessings and giver of life
Come and dwell in us and cleanse us from every stain
And of Thy goodness save our souls*

(from the Trisagion prayers)

SINGAPORE NEWS

PARISH NEWS

- 1) Fr Daniel visited England 18th June to 3rd July, during which time he concelebrated with Fr Michael Harper, dean of the English-speaking parishes of the Antiochian Orthodox Patriarchate in England on Sunday June 20th. After Divine Liturgy, in St. Botolph’s, Bishopsgate in London, Fr Daniel had the opportunity of meeting parishioners and talking to them about Orthodox Mission in South East Asia.
- 2) During his visit to England, Fr Daniel also had the opportunity of staying at the St. Edward Brotherhood, Brockwood, where he was briefly a novice, in 1987.
- 3) His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas made a pastoral visit to Singapore, and served the Divine Liturgy in Holy Resurrection Church on Sunday 27th June.
- 4) Through the good offices of Vladyka Tikhon of San Francisco & Western America, and the kindness of Archpriest Stefan Pavlenko, the Parish has been sent twelve bottles of oil from the shrine-lamp of St. John the Wonderworker of Shanghai, together with icon cards blesses on his shrine and a wonderful book about his Cathedral in San Francisco.

- 5) Many congratulations to Zoe and Christos, to whom a daughter has been born, a sister for Spyridon. The baby girl has been named Irene, after her paternal grandmother.



FROM THE FATHERS

...the Holy Spirit, being one, and of one nature, and indivisible, divides to each His grace, 'according as He wills' (1 Corinthians 12:11) and as the dry tree, after partaking of water, puts forth shoots, so also the soul in sin, when it has been through repentance made worthy of the Holy Spirit, brings forth clusters of righteousness.

~Saint Cyril of Jerusalem

Peace is liberation from passions, which cannot be attained without the action of the Holy Spirit.

~Saint Mark the Ascetic

A house roof is held up by the foundations and the rest of the building, and the foundation and the rest of the building are laid to hold the roof – since both are necessary and useful – and neither is the roof built without the foundations and the rest of the house, nor can foundations and walls without roof make a building fit to live in. So it is with the soul: the grace of the Holy Spirit is preserved by keeping the commandments, and the keeping of the commandments is the foundation laid for receiving the gifts of God's grace. Neither does the grace of the Holy Spirit remain in us without our obeying the

commandments, nor can obeying the commandments be useful and salutary without Divine grace.

~ Saint Symeon the New Theologian

It was said that a person who has not the Holy Spirit within him cannot pray true prayer. This is perfectly true. We need to make considerable use of toil and suffering in order to be able to pray holy prayer. We cannot suddenly or quickly attain to such a state as to be able to raise our thoughts and hearts to God. Not only with us ordinary people, but even with many who have consecrated their whole life to prayer, it happens that you go to turn your thoughts to God and you find them distracted in different directions and taken up with various matters; you want to have God in your thoughts, and something quite different comes to you, and sometimes it is even terrible.

~ Saint Innocent of Alaska

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Books for Sale

The following books are for sale at the Parish's Book Store:

The Orthodox Study Bible **\$40**

The Orthodox New Testament Volumes I & II **\$100**

Equal Yet Different (Fr Michael Harper) **\$10**

The True Light (Fr Michael Harper) **\$10**

Are You Saved? (Barbara Pappas) **\$10**

Parish's Library

You are welcome to borrow books from the parish library. Parishioners can approach Symeon or Patrick after church services to register your library card.

You can ask The Pilgrim a Question

Do you have something you would like to ask the Pilgrim?

The Pilgrim(s) – there are actually more than one of us here -- will be really happy to try and answer any questions you have on Christianity, the Orthodox Church, ethics and life in general.

You can email us at askthepilgrim@yahoo.com and we'll do our best to prepare something to address your query.

Privacy: questions and answers received are assumed to be for publication in The Pilgrim. If you want a personal reply and / or if you do not want your question published please say so clearly in your email.

You can write under an assumed name. That's OK.

The Pilgrim and Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church will not send unsolicited messages or materials to your email address and we won't pass it on to others.

We reserve the right to edit questions that are published and to terminate discussions.

As always, all parties engaging in dialogue, whether in print or on the internet, are to observe normal rules of politeness, mutual respect and the appropriate choice of words.

SERVICES AT HOLY RESURRECTION CHURCH IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

Saturday 31 st July	5.00pm	Vespers
Sunday 1 st August	9.30pm	Third Hour & Divine Liturgy
Thursday 5 th August	7.30pm	Vigil & Divine Liturgy
Saturday 7 th August	5.00pm	Vespers
Sunday 8 th August	9.30am	Third Hour & Divine Liturgy
Wednesday 11 th August	7.15pm	Small Compline & Bible Study
Saturday 14 th August	5.00pm	VIGIL
Sunday 15 th August	9.30pm	Third Hour & Divine Liturgy
Wednesday 18 th August	7.15pm	Small Compline & Bible Study
Saturday 21 st August	5.00pm	Vespers
Sunday 22 nd August	9.30pm	Third Hour & Divine Liturgy
Wednesday 25 th August	7.15pm	Small Compline & Bible Study
Saturday 28 th August	5.00pm	Vespers
Sunday 29 th August	9.30pm	Third Hour & Divine Liturgy
Tuesday 31 st August	7.15pm	Vespers
Wednesday 1 st September	7.15pm	Small Compline & Bible Study
Saturday 4 th September	5.00pm	Vespers
Sunday 5 th September	9.30pm	Third Hour & Divine Liturgy
Tuesday 7 th September	7.15pm	VIGIL & Divine Liturgy
Saturday 11 th September	5.00pm	Vespers
Sunday 12 th September	9.30pm	Third Hour & Divine Liturgy
Monday 13 th September	7.30pm	VIGIL & Divine Liturgy
Tuesday 14 th September	7.15pm	Vespers
Saturday 18 th September	5.00pm	Vespers
Sunday 19 th September	9.30pm	Third Hour & Divine Liturgy
Saturday 25 th September	5.00pm	Vespers
Sunday 26 th September	9.30pm	Third Hour & Divine Liturgy
Wednesday 29 th September	7.15pm	Small Compline & Bible Study

Please note:

- ❖ DORMITION FAST 1st – 14th August
- ❖ Fr Daniel will be away in Greece 20th – 25th September