

STATEMENT OF OUR POSITION ON THE “BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”

As those appointed by God for the spiritual oversight, care and protection of the people of Calvary Community Church through the ministry of the Word and prayer and the example of our own lives, we do hereby affirm our understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ, having examined carefully and openly and humbly the teaching of the Word of God on this vital truth.

The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is that pouring forth of the Father (Joel 2; Acts 2); that baptizing by Jesus, the Son, with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16; 1 Cor. 12:13) all those who have repented and received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Acts 2:38; Acts 19:1-6; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9-16).

Through this “gift”, “pouring out” of, “baptism with the Holy Spirit”, the Holy Spirit (1) regenerates us (John 3); (2) seals us (Eph. 1:14); (3) unites us in the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13); (4) manifests Himself in our lives through various gifts He sovereignly bestows (1 Cor. 12:14; Eph. 4:6-15; Rom. 12:3-8); (5) empowers us for witness (Acts 1:5-8); (6) enables us to grow in Christ-like character (Gal. 5:13-26); and (7) fills us (Eph. 5:18; Acts 6:3-5).

While some ministries of the Spirit take place at the time of our initial repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, the enabling, empowering, filling ministries of the Spirit are dependent upon our walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:13-26; Rom. 8:1-5); our yielding to the Spirit (Rom. 6:12-19); Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:18; Rom. 8:14); our not grieving the Holy Spirit through sin (Eph. 4:30); our not quenching the Holy Spirit through unbelief (1 Thess. 5:19) and our setting our minds on the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-5).

Because we are one with them in Christ and because we are subject to human error and finiteness, we want to disagree lovingly and humbly with those of our brothers and sisters in Christ who teach the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a separate experience from repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. We do this because we do not in good conscience before God see Biblical support for this position. We thank God for their openness to His Spirit and are encouraged by them to allow more of the fullness of God’s Spirit to manifest itself in our lives. We feel that they have confused the “Baptism of the Spirit” with the “filling of the Spirit”. There is no place in the New Testament where the Baptism with the Spirit is commanded. The filling of the Spirit is (Eph. 5:18). The former is a once for all experience that accompanies repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and is His work in us. The latter is a continuing experience that is necessary to be maintained throughout our lives, without which we live in weakness and ineffectiveness as though we were but natural men and women, (i.e. walking in the flesh; 1 Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 5:13-26).

It is our response to and appropriation of His work in us. Speaking in tongues is one of the manifestations (gifts) of the Holy Spirit. Not all must speak in tongues to (1) validate the Baptism with the Spirit nor (2) to know the fullness of the Spirit in their lives (1 Cor. 12). Paul in the only teaching portion of Scripture on tongues (1 Cor. 14) minimizes its importance in the public church service and subjugates it to prophecy as a tool for edification. While many teachers in the Body of Christ teach the abstinence of tongues, we believe that 1 Cor. 14:2-4,

13-19, 28 allows the private use of the gift and that 1 Cor 14:26-27 allows the public use of this gift when a valid interpreter is present. However, because of the surpassing value of speaking in a language that can be understood by all (1 Cor. 14:18-19), we will not emphasize the public use of tongues. If any person has the gift of tongues or the gift of interpretation, let them come to the Elders first for confirmation of such gifts and also for guidance for proper expression of the gift. The summary of our position is stated by Paul in 1 Cor. 14:19-40: "Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner."

The Corinthian Christians should be a solemn warning to us. It seems clear from Paul's first letter that (1) they had all been baptized with one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12) into one body and (2) blessed with all spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-11). Yet the apostle rebukes them as being unspiritual people---that is, not Spirit-filled (Eph. 5:18) and not walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:13-26). His implication seems clear from 1 Cor. 13 that the best evidence of the Spirit's fullness is not in the exercise of their many gifts, but in the growing manifestation of the Spirit's fruit---genuine love.