

## **AN OUTLINE OF PAUL'S VIEW OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE: FOUNDATION FOR AN EVANGELICAL SPIRITUALITY**

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Contemporary Christianity is characterized simultaneously by a longing for a deeper relationship with God's Spirit and also a seeming neglect of authentic and developing sanctification. When we look about us, we see many seeking spiritual renewal,<sup>1</sup> some by contemplation,<sup>2</sup> some through community involvement and fellowship groups,<sup>3</sup> and others through signs and wonders.<sup>4</sup> The confusion is compounded

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics* (New York: Doubleday, 1976); H. Hobbs, *The Holy Spirit: Believer's Guide* (Nashville: Broadman, 1967); A. A. Hoekema, *Holy Spirit Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972); J. MacArthur, *The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978); M. Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); J. R. W. Stott, *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1971); J. R. Williams, *Renewal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. Glenn Hinson, "Contemplative Spirituality" *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification* (ed. D. L. Alexander; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988); C. Stanley, *Listening to God* (Nashville: Nelson, 1985). Especially see the article in this issue of CTR by Bruce Demarest and Charles Raup.

<sup>3</sup> H. A. Snyder, *The Community of the King* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977); idem, *The Problem of Wineskins* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1975); K. Miller, *The Taste of New Wine* (Waco: Word, 1966); R. F. Webber and R. Clapp, *People of the Truth: The Power of the Worshipping Community in the Modern World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> J. Wimber and K. Springer, *Power Evangelism* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986); idem, *Power Healing* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987); J. White, *When the Spirit Comes with Power and Wonders Among God's People* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988).

by the discussion at the popular level about "prayer in the Spirit," "walking in the Spirit," "life in the Spirit," "baptism in the Spirit," and even "being slain in the Spirit." The terminology is very often used carelessly and without definition. Our purpose is not to address each of these issues, but only to acknowledge the ubiquity of interest in spiritual renewal.

While all of this is true, there yet exists an emptiness in contemporary Christian spirituality evidenced among church members and church leaders by superficiality and busyness. This has resulted in lives characterized by discouragement, frustration, and even problems of immorality.

Some of these problems can be traced to a faulty view of conversion.<sup>5</sup> Others can be linked to our individualistic concept of Christianity.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps underlying all of these matters is the obvious lack of a spiritual theology in Evangelicalism, even in Protestantism at-large. For too long, spiritual theology has been considered the domain of Roman Catholic theology.<sup>7</sup> Recently, however, there have been helpful attempts to fill this void.<sup>8</sup> While our primary focus is not the correction or reshaping of the popular confusion, our theological concerns are always intended to serve the Church.<sup>9</sup> Even without emphasis upon theological and ethical matters, it is hoped that the present investigation will yield fruit for laypeople, as well as the pastoral aspects of the Christian community. This essay will outline Paul's view of the spiritual life which can serve as a foundation for a contemporary evangelical spirituality.

<sup>5</sup> See the ongoing discussion in such works as J. MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988); J. Boice, *Christ's Call to Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody, 1986); Z. Hodges, *The Eclipse of Grace* (Dallas: Redencion Viva, 1985); C. C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody, 1969) 170-78; J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1961) 89-95; J. R. W. Stott, *Our Guilty Silence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967) 48-50.

<sup>6</sup> One of the finest treatments of the Christian life viewed from a corporate perspective can be found in N. H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (tr. J. R. DeWitt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). Also see the article in this issue by Timothy George which discusses the "priesthood of all believers" from a corporate perspective.

<sup>7</sup> R. P. McBrien, *Catholicism* (Minneapolis Winston, 1981) 903-1099; L. Bouyer, *Introduction to Spirituality* (New York: Desclee, 1961); idem, *Orthodox Spirituality and Protestant and Anglican Spirituality* (London: Burns and Oates, 1969); K. Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in the Church* (London: Burns and Oates, 1964) 84-170.

<sup>8</sup> R. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1979); J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1984). This is reinforced by noting that the 1987 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society was devoted to concepts and issues involved with evangelical views of spirituality.

<sup>9</sup> R. Saucy, "Doing Theology for the Church" *The Necessity of Systematic Theology* (ed. J. Davis; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 60-67.

The Pauline view of the spiritual life can best be summarized by the statement in 2 Cor 3:17b, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The key concepts in the thought of Paul regarding the Christian life are here expressed: the Spirit, lordship and liberty. The Spirit's activities so widely permeated the apostle's thought that there is hardly any aspect of Christian experience outside of the sphere of the Spirit. We shall examine the main facets of the Spirit's activities by concentrating on both the individual and the community's corporate perspectives of the Christian life. Also matters of freedom will be surveyed, particularly ideas of freedom from sin and from law. We could not do justice to Paul's thought without a brief look at the idea of the spiritual life in tension, including the nature of suffering in relation to life in the Spirit.

### *I. The Work of the Spirit in the New Life of the Believer*

1. *Initiation.* Paul was convinced that it was the responsibility of the Spirit to draw attention to the glories of the risen Christ in the preaching ministry (1 Thess 1:5; 1 Cor 2:1-4). Equally true was the Spirit's task in enabling persons to respond to the message of the glorified Christ. Indeed, it is a fundamental assumption of Paul's theology that all believers are possessors of the Spirit. In other words, "no one can respond to the claims of Christ without being activated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit."<sup>10</sup>

Paul tells the Thessalonians that God has given them the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 4:8). In his first letter to the Corinthians he states that no one can confess Jesus as Lord except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). It can be assumed that all believers have the Spirit since "anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom 8:9). The Spirit has transformed persons from unrighteousness (1 Cor 6:9, 10) to those who are washed, sanctified and justified (1 Cor 6:11). The strong adversative in the passage serves to heighten the contrast between the former life in the Spirit and thus focuses attention on the change the Spirit's ministry performs. The point, then, is that a person is regenerated only through the work of the Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

The regenerating work of the Spirit brings about new life in Christ. The new life in Christ is summarized in Paul's classic statement, "If anyone is in Christ, a new creation!, the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17). The verse is usually

<sup>10</sup> D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1981) 551.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 553; cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Black, 1963) 253.

interpreted on the popular level in terms of one's subjective experience, meaning the desires and attitudes of the unregenerate have passed away and have been replaced by a new set of desires and attitudes. The idea of newness, however, in the context of Pauline thought is distinctly eschatological.<sup>12</sup> The new age which has dawned brings a new creation, the creation of a new person.<sup>13</sup> The passing of the old does not mean the end of the old age; it continues until the parousia. But the old age does not remain intact; the new age has broken in.<sup>14</sup> Without discussing the full ramifications of the new age, we can conclude with G. Ladd's appropriate remark, "The underlying idea is that while believers live in the old age, because they are in Christ, *they* belong to the new age with its new creation (indicative); thus they are to live a life that is expressive of the new existence (imperative)"<sup>15</sup> [emphasis mine]. Having seen that the Spirit is the giver of new life to believers, we now turn our attention to the ministry of the Spirit in the life of the believer.

2. *Adoption and Sanctification.* There are two primary passages which show that the believer's filial consciousness is directly induced by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:6). It is the Spirit who leads the children of God to cry out "Abba! Father!"<sup>16</sup> Adoption describes the new relationship into which believers have entered.<sup>17</sup> D. Guthrie uses the term "sanctification" comprehensively of the overall process by which the new believer moves toward a life of holiness.<sup>18</sup> The standard of sanctification is a holiness acceptable to God, that is, a holiness in line with the Spirit's own character (Rom 15:16; 1 Cor 6:11).

3. *Illumination and Guidance.* The Spirit of God is not only active in revealing the gospel, but is likewise involved in bringing the believer to further understanding (1 Cor 2:13). Paul goes into considerable detail in I Cor 2:10-16 in order to establish the distinction between human wisdom and the understanding provided by the Spirit. Paul affirms that without the enablement of the Spirit, a salvific knowledge of God is unattainable. After receiving the gift of the

<sup>12</sup> G. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 479.

<sup>13</sup> J. Behm, "καινός," *TDNT* 3 (1965) 449.

<sup>14</sup> F. F. Bruce, "New," *IDB* 3 (1962) 542-43.

<sup>15</sup> Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 480.

<sup>16</sup> J. Jeremias, *The Central Message of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) 18.

<sup>17</sup> E. Schweizer, "υιοθεσία," *TDNT* 8 (1972) 399.

<sup>18</sup> Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 554.

Spirit, there is a capacity for understanding what was previously denied. The Spirit penetrates to the deepest understanding of God in Christ.<sup>19</sup>

The Spirit guides the believer into a new way of thinking and gives her or him a new set of values. Concerning Rom 8:5, "Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit;" J. Murray comments that, "the mind of the Spirit is the dispositional complex, including the exercise of reason, feeling and will, patterned after and controlled by the Holy Spirit."<sup>20</sup> The renewal of the mind (Rom 12:2) which was formerly hostile to God (Rom 8:7) can only be achieved by/through the Spirit. The believer's new values come through the leading of the Spirit (Rom 8:14) and cause him or her to walk in the Spirit in opposition to carrying out the desires of the sinful flesh (Gal 5:16; Rom 8:4). The concept of total dependence on the empowering of the Spirit "shows how utterly indispensable the Spirit is for Christian living, and it demonstrates the impossibility of any Christian not possessing the Spirit."<sup>21</sup>

4. *Progress and Development.* Paul speaks in Gal 5:22-23 of the "fruit of the Spirit" as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." These virtues must be compared with the list in Phil 4:8 (cf. Col 3:12-15). These Spirit-prompted virtues go beyond the natural bounds of virtue so that, for example, the believer demonstrates love by loving one's enemies. The outworking of these virtues is a demonstration of the Spirit at work in the believer, but there is not necessarily a one-to-one correspondence between these lists and progress in the Christian life. According to V. Furnish, the virtues are not even desired to portray the pattern of the good person of the Christian ideal toward which all are to strive, but are rather different ways Paul addresses himself to the concrete historical situations to explain how the new life in Christ is to express itself.<sup>22</sup> Yet, it seems to us that they can be seen as evidence of the work of the Spirit in the development of the believer in contrast to "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21). We can say that at least to some extent, they are marks of the Spirit.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> L. Morris, *Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Tyndale: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958) 57.

<sup>20</sup> J. Murray, *Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; NIC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 1.185.

<sup>21</sup> R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (ed. K. Grobel; 2 vols.; New York: Scribners, 1951-55) 1.153.

<sup>22</sup> V. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1958) 87.

<sup>23</sup> See my discussion of development in Pauline theology related to Galatians 5 in "Pauline Pictures of the Spiritual Life: Developmental or Contextual" in, *The Living*

5. *Liberation*. One of the key themes which will be discussed later under a separate heading is the theme of freedom. Paul had known the futility of seeking salvation through works and had come to know that liberation comes through the Spirit (2 Cor 3:7-18).<sup>24</sup> An important function of the Spirit is to break shackles which have been carried over from pre-conversion days. Liberty is one of the great outworkings of the Spirit in the new age.

## II. *The Work of the Spirit in the New Life of the Community*

1. *Unity*. Paul viewed the Holy Spirit as the basis for true unity in the body of Christ. Fellowship in the Johannine epistles seems to be with "the Father and the Son" (1 John 1:3), but Paul stresses "fellowship in the Spirit" (Phil 2:1-4; 2 Cor 13:14). The passage in the letter to the Philippians enlarges on the theme of unity and suggests a mutual participation of believers through the common bond of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who binds Christians together and enables them to be of the same mind, which is the "mind of Christ" (Phil 2:5). The community of faith is to maintain the unity of the Spirit as stated in 1 Corinthians 12 (cf. Eph 4:1-6). The passage emphasizes the unity of the Spirit and diversity of functions and gifts given by the Spirit to the Body. The basis of unity is identified by Paul as the baptism in the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13).

2. *Baptism in the Spirit*. 1 Cor 12:13 is the key passage referring to corporate initiation into new life. While it is much debated in recent times whether the Spirit's baptism is an experience identical with conversion or subsequent to the conversion experience, we find it difficult to support the second stage experience anywhere in the Pauline materials.<sup>25</sup> Guthrie suggests that baptism in the spirit is "no more than another way of expressing the Spirit-dominated character of the (corporate) Christian life."<sup>26</sup> Paul's teaching that "all were made to drink of one Spirit" shows the basic solidarity of all Chris-

*Word: Essays in Honor of J. H. Greenlee* (forthcoming).. Also see R. N. Longenecker, "On the Concept of Development in Pauline Thought" *Perspectives in Evangelical Theology* (ed. S. Gundry and K. Kantzer; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 195-207.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

<sup>25</sup> For an informative explanation of these differences, see F. D. Brunner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) and J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970); also E. Schweizer, "πνεῦμα," *TDNT* 6 (1968) 233-455.

<sup>26</sup> Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 563.

tians in the Spirit.<sup>27</sup> It is transformation for all believers by which they are placed into the body of Christ. This is made possible by the Spirit.

Although Dunn and Ladd opt for the meaning of baptism as "Spirit baptism" and not water baptism, many scholars believe that baptism refers to water baptism as the means by which the Spirit is imparted to believers.<sup>28</sup> We do not believe that there has to be an either/or answer to the question, "Does Paul mean to say that water baptism is the means of incorporation into the Christian community or that an act of the Holy Spirit is the means of incorporation?" We believe, rather, a both/and answer is more satisfactory. It is the work of the Spirit to form the body of Christ, while water baptism is the outward sphere where this takes place. When men and women believe and are baptized, they become members of the body of Christ. The Spirit has been given by the exalted Christ to form a new people, to join believers together in the baptism of the Spirit constituting the body of Christ.

### III. *The Spiritual Life as a Life of Freedom*

The theme of freedom is seen constantly throughout the Pauline writings. In this section we shall see that Paul is concerned with freedom from sin, freedom from law, and freedom and responsibility, which he discusses from the perspective of the stronger Christian's relationship with the weaker Christian.

1. *Freedom from Sin.* Paul uses the idiom of dying and rising with Christ to express the truth of the believer's union with Christ (Romans 6). Baptism into Christ (Rom 6:4) means union with him in his death, burial with him, which in turn means death to sin, the crucifixion of the "old man," the nullifying of the "body of sin" (Rom 6:6). The positive side means freedom from sin and life to God. In the Romans 6 passage, resurrection with Christ is future and eschatological (vv 5-7; cf. Eph 2:5-6 which speaks of a present resurrection with Christ).<sup>29</sup>

The baptism into Christ's death is drawing attention to the corporate aspect of Christ's death. As that death was an historical event, so also the incorporation of believers in that death is historical. In other words when Christ died on the cross, all who were to be

<sup>27</sup> Hoekema, *The Holy Spirit Baptism*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) 167; also cr. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, 48.

<sup>29</sup> Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 485.

incorporated in him also died.<sup>30</sup> This implies that when a person puts faith in Christ, he or she is at once identified with a death that has already happened. The identification with death is necessary before there can be a participation in the risen life of Christ, which is life in the Spirit. Ladd comments:

ultimately this is an eschatological fact that every believer should know (Rom 6:2, 6), and on whose basis he is to consider himself alive to God. It means a change in dominion. In the old aeon, the dominion of sin has change of dominions, and for this reason they are to change their alliance from sin to God (vv 17, 18, 22). It is because this change has occurred in Christ that believers are exhorted to yield themselves to righteousness (v 19).<sup>31</sup>

The sixth chapter of Romans highlights Paul's indicative/imperative tension. The command is to become what we are. This is accomplished through yielding to the Spirit. The practical paradox is that freedom from sin comes through slavery to Christ. Even Paul's most affirmative statements about freedom are linked with lordship. Gal 5:1 and 5:13 respectively exhort the Galatians not to return to slavery either of law or licentiousness, but to remain in the Spirit as those who belong to Christ (Gal 5:24). 1 Cor 3:21-23 speaks only of the freedom of those who belong to Christ, who "are Christ's." And 2 Cor 4:12-18 speaks only of the freedom which is "through Christ," "from the Lord" and "of the Spirit." Thus Paul argues that there are only two alternatives: (1) to have sin for one's master or (2) to have God for one's master. For God to be one's master means a life of freedom from sin. True freedom, therefore, comes only through authentic obedience.

2. *Freedom from Law.* Paul views the believer in the age of the Spirit as living under grace and not under Law (Rom 6:14). Paul believed and taught that the Law had been in some sense abrogated by Christ for he is the "end of the Law" (Rom 10:4). The Law is not evil, rather it is "holy, just and good" (Rom 7:12). But what the Law could not do because of the powerlessness of human nature, God did by bringing freedom from Law for all who believe (Rom 8:1-4). Paul, however, disassociates himself from the idea that freedom is power to do for oneself and with one's life as seems pleasing. Freedom can be misused as a pretext for evil, which is libertinism or antinomianism.

<sup>30</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975-1979) 1.295-96.

<sup>31</sup> Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 486.

True freedom involves obeying the "Law of Christ" (Gal 6:2) which is service to God (1 Thess 1:9) and for humankind (1 Cor 9:19).

The "Law of Christ" seems to mean not only the teaching of Jesus as the embodiment and true interpretation of the will of God (Rom 12-14; 1 Cor 7:10-11), but also the person of the historical Jesus. The life of Jesus served as a tangible portrayal and example of the new divine standard as suggested by the phrase "according to Christ" (Rom 15:5; cf. Eph 4:20-24; Col 2:6-8) and the frequent appeals to the character of Jesus (Rom 15:3, 7, 8; Phil 2:5-11; 1 Thess 1:6).<sup>32</sup> The difference between the law of Christ, which can be identified with the new covenant written upon hearts instead of stone, and the old covenant law is knowing the law as inward principle. F. F. Bruce's comments are extremely helpful in this regard:

So for Paul there was no substantial difference in content between the "just requirements of the law" which cannot be kept by those who live according "to the Spirit." The difference lay in the fact that new inward power was now imparted, enabling the believer to fulfill what he could not fulfill before. The will of God has not changed, but whereas formerly it was recorded on tablets of stone, it was now engraved on human hearts, an impulsion accomplished what an external compulsion could not.<sup>33</sup>

This is not a new legalism, but a new "nomism." W. D. Davies has suggested that this is a "new torah."<sup>34</sup> There is some difference between *nomos* (the Greek word for "law") and *tora* (the Hebrew term for "law"). *Tora* has the idea of a binding instruction, whereas *nomos* designates a principle. It is also possible for *nomos* to be the equivalent of *tora* in some instances, especially when *nomos* is used with an adjective or article.<sup>35</sup> Only in the atmosphere of spiritual liberty can God's will be properly obeyed and God's *nomos* upheld.<sup>36</sup>

3. *Freedom and Responsibility.* Having been liberated by Christ from the penalty of sin, the believer is challenged to employ this liberty properly in Christian living. Liberty is not to be used as an excuse to satisfy unchristian sinful desires, but to serve others by

<sup>32</sup> R. Longenecker, "Pauline Theology," *ZPEB* 4 (1975) 663. See the provocative view of law and grace in D. Fuller, *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

<sup>33</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 200.

<sup>34</sup> W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) suggests the idea of the spiritual life as a "new torah," while the concept of "nomism" is advanced by Longenecker, Paul, Apostle of Liberty.

<sup>35</sup> H. H. Esser, "Law," *NIDNTT* 2 (1976) 443; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.362.

<sup>36</sup> J. Blunk, "Freedom," *NIDNTT* 1 (1975) 717-18.

love.<sup>37</sup> This responsible freedom might be referred to as a law of love. Guidance for the church in questionable areas, so far as Paul is concerned, is provided by the law of love and not by the law of commandments (cf. Eph 2:15).

This topic receives its fullest treatment in Romans 14-15 and 1 Corinthians 8-10. Food sacrificed to idols, for instance, is ethically' and religiously indifferent.<sup>38</sup> For Paul, what is important is responsible living so that the effect of one's conduct is an example and not a stumbling block to others.

The law of love becomes, in Paul's thought, the most important motivation for Christian freedom. Love fulfills all the demands of the Law. Therefore, love becomes the solution to the problems raised about food and drink. Love requires that when persons living in freedom find themselves in a situation where the proper exercise of that freedom would truly offend a brother or sister, then freedom is to be set aside. Abstinence is the recommendation, but only when the weaker believer would actually be caused to sin; otherwise the whole standard of conduct in such matters would be decreed by the rigorism of the weak.<sup>39</sup> The basic principle is that personal freedom must be tempered, by love for the community. It is clear that "such love is not an emotion, but Christian concern in action."<sup>40</sup>

Responsible freedom, for Paul, also includes a negative, as well as a positive, aspect. The negative teachings are often overstressed in more legalistic environments and understressed in more libertine settings. The Pauline balance must be the goal for believers living in the Spirit. Paul teaches a rigorous self-discipline, self-control and non-conformity (1 Cor 9:27; Rom 12:1-2). Everything is to be done for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31), and deeds that bring glory to the flesh are to be put to death (Rom 8:13). Paul's nonconformity is not ascetic (Col 2:23). He views the ascetic approach to the Christian life as worldly, because it appeals to human pride and attainment rather than trust in Christ and reliance on the Spirit. The true Pauline view is, "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (1 Cor 10:26). In sexual

<sup>37</sup> W. H. Mare, "Liberty," *ZPEB* 3 (1975) 921; cf. W. Longworth, "Ethics in Paul: The Shape of Christian Life and a Method of Moral Reasoning," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1981) 29-56.

<sup>38</sup> See the careful exegesis of these chapters in W. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (SBLDS 68; Chico: Scholars, 1985).

<sup>39</sup> J. C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 310-13.

<sup>40</sup> Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 524.

matters, the believer is again not to conform to worldly practices. Paul personally goes beyond this as he was an ascetic in sexual matters (I Corinthians 7), but only for missionary purposes. Paul recognizes his asceticism as a gift to promote the gospel, not to achieve greater spirituality.<sup>41</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this article to deal with all the lists of vices and virtues which Paul encourages believers to avoid and follow. While his lists are similar to Hellenistic and Jewish lists of virtues and vices, they are not to be overgeneralized to the point that they lose their spiritual significance. We do not believe that Paul considered these lists in any sense as options for life in the Spirit. Rather, they help shape and form what is otherwise a somewhat nonobjective concept. They are part and parcel of normal life in the Spirit. These lists include character qualities to be emulated, and sins to be shunned, which are inconsistent with the spiritual life.<sup>42</sup>

#### IV. *Tension in the Spiritual Life*

Life in the Spirit is to be lived out between the polarities of what has been accomplished by the historical achievement of Jesus and what is yet to be fully realized in the consummation of God's redemptive program.<sup>43</sup> The believer lives in this temporal tension. This is characterized by the already/not yet, and indicative/imperative tensions,<sup>44</sup> Christians live in this age, but their life pattern, their standard of conduct, their aims and goals are not those of this age, which are essentially human-centered and prideful, but of the age to

<sup>41</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 450; cf. Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 526. It might also be possible to include with the discussion of nonconformity the idea of separation. Paul urges that believers should not be "mismatched with unbelievers" (in a disputed passage in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1). This is not to be construed as a breaking of all ties and relationships that believers may have with unbelievers, rather it is directed against close ties that link Christians with unbelievers in pagan ways of thought and action. Separation, properly understood is a rejection of idolatry and sinful conduct of the old age by one who is a citizen of the age to come.

<sup>42</sup> L. Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament* (tr. J. E. Alsup; 2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 2.143-45; also Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, 920-25; E. Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Letters and Their Development Lists of Vices and Housetable" *Text and Interpretation* (ed. E. Best and R. McL. Wilson; Cambridge: University Press, 1979) 195-209.

<sup>43</sup> This idea has received its fullest articulation in the work of O. Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (tr. F. Filson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1951); also cf. A. A. Hoekema, "Already/Not Yet Christian Living in Tension" *Reformed Journal* 29 (1979) 18-20.

<sup>44</sup> This has been ably described by Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*.

come. Yet the struggle with indwelling sin continues (Rom 1:14-25).<sup>45</sup> The flesh continues to war against the Spirit (Gal 5:16-21). The believer's union with Christ must be lived out (Romans 6; 12:1-2). While living in the Spirit as a citizen of the new age (Phil 3:21), it should be remembered that believers will suffer in this age (Phil 1:29-30). Christians are conscious of life "in Adam" (Rom 5:12-21) and "in Christ" (Rom 6:1-11). This life is characterized as a tension between freedom and responsible love (Romans 14). Life in the Spirit awakens believers to the prospects of present and ultimate victories. The basis for life in the Spirit must never be forgotten. It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the Spirit applies justification, regeneration, sanctification and ultimate glorification to the lives of believers. Life in the Spirit is living out, by the Spirit's empowerment, what believers are because of Christ.<sup>46</sup>

#### *V. Toward Maturity in the Spiritual Life*

It is the fact that for Paul Christianity is essentially "pneumatic" (that is, he interprets Christianity through the category of Spirit) that makes it inevitable that he should also give a greater significance to the ethical aspect of the pneumatic life.<sup>47</sup> Paul's view of life in the Spirit develops shape by the enablement which the Spirit provides for obedience in the midst of struggling and suffering. The most genuine utterance of the Spirit in the assembly of believers is not ecstatic speech, but prophecy, since the intention and criterion of the worship service was that God should become manifest for people (1 Cor 14:23-25). The individual believer experiences the Spirit primarily in prayer when he or she can call upon God in the words of the Lord's prayer, "Abba! Father!" (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15). The Spirit provides divine enablement for the believer struggling in prayer (Rom 8:26-27). The immediacy of devotion to God does not come forth from innate human capacity, but from the Spirit. The Spirit brings to light an awareness that one has been accepted through the love of God, from which prayer springs forth.<sup>48</sup> When the Spirit reaches to God's children, the love of God reaches out (Rom 5:5). The Spirit ultimately is made known as the consciousness-generating power that creates

<sup>45</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, "Romans 7:14-25 in the Theology of Paul" *TZ* 31 (1975) 270-81; also D. Dockery, "Romans 7:14-25: Pauline Tension in the Christian Life" *GTJ* 2 (1982) 239~57.

<sup>46</sup> An extended discussion can be found in Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*.

<sup>47</sup> Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 220.

<sup>48</sup> Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament* 2.121; G. MacRae, "Romans 8:26-27" *Int* 34 (1980) 288-97.

openness for God, enablement in struggle and openness in prayer.<sup>49</sup> The Spirit is the downpayment of future glory which will be inherited by believers in the eschaton. Until then, the community experiences life in the Spirit in such a way that can be characterized as liberty. Paradoxically, liberty comes about through obedience just as glory comes through suffering.

### *Conclusion*

In this essay we have seen that there is hardly any aspect of the Christian experience that is not influenced by the Spirit's activities. We briefly surveyed the Spirit's work in the life of the individual believer and in the believing community. We observed that the ethical teaching concerning life in the Spirit is shaped by the list of vices and virtues, by the indicative/imperative statements carried out in time of the already/not yet tension. Life in the Spirit brings freedom to the believers in the community.

As the contemporary Church seeks to develop a spiritual theology, it must be primarily grounded in scripture, not just human experience. Paul's view of the Spirit suggests parameters and injunctions by which the confusion in the contemporary Church can be checked. The tendency toward busyness must be balanced by a Spirit-led contemplation. The overstressed themes of triumphalism, so common in the extreme victorious life teachings, as well as the health, wealth and prosperity theologies must be countered by a balanced view of struggle and suffering. False teaching that advocates legalism and asceticism must be replaced by Paul's view of freedom, which is freedom not only from law, but freedom from sin toward obedience, exercised in responsible love. An evangelical spirituality must develop its shape from the Pauline guidelines so that the pneumatic experience is neither totally individualistic, nor is it an out-of-control experience lacking norms or parameters. Instead, an evangelical spirituality must focus upon the corporate experience among believers that stresses worship, mutual commitment and dependency, transparency and authenticity, responsible freedom and loving obedience.

<sup>49</sup> Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2.121-22; A. J. Wedderburn, "Romans 8:26- Towards a Theology of Glossalalia" *SJT* 28 (1975) 369-77; also cf. S. Grenz, *Prayer: The Cry for the Kingdom* (Peabody, MA; Hendrickson, 1988).

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