



DOCTRINAL STATEMENT ON CHARISMATIC ISSUES

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1. The Premises:

- 1.1 Our doctrinal position is not based on the narrative part of the Scriptures but on the didactic part. If the narrative verses are found within the context of didactic passage, then they have interpretative function. In other words, we do not treat the written record on experience or spiritual phenomena as repeatable or norm we have to follow. We may discover biblical principles from the record on phenomena, then we follow the teaching from the principles but not the phenomena themselves. We do not treat the principles and phenomena as equal.
- 1.2 We believe the believers have their spiritual fullness in Christ as it is written in Col. 2:9-10: “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.” (NIV) Therefore, we cannot accept the teaching that we must add on something even though we have accepted Christ.
- 1.3 We cannot accept the view that we have to evaluate the reality of human experience based on purely subjective standards. We believe God operates through history in objective mode. The testimony of Christ is God’s Word par excellence. The Bible is the written record of God for our learning. Our tradition, worldview and experience must subscribe to the truth of the Bible. They must be evaluated independently and objectively by it.

2. Our Position:

- 2.1 The Baptism of the Holy Spirit:
 - 2.1.1 We believe once a person accepts Christ, he is baptized in the Holy Spirit instantly (2 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9, Tit. 3:5-7; Gal. 4:6). It is not a subsequent event. It is a once-for-all experience for the believer’s regeneration. We cannot accept the second blessing or subsequent experience of this spiritual act. Seven times in the Scriptures where such references occur, they are in the narrative passages, not once in imperative passage.
 - 2.1.2 However we do believe that a believer must be constantly filled with the Spirit. Wherever the teaching on the filling of the Spirit is mentioned, it is written as imperative instruction (Eph. 5:18-21). Therefore, a believer must live a Spirit-filled life. A Spirit-filled life is Spirit-controlled life.
 - 2.1.3 Though the event of Baptism of the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4 occurred after the post-conversion of believers, we must understand that this happened after the Pentecost when the believers received the Baptism of the Spirit. Therefore this should be considered as a particular historical narrative. As for the event in Acts

8:14-17, the Samaritan believers received their Spirit after their conversion. This was allowed to happen to highlight the fact that the Lord used this experience of the spiritual gift to take away the racial barrier between the Jews and the Gentile. The other records of the conversion of Cornelius and Ephesian believers (Acts 10:44 - 48 and 19:1-17) all mentioned that they received their Baptism of the Spirit simultaneously with their conversion. Besides all the four records of events all happened within 28 years, therefore they were historically significant to the testimony of Acts 1:8.

2.2 Slain by the Spirit:

2.2.1 Possible causes:

1. Evil spirit 2. Psychological factor 3. Holy Spirit

2.2.2 The behaviour induced by the Spirit as mentioned in the Bible: standing, sitting, kneeling and lying; weeping or in calm repentant mood. However all the repentance process in believers is in alert, conscious mind, not in unconscious mind or not knowing for themselves what they are doing, for example: Saul (Paul) repented and fell to the ground (Acts 9:4-5). Therefore we do not support the view that you have to lose your consciousness or intellect in order to be slain by the Spirit, especially such behaviour like falling backward to the ground.

2.2.3 Those believers who claim to repent must be discerned and be followed up to ensure that their repentance is genuine.

2.3 Holy Spirit & Tongues:

2.3.1 Our Church does not deny the existence of tongues, but the practice of them in worship must be guided by the principles according to I Cor. 14.

2.3.2 Tongues are neither the only sign of Baptism of the Spirit or the filling of the Spirit, nor the assurance of salvation.

2.4 Prophecy:

We do not practise prophesying for we are convinced that the Bible is sufficient for leading and guiding our way of life (Deut. 6:1-9).

2.5 Dreams & Vision:

2.5.1 Though there are records of dreams & interpretation in the Bible, these are exceptional, for example: the dreams & interpretations by Joseph and Daniel were extraordinary. They might interpret only those few dreams throughout their lives. Therefore we cannot treat these as norm.

2.5.2 Under exceptional cases, in modern days the Lord may allow these dream experience to lead someone to Christ, such as some Muslim converts did in middle East.

- 2.5.3 However under normal circumstances, the revelation of the Lord is complete and sufficient. There is no need for Him to customarily using dreams to lead someone to Christ.
- 2.5.4 Therefore, based on the above reasoning, the service of dream interpretation may not be necessary.
- 2.6 Supernatural Gifts: such as Gold Dust phenomena:
Refer [Power Encounter] pg.8
- 2.7 Clapping, Lifting hands and Spiritual Dance:
- 2.7.1 There is nothing wrong in clapping and lifting hands for there are such examples in the Bible.
- 2.7.2 In order to distinguish ourselves from the charismatic worship during this transitional period, we do not encourage of lifting hands in our worship. This is for the purpose of distinction rather than doctrinal flaw.
- 2.7.3 As for clapping, we may allow such practice in certain cases, but it must be orderly. Not every hymn or song should be accompanied by clapping.
- 2.7.4 We do not approve congregational or spiritual dance in worship, but dancing presentation may be exceptional. This is more of cultural rather than doctrinal reason. If dancing is incorporated in a certain worship service because it is part of the total culture of a particular ethnic group and is done orderly, we have to accept it with respect except that we do not practise ourselves.
- 2.8 Symbol of Dragons:
- 2.8.1 The symbol of dragons in Chinese culture is different from the biblical symbolism. Therefore we should not equate them. Hence there is no need for us to deliberately destroy or burn such objects that bear the symbol of dragons.
- 2.8.2 However those objects that have such symbol and have been used in idol worshipping should be destroyed in His name.
- 2.8.3 Though the symbol of dragon is nothing, we do not encourage the display of objects that bear such symbol at home for the sake of stumbling-block issue.
- 2.9 Diseases and Curse-breaking:
- 2.9.1 Certain type of sin may induce sickness or difficulties in life, however not every type of disease or difficulty is caused by sin. If we have sinned, we must confess to the Lord. However we should not be over sensitive or guilt-loaded for such feeling that our confession is not sufficient or the sins of our ancestors have not been forgiven.
- 2.9.2 We cannot interpret dogmatically Ex. 20:5b-6 “for I, the LORD your God, am a

jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments". (NIV) The main focus of this passage is not on the effect of sins on the next generation, though it is also significant theologically, but the focus is on the comparison of "third or fourth generation" with "a thousand generation". If idolatry affects up to third or fourth generation, then the blessings of our Lord extends more to a thousand generations, Why not choose the Lord whose blessings has far greater effect than idols!

2.9.3 Though there is the retribution effect of sin upon the human generations, Moses also pointed out the personal responsibility of personal sin in Deut. 24:16. Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin". The prophets also taught this principle of personal responsibility of sin in Jer. 31:29-30 & Ezk. 18:2-4 In those days people will no longer say, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes - his own teeth will be set on edge.

2.9.4 We believe once a person accepts Christ, all his sin is forgiven. We believe the effect of His atonement is wonderfully effective as stated in 2 Cor. 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!". I Jn. 1:9 also states the same thing." If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness".

2.9.5 If a certain believer has been adopted by an idol, once he accepts Christ, the effect of the adopting covenant with an idol in his past life has no more binding effect on him. If he is not convinced in his conscience or psychologically, he should seek pastoral counseling. If his faith in Christ is genuine, there is no need for him to seek for pastoral counseling for the power of Christ is sufficient for him.

2.10 Prosperity Theology:

Refer [Power Encounter] pg.10

3. Our Relationship with Charismatic Group:

Our Attitude: Firm, cautious but loving.

3.1 Ultra Charismatic Group:

3.1.1 Behaviour

3.1.1.1 Treat the gift of Holy Spirit as the way of salvation, for example: equating tongues as assurance of salvation.

- 3.1.1.2 Denying the salvation in other evangelical churches.
- 3.1.1.3 Having the superior feeling of having a particular spiritual gift. Those who not have the charismatic expressive behaviours are second class citizens.
- 3.1.1.4 Treating the relative truth as absolute norm to follow, e.g. those who have the experience of Acts 16:17 are true believers.
- 3.1.1.5 The lack of using God's Word to evaluate charismatic experience. Using God's Word to validate whether a particular experience is a consistent part of the truth.
- 3.1.1.6 No sign of willingness to change or repent.
- 3.1.1.7 Those who do not agree with our Charismatic position.
- 3.1.2 Treatment:
 - 3.1.2.1 For laity, stop or deny contacts with them, refer 2 Jn. 1:10. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him”.
 - 3.1.2.2 For the leaders:
 - 3.1.2.2.1 Be selective: for the sake of understanding the doctrinal errors or the promotional tactics used by them, adopt a limited degree if contact.
 - 3.1.2.2.2 Unless for research or observation purposes, the leaders should avoid such meetings or activities sponsored by such groups, like Healing Rally.
 - 3.1.2.2.3 If there is no other necessity, avoid contact with them (1 Tim. 6:20) .
 - 3.1.2.2.4 Helping those anti-charismatic workers within the group.
 - 3.1.2.2.5 Do not support those workers who subscribed to the above charismatic stand.
- 3.2 Mild or Charismatic inclined Group:
 - 3.2.1 Behaviour:
 - 3.2.1.1 Open to charismatic influence.
 - 3.2.1.2 Sympathetic to such teaching.
 - 3.2.1.3 Support charismatic meeting outside the church but does not hold such meeting within the church.
 - 3.2.1.4 Discern the possibility of repentance in charismatic stand.
 - 3.2.1.5 Respect non-charismatic form of worship as valid.
 - 3.2.1.6 Do not regard the charismatic zeal or search as absolute.
 - 3.2.1.7 Honour the teaching of God's Word, and that the crucified Christ is glorified.

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- 3.2.2 Treatment:
 - 3.2.2.1 Regard as friends.
 - 3.2.2.2 Advise with love, bring them back to the Bible.
 - 3.2.2.3 Seek opportunities to influence them, holding theological seminars for them.
- 3.3 For local pastors, leaders or church members who have gone charismatic, refer Church Discipline Manual.