

Worship services are being cancelled until further notice because of Covid-19. However, we will have worship services through the Internet Zoom platform every Sunday at 10:30 AM in NB, NS and PEI. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The telephone numbers for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number change every week. If you need more information, please contact Mr. Vautour. See the bottom of the bulletin the contact information.

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

For more information about special activities happening in GCI, please see the international website at [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org). On the left-hand upper side of the screen, you will see 3 short lines. You simply need to click on it. A drop-down menu will appear. Click on "PARTICIPATE".

Please note that audio sermons are available of sermons are available at [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) and video sermons are now available on YouTube – GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL-MONCTON (see link below)

If you have a prayer requests, other events you would like to announce and/or praise to our great God you would like to share, please try to contact Mr. Vautour by email, text or telephone no later than Saturday, in the morning.

For local prayer requests and financial updates, please see <http://www.worshipim.ca/> and click on **Members Only**. It is password protected for confidentiality reason. If you do not have the password, please contact Mr. Vautour.

**Voice of the Martyrs** (<https://www.vomcanada.com/ng-2020-06-04b.htm>). Christians continue to be persecuted in many parts of the world. They need our prayers. You can receive a free publication through your email. If you are interested, please visit their website to subscribe.

Next Bible Study (through ZOOM) is scheduled for Thursday August 27 at 7:30 p.m. We will continue to series in 1<sup>st</sup> John 4

For prayer requests please see local website [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) under "For Members Only". If you do not know the password, please contact Mr. Vautour

**Offerings:** you can send your offering directly to the following address: **Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7SL 6W5**. If you prefer, you can also call **1-306-653-2705**. Thank you for your continued generous giving to God by giving to this part of God's church, his body.

**From Mr. Bill Hall – GCI Canadian Director** "We will continue to process the donations we receive in Saskatoon. Members are urged to mail them directly to our office for the time-being. They can also donate via phone using a credit card, or via Canada Helps using the donate button on our website [www.gcicanada.ca](http://www.gcicanada.ca) We are waving the provision that all donations given via Canada Helps go toward national expenses for the time being. We will credit all donations received via Canada Helps to a member's local congregation, if we can identify where they attend."

**For updates see GCI News** where you will see the following articles and updates:

- 1) **100 Year Old Church** – Mr. Williams (<https://update.gci.org/>)
- 2) **Staten Island Congregation Begins ASL Bible** (<https://update.gci.org/2020/08/staten-island-congregation-begins-asl-bible/> )
- 3) **Sharing the Gospel in NYC** (<https://update.gci.org/2020/08/sharing-the-gospel-in-nyc/> )
- 4) **Feeding Children during the Pandemic** (<https://update.gci.org/2020/08/feeding-children-during-the-pandemic/> )
- 5) **Up Close and Personal** - article by Mr. Bill Hall, Canadian Dir. (<https://update.gci.org/2020/08/romans-11/>)

## **Our Response to God (Doctrine of the Spirit, part 7 (conclusion))**

By [Ted Johnston - August 16, 2020](#)

*This post concludes a series presenting "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit" by Dr. Gary Deddo, President of [Grace Communion Seminary](#). For other posts in the series, click a number: <http://thesurprisinggodblog.gci.org/2020/05/holy-spirit-part-1.html>*

[Last time](#) we noted various aspects of the Spirit's ministry to us both corporately and individually. As we now bring this series to a close, let's look at a primary aspect of the Spirit's ongoing ministry which involves enabling us to make a full and proper *response* to the truth and reality of who God is, and what he has done, is doing and will yet do in our world, church and individual lives.

### **The nature of our response to God**

The Holy Spirit works actively in our lives, both individually and corporately, to unbind our wills, unscramble our minds, and refashion our affections so that we can more fully respond with all that we are to all that God is. The Spirit frees us to be receptive at *every level* of who we are. However, it sometimes seems that we think the Spirit enables us to respond to God only emotionally. While the Spirit certainly does enable our emotional response (in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, joy, sorrow and repentance), the Spirit (who is called *the Spirit of truth* in [John 14:17; 15:26](#)) also enables us to respond with our minds -- with our understanding or intelligence ([1 Cor. 14:15](#)). The Spirit also sets our minds free to be obedient to the truth ([Romans 2:8](#)). Throughout the New Testament, the heart (emotions, human spirit) and the mind, when healthy, are not split apart. Instead, they are coordinated. Thus the Spirit enables us to respond with all of what we are.

There is no reason to think that the working of God in and among us is divided, as if Jesus addresses our minds, and the Spirit addresses our emotions. We're not compartmentalized like that. The whole of God (Father, Son, Spirit) interacts with the whole of who we are (body, mind, heart). Note as well that the Son of God, via the Incarnation, assumed our fully humanity -- a whole human nature, with all its aspects. We thus understand that Jesus is a full human being with body, mind and heart. In the Gospels we see Jesus responding fully with all that he is to the truth and reality of his heavenly Father and his relationship to him and the Spirit. Jesus obeys in the Spirit and rejoices in the Spirit. He overcomes temptation by the Spirit. He overcomes evil by the Spirit and sets people free. He offers himself on the cross to the Father through the Spirit ([Heb. 9:14](#)). Jesus lives his fully human life in and by the Spirit.

Thus, we understand that when the Spirit of Jesus comes upon us, he enables us to respond fully to the truth and reality of who God is and who we are in relationship to God with all we are and have. If there is part of us that is not yet responding, whether it be body, mind or heart, the Holy Spirit works to bring us to the point that we respond in all that we are. The Spirit does not divide us. Rather, he heals and makes us whole, giving us human integrity before our Lord and God.

### **The objective work of the Spirit in us**

So, we should not align the Holy Spirit exclusively with what is subjective (internal or affective) in human experience. Yes, the Spirit works in us, works *in* our subjectivity, but not *as* our subjectivity. The Holy Spirit cannot be identified with our subjective states (feelings, emotions, consciences) as if they are identical. There is no denying that the Spirit works in our subjectivity. If not, we would remain in bondage to our fallen, rebellious wills and hard hearts, and our self-justifying and rationalizing minds. However, the Spirit works in us, in our subjectivity, but does so objectively, so that we can respond with our whole being to the truth and reality of who God is and who we are in relationship to him.

The Holy Spirit objects to our false, resistant, self-justifying subjective orientations. He is not the subjective aspect of human beings that can be shaped and formed any way we like, made to say what we want, made to reflect our preferences, prejudices, biases and desires. The Spirit has a *particular* character, mind, will, purpose, desire and heart, which is identical to that of Jesus. We have no power over the Spirit to recreate him in our image. The Spirit has his own objective reality that works within our subjectivity to open our eyes, minds and hearts to God.

The Holy Spirit, then, is a healer that brings the whole of human being together from the inside out. He does not split us up. He does not say to us, "I'm just in charge of your emotions, your imagination and your desires. What you think and believe and come to know, the rational part, well, Jesus takes care of that. I don't know anything about that." No, the Spirit does not divide up human being into compartments. Instead, he harmonizes the internal with the external, sharing with us the reestablished integrity of Jesus' humanity (which is true humanity).

### **The Spirit humanizes us**

Thus we understand that a key aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry is to *make us more fully human*, like Jesus, the one in whose image we were created and are being renewed or transformed ([Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 3:18](#)). The Spirit shares with us the sanctified humanity of Jesus, which makes us fully human, more completely human, more personal, more full of the fruit of the Spirit. *True spirituality is mature humanity in full and right relationship with God.*

So, we can say that the Holy Spirit humanizes by making us share in the glorified humanity of Jesus Christ. Now in the process of this transformation, the Spirit brings us to have a humility before God in which we confess that God is

God and that we are not; that we are entirely dependent upon God; that we need the grace of God and that we must hand over to him all our sin in repentance, and our whole selves in faith. But in leading us to confess these things, the Spirit will not submit us to humiliation. He will not make us feel less than human, or regret that we were ever human, or think that God despises humanity and creaturely limits.

There is a huge difference between humility and humiliation. Putting it this way may be surprising, since there are some who teach that humility in the Spirit comes by way of our humiliation. It is sometimes taught that the ministry of the Spirit not only focuses exclusively on the subjective side of human being, but requires that we set aside our rationality or intelligence, and act in less than human ways, perhaps like an animal or a person who has lost self-control (like a drunk person). It would be strange indeed for the Spirit to lead persons to lose self-control and act in ways beneath human being, since one of the gifts of the Spirit is precisely self-control, and the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus who came to bring us into conformity with him. Though Jesus was humble before the Father and the Spirit, the Father never treated Jesus in a way that denigrated his humanity. Nor did Jesus respond to God in ways that denied a healthy and whole humanity. In Jesus, humanity was glorified, not denigrated. Jesus showed what it really means to be a human being.

Given who the Holy Spirit is, and what we know of his ministry, we can affirm that the Spirit does not dehumanize or depersonalize us. So when he leads us into humility before God, he does so in a way that is deeply personal -- a way that is not alien to our humanity. This humility, which is the fruit of human maturity in relationship to God, is *not* about being humiliated, being treated as less than a person, as less than fully human -- a form of humility that involves a relationship the opposite of the kind of ministry Jesus performed in the power of the Spirit. Abject humiliation does *not* represent the kind of relationship Jesus had with his heavenly Father.

Even though Jesus' enemies, especially in the end, attempted to humiliate him to the fullest extent they could, the end result was not Jesus' humiliation in the sense of him collapsing into a dehumanized heap of regret and shame for taking on humanity. Rather, Jesus reacted in such a way that we are encouraged to look to him as **"the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God"** ([Heb. 12:2](#)). Jesus, who is exalted in his bodily resurrection and ascension, and who calls us his brothers and sisters, is not ashamed of us ([Heb. 2:11](#)). Jesus, by the Spirit, shares with us his glorified and perfected humanity.

Rather than denigrating us, the Holy Spirit works to humanize us. He does so by enabling us to share in Jesus' own glorified humanity. To be fully spiritual does not mean becoming non-human, nor does it mean becoming some kind of super-spiritual disembodied ghost, vapor or ethereal gas that is distributed throughout the cosmos. We come to a biblical understanding of true spirituality by observing the life of Jesus lived out in the Spirit. True spirituality is a human being fully responding to the truth of who God is -- firing, as it were, on every cylinder, responding totally to who God is and who we are in relationship to him. It means responding to God in praise and prayer, and in every other way of service and love. The Holy Spirit, who is the humanizing Spirit, leads us in this, helping us share in the perfect humanity of Jesus. The presence and working of the Holy Spirit will always demonstrate just that kind of spirituality and not some other. Evil spirits dehumanize and destroy.

### **What about the Spirit's ministry to those not yet repenting and believing?**

So far, we've been addressing primarily the Holy Spirit's ministry in connection with persons who are responsive to the gospel and receptive to Spirit's working. Let's now address the Spirit's ministry to those not yet responding, not yet believing, not yet receptive to the Spirit's work. We can start by asking whether or not the Spirit acts upon those who are resistant, or not yet believing, that is, those who are not Christians. The answer must be *yes*. No one becomes a believing person except in response to the ministry the Spirit. If no one comes to the Father except by the Son who sends the Spirit, and it is the Spirit who opens eyes, convicts of the need for forgiveness and life in Christ, then no one could become a conscious member of the body of Christ unless the Spirit drew them. The Spirit must work on those not yet believing and responding, or no one would ever become Christian, no one could enter into their salvation. The Spirit goes out after people to bring them to Christ and so to the Father. That is essential to the Spirit's mission in the world. We can see this in a dramatic way in the conversion of Saul/Paul.

A related question is whether we can say that the Spirit is "in" everyone. While there is not a lot to go on conveyed in biblical revelation, there is sufficient teaching that can enable us to answer this question. If by "in" everyone we mean in the deepest most personal and intensive way that the Spirit ministers, I think we have to say *no*. Jesus indicates to those who are following him that the Spirit was "with" them, but will be "in" them ([John 14:17](#)). Jesus at one point breathes on the twelve the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room. As a result, they have the Spirit now in a way they didn't previously. But Jesus also tells them to wait for the coming of the Spirit in Jerusalem, indicating that there is more yet to come involving the Spirit. And then the Spirit becomes present at Pentecost in a new and different way. But also notice that there were some who rejected the Spirit and mocked those who received the Spirit. Not all received the Spirit even though He was now present in a new way. So the Spirit can be present in a variety of ways, a range of intensities, and we could say at a number of different levels of depth.

### **The Spirit inhabiting (dwelling in)**

One of the ways of speaking of the Spirit's presence in the New Testament is through use of the word which can be translated "dwelling in" or "inhabiting." This coming and indwelling of the Spirit in persons is viewed as the fulfillment of the promise God made through the prophet Joel ([Joel 2:28](#)) and Ezekiel ([Ezek. 18:31; 36:26](#)), as Peter tells us in [Acts 2:17](#). The biblical notion of the Spirit's "dwelling in" or "inhabiting" is exclusively applied to those who are believing, receptive and responsive to the leading and working of the Spirit (see [Rom. 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 3:16](#)). This word designates the most intense, personal and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in persons and in the community of believers.

But this special presence of the Spirit does not mean that the Spirit is absent from everyone else. Clearly, the Holy Spirit was with those in ancient Israel, and sometimes in special ways upon the prophets and even some of the skilled tabernacle workmen. But that kind of presence did not represent what God had ultimately promised. That only occurred on Pentecost to those who received the preached word and were receptive of the presence and working of the Spirit. Further, we can see that the dynamic nature of relationship to the Spirit continues even at the deepest level of indwelling. This becomes clear when we consider the teaching that those who are part of the believing body are not to "quench" or "grieve" the Spirit ([1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30](#)) but rather are to "be continually filled" with the Spirit ([Eph. 5:18](#)).

We thus understand that the Holy Spirit can be present to anyone and everyone. The Spirit is God's presence throughout the creation. But we can also say that the Spirit can work in anyone and everyone. The Spirit's ministry is to open people's minds, soften their hearts, open their eyes to truth, unbind their resistant wills and convict them of the need for forgiveness and the life of salvation that comes only from God by grace. The Spirit delivers to unbelieving people the gift of repentance and faith, hope and love. Doing that requires working within them, within their persons, in their subjectivity. So, we can say that the Spirit works in them and is present to them in that way. However, that kind of inner working does not represent the promised indwelling that comes only with receiving Christ by being responsive to the promptings of the Spirit. For the Spirit does not work causally, mechanically, impersonally or coercively so that all necessarily are forced to receive the benefits of the Spirit's ministry. Those who in response to the Spirit's ministry receive the Spirit, who are receptive and submissive, then participate (have *koinonia*, fellowship) in a much deeper way and experience a unique quality of relationship with the Holy Spirit that is manifested in a conversion of heart and mind, a turning to face in a new directions toward God. Such submission and turning is exhibited in repentance and faith in God through Jesus Christ.

### **In Christ, united to Christ by the Spirit**

This seems to explain why in the New Testament only those who are receptive to the Spirit, not resistant, and those who respond with repentance, faith, hope and love to the Gospel of Jesus Christ are said to be "in" Christ, or dwell "in the Lord." They alone are said explicitly to be united to Christ ([1 Cor. 6:17](#)). The relationship of Christ with his people is compared to the marital unity ([Eph. 5:23; Rev. 19:7; 21:9; 22:17](#)). The most intensive, intimate, deep and personal unity described in the New Testament is reserved for those who are believing, for those who are members of the body of Christ, united to him as the head is to the body of a living being.

So, by means of the use of certain words and images there is in the New Testament a distinction made between the Spirit's relationship with those who are receptive and open to the ministry of the Spirit, and those who are not yet responsive. How the Spirit is present, that is whether or not indwelling or inhabiting, will involve whether or not persons are receptive to the gospel and the ministry of the Spirit to receive it, welcome it. How one responds to the ministry of the Holy Spirit does make a difference in the kind of relationship one has with the Spirit.

But such a distinction should not be construed as meaning that the Spirit is not for all persons, is not capable of ministering in and to all persons at the deepest level, speaking to their individual human spirits. The Holy Spirit is "for all" in just the same way that Jesus Christ is for all those created through him. The Father sends the Spirit for the same purpose as he sent the Son. But the Spirit is able to be present in a range of ways. And this fact is represented in biblical understanding and so we have to account for it in our understanding as well.

### **What about the Spirit in other religions?**

What we can say about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in other religions is an extension of what we have just covered. No religion itself can keep the Holy Spirit out or away. The Holy Spirit is God's sovereign grace at work. The Spirit can be present to anyone and anywhere without becoming polluted, just as we see take place with Jesus' being present among sinners. And the Spirit is present to bring to bear all the fruits of reconciliation accomplished for all humanity in Christ. So in those situations where the official religion being practiced is resistant (even hostile) to the gospel, the Spirit will be present and working within, but against those points of resistance/hostility.

The religion itself will not be responsible or earn any credit for the presence and working of the Spirit. If hostile, the religion is actually an impediment to the working of the Spirit, an obstacle to receptivity to the ministry of the Spirit of Jesus. However, that does not stop the Holy Spirit from working. The Spirit will work to bring individuals and groups out of bondage to false ideas about God, and false ideas about their relationship to God. The Spirit will minister to open

people's minds and hearts to be receptive to God's grace, love, faith and hope. The Spirit will draw people to a humble repentance and a dependence upon some kind of grace.

Individuals and groups can be drawn by the Spirit even while remaining outwardly a part of their non- or anti-Christian religious community. In that case, the Spirit will be making heretics within that religion—individuals or sub-groups who in their own minds and hearts take exception to at least some of what they have been told and are taught by the formal religion—as the Spirit leads. These persons may not know that they have become willing to follow the Spirit of Jesus. The Spirit may be anonymous to them, especially at first. But they, in their spirits, will have become responsive and receptive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit of Jesus.

People in this state can be said to have *implicit faith*, not *explicit faith*. There can be made an analogy between these people and those of faith in the Old Testament, whose faith in Jesus was not explicit. Although they did not know Jesus by name, nor of the nature of his future work, they nevertheless lived by faith and repentance and trusted in the covenant love and free grace of God to renew it when they broke it. They didn't know exactly how God's covenant was going to be fulfilled, but they knew and trusted and hoped it would somehow it would be.

That's how the New Testament depicts these Old Testament persons of faith. On the other side of their death, they will see how the promises they had hoped in were explicitly fulfilled. These persons, of course, are not excluded from God's salvation. So too, if through no fault of their own, persons responsive to the even anonymous ministry of the Holy Spirit do not come to have explicit faith, there is no reason to believe that they will not be included in God's ultimate salvation. Such persons have not committed the absolute and complete repudiation (blasphemy) of the Spirit but have been welcoming and receptive. Their implicit faith will become explicit as soon as it is made possible.

Of course, it is normally God's will for all who have implicit faith to come to have explicit faith in this life. And after all, is it not true that everyone who comes to have explicit faith, first had, at least for a moment, implicit faith? But faith can become explicit, it seems, only if and when there is a conscious and explicit proclamation of the gospel so that in the hearing of it, it is welcomed and received. And where there is such implicit faith it is always welcomed and received since there has already been a responsiveness to the Spirit that is working even as they hear the explicit Word announced. There are numerous missionary stories that corroborate just this kind of scenario. People have somehow become ready to receive the proclamation of the gospel before any missionary had ever arrived. So when the explicit gospel is proclaimed by the evangelist or missionary, it is recognized as fulfilling what they have been waiting for. Well, we know how this comes about—by the Spirit, that's how they were prepared.

But it may be the case that in not every instance where there is implicit faith engendered by the Holy Spirit that God brings about an opportunity for that faith to become explicit in this life. Yes, it could be that God sees to it that this never comes about. It could be that in every case where there is genuine implicit faith, God may send dreams or angels or miraculously appearing evangelists (as in Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch, shown in the picture below), so that their implicit faith can become explicit through a conscious testimony to Christ. But we cannot know about these situations. And knowing how God works in every case does not practically concern us.



*Baptism of the Eunuch* by Cuyp (public domain via Wikipedia Commons)

The point here is that we do not need a final theory as to how things will necessarily play out in situations in which we have no part. Rather, our ministry is to serve in ways that count on the working of the Holy Spirit within people so that implicit faith can become joyfully explicit. And in that way, our and their joy and thanksgiving will be increased. They will become members of the body of Christ (Christians) and be able to join in explicit worship and in consciously bearing witness to God so that others can also come to have explicit faith as well. But in any and every case, we can rest assured that God will, one way or another, take care of all those situations where faith is implicit because he is merciful and faithful. God always acts on the basis of his grace operating through the faithful working of the Holy Spirit, who is

the Spirit of the Son and of the Father, sent by both in accordance with their sovereign grace.

### Conclusion

With that comment we now end this series on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit with a focus on the Spirit's Person and work. Though the series has not answered all questions on the topic, and the answers given are not exhaustive, hopefully understanding has been gained concerning fundamental questions we have regarding the Holy Spirit.

**GCI principle website and Moncton Websites**—a) [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org) , b) [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) , c) <https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton> ; d) [Grace Communion International-Moncton](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmDZy69vJcFfPg)

For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website.  
Contact Information: Pastor's contact information: email— [evatour47@outlook.com](mailto:evatour47@outlook.com)