



HERE ARE A FEW INTRODUCTORY WORDS ON THIS .PDF FILE BEFORE YOU WADE THROUGH THE HOOPLA.

FIRST, IT'S IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT THIS DOCUMENT IS MORE OR LESS ONE PIECE OF A CONVERSATION - AN EXCHANGE THAT HAPPENED BETWEEN TWO BLOGS. SO IT'S HARDLY ACADEMIC-QUALITY STUFF. EDELEN IS A SMART ENOUGH GUY, AND I SEEM TO IMPRESS ABOUT 50% OF THE PEOPLE WHO READ TEAMPYRO WITH MY THOUGHTS, SO THE CONVERSATION IS AT LEAST ABOVE THE MUDLINE WHEN IT COMES TO POPULAR-LEVEL CONTENT. BUT AS A CONVERSATION OF SORTS, IT'S LIMITED IN SCOPE AND USEFULNESS. I WOULDN'T ABANDON YOUR CHURCH OVER WHATEVER YOU READ HERE, BUT IF THIS HELPS YOU ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, THAT WILL BE GREAT.

THE SECOND THING ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT IS THAT THERE'S NO TELLING UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES YOU'RE GOING TO BE READING IT. ON THE ONE HAND, YOU MIGHT BE SOMEONE WITH A NEW AND FRAGILE FAITH, AND YOUR PASTOR IS EXHORTING YOU TO SEEK THE GIFT OF TONGUES; ON THE OTHER, YOU MAY BE A PERSON WHO WAS JUST HURT DEEPLY BY A SO-CALLED "PROPHET" WHO JUST DID SOME SPIRITUAL BULLYING ON YOU IN CHURCH; ON YET THE THIRD HAND, YOU MAY BE SOMEONE WHO HAS EXPERIENCED WHAT YOU BELIEVE TO BE A MANIFESTATION OF THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND YOU ARE TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THAT EVENT. IF YOU ARE IN TURMOIL OVER THIS WHOLLY-THEOLOGICAL QUESTION, MY SUGGESTION IS THAT YOU FIRST RESOLVE YOUR EMOTIONAL ISSUES BEFORE YOU COME TO THE SCRIPTURE.

THIRD, NO OFFENSE. SERIOUSLY: I WRITE IN A RATHER PITHY STYLE, AND I MEAN NO OFFENSE BY IT. THIS IS HOW I TALK IN REAL LIFE, AND THIS IS WHO I AM. DAN EDELEN MAKES SOME STARK CLAIMS AND SOME PRETTY CLEAR CHARGES IN HIS PART OF THIS EXCHANGE; I GIVE IN RETURN A FRANK REBUTTAL BASED ON WHAT I UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURE TO SAY AND HOW I HAVE READ HIS ARGUMENTS. PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT IN THE SPIRIT WHICH IT IS WRITTEN.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ABOUT THIS PAPER, YOU CAN E-MAIL ME AT:

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Grace and peace to you,

centuri0n



Yeah, don't say anything. My hiatus is on hiatus.

| Before I say anything further, let's
| establish some boundaries on proper
| exegesis of the Scriptures:
|
| 1. Scripture interprets Scripture - I'm
| certain we both agree on that.

I agree that Scripture is the –context- of Scripture, and that when Scripture plainly tells us how to interpret another passage, we have to abide by that.

| 2. Scripture says what it must say and
| omits what it omits - Proper exegesis
| of the Scriptures relies on addressing
| what is said, not speculating about
| what is not said. Speculation is
| exactly that, and for that reason, we
| do not create or destroy foundational
| doctrines within the Church as
| espoused in the Scriptures based on
| speculation. I certainly hope we both
| agree on that issue, too.

An argument from silence is always a bad way to argue – affirming something which is not addressed or not substantiated is always a mistake. The question, as I have pointed out already, is what you do with some text when what is said speaks –against- something which one would expect the text to say, given certain presuppositions.

It is you who brings conjectural presuppositions to the text. The idea that charismatic gifts are a –given-, and a –necessity-, is a -presupposition- which you are trying to substantiate with various passages, but you ignore or retreat when passages that an alert reader would seek to find some sign of the presupposition show no sign of your assumption. It is you who have elevated the charismata into the "lifblood of the church" – in many ways, like a Catholic advocate elevates the Magisterium or the Sacraments. And the methodology for either proving or disproving these things is the same: does the subject in question turn up to do what the advocate says it should and ought to do, or are other means provided by the writers of Scripture to do the work in question? This is not an argument from silence: it is a demonstration that the charismata are not lifted up in Scripture the way you say they should be lifted up today, and in that there are other normative means lifted up in Scripture to do the

things you say the charismata ought to be doing.

| 3. We do not form doctrines based on
| a single Scripture verse. The
| Scriptures are rich and they
| continually reinforce themselves. All
| sound doctrine within the Church is
| based on a complete understanding of
| the Scriptures, not on a lone verse.
| Throughout history, error has crept in
| when we create and destroy doctrine
| on stand-alone verses. Again, Biblical
| scholars agree on this concept, and I
| hope you do as well.

We will see how well you abide by this maxim. I would agree that the AWANA method of understanding any particular verse is not very productive or useful, and that reading Scripture is a more robust activity than merely citing verse numbers.

| Let me also add this:
|
| 4. As we have both agreed, the New
| Testament clearly shows the
| charismatic gifts bestowed on the
| Church. It shows them in action. It
| provides doctrinal reality as to how
| they function and must be
| administrated. It includes narratives
| showing the gifts at work. It explains
| why they have been given. The Bible
| shows the gifts operating throughout
| the whole of the New Testament after
| the point at which the Spirit came
| upon the Church. For this reason, the
| burden of proof to believe the gifts
| have passed is not on the
| charismatic/continualist, but on the
| cessationist. The gifts are a
| foundational reality of the Church. To
| make any changes at all to this
| position is to provide multiple
| Scriptures and compelling arguments
| based on Scripture against that
| doctrinal position. Not speculation (as
| in #2 above), but compelling reality
| that anyone can see stated explicitly

| in the Scriptures. Therefore, the
| burden of proof on the cessationist
| position is not something attended to
| lightly. It must be compelling in order
| to overturn the majority of revelation.

We do not agree on this. I was very clear that I do not contend against the idea that the Apostles were gifted with miraculous gifts, but those gifts were specifically for the fulfillment of [Joel 2](#).

We can agree that they existed in the church for a time – not that they are given to the Church (big "C", all believers at all times) as a right or a "key".

As for the burden of proof being on the cessationist to say, "look: they will cease and in fact have ceased," all I have to do is open a history book and point out the fact that the gifts did, in fact, cease. The earliest apologists for the church never once pointed to on-going miracles and signs as a substantiation of the church's connection to God or for their authority.

But, because that rebuttal is open to all kinds of random responses, I am more than willing to stick to the Scriptural case which cannot be avoided. That is, if the word of God says something must be true, we are called as believers to believe that and not what we'd like to believe or what we'd hope could be true.

| Now, let me address your reply:
|
| 1. To the lack of discussion of
| charismata in Paul's pastoral letters to
| Timothy and Titus
|
| We have the canon of Scripture as a
| means by which God tells us the
| Gospel story, equips us for the work
| of the Kingdom, and provides us
| correction. The books are broad and
| cover many topics. Each book has its
| emphases, and God in His wisdom
| alone has chosen them to be what they
| are.
|
| For our benefit, God gave us answers
| in the canon. In 1st Corinthians, Paul

| develops a healthy doctrine of the
| charismata because that church had
| some lack of understanding in that
| area. He didn't address that with
| Timothy and Titus.

I would agree, in one sense, that 1Cor offers us guidance on this issue. The question is whether Paul offers us "a healthy doctrine of charismata", or if Paul instead is speaking to what a healthy, well-rounded spiritual life is in light of the Gospel.

This goes specifically to your point regarding quoting one verse in a vacuum. If you will excuse me for speaking this way, what is the over-arching motive of Paul in writing 1Cor? Why does he write to these people? Is this letter a series of blog entries not related to each other, or is it a letter with one objective broken down into specific categories under that objective? That is to ask: is Paul offering a menu of unrelated corrections to the Corinthians, or is he offering one category of correction, and in that category is he demonstrating all the applications of that specific problem? Think carefully – because the wrong answer can be demonstrated to be wrong in very short order.

| If we ask why, we have moved into
| the realm of speculation. Paul didn't
| feel the need to address the gifts with
| Timothy and Titus. Perhaps he had
| addressed it in other letters to
| Timothy and Titus we do not have.
| Perhaps he addressed them in person
| or through others. Perhaps neither
| Timothy nor Titus had problems in
| this area, so they needed direction.
| Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps.

No – the question of "why" is apparent immediately, given the reasons for each letter, and it offers significant difficulty to the continualist. In the continualist view, the gifts are the way the church at any given point in time demonstrates and exercises its connection to the Holy Spirit, right? And the application of that simply gets wider and wider if one allows a continualist to ponder the matter and express his thoughts. Your latest post, for example, [about the role of the Holy Spirit in the church](#) – if we used it here as supporting material – proposes a church in which the application of the charismatic doctrine of the Holy Spirit should be served up in every situation imaginable.

If the charismatic doctrine is actually that deep and wide, why is it so far from being present in that form in the NT? For example, why is church unity not subject to charismatic outpouring but instead to truth in love? Why is false teaching not subject to charismatic outpouring but instead to rebuke of faithful teachers? When Paul speaks of the power of the church in Jesus Christ in 1 Cor, why does he mean the authority to remove a sinful man rather than the power to manifest the Holy Spirit as a warning (cf. [Acts 5](#))?

See: if the charismatic gifts are the sign, seal and way the Holy Spirit is present in the church, and the doctrine means that's how we know God is working, why does the NT not tell us to follow the gifts around rather than what it does tell us to do – which is follow the healthy teaching of doctrine? The speculation is how you can come to the broad conclusion you do when what the NT presents is a far narrower conclusion about the miraculous signs of the apostolic age. I ask why – any cessationist asks why – because what you affirm isn't found, and instead something far more demanding and frankly useful is found in the place of the ideas you think are in Scripture.

| The Scriptures develop a rich
| theology of the gifts. We have that
| rich theology. To speculate as to why
| God did not move Paul to write on
| that topic to Timothy and Titus is to
| also speculate why He did not advise
| on the proper administration of the
| Lord's Supper or the doctrine of the
| Trinity, both foundational realities
| within the Church.

I have never encountered a "rich theology" of gifts except in cessationist systematics. I find Grudem's treatment of the subject, in the best case, optimistic; and for the record, the weakest, least-compelling aspect of John Piper's theology – Dr. Piper being someone I greatly admire – is his cautious expression of the necessity of the practice of the miraculous gifts today.

But I admit that the subject doesn't interest me – so it might do me some good to have someone like you recommend a book on the rich theology of charismatic gifts. I'd be willing to read the book and talk about it publicly any time, in spite of my (ahem) hiatus.

But that said, I wouldn't advocate for a deep and wide theology of the Eucharist because Scripture doesn't express such a thing. That doesn't make it unimportant, but it also means that I wouldn't try to lift up an ordinance to something more than it is intended to do.

As for the Trinity, I affirm the Trinity. I think Paul affirms Trinitarian theology. But He doesn't make the truth of the Trinity supercede the core of the Gospel, which is not about some philosophical expression of the incomprehensibility of God, but about how God seeks to glorify Himself and somehow, inexplicably, include us in His glory. In that, it would also be wrong to try to make the doctrine of the Trinity as far-reaching as you would make the charismatic doctrine. For example, the doctrine of the Trinity does not explain to us how to call and establish elders; it does not explain how to preach from Scripture effectively; it does not teach us how to deal with grief. Anyone trying to make it do those things has gone too far with that doctrine.

My suggestion is that you, and those like you, do this sort of thing with charismatic doctrine.

| We can speculate all we wish, but we
| cannot overturn a foundational truth
| based on speculation. You know that.
| I don't understand why you pepper
| nearly every question and statement
| you make with speculation.

The speculation is an expression of your own view of the charismatic doctrine, dude. Go back and read your own writings on this subject. It is your view that the charismatic gifts are necessary and sort of ubiquitous, meaning they apply to almost everything and make church life meaningful.

Listen: the person and work of Christ is that necessary and meaningful, and that's how Paul treats these doctrines in all his letters. The charismatic gifts don't get 5% of the play they ought to if they are as extremely important as you affirm in your own writing.

That's not speculation: that's simple comparison. If Paul thought what you think about daGifts, Paul would talk about them in some way which resembles how you talk about them. He doesn't. That's a significant problem.

| Speculation does not make for sound

| exegesis. Let's stick with what the
| Scriptures plainly say and not go off
| into speculation.
|
| The burden of proof, again, is on the
| cessationist position. But it cannot be
| fulfilled by speculation.

The cessationist doesn't make a positive affirmation; he doesn't demand the presence of something and call it a doctrine. The cessationist takes the position that Scripture spells out the life of the church sufficiently, that the description in Scripture lacks significant references to on-going charismata, and that history bears out the fact that the post-apostolic church did not rely on signs and wonders to spread the Gospel – but relied on what Paul calls in Titus behavior which "may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior".

There's no speculation that, for example, the letter of Mathetes to Diognetus talks extensively about how the second-century church lived – and in a bizarre turn of events for the charismatic, there is categorically no mention of supernatural events attracting the attention of non-believers and securing the faith of those in the Body. Now, why is that? Because it was so obvious to Mathetes that he didn't bother to mention it? Dude.

| (As to #2 in your post, my answer is
| encapsulated in #1.)
|
| 3. The Bible says the gifts will cease
|
| I absolutely agree the gifts will cease!
| The question becomes one of when.
|
| You quote [1 Corinthians 13:8-10](#):
|
| Love never ends. As for prophecies,
| they will pass away; as for tongues,
| they will cease; as for knowledge, it
| will pass away. For we know in part
| and we prophesy in part, but when the
| perfect comes, the partial will pass
| away.
| ---[1 Corinthians 13:8-10](#)
|
| I understand this is a favorite verse of
| cessationists. It seems their entire

| argument against the vast reality of
| the gifts and their continuation rests
| on this verse. I have no idea why.
|
| Again, solid exegesis demands that, to
| overturn a foundational truth laid out
| in Scripture, we must go to multiple
| sources within the Scriptures
| themselves. But you have not.
|
| Worse, you attempt to overturn a
| foundational truth not just by one
| verse, but by one word within that
| verse! The rich reality of the gifts gets
| annihilated by one word! That
| astonishes me, Frank. I, for one, don't
| have the courage to recreate doctrine
| found in both the Old and New
| Testament based on one word. I doubt
| that any serious Biblical scholar does.

There are two humorous aspects to what you are doing here. The first is frankly a misstatement of what I have done. I didn't stop at v. 10 – I went to the end of the passage to connect all the aspects of the dissertation of the apostle on what is a "more excellent way", which plainly you are ignoring.

And that's fine – it's not the first time the question of what Paul means by the metaphor of child-to-man in this passage has been ignored by the charismatic advocate. However, what you do next is far more comical because you have simply changed the ground of our discussion from Scripture to what some other men have said! And in that, you have changed men who are non-charismatics into advocates of your position by avoiding the balance of their commentary here.

| I pulled four commentaries. All four
| came out long before the modern
| charismatic movement came to the
| fore, so none are predisposed as being
| pawns in the pro-charismatic camp.
| Here's what they say about v10 and
| the idea of "the perfect":
|
| Albert Barnes: "The sense here is, that

| "in heaven" - a state of absolute
| perfection - that which is "in part," or
| which is imperfect, shall be lost in
| superior brightness. All imperfection
| will vanish. And all that we here
| possess that is obscure shall be lost in
| the superior and perfect glory of that
| eternal world. All our present
| unsatisfactory modes of obtaining
| knowledge shall be unknown. All
| shall be clear, bright, and eternal."

|
| In other words, the perfect comes at
| the end of all things, when the
| Kingdom comes fully in Christ's
| return.

|
| Adam Clarke: "The state of eternal
| blessedness; then that which is in part
| -that which is imperfect, shall be
| done away; the imperfect as well as
| the probationary state shall cease for
| ever."

|
| In other words, the perfect comes at
| the end of all things, when the
| Kingdom comes fully in Christ's
| return.

For the sake of complete transparency, I have to let Clarke and Barnes go because I cannot lay a hand on their commentaries. Gill and Henry, however, are another story.

| John Gill: "When perfect knowledge
| of God, of Christ, and of the mysteries
| of the kingdom of heaven shall take
| place; which will not be in this life,
| but in that which is to come."

|
| In other words, the perfect comes at
| the end of all things, when the
| Kingdom comes fully in Christ's
| return.

The problem here is that Gill's view of what gift are being spoken of here is somewhat different than yours:

but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail;

by which are meant, either the predictions of future events, not that they shall fail in their accomplishment, but they shall be no more, because they will all be accomplished; or else the gifts of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of preaching the doctrines of the Gospel, will be no more, because there will be no need of them in a state of perfection:

whether there be tongues they shall cease;

not but that, in the resurrection, that member of the body, the tongue, will be restored as the rest, and be everlastingly employed in celebrating the perfections of God, in singing the hallelujahs of the Lamb, and in joining with angels and other saints in songs of praise to the eternal Three; but the gift of speaking with divers tongues will cease, indeed it has already; nor will there be any use for such an extraordinary gift in the other world; when probably, and as it is thought by some, there will be but one language, and that the Hebrew language; as the whole earth was of one language and speech before the confusion at Babel: ...

In that context, Dr. Gill is not even talking about the same thing you are – so his view that there is a future, perfect time when they will be passed away has to be read in that context. Not, as someone of interest once said, by forming "doctrines based on a single ... verse" of his exposition.

| Matthew Henry: "But it is plain that
| the apostle is here setting the grace of
| charity in opposition to supernatural
| gifts. And it is more valuable, because
| more durable; it shall last, when they
| shall be no more; it shall enter into
| heaven, where they will have no
| place, because they will be of no use,
| though, in a sense, even our common
| knowledge may be said to cease in
| heaven, by reason of the improvement
| that will then be made in it. The light
| of a candle is perfectly obscured by
| the sun shining in its strength."

|
| In other words, the perfect comes at
| the end of all things, when the
| Kingdom comes fully in Christ's
| return.

|
| And Henry makes a very telling
| observation in his commentary. He
| notes that the gifts will not be needed
| in the world to come, but love will be.
| This is the whole point of Paul. I fully
| agree that the gifts cease on the Great
| Day of the Lord, but love endures past

| that day because God is Love and
| love powers the Kingdom both now
| and forever. Will we cease to love
| God and He us when we die or when
| He comes again? No! But there will
| be no need for the gifts then because
| our work is done (a concept I'll
| expand further on).

Before we get to Henry's notes here, let's keep something in mind: it is specifically my argument that Paul exalts love in [1 Cor 12-13](#) as the real gift, the real object of what the Christian must be after. That's what I have said from the start of this exchange, so let's please not try to make that a point of contention. It is, in fact, the strength of the cessationist reading of this passage.

But in that, here's Henry's extended comments on this passage:

Here the apostle goes on to commend charity, and show how much it is preferable to the gifts on which the Corinthians were so apt to pride themselves, to the utter neglect, and almost extinction, of charity. This he makes out, I. From its longer continuance and duration:

Charity never faileth. It is a permanent and perpetual grace, lasting as eternity; whereas the extraordinary gifts on which the Corinthians valued themselves were of short continuance. They were only to edify the church on earth, and that but for a time, not during its whole continuance in this world; but in heaven would be all superseded, which yet is the very seat and element of love.

Prophecy must fail, that is, either the prediction of things to come (which is its most common sense) or the interpretation of scripture by immediate inspiration.

Tongues will cease, that is, the miraculous power of speaking languages without learning them. There will be but one language in heaven. There is no confusion of tongues in the region of perfect tranquility.

In Henry's view, the gifts had already ceased. When your citation is linked in with this text, the force of the comment is directed away from a dream that there is a continuation of the gifts to through the whole church age to today.

| I'm not going to let non-apostles
| interpret that Scripture for me,
| though. I'll let Peter speak on
| Pentecost, the day of the enabling of
| the charismata, the day the Church
| was founded, and the day the Church's
| mission began. He quotes the Old
| Testament prophet Joel:
|

| 'And in the last days it shall be, God
| declares, that I will pour out my Spirit
| on all flesh, and your sons and your
| daughters shall prophesy, and your
| young men shall see visions, and your
| old men shall dream dreams; even on
| my male servants and female servants
| in those days I will pour out my
| Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I
| will show wonders in the heavens
| above and signs on the earth below,
| blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
| the sun shall be turned to darkness
| and the moon to blood, before the day
| of the Lord comes, the great and
| magnificent day. And it shall come to
| pass that everyone who calls upon the
| name of the Lord shall be saved.'

| ---[Acts 2:17-21](#)

| Peter frames Pentecost and the
| outpouring of the charismata within
| the Joel prophecy. The last days begin
| with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit
| (and the gifts) and end with the Great
| Day of the Lord. That timeframe
| delineates the extent of the
| continuation of the charismata.

What I find amazing about this is that what happened at Pentecost is not what you are advocating for. Can you name one time in your own church where the gift of "tongues" was manifest in a form of speech which was understood by each man in his own native language? Or a prophecy was given which came to pass, with the requisite "this shall be a sign unto you"?

You cannot read Peter's affirmation of Joel as a statement of perpetual action: Peter himself says that the explanation of the behavior before the men in Jerusalem was the fulfillment of what Joel prophesied. Peter didn't say, "this is how the church will act from now on," but instead, to explain the behavior the visitors to Pentecost witnessed, he proclaimed that Joel was there fulfilled. If your plea is to let Scripture interpret Scripture, so be it. But let's make sure we don't miss any of the salient points such as when a person is speaking particularly rather than generally.

| These sources are not in dispute. They
| all agree that the charismata will
| cease--but they will do so when the
| end of time comes, when the Lord
| returns on that Great Day.

That is wholly false regarding Henry and Gill – because they explicitly endorse the idea that the miraculous gifts have already ceased.

| Again, the burden of proof for the
| cessationist view must provide
| compelling evidence to overturn
| foundational truth. That compelling
| evidence simply cannot be made from
| one word in one verse.

Well, there you go. Glad I could help.

| 4. Misunderstanding [1 Tim 4:14-15](#)'s
| reference to Timothy's prophetic word
| spoken over him
|
| The passage in question:
|
| Do not neglect the gift you have,
| which was given you by prophecy
| when the council of elders laid their
| hands on you. Practice these things,
| immerse yourself in them, so that all
| may see your progress. Keep a close
| watch on yourself and on the
| teaching. Persist in this, for by so
| doing you will save both yourself and
| your hearers.
| ---[1 Timothy 4:14-16](#)
|
| You claim I'm misunderstanding what
| the gift is here. I'm not. I'm fully
| aware that Timothy has been blessed
| with a pastoral gift. I've never
| disputed that. What I'm referring to,
| and you missed, is the prophetic word
| spoken over Timothy that confirmed
| his pastoral gift.

Aha. At last we get to the gift of prophecy. This will be, by far, the most useful part of this discussion, no matter which side of the fence one starts on. For the record, there are still plenty of seats on my side of the fence for those who find, in the end, they have no place on the other to sit or stand.

| You claimed Paul discussed nothing
| of the charismata in his letter to
| Timothy, but he clearly does by
| recalling the action of a revelatory
| word of God confirming the pastoral
| role of Timothy!

I would argue that this passage says something very different than you would accept, but I would be arguing from a minority position. I have already conceded that the miraculous gifts were active in the Apostolic age. Let's operate from that standpoint.

How does the ordination of Timothy apply to someone other than Timothy? For example, does every overseer require a prophecy to tell the church he is gifted for service?

If the answer is, "no, every overseer does not require that," then who was the last one for whom it was true? That's a rhetorical question. The actual, you-should-answer-it question is below.

| How we miss this! When we deny
| that type of prophetic word spoken
| over our leaders, we create an
| environment of doubt wherein men
| not fit for the pastoral role are allowed
| to become pastors because we have
| said that God no longer reveals His
| will through charismatic prophecy!
|
| What a tragedy for the Church! When
| we toss away the charismata, we toss
| away this type of confirmation used to
| confirm the roles of specific
| individuals within the Church. We
| then go on blindly to install folks God
| may not have confirmed because we
| base their confirmation on things
| outside the Spirit. And for this error,

| we've damaged the Church.

Dude: that's academy-award stuff. Very moving.

| God gave that prophetic word then
| and He will do so today if we believe
| that He will. Our problem is that too
| many people say the charismata have
| ceased. Therefore, God has given us
| over to the vagaries of installing
| people into positions of leadership
| who do not have His confirmation by
| means of prophetic revelation.

|
| The implication is clear.

I don't think it is. See: I think the gift of being a pastor/teacher/overseer is still present in the church – the church would be completely useless without these offices; it would be a meaningless gathering. Moreover, these are plainly gifts of the Spirit (cf. [1 Cor 12](#)). But the question here is whether or not a miraculous event co-terminus with the laying on of hands is the vehicle by which the Spirit provides these gifts, and if a prophecy must precede that event. That is, in what way is Timothy's ordination normative for the church today?

Be careful that you answer consistent with the way charismatics view giftedness prior to ordination. I think if you answer this by thinking about how one is called by the church to ministry, you'll find a very different model – which is like the one described in the Bible -- hidden under your charismatic enthusiasm.

| 5. Are the charismatic gifts necessary
| or not?
|
| Jesus Christ believes the gifts are
| necessary because He gave them to
| His Church to establish it through the
| world and through time:

|
| But you will receive power when the
| Holy Spirit has come upon you, and
| you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem
| and in all Judea and Samaria, and to
| the end of the earth."

| ---[Acts 1:8](#)

|
| Many cessationists believe the gifts
| were only for the initial establishment
| of the Church in the first century
| during the Apostolic Age. But that
| theory contains a profound flaw.

I'm interested in this flaw, but before we go there, let's consider one of yours: the problem of specificity. No one would disagree, btw, that the church is called to be a witness for Christ "to the ends of the earth". The question is whether every generation, and indeed every believer, must experience Pentecost.

In your view, Jesus here promises to give every believer a "Holy Spirit" experience, and then at Pentecost He gives the first one, and Peter says that Joel prophesied this for all who believe. The problem is that Jesus in [Acts 1](#) says, "the Spirit of power will come to you", meaning the ones asking the question, "whence the Kingdom," and Peter says Joel is pointing at the specific event of the people then filled with the Holy Spirit, and incredibly, those baptized at Pentecost don't also share in the speaking in tongues. Those baptized that day share in fellowship, prayer, and bearing burdens. Your view ignores what specifically happens, and expresses a broadness the events of the text do not express.

That's your flaw. Let's see what mine is.

| You see, the Church of Jesus Christ
| never stops being established. Even
| today, it's being established on the
| frontiers of lands peopled by folks
| who have never heard the Gospel. To
| those people, today is the same as the
| first century, because the Gospel is
| coming to them afresh. And it comes
| in the same manner and means as it
| did the day of Pentecost.

|
| Not only this, but even in this country,
| the Gospel is still being established
| because we continue to establish it
| from one generation to the next. The
| frontier exists even in a country like
| ours filled with churches because we
| must establish the next generation in

| Christ or else the Church here will
| cease to exist.

I don't see how this is my flaw. It seems to be that you are claiming something Phil, Dan and I have asked to see substantiated. See: we read Scripture, and you say it says, "X", but in fact it says less than "X", and in fact more of "Q". So your view, to me, seems to experience a good bit of exaggeration.

So then when you say, "Well, the church experiences 'X' in places you can never see, and to a lesser degree in places you can see," all I say in reply is, "Dude: if your reporting is of the same type as your exegesis, I'd like an example I can check against your description."

So here we are again: it'd be nice to have an example to compare to your description.

| Your basic premise ("The Charismatic
| Gifts, as manifest today, point people
| to Jesus Christ.") has a subtle
| underlying flaw we must examine if
| this is to make sense.

I love a good teaching metaphor, btw. It tells us as much about the teacher as it does about the thing he is describing.

| A rich landowner approaches a poor
| man and asks the poor man to build
| him a house. The rich man provides
| all the tools, the best made. Because
| the rich man is an expert builder, he
| promises to teach the poor man
| everything he knows. And this he
| does. The poor man is given the
| riches of the wealthy man to complete
| the work. So the poor man, with all
| that has been given him by the rich
| man, builds a magnificent house.
|
| When the house is complete, the
| wealthy man comes to inspect the
| beautiful the house the poor man has
| built for him. The poor man thanks
| the rich man for the job and for the

| bountiful pay the rich man gave him.
| The rich man offers to make the poor
| man the chief carpenter of all the
| houses he wishes to build. When the
| rich man asks the now no-longer-
| poor man what he thinks of the house
| and his new position in life because of
| the rich man's generosity, the man
| says, "Look at this hammer! It's
| amazing. I've never seen a hammer
| like this. And this drill! Wow."
|
| You see, the once-poor man was
| looking at the wrong thing. His
| fixation was on the tool, not on the
| work.
|
| Jesus Christ gave the charismata at
| Pentecost to accomplish His
| commission to the Church. He
| Himself does not fixate on the tools
| because the tools are subservient to
| the work. Yes, Christ did not speak
| volumes on the gifts in the Gospels.
| He does not go into great detail on
| what they will be, but He instead
| shows us at Pentecost. Peter
| understood this, as did the rest of the
| apostles. We're to understand also.

Yeah, hold on a second. That is exactly the point of the thesis statement which you gladly accepted. It's a little self-ignorant of you not to see yourself in the poor man here.

Let's imagine that, in the next lot over, TeamPyro construction is building a house, too, for the same rich man, who has apparently made us the same offer, but we tell him, "Rich dude: we like to use bricks as hammers to save money on hammers. Our work turns out just as good as hammer people, but we like the bricks." The Rich guy, being a master builder, and steadfast in love, smiled at our, um, frugality, but signed us up for the job.

Plainly, you get done faster than us; you use fewer nails; you don't mark up the wood; and your roof has straighter lines because bricks on roofing nails is murder. So you come across your lot to ours and you say to me, "cent, dude: I'll give you hammers for free. It hurts to

watch you build a house using bricks for hammers."

My first answer, if I am not as dumb as a pile of bricks, has to be, "Well, show me the hammers." That's the premise of the question, Dan: show me the hammers. Show me how the gifts are necessary for building the house right. Show me how tongues and prophecy – as you have described them in this particular answer of yours – are the tools of the church today. Show me the hammers. It is you saying, "Look at this hammer! It's amazing. I've never seen a hammer like this. And this drill! Wow." We're not denying you guys build houses: we're denying that the thing you're calling a hammer is more effective than what you might call our bricks, and in fact we are saying plainly that they are less effective and scripturally unfounded in building the kind of house the NT says we should be building. Because it turns out that our houses do go up quicker, stand longer, and have straighter roofing lines.

| It's not about the tool, it's about the
| mission, the work. This doesn't not
| mean that we throw the tools away
| because it's not about them. We use
| them in their proper place to work the
| work Christ asks of us.

... and those would be ... ?

| And just as the Lord does not change,
| neither has the work He set out before
| us. We are still establishing the
| Church. The charismata are part of the
| tools by which we do so. This is why
| they pass away only on the Last Day--
| because then the work is done.
|
| But as of today, the work is not done.
| So they persist.

Again, nice speech. Show me the hammers.

| If we choose to believe the charismata
| have ceased, then we only make the
| work harder. Worse, we tell the Lord
| that we will not use the very tools He
| paid for with His blood.

|
| As to the question you ask me at the
| end of your post, my answer comes
| out of what I just wrote. We cannot
| make the tools our focus. The focus is
| on the Lord and His mission.
| Pretenders will come who use bogus
| tools to do unauthorized work, but
| this does not negate the reality of the
| genuine tools given the genuine
| workers for the Kingdom.

Yet sadly, Dan, you certainly do make the tools the focus. Dude: "the lifeblood of the church"? Above Scripture? Above church disciple? Above the gathering together? Above prayer?

The problem is that you have made the tools the focus – and thus I simply want to see them, not just hear about them. Almost every example I can think of regarding someone who says they experience or practice these gifts is demonstrably fraudulent. KC Prophets, Benny Hinn, Pat Robertson, Oral Roberts, GUTS Church, Jim and Tammy, TBN, ...

Isn't it bizarre that the churches and ministries that really grow in a crazy way because of the exercise of the gifts are generally frauds?

| Frank, you are a very intelligent man,
| but you have no case here. You've not
| met the burden of proof and you
| simply can't, especially with
| speculation as to why God did what
| He did the way that He did. The
| Scriptures are clear and rich with the
| work. They show us the tools and
| how to use them.

Since your point about speculation really points the light back on your own claims, I'd be careful how many times you mention it.

Please engage in some kind of meaningful reading of the passages you are enlisting here – in context, as they are presented – in order that you can address these issues more clearly.