In-Depth Analysis

Five Views on Sanctification: An In-Depth Analysis

by Mike Sullivan

This paper provides an in depth analysis of the views presented in *Five Views on Sanctification*. It start by summarizing and reacting to each contributor's position. At the end of the paper, I offer my own explanation of how sanctification occurs. I hope you enjoy it! You can share your thoughts by sending email to (<u>SullivanM@Xenos.org</u>) or to the editor of the Crossroads Online Journal (<u>LeffelJ@Xenos.org</u>).

The Wesleyan View

(Summary | Reaction)

The Reformed View

(Summary | Reaction)

The Pentecostal View

(Summary | Reaction)

The Keswick View

(Summary | Reaction)

The Augustinian-Dispensational View

(Summary | Reaction)

My View

The Wesleyan view - presented by Melvin Dieter

This view derives its name from John Wesley (1703-1791), an English theologian and evangelist. Wesley was a student of the writings of the early church fathers. Their influence set Wesley's beliefs apart from the dominant Reformed tradition of his day.

For Wesley, the ultimate goal of sanctification was "to renew men's and women's hearts in (God's) image." Wesley worked out this definition of sanctification in a practical way. He believed that true Christian maturity was primarily evidenced by "a faith that works by divine love in the crucible of everyday life."

Dieter shares Wesley's belief that love is the true measure of sanctification. While acknowledging that the primary meaning of "sanctify" in the Old Testament is to set apart to God, Dieter claims that the New Testament word strongly emphasizes the ethical. Love, he says, is the true test of holiness.

Wesley taught that sanctification begins at conversion, when the Spirit regenerates the heart of the believer. And it's appropriated by faith in the same way salvation is. Sanctification is "faith working by love": not merited but appropriated by faith. When a Christian appeals to God in faith for the power to live a life of Godly love, the Holy Spirit takes away his or her "bent to sin" and replaces it with a "bent to loving obedience." [4]

Original Sin and Prevenient Grace

Wesley believed that fallen man was utterly depraved and that any movement toward God could be attributed to prevenient grace - the work of God in drawing all men to himself. The law written

on the gentile's hearts is a product of the prevenient grace of God extending itself to man and drawing him to God. Prevenient grace is the initial and necessary agent in the process of salvation. It is "the beginning of the process by which God begins to lighten the darkness of the Fall for all men and women; it will bring those who faithfully receive it to saving grace, sanctifying grace, and grace for the life of love."[5]

Perfection

Can a Christian lead a sinless life? Wesley taught that mature Christians will always be capable of falling into sin but they need not necessarily do so. Christians are free from the dominion of sin and can choose against it. But because we live in a fallen world dominated by sin and its effects, total delivery from the presence of sin will have to wait for the life to come.

Wesley admitted there was always room for a Christian to develop in maturity. But he believed Christians could enjoy greater degree of freedom from sin than Reformed theologians thought possible. He went as far as to assert that Christians could be delivered from willful $\sin^{[6]}$ and that this level of sanctification could occur before death. For this reason, Wesley often said that Christians should not be "content with any religion which does not imply the destruction of all the works of the devil, that is of all \sin ." We can fulfill God's law of love in this life, despite all the failings and imperfections of the world. This is what Wesley calls the "optimism of grace."

Wesley's understanding of sin in the life of a believer is seen most clearly in his doctrine of entire sanctification. Dieter defines entire sanctification as "a personal, definitive work of God's sanctifying grace by which the war within oneself might cease and the heart might be released from rebellion into whole hearted love for God and others."

Entire sanctification can occur at the moment of salvation but typically occurs during a crisis point in the life of a Christian sometime after conversion. Those who have experienced entire sanctification are characterized by:

- a wholehearted love for God and neighbor
- having the mind of Christ
- bearing the fruit of the spirit
- both inward and outward righteousness and true holiness in life
- complete devotion to God
- giving thoughts, words, and actions as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God
- salvation from all sin [10]

Entire sanctification involves freedom from willful sin, but it is not the final destination of Christian growth. Dieter points out, "the idea of a gradual progression in sanctification is extended beyond the boundaries of this life, even though the basic relationship that nourishes such development is established in the crisis moment of entire sanctification."[11]

Dieter also believes that the Reformation tradition, with its emphasis on imputed righteousness, neglects Paul's teaching that existential deliverance from is sin available in Christ. Since the life of Jesus is being revealed in them, Christians should "not let sin reign in their mortal bodies." They have been "set free from sin and have become slaves to God." For Wesley and his followers, then, any view of sanctification that doesn't hold out the possibility of real, experiential deliverance from sin in this life falls short of the full Gospel.

The law

Wesley taught that Christians who follow the "royal law" of the Sermon on the Mount are fulfilling the ten commandments and the requirements of the law. He believed, "the ten commandments are renewed in the Sermon on the Mount in their sanctifying purity and spirituality and... describe the life of practical Christian holiness, which is the end of faith and the commandments."

[14] Wesley also said that faith establishes the practice of the law in the life of

the believer. The result of this faith is holiness expressed by love for God and neighbor.

Some teach that Christians are free from their obligation to keep the law. Wesley disagrees. He believed that "freedom", when used in conjunction with the law, was not freedom from obligation to keep it, but rather freedom to love and serve God. The Christian is still under "obligation to fulfill the law on the basis of faith." [15]

The Holy Spirit

Wesley tied the ministry of the Holy Spirit to promises throughout the Bible (Duet. 30; Jer. 31; Ezek. 36) that God would give his people the ability to truly love God, to keep his statutes, and to obey Him. As a result of the Spirit's empowering, true believers (the people of God) would be "enabled to live in righteousness and true holiness all their lives." God demands perfection and makes provision for it in the Holy Spirit.

Reaction to the Wesleyan view

Dieter does not directly discuss Wesley's teaching on the sin nature. A first glance, he seems to affirm that the sin nature is still operative within the life of a Christian:

"The presence of Christ and the freedom from the rebellious nature of the old Adam in the Christian's life in the Spirit, however, are not the final release from the presence and threat of sin. Its power and presence threaten and tempt us through our fallen bodies and minds as well as in all that surrounds us in a world that is yet to be redeemed."

[17]

But what is the source of the temptation? Dieter and Wesley imply that the temptation to sin doesn't come from within but rather from the fallen world around us:

"After declaring freedom from the dominion and inner presence of sin in the life of the Spirit-filled Christian (Rom. 8:1-17), he (Wesley) nevertheless acknowledges that we still live in a fallen, sinful world..."[18]

Dieter grants that the flesh is a source of temptation (Matt. 26:41) but doesn't have a well developed explanation of the role of the sin nature in the life of the believer. Dieter's essay left me uncertain about the Wesleyan position on this important issue.

In The John Wesley Reader, a compilation of Wesley's sermon notes and journal entries, Wesley translates Rom. 6:6 as "Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed (katargeo), that henceforth we should not serve sin." He takes katargeo to mean destroyed which implies a belief in the removal of the sin nature. This is confirmed by when he adds, "an immediate fruit of this faith... is power over sin... for it purifies the heart from every unholy desire and temper."[19]

So I am left with concluding that if anything, Wesley minimized the role of the sin nature in the life of the believer and the conflict it causes within. This conclusion is also supported by the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification.

Entire sanctification is an important doctrine in Wesleyan theology. It offers the hope that Christians are able to live without sin during their lives on Earth. [20] But this claim doesn't account for numerous New Testament texts which describe a struggle between the flesh and the spirit. In Romans 7:18 Paul admits that "the wishing of (of doing good) is present in me, but the doing of the good is not." How does the doctrine of entire sanctification explain how a statement like this can come from a mature Christian? In Galatians 5:17, Paul describes struggling against the sinful tendencies of our flesh as if it were a normative part of the Christian experience.

Dieter cites Matt 5:48 to show that it is possible to live free of willful sin. Jesus was telling his listeners that their current standard of righteousness was not good enough to satisfy God. He

said, 'you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." But perfection was not a state Jesus expected his audience to reach in this life. If it was, why did he model a prayer for his disciples in which he said, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us?" His prayer clearly implies that Christians can and will sin from time to time.

Dieter also quotes Colossians 1:28 where Paul expresses his wish to "present every man perfect (teleios) in Christ." Against Dieter's translation of teleios, many commentators take Paul's use of this word in Colossians 1 to mean "mature". [21] Equating sinless perfection with teleios in this passage flies in the face of other verses that teach Christians continue to sin. For example, in 1 John 2:1, John assures his Christian listeners, "I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father..." Instead of achieving sinless perfection now, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 seems to indicate that our perfection is a future event that God will accomplish in us at the second coming of Christ.

I still can't shake the words of Oswald Sanders^[22] when I heard him speak at age 88 a few years ago. This mature Christian worker who had spend a lifetime following Christ said, "the older I get, the more deeply I am aware of how sinful I am." This has certainly been my experience and the experience of countless other Christians who have wrestled with the issue of sin in their lives.

Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification leans heavily on his vague definition of sin. He believed that a Christian who had experienced entire sanctification enjoyed freedom from deliberate sins. [23] Slip-ups in behavior could still occur, but these result from living in a fallen world. Wesley called these lapses "mistakes." [24] He thought, "because we are imperfect persons in an imperfect world, perfection 'in love' is consistent with a 'thousand mistakes.' But limited as we are by our own and the world's imperfections, we may still enjoy a relationship in which, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can fulfill the great and final commandment of loving God with our whole heart..."[25]

By creating the categories of willful sin and "mistakes", Wesley erodes a broader definition of sin found Romans 14:23, "whatever is not from faith is sin." The Bible portrays sin as any action, deed, or thought that falls short of God's perfect character (Rom. 3:23). This is clear from Jesus' repeated "you have heard... but I say to you" contrasts in the sermon on the mount. By equating murder and anger, lust and adultery, Jesus is trying to destroy the superficial, shallow view of sin held by his audience. Wesley's attempt to separate "sins" from "mistakes" misses the all inclusive spirit of these and other New Testament passages.

The Reformed view - presented by Anthony Hoekema

Reformed theologians define sanctification as "that gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, involving our responsible participation, by which He delivers us as justified sinners from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the image of God, and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to Him."[26] When we are justified, our guilt before God is removed. Sanctification is the process of removing the corruption caused by sin polluting our lives. This is consistent with the meaning of the Greek word for sanctify, hagiadzo. Hagiadzo literally means to make holy: to be set apart for service to God and to abandon practices that displease Him.

How sanctification occurs

Hoekema says there are three essential requirements for sanctification. First, sanctification can only occurs in the context of a growing union with Christ. We will not grow unless we are identified with Christ. Second, he points out that we are sanctified by the truth. The Bible is "one of the chief means whereby God sanctifies His people." Lastly, faith is the means by which we appropriate our sanctification. Faith helps us to live in union with Christ, accept the fact that we are no longer mastered by sin, and results in the production of fruit in the life of the Christian. Like justification, sanctification comes by faith.

The goal of sanctification

What is the process of sanctification accomplishing in the life of a Christian? Hoekema distinguishes between two end results: the proximate and final goals of sanctification. The final end of our sanctification is the glorification of God. This is implied by Paul's use of the phrase, "to the praise of his Glory" in Ephesians 1:12. The proximate goal of sanctification is our perfection: God's desire that every Christian be conformed to the likeness of Christ (1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:49; Ephesians 5:27; Hebrews 12:23). As a result of being conformed to His image, Christians share in Christ's glorification and become an eternal testimony to His glory.

God's role and man's role in sanctification

To reach this goal, both man and God play a part. God set our sanctification in motion by electing us for conformity to Him and scripture indicates that all three persons of the trinity are involved. We read, for example, that the Father disciplines us and sanctifies us by the truth (Heb. 12:10; John 17:17), the Son cleanses the church through the word (Eph. 5:25-27) and the Holy Spirit is responsible for our washing, rebirth and renewal (Titus 3:5). The role(s) each member of the Godhead plays in sanctification are not compartmentalized; "sanctification (is) ascribed to the triune God without any designation of persons." [28]

Sanctification is accomplished by God, but it still requires the cooperation of men and women. We must still fight against sin, express gratitude toward God, and offer ourselves fully to him. We also should imitate the example of Christ (Phil. 2:5-7; John 13:14-15).

The interplay between man's role and God's role in conforming us to Christ is seen clearly in passages like Philippians 2:12-13: "(you) work out (cultivate) your salvation in fear and trembling.... for it is God at who is a work in you to will and work for his good pleasure..." But Hoekema carefully points out that the relationship between our work and God's work shouldn't be thought of strictly in terms of cooperation. Instead, he follows Murray who said, "God's working in us is not suspended because we work, nor our working suspended because God works... the relation is that because God works we work."[29]

Definitive and progressive sanctification

Reformed theologians claim that scripture speaks about sanctification in two ways: as an ongoing process and as an accomplished event. The latter use can be seen in 1 Corinthians 1:2 and 6:11. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, believers are spoken of as "those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus." In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul says the Corinthians "were sanctified." The Greek word for sanctify in 6:11, hagiadzo, is used by Paul in the aorist tense to emphasize that the Corinthian's sanctification is a past, completed action. This statement, made to an audience that could hardly be called mature, implies Christians are somehow sanctified in a way that has no bearing on the condition of their day to day life. Hoekema calls this use of hagiadzo "definitive sanctification".

Romans 6, the passage with the most detail about definitive sanctification, teaches that Christians have been:

- (1) freed from the power of sin
- (2) enabled to live in newness of life under the reign of grace
- (3) unified with Christ in his resurrection
- (4) made new creatures

Definitive sanctification differs from Wesley's entire sanctification in two important ways. First, definitive sanctification does not produce sinless perfection in the Christian. Hoekema asserts that Christians will always "struggle against sin and sometimes fall into sin." A true believer is genuinely a new creature but they are not fully transformed into Christ's image. Second, definitive sanctification does not occur in an experience subsequent to salvation but rather coincides with it

Other passages describe what Hoekema calls "progressive sanctification." They imply that sin

continues to be present to some extent in the life of the believer (1 Kings 8:46; Psalm 19:12; Psalm 143:2; Proverbs 20:9; Isaiah 64:6; James 3:2). According to Paul, sin is dealt with over time by putting to death the deeds of the flesh (see Romans 8:13). Progression in sanctification can also be seen in Colossians 3. Verses 1 and 3 affirm definitive sanctification has occurred ("we have died in Christ and been raised up with him") but in verse 5 Paul advises one must still "consider the members of your earthly body to be dead to sin." Colossians 3:9-10, 2 Corinthians 7:1 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 all convey this same progressive sense of sanctification.

In reflecting on these two types of sanctification, Hoekema concludes, "One could think of definitive sanctification as the beginning of the process and of progressive sanctification as the continual maturing of the new person who was created by definitive sanctification."[31]

Old self and new self

Reformed theologians have differed over the presence of the old and new self in the life of the believer. Standing with Murray, Hoekema believes that Christians are "no longer the old selves they once were. They are not, as has often been taught, both old selves and new selves but are indeed new selves in Christ." He makes his case by citing:

- (1) the crucifixion of the old self in Romans 6:6
- (2) the use of the agrist tense in Colossians 3:9-10 to describe how Christians have taken off their old self and put on their new self
- (3) the New International Version's rendition of Ephesians 4:20-24 which reads as if the old self was put off when we came to know Christ

Christians are new creatures: not sinless, not totally conformed to the image of Christ, but genuinely new people headed in that direction. This is why we are still repeatedly urged in the New Testament to fight sin and the influence of evil in our lives (Ephesians 6:11-13; Galatians 5:16; Hebrews 12:4).

Reformed theology and perfectionism

Hoekema advances several reasons why the Wesleyan hope of living a life without sin is flawed:

- (1) The hope of perfection requires weakening the definition of sin (e.g. only deliberate sins).
- (2) The perfection held out is admitted to be less perfect that our eschatological perfection.
- (3) The Bible doesn't encourage believers to seek a 'second experience' that follows conversion like entire sanctification; the emphasis is on pursuing ongoing growth (Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:23; 2 Pet. 3:18).
- (4) Many passages in the Bible indicate that Christians still sin (Matt. 6:12; James 3:2, etc.).
- (5) Gal. 5:16-17 indicates that a struggle exists between our sinful flesh and the Holy Spirit within.

The above observations make it evident that sinful tendencies still exist in the life of even the most mature Christian. As a result, no one is able to live a life truly free from sin.

The law

Reformed theologians believe that the law (the 10 commandments and other precepts given to guide our lives) should be obeyed by Christians. Christians who fail to keep the law do not face God's condemnation (in this sense, they are not "under the law"), but they should express their thankfulness to God by attempting to keep it. John Calvin called this the "third and principle use of the law."

Hoekema claims that obedience to the law out of gratitude toward God is taught in the Old and New Testaments. Old Testament examples include Exodus 20:2-17 and Psalm 19:7-8. In the New Testament (Rom. 8:3-4 for example) Paul says the Holy Spirit came in part to empower Christians to fulfill the law (Rom. 8:3-4). Hoekema even goes as far as to equate keeping the law with walking in the Spirit. In addition, James 1:25 and 1 John 2:3-5 prove that law keeping is an

avenue through which God sanctifies us and brings us freedom.

Reaction to the Reformed view

Hoekema takes an in-depth look at Col. 3:9-11, Eph. 4:22-26, and Rom. 6:6 and concludes that "the person who is in Christ is no longer an old man or old self, but is now a new self"[33] I think this statement is accurate with regard to our position in Christ but less than accurate when describing our day to day experience. To be sure, Rom. 6:6 teaches that the old man was crucified. I would also agree that the putting off of the old self is described as a past event in Col. 3:9-10. Paul is clear that at conversion, Christians are freed from the life they used to live under the rule of sin. In this, positional sense, the old self has truly passed away.

Having said this, there are numerous passages that suggest that our old lifestyle is not easy to shake and needs to be resisted. Paul urges his audience in Romans 6:11, for example, to consider themselves "to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." In Colossians 3:10, Paul says the new self is going through an ongoing process of renewal. This theme is repeated in Ephesians 4:23 where Paul urges: "be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Verse 23, which Hoekema describes as an ongoing process^[34] comes in the middle of a discussion about putting off the old and putting on the new self. If verse 23 describes a process, why should we read verses 22 and 24 any differently? The plain sense of Ephesians 4:20-24 implies that Christians must regularly lay aside the habits associated with the old self and put on the new.

Hoekema believes that Christians are free from the law only in the sense that "we are no longer under condemnation because of our failure to keep the law." In another sense, he continues, "believers are not free from the law. They should be deeply concerned about keeping God's law as a way of expressing their gratitude to Him for the gift of salvation." But Rom. 7:1-6 says that when someone becomes a Christian, their relationship to the law fundamentally changes. Just as a widow is no longer obligated to her husband, we have died to and been freed from the law.

Some have said we are only free from the ceremonial and civil portion of the law. But the law Paul has in mind Romans 7 is the moral law. This is evident when he quotes the moral part of the law in verse 7: "I would not have known about coveting if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet." Christians are free from the Law - all of it.

Having said that, how should we relate to the law? Several passages indicate that the law still has a role to play in the life of a Christian: Jesus says he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Matt 5:17) and Paul admits he is "not without the law but under the law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21). But what role does the law play? The law acts as an objective standard of morality that exposes sin (Rom. 7;7), it can stimulate sin (Rom. 7:8,9), and it shows our need to depend of God for the power to lead a moral life (Rom. 7:9b-24).

Hoekema is right to say we are freed from the condemnation incurred by failing to keep the law. But Paul says we are also free from trying to meet its demands by our own power. In place of Hoekema's law keeping, Paul suggests we walk in the newness of the Spirit (Rom. 7:6). It is the Spirit inside us that is then able to keep the requirements of the law (Rom. 8:3-4). Unfortunately, Hoekema takes Rom. 8:3-4 to mean "Spirit-led believers are precisely the ones doing their best to keep God's law."

[37] He reduces walking in the Spirit to law keeping and entirely misses the point of the passage: it is the power of the Spirit that enables Christians to keep the law.

Parting from the traditional Reformed view, Hoekema understands Rom. 7:13-25 to be Paul's recollection of his struggle with sin as a non Christian. Walvoord makes an excellent point against this view. He says, "It is not demonstrable that an unbeliever has two inner, contending natures." I will leave further arguments in favor of Romans 7:13-25 describing a Christian experience for an upcoming paper.

The Pentecostal Perspective - presented by Stanley Horton

Historical development

In the first part of his essay, Horton traces the historical development of the doctrine of sanctification now taught in the Assemblies of God.

At the turn of the 20th century when their movement started, Pentecostals disagreed over the how sanctification occurred in the life of a believer. Holiness Pentecostals asserted that before one can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit^[38] they must first undergo the crisis experience of entire sanctification. This sanctification was seen as a definitive work of God's grace that a believer receives much in the same way they receive salvation.

Other Pentecostals (like those who later formed the Assemblies of God) believed that putting one's faith in Christ's forgiveness was the only precondition for receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They downplayed the importance of a second (or third work) of grace where Christians were entirely sanctified and instead saw sanctification as process.

Further refinement of the Pentecostal understanding of sanctification grew out of disagreements over the nature of the trinity. In 1916, trinitarian disputes compelled the Assemblies of God to clearly delineate their beliefs in the form of a 16-point statement of faith. This document touched on sanctification, but leaders soon recognized that the definition provided was vague and poorly formulated. Over time, however, the definition of sanctification was fleshed out. Instead of entire sanctification, they thought in terms of instantaneous sanctification (see 1 Cor. 6:11-12) and progressive sanctification (2 Cor. 3:15). Christians are positionally sanctified at conversion but then progressively sanctified over the course of their lives. The distinction between instantaneous and progressive sanctification, promoted by the Assemblies of God, moved away from the belief in entire sanctification espoused by the Holiness wing of the Pentecostal movement.

The bulk of Horton's essay explains the view of sanctification being taught today in the Assemblies of God and focuses on the meaning of instantaneous, progressive, and entire sanctification.

Instantaneous/ positional sanctification

Instantaneous or positional sanctification is similar to the Reformed notion of definitive sanctification. This type of sanctification:

- occurs at the moment of belief
- involves the believer being set apart from the world to follow Christ
- is symbolized by baptism (Col. 2:11-12)
- occurs because we are united with Christ and given new life (1 Cor. 1:30)
- puts us in perfect relationship with God
- sets Christians free to do God's will
- is based on the finished work of Christ

Progressive sanctification

Horton cites a number of verses to show that Christians don't always measure up to the their positional sanctification. He points out that the Corinthians, despite being called sanctified in 1 Cor. 6:11, were still addressed as "infants" in1 Cor. 3:1. Other passages indicate that self control needs to be learned (1 Thes. 4:3-4) and that old habits like lying need to be renounced (Col. 3:5-10).

While Wesleyans claim they have been released from willful sin through entire sanctification, Horton believes these claims result in "making God out to be a liar." He also holds that the blood of Christ cleanses us from our sin in an ongoing way. This is in contrast to those who say there is no need for Christians to repeatedly seek to be cleansed from their sins.

What does progressive sanctification look like? According to Horton, Christians moving forward in this process regularly put God's will into practice, demonstrate the fruits of obedience, and exhibit a selfless willingness to do whatever God asks them to do

Entire sanctification

Pentecostals in the Assemblies of God reject Holiness claims to be able to reach a state of sinless perfection in this life. They contend that the old nature is still active in a Christian and claims of perfection depend on a weakened definition of sin. Despite these objections, however, they still use the term "entire sanctification". Instead of abandoning the term, they redefined it as:

- (1) following the purposes and desires of God to the best of one's ability or
- (2) an event that occurs when Christ comes back and gives our glorified bodies.

So the term entire sanctification is being used here in a way that is entirely different than Wesley's usage.

The Spirit's Work in sanctification

Pentecostals, mindful that the work of the Holy Spirit is often neglected by other theological schools, are quick to point out the role the Spirit plays in sanctification.

Horton believes of all the works of the Spirit, the New Testament highlights sanctification foremost. "The Holy Spirit here is the agent, and His work is the most important means of our progressive sanctification." To underscore his point he cites numerous verses that teach the central role of the Holy Spirit plays in our growth (1 Peter 1:2; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thes. 2:13; Rom. 15:16; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

One of the most important ways that the Holy Spirit helps sanctify Christians is in helping them to understand and benefit from the Word of God. The Word itself is the Spirit's primary tool in accomplishing our growth and maturity. The Spirit teaches us the Word, guides us to the truth (John 14:17,26;15:26;16:12-13; 1 John 4:6) and uses the Word to "give us a clear vision of Jesus and inspire us with a deep desire to be like him." Of course, Christians must cooperate with the Spirit's work in in their lives by depending on his Word for guidance and being willing to obey it.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Perhaps the most unique feature of Pentecostal theology and the one that distinguishes it from other views on sanctification is the emphasis placed on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This event occurs in the life of a Christian after their salvation and "empowers (them) through the filling of the Spirit."

[42] Those who receive this baptism initially speak in tongues (Acts 10:46) and go on to lead lives of service "marked by gifts of the Spirit that bring power and wisdom for the spread of the Gospel and the growth of the church."

Hoekema is quick to dispel misconceptions about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He agrees that it is not necessary for salvation and that those who receive it may never have a continuing ministry of speaking tongues in the church. But he warns that "rejection of the Pentecostal position and the evidence of other tongues often leads to a downward trend that ends in the neglect of the Spirit's work in the believer's life." In other words, it is hard to experience the full life we were meant to have as Christians without undergoing this baptism.

Having said that, Horton admits that being baptized in the Holy Spirit is not a sanctifying experience in and of itself. It doesn't elevate one to a higher level of sanctification like Wesley's entire sanctification. Christians still need to deepen in maturity and grow as they become more involved in selfless ministry to other people.

Horton studiously avoids the overemphasis on tongues often associated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He says that Christians should strive for the "greater gifts" mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:31, and believes gifts in general are most likely to be discovered in the context of active service to Him. Horton also points out that love is "necessary to make (spiritual) gifts effective to the highest degree and to bring the proper reward." [44]

Summary

Holiness and Assemblies of God Pentecostals agree that justification and positional sanctification occur at the same time. They also agree that both man and God play a role in Christian growth. They differ as to the definition of entire sanctification and whether it is possible to live a life free from sin. The Assemblies of God maintain that sin is not entirely removed in the life of a believer and that sanctification is a long process of growth and change. Holiness Pentecostals tend to view sanctification as a defining, post conversion event in the life of a Christian.

Reaction to the Pentecostal view

Horton believes that Christians are indwelled by the Spirit when they are converted. In addition to the Spirit's indwelling, Horton says that Christians receive a second blessing called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a post-conversion^[45] experience where a Christian enjoys the true fullness of the Spirit. It results in a higher level of devotion and increased ability to evangelize and worship. This life defining event is evidenced by tongue speaking by the recipient and enables believers "to respond to the full working of the Spirit." [46]

1 Corinthians 12:13, then, does not describe two events but rather what took place the moment we placed our faith in Jesus Christ.

I find no biblical basis for the existence of an additional work of the Spirit as described by Horton. His belief that such an experience exists relies on (1) his interpretation of 1 Cor. 12:13 and (2) a distinction he makes between baptism by the Spirit and baptism in the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:13

The first part of 1 Cor. 12:13 says Christians are baptized by the Spirit and put into Christ (13a). The second part says Christians are made to drink of one Spirit. Horton teaches the baptism and the drinking describe two distinct events; being baptized into Christ occurs at conversion and drinking of the Spirit (baptism of the Holy Spirit) happens later. Against this claim, Hoekema says, "the second clause of (1 Cor. 12:13) is clearly parallel to the first clause, since both clauses stress the oneness of all believers." In other words, the second clause does not describe a new event, but provides more information about what is being discussed. Verse 13 describes two aspects of one event: when we were baptized by the Spirit we were (1) put in the body of Christ and (2) indwelled by the Holy Spirit. This interpretation is preferable because it takes into account Paul's repeated use of "one" throughout the verse.

"by" and "in"

According to Horton, the phrase "baptized by the Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13a) refers to our being placed in Christ at conversion; the phrase "baptized in the Spirit" refers to the second blessing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This second baptism, he claims, is described in several passages like Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8, and Acts 2:4. Remarkably, however, none of these passages contain the phrase "baptism in the Spirit."

A survey of passages where baptism in, with, or by the Holy Spirit is used shows that in every case, being Indwelled with the Spirit is in view. In Matt 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, and John 1:33, for example, Jesus is identified as one who will baptize with/in the Holy Spirit. This baptism is described as a still future event. In Acts 1:5, Jesus reminds the disciples of this baptism and says, "John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Jesus is clearly associating the baptism with the Holy Spirit promised in the gospels

with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. At Pentecost, followers of Christ were Indwelled by the Spirit for the first time. [47]

In Acts 11, Peter recounts how God arranged a meeting between him and Cornelius. God told Peter to visit Cornelius' household and preach the gospel. Before Peter came, his audience was not saved (see verse 14 and 18) and therefore not indwelled by the Spirit. After Peter preached the gospel to them, they believed and were saved. Luke says the Holy Spirit came upon them while they listened to Peter. He also associates the experience with the baptism of the Spirit promised by John the Baptist. In this passage, then, the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs simultaneously with salvation and involves the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13, which we have already discussed, Paul tells us that when we were put into Christ we were made to drink of (were indwelled by) one Spirit.

So when the New Testament discusses the baptism of the Holy Spirit it refers to an event where the Spirit comes to indwell a new believer. There is no reason to assume that a second post conversion event is in view.

Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 19

In a few passages in Acts, we find believers receiving the Spirit well after they are converted. Doesn't this imply that a post-conversion blessing of the Spirit is possible? I would say it's unlikely for the following reasons:

- (1) In Acts 2 and 19, old covenant Christians are being Indwelled by the Spirit for the first time. Tongues and other miraculous signs helped to confirm that God's promise to pour out the Spirit was being fulfilled and that the new covenant was in effect. Peter calls the crowds attention to this very fact in his speech in Acts 2:17-21.
- (2) Acts is a historical narrative of an extraordinary time and as such should not be taken to record normative Christian experiences. One would expect a doctrine as important as the Pentecostal understanding of baptism of the Holy Spirit to be explicitly taught elsewhere in scripture. But when we look to the epistles, we search in vain for a single command to seek a second, definitive baptism of the Spirit after our conversion.
- (3) In Acts 8:14-17, the coming of the Holy Spirit may have been delayed to allow Peter to be the one who opened the door of the gospel to the Gentiles. This would be consistent with Matt 16:18 where Peter gives Jesus the keys to the kingdom. The outward sign of tongues also helped to confirm to Jewish Christians that Gentiles could be included in the kingdom of God.

Finally, a word should be said about the notion that the tongues must accompany the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This assertion is flawed for several reasons:

- (1) Episodes in Acts where tongues are spoken at the coming of the Holy Spirit are unique historical situations. In these instances tongues provide confirmation that a new covenant is in effect (Acts 2, 19) and proof that those previously viewed as not being God's people can now be included in the kingdom (Acts 8, 10). There was a lot of resistance in the early church to including Gentiles in the movement; tongues helped prove that Samaritans and Gentiles were able to receive the indwelling Spirit just like the Jews.
- (2) Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19 are the only places in scripture where tongue speaking is associated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In other passages, the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs but no mention is made of tongues. [48]
- (3) In 1 Corinthians 12:30, Paul asks, "all do not speak with tongues, do they?" The required answer is: "No, they don't." Yet despite this verse, Horton maintains that everyone should receive

the baptism of the Holy Spirit and upon receiving it, they will speak in tongues. How is this possible when Paul clearly says not every Christian can speak in tongues?[49]

The Keswick Perspective - presented by J. Robertson McQuilkin

According to J. Robertson McQuilkin, and those who hold the Keswick view, the normal Christian life should be one of progress and victory: victory over temptation, growth in obedience, improving self-control, and increasing joy. Unfortunately, the average Christian experience is far from normal. Church goers are adept at moving through the routines of the Christian life but something is missing. They show no excitement or evidence that anything supernatural is going on

What can Christians do to break out of this malaise? The Keswick view offers a message of hope to defeated and backslidden Christians. Since 1875, proponents of this view have offered four and five-day conferences focusing on the spiritual renewal of those who attend. These conferences expose those attending to the depth of their sin, teach them a way to live a victorious life, and challenge them to fully commit their lives to God and to His service. A typical conference schedule includes:

Day 1: Sin - understanding the gravity of our shortcomings before God.

Day 2: Victorious Christian living - the power of the Holy Spirit and the finished work of Christ to bring "consistent success in resisting the temptation to violate deliberately the known will of God "[50]

Day 3: Consecration - the full surrender of one's life to God to be used by Him.

Day 4: Life in the Spirit - Being filled with the Spirit - the key to effectiveness in our life and service for God.

Day 5: Service - Missions, the great commission and other ways to outwardly serve God.

Keswick theology

Since Keswick organizers and attenders have come from a variety of theological persuasions, the Keswick view has no official or well-defined statement on sanctification. Despite this, the core values and emphases of the Keswick movement are well summarized in the following quote from Steven Barabas:

"From the beginning until the very present it has taught that a life of faith and victory, of peace and rest, are the rightful heritage of every child of God, and that he may step into it ..., 'not by long prayers and laborious effort, but by a deliberate and decisive act of faith.' It teaches that 'the normal experience of the child of God should be one of victory instead of constant defeat, one of liberty instead of grinding bondage, one of 'perfect peace' instead of restless worry." [51]

The Keswick view and perfectionism

The Keswick movement has no clear stance on perfectionism. McQuilkin says that the Spirit makes it possible for Christians to consistently avoid deliberate violations of God's will. And, like the Wesleyans, McQuilkin believes there is a biblical basis for making a distinction between willful, deliberate sin and unwitting sin. He claims a distinction is clearly made in the Old Testament (see Exod. 21:12-14; Num. 15:27-31) and is implied in several New Testament passages (see 1 John 1:8-10 and 1 John 3:6,8-10). In day to day life, however, McQuilkin concedes that distinguishing between volitional and involuntary sin is difficult. Parting from the Wesleyan view, he concludes that a definition of sin should include all types (deliberate and accidental) and expectations of perfection in this life are more frustrating for sincere Christians than helpful.

Even though McQuilkin believes everyone has sin (1 John 1:8-10), he takes a dim view of Christians who continue in a pattern sinful activity. He suggests they are probably not Christians (1 John 3:6;8-10). In other words, everyone sins unintentionally but ongoing deliberate sin is evidence that someone is not genuinely converted. He goes as far as to say, "(Christians) need

never - and should never - deliberately violate the known will of God." He never says it directly, but one gets the impression that if a pattern of sin is established in the life of a Christian, part of the healing process is reconsidering the original validity of one's own conversion experience.

Having said all that, McQuilkin concedes that believers still have a tendency to sin and must constantly rely on the Holy Spirit to lean against this tendency. He attributes this attraction to sin to the "old nature" and affirms that our old nature remains in conflict with the indwelling Holy Spirit even after conversion. It is because of their old nature that committed Christians still commit unintentional sins. Growth in the Christian life, then, is focused on minimizing the damage caused by the sin nature in the area of involuntary sin. As McQuilkin puts it, "... much of our behavior falls short of Christ likeness involuntarily and even unconsciously. It is in this area that the normal Christian grows steadily to reflect more and more accurately the likeness of Christ." [53]

The Keswick definition of sanctification

Like most of the theologians in Five Views of Sanctification, McQuilkin defines sanctification as a setting apart for service to God. And, like the others, he says a moral dimension is involved: those who are sanctified are set apart from sin and consecrated to God.

McQuilkin then breaks sanctification down into three main types: positional, experiential, and permanent sanctification. Positional sanctification occurs at conversion and results in our forgiveness, justification in God's eyes and regeneration. The new life of the Spirit indwells the new believer and makes it possible for good to prevail over sin in their lives. This is the sanctification spoken of in Heb. 10:10, Eph. 4:24, and 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11.

Experiential sanctification is very similar to the reformed idea of progressive sanctification. McQuilkin defines it as "the outworking of one's official position in daily life." When we are given our new bodies and transformed to be like Christ, permanent sanctification occurs. It results in the complete removal of sin..

In parts of his essay, McQuilkin describes sanctification as a process of growth that occurs over time in the life of a Christian (2 Cor. 3:18, Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:15,16, 1 Thes. 4:1,10)^[55]. But he also believes the process is aided by a crisis experience in which a Christian is profoundly struck by the depth of their sin, made aware of God's provision for victorious living, challenged to commit their whole person to Him, and taught to serve out of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. McQuilkin says, for the backslidden Christian "reentry into normal, supernatural Christian living is through the gate of surrender." And he adds, "for such a person, a normal, successful Christian experience is not the product of a gradual process of spiritual development, let alone automatic progress. A decisive turning point is needed."

Like the other four views of sanctification, McQuilkin believes sanctification brings about changes in the way we act (1 Cor. 6:9-10) and the way we think (Rom. 12:1,2). The overall effect is that our lives more and more approximates the likeness of Christ.

Ignorance and unbelief: the cause of spiritual failure

More than other the other views we have studied so far, the Keswick view of sanctification seeks to address the problem of the stumbling or back sliding Christian. According to McQuilkin, spiritual failure results from two main causes: ignorance and unbelief.

Some Christians are ignorant of their ability to live victorious lives. They are not aware of the provisions God has made to enable them to conduct a vibrant walk with Him. Usually, though, struggling Christians are set back by unbelief. According to McQuilkin, unbelief is the root cause of disobedience and lack of faith. Disobedient Christians, for example, often are afraid to trust God because they do not believe what He says. For some, this leads to outward rebellion but most drift away from God through sins of omission and a failure to pursue Him. Christians who

lack faith are reluctant to depend on God's power for ministry. Their fundamental unbelief and distrust of God leads them to rely on self in an attempt to attain godliness in their own power.

The cure for spiritual failure

Whatever the cause, McQuilkin's solution to a subnormal Christian experience is faith. "Simple faith is the secret." Faith is the ultimate answer to the question of sin in the life of the believer. No one can bring about their own sanctification. It is only as we place our faith in God and His resources that a victorious Christian life can result.

McQuilkin defines his simple faith as "a choice to commit all of oneself unconditionally to the person of God, who is revealed in the Bible and witnessed to by the Holy Spirit." This is in contrast to "false faith" which occurs when the object of faith is someone or something other than God or when faith is not a commitment of the whole person. The commitment inherent in sanctifying faith is demonstrated by a willingness to step out in obedience to the truth to do God's will. This commitment to do God's will, is, according to McQuilkin, "the most important evidence of faith." [60]

Those who continue in deliberate violation of God's will are not exercising faith and for them, no growth is possible. They must first surrender to God and obey him. The need for surrender often results in a crisis in the life of a Christian. Accustomed to living as they see fit, they are forced to decide if they will abandon rebellion and make a decision to wholly commit to Him. This crisis does not arise in the life of every Christian, but from McQuilkin's experience it does more often than not.

Filling of the Spirit

When someone becomes a Christian, Christ gives them the indwelling presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As a result, a process of change is initiated with a view to the renewal of the person in the image of God. Now, for the first time, they have the ability to choose against sin. With God's power they are able to follow Him. This new power, mediated through the Spirit, is available to Christians through a process called "filling." McQuilkin explores the meaning of the phrase "filling of the Spirit" and advances a definition centered around the concept control:

"Filled with the Spirit is a figurative, poetic expression that refers primarily to the relationship between two persons in which one is in charge." [61]

"(filled with the Spirit) means that the Holy Spirit dominates, has full control, possesses... though the dominion (is) gracious, by invitation only, and does not... override one's personal choice."[62]

McQuilkin is not clear in his essay as to the duration of this experience. He says that the expression filled with the Spirit refers to a "state or condition" and that "we are commanded to be filled continually."[63]

McQuilkin concludes that being filled with the Spirit is the key to living an effective and victorious Christian life. Additionally there may be times of special empowering that go above and beyond normal filling. These special empowerings enable Christians to serve effectively in more challenging situations.

The means of growth

According to the Keswick view, sanctification is facilitated by the means of growth: prayer, learning the scripture, fellowship and suffering. Each of these avenues are used by God to bring us into conformity with Him. In the midst of suffering, for example, Christians are presented with an opportunity to look to God for the good he can perform and to grow in dependence on Him. McQuilkin also points out that the means of growth should be pursued aggressively and with the realization that God is the one bringing about change.

The impact of the means of growth on individuals varies widely. As a result, Christians should resist the temptation to measure their own growth in comparison with others and should instead keep before them the example of Christ.

Summary

Over the years, the Keswick movement has drawn inspiration from leaders of a variety of theological perspectives. For this reason, McQuilkin sees the Keswick view as a mediating position on sanctification that avoids the extremes of some views. He concludes it has a balanced perspective on the Biblical data and much to contribute to the discussion on sanctification.

Reaction to the Keswick view

I agree with McQuilkin's statement that "sin according to the Bible is defined as any falling short of the glorious moral perfection of God himself" But like Wesley, McQuilkin muddies the definition of sin by introducing a distinction between sins that are deliberate those that are "unconscious" or "unwitting". In my reaction to the Wesleyan view, I argued that the New Testament does not make such a distinction.

Assuming a distinction can be made between deliberate and unwitting sin, McQuilkin asserts that sanctification is only concerned with the latter area. He says,

"Growth into more Christlike behavior is in areas of unconscious sin or sins of omission, falling short of Godlike qualities. In deliberate sin, there is no pattern of gradual growth." [65]

For McQuilkin, Christian growth is restricted to improving on godlike qualities that are yet to be fully developed. Christians don't sin less; they become more Godly.

I would agree with McQuilkin that developing Godlike qualities is an important part of sanctification. These qualities are the fruit of the spirit and every Christian should pursue them. But the renewal of our new man into Christ's image (Col. 3:10) is not enough. Our old man must also be put off (Eph. 4:22). While character is being developed, sin must also be dealt with. In Gal. 5:16-6:10 Paul portrays Christians engaged in a struggle between the flesh and the Spirit (5:17). Sometimes they lose this struggle and fall into sin (6:1). If this occurs, members of the body should recognize their own vulnerability to temptation and restore the fallen brother (6:2,3). Christians should not lose heart in this war over the flesh; they should strive to continue doing good (6:9,10). We don't know the nature of the trespass mentioned in verse 1. We are not told whether the act was deliberate or unconscious, ongoing or isolated. We are not given information about the severity of the sin or the nature of the consequences. We are simply told that sinning Christians need to be restored and that everyone should strive to continue doing good. Christian growth is not limited in this passage to the developing Godly qualities. Sin is a reality that must be faced and overcome in the life of a Christian.

Instead of taking the redemptive approach suggested by Paul, McQuilkin says that real Christians "need never - and should never - deliberately violate the known will of God." For McQuilkin, the issue is settled by passages like 1 John 3:4-10. In verse 9, John says, "no one who is born of God practices sin." The implication is that if someone sins deliberately, their salvation should be called into question. I believe this is a misunderstanding of what John is trying to say. Earlier in the same letter (1:8-10), John tells those who say they don't sin that they deceive themselves. In the next chapter (2:1,2), he implies that Christians can and do sin and affirms that Jesus' death covers their sins. John also says those who focus on the hope of their future conformity to Christ "purify themselves" (1 John 3:3). Using the word purify assumes there is sin in the life of a Christian to be purified from.

What then is the meaning of 1 John 3:4-10? We've seen above that Christians sin, but John

seems to rule out the possibility of sin in chapter 3. The problem is resolved when we consider the language John uses and the situation his is addressing.

Language: The present tense of the verbs for sin and repeated use of "practice" in 1 John 3:4,8a,9a suggest that an ongoing lifestyle of sin is in view.

Situation: Most commentators agree that John's readers faced an early form of Gnostic teaching that promoted throwing off moral restraints. John's warning in 1 John 3:8, "let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous", indicates that he has these teachers primarily in mind.

When we understand the language and the situation, John's becomes clear: false teachers who set themselves up to be Christians betray their true identity by their ongoing sin and disregard for God's will. John is not saying, however, that someone who sins deliberately is not a Christian. That interpretation adds a distinction to the definition of sin that John never makes, and it also completely contradicts the tone of 1 John 2:2.

Christian growth, therefore, is a mixture of laying aside our old sinful habits and embracing the positive character qualities God wants to bring about in our lives. The Keswick view misses this balance.

McQuilkin's description of being filled with the Spirit was helpful. I agree that this is the key to living an effective Christian life. McQuilkin could have said more, though, about how this filling is obtained. I agree with Walvoord, "it would be helpful... if the means by which one may be filled with the spirit would be more carefully delineated." [66]

I also found it difficult to determine the importance and nature of a crisis experience that McQuilkin discussed on page 171. He suggests there comes a point in the life of most Christians where they must decisively surrender their own self will and place themselves under the authority of Christ. This crisis experience is a turning point their life and very important to their growth. But we don't hear whether the experience is a one time event or repeated at regular intervals. A single, definitive event seems to be in view.

Certainly, the New Testament narrates important crises in the life of Christians that play a major role in their sanctification. Paul, for example, indicates that on at least two occasions adverse circumstances helped him to gain deeper insight into God. In 2 Cor. 1:8,9 he says, "we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead". And when suffering from his famous "thorn in the flesh", God was able to teach him, "my grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. (2 Cor. 12)" The call for total surrender to God in passages like Rom. 12:1,2 has no doubt produced a crisis in the life of many Christians. But the New Testament does not urge Christians to seek or to expect life-defining post conversion crisis experiences. These times may come for some, but our challenge is instead to "not lose heart", to "not growing weary" (Gal. 6:9-10) and to "press on" (Phil. 3:12,14) knowing all the while we are far from perfect (Phil. 3:12-14). Hoekema adds, "I agree... that some, possibly many, Christians need to surrender their wills in total commitment to the Lord sometime after their conversion... I disagree, however that a specific post-conversion crisis experience needs to be programmed into the lives of most Christians"

The Augustinian-Dispensational View - presented by John Walvoord

According to John Walvoord, differences in the various approaches to sanctification center mainly on the degree to which a person is transformed after becoming a Christian. Some say at conversion people become a totally new persons. Others argue that vestiges of their old life remain. At the center of the debate is the term "nature" and more specifically "sin nature". Walvoord thinks that differences of opinion could be resolved if these terms were more carefully

defined.

In contrast to a substantive use of the word nature [68], Walvoord's definition of "sin nature" focuses more on a Christian's capacity for or inclination towards sin. This can be seen in Walvoord's definition: "The concept of a sin nature can probably best be summarized as a complex of human attributes that demonstrate a desire and predisposition to sin (italics mine)."[69]

Walvoord also discusses the relationship between the sin nature and the terms "flesh" and "old man/ new man". He believes that Augustine's concept of the flesh is synonymous with the Biblical use of sin nature. Here the flesh is seen as that which remains in a person following their conversion. Walvoord takes a different approach with old man/ new man language used in Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4. He says these terms shouldn't be confused with the sinful and new natures inside a Christian. Old man/ new man instead refers to the change of lifestyle that occurs when someone is saved; Christians lay aside their old manner of life and put on the new. Sin nature and new nature, by contrast, refer a state of being and not just a lifestyle. Walvoord points out:

"Once a person is saved, the spiritual state of that person includes a new nature and an old nature... The believer still has an old nature - a complex of attributes with an inclination and disposition to sin; and the new nature... a complex of attributes... (that) incline and dispose the Christian to a new manner of life, one that is holy in the sight of God."

[70]

Like proponents of the Reformed view, Augustinian-Dispensationalists affirm a sin nature or sinful tendency exists in the life of every Christian (see Rom. 7:14-25 and Gal. 5:16-17). Because Walvoord maintains that an old nature is still present, he believes that Christians may progress in their sanctification, but they will never be free from sin in this life.

Regeneration and the baptism of the Holy Spirit

Walvoord says that two things occur when someone is converted: regeneration and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration occurs at the point of conversion, involves the granting of eternal life and the new nature, and moves a Christian from spiritual death to life. It does not, as some suggest, "bring perfection of character or freedom from a sin nature." The baptism of the Holy Spirit, spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12:13, is the placement, at the moment of conversion, of someone into the body of Christ. When we are identified with Christ in this way we share in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-4; Col. 2:12). As a result we can tap into God's power and guidance for our lives. This experience was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost and occurs to anyone the moment they repent and turn to Christ.

The indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit

All Christians, at the point of conversion, are indwelled by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's indwelling is God's first phase in His plan to conform us to His image. It is also the basis for our sanctification because through the Spirit we receive spiritual gifts and the power to life effective Christian lives. This indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit is unique to the church age (the period of time following the day of Pentecost) and is qualitatively different than the pre-Pentecost ministry of the Spirit (see John 7:37-39).

While all Christians can be said to be indwelled by the Holy Spirit, not all have been filled by the Spirit. Walvoord defines the filling of the Spirit as "the unhindered ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian." Unlike baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is a one time event that permanently places us in Christ, filling is a temporary state, an experience that Christians should regularly seek to have. This is implied by the present continuous tense of Ephesians 5:18: "Don't be drunk with wine, for that is dissipation but be filled (or, "go on being filled") with the Holy Spirit."

When someone is filled with the Spirit they are empowered to carry out the will of God. This is evident from numerous passages that describe the Spirit's filling (examples include Acts 2:4; 4:8,31; 6:3,5; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24). Much like the way alcohol permeates our body and effects the way we act, when someone is filled with the Spirit, the Spirit is in control. Walvoord says being filled by the Spirit "brings for the time being a control of a believer's life by the Holy Spirit and the infusion of spiritual power, enabling a Christian to do far more than he or she could do naturally."

[73]

Becoming filled by the Holy Spirit is a matter of yielding oneself wholly over to God. This yielding must occur both in the area of God's revealed will and in accepting the life circumstances that God has placed us in. According to Paul in Romans 6, believers have a choice whether they want to yield themselves to God or to sin. When someone fully places their life under God's control (e.g. Rom. 12:1-2) the Spirit is given free reign to empower them. A good example of this attitude can be seen in Philippians 2:5-11 where Jesus completely submits in obedience to God and places all trust in Him.

When Christians stumble and sin, the indwelling Spirit is grieved (Ephesians 4:30) and is hindered in His ability to minister to them. But there is no danger of loss of salvation; the person still remains indwelled by the Spirit. Instead Christians should confess their sins to God and appropriate the forgiveness that Jesus obtained for them on the cross.

According to Walvoord, living an effective Christian life hinges on cultivating an attitude of continuous dependence on the power of the Spirit to energize us an make us effective for service. When we turn from God and continue in sin, we won't be filled with the Spirit. Instead of power we will experience God's corrective discipline (1 Cor. 11:31-32; Heb. 12:5-6). But if we yield our selves fully to him, he will fill us with the Holy Spirit, and do things through us we could never do on our own.

The resulting experience of progressive sanctification

Christians who put their full trust in God and walk in dependence on the Spirit's power may never attain to God's standard of perfection in this life, but they can expect to steadily grow in sanctification. The Holy Spirit makes this possible by giving us increasing assurance of our salvation, providing insight into God's will for our lives, helping us to worship and pray, and using us as a channel of His life in our service others. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) is evidence that this process is occurring and the result is that "a mighty work for God can be accomplished" in the life of the believer.

God and man's role in sanctification

Walvoord maintains that some Calvinists have overemphasized God's sovereignty, not just in relation to conversion but also in their view of sanctification. He claims that this imbalance has had detrimental effect, making some Calvinists reluctant to carry out the great commission. This reluctance, Walvoord says, stems from thinking that minimizes human responsibility (e.g. "If God has elected some to salvation, they will surely be saved regardless of our efforts.").^[75] Being a Calvinist himself, Walvoord feels the need to balance an emphasis on God's sovereignty with the awareness that human choices have a critical impact on Christian growth. Walvoord says, "God is the sanctifier... however... people are responsible for responding to the truth of God and to the work of the Holy Spirit. (italics mine)"^[76]

Ultimate perfection

Walvoord says we are destined to eventually be conformed to the image of Christ and perfectly sanctified, regardless of our present shortcomings. Sanctification in this life is shaped by our choices and will never be complete, but scripture promises the full removal of sin and imperfection from our lives when we stand before God (Eph. 5:25-27; 1 John 3:2). In light of this, Walvoord concludes that "sanctification is the work of God for human beings rather than our work

for him." In the future, we will be conformed to the image of Christ and reflect his Glory. Then all of the credit will go to God.

Reaction to the Augustinian-Dispensational view

I agree with Walvoord's definition of the filling of the Holy Spirit and his recognition that it is a repeated occurrence in the Christian life. I thought his description of how to be filled with the Spirit, however, focused too narrowly on submission and obedience. Walvoord suggests that total surrender to Christ and avoiding actions that might grieve that spirit are the keys to being filled by the Spirit. While surrender to Christ allows the Spirit to characterize our actions, this is only one of many things Christians can do to facilitate being filled by the Holy Spirit.

More insight into how to be filled by the Holy Spirit can be found when we realize how similar the concept is to walking according to the Spirit (e.g. Rom. 8:1-11). Both are temporary states that Christians must choose to enter into [77]. Both involve being empowered by the Spirit to live effective Christian lives (Acts 4:8; Acts 7:55ff; Gal. 5:22-23). Once this connection is established between walking and filling, several suggestions can be made about how to enjoy the full power of the Spirit:

- (1) Develop the correct mental outlook. Paul urges the Romans to set their minds on the things of the Spirit (see Rom. 8:5-7).
- (2) Cultivate an attitude of dependence on the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-4) through the regular expression of gratitude and recognition of what God has done for you (Eph. 5:18-20).
- (3) Respond to God's personal leading. Gal. 5:18 and Rom. 8:14 suggest that being led by the Spirit and walking by the Spirit are virtually synonymous.
- (4) Realize that engaging in bitter disputes and sinning against others will grieve the Spirit and minimize His ability to work through you (Eph. 4:30).

My view of sanctification

The key components of my view of sanctification have been spelled out in my comments on the other views. I will present my view, then, in summary form:

Definition

- Sanctify comes from the Greek word hagiadzo which means to be set apart or made fit for service (2 Thes. 2:19-22).
- Sanctification has a moral dimension (1 Thes. 4:3-7). It involves turning away from immorality and towards God (Eph. 4:22-24; Gal. 5:16-6:5)
- Sanctification is spoken of as an accomplished event (1 Cor. 1:30,31;1 Cor. 6:11;Col. 3:9-10) and as an ongoing process (Eph. 4:15-16,23). We are sanctified in our position in Christ but our condition is far from perfect. We still sin and won't be perfected until Jesus returns (1 Thes. 5:23-24).

Sin

- Sin is any word, thought or action that that falls short of God's perfect character (Rom. 3:23; Matt. 5; Rom. 14:23). Distinctions between "deliberate" and "unconscious" sins or "willful sins" and "mistakes" are not made in the New Testament.
- No Christian is without sin (1 John 2:2; James 3:2; Phil. 3).
- There is a struggle inside every Christian between the flesh and the Spirit (Gal. 5:17). Sometimes Christians lose this struggle and fall into sin (Gal. 6:1). If this occurs, other Christians should recognize their own vulnerability to temptation and restore the fallen brother (Gal. 6:2,3). Christians should not lose heart in this process, but continue doing good (Gal. 6:9,10).

Sin nature/ old man

- Christians are new creatures (2 Cor. 5:21) who have been freed from sin (Rom. 6:6-7).
- Christians lay aside their old self when they are put into Christ (Col. 3:9-11; Rom. 6:6), but our habits and ways of thinking still present problems.

- We still have our body of sin to reckon with (Eph. 4:22-24; Gal. 5:16-17).
- As a result, the habits of the old self need to be put aside everyday as we learn to act consistently with our new identity in Christ (Eph. 4:22-24).

Perfection

- Christians will never reach a sinless state on this side of the grave (Phil. 3:12-16; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8-10). I reject the Wesleyan notion of freedom from known sin and the Keswick teaching on freedom from deliberate sin. Claims to perfection are fertile ground for self deception and rationalization.

Process/ Crisis

- Numerous passages teach that sanctification is an ongoing a process (Gal. 3:3; Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Thes. 4:1,10; 2 Peter 1:3-8). During this process the new man is transformed into Christ's image (2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10) and increased victory is won over sin (Eph. 4:22-24; Gal. 5:16-6:5; 1 Thes. 4:3-7).
- Crises that promote growth can and do occur in the life of a Christian (2 Cor. 1:8-11; 2 Cor. 12:1-10). The New Testament nowhere teaches, however, that crises such as surrender (Keswick), entire sanctification (Wesley), or the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are normative experiences that should be sought by all Christians. Christians are never urged to seek lifedefining post conversion crisis experiences.
- Instead we hear more about not losing heart, not growing weary (Gal. 6:9-10) and pressing on with the acknowledgment we have not become perfect (Phil. 3:12-16; Gal. 5:16-6:10).

God's role and Man's role

- God accomplishes our sanctification (1 Thes. 5:24;Phil. 1:6; Hebrews 13:20-21) through the agency of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2). He causes us to grow and change and we cooperate (Phil. 2:12-13). We pursue our sanctification (1 Tim. 6:11; Heb. 12:14), trust God that we are free from sin (Rom. 6:11) and that he can renew us (Col. 3:1-11), and avail ourselves to the means of grace: learning the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2), participating in fellowship (Eph. 4:15-16), responding to God's discipline (Heb. 12:11), praying (Rom. 8:26; James 5:16), and giving our lives away to serve others (John 13:17).

Maturity

- The Bible does make distinctions between the maturity level of different Christians (Heb. 5:11-14; Gal. 5:13-15; 1 Cor. 2:6). But this distinction is based on knowledge of the Word of God, not on whether or not someone has had an experience such as entire sanctification.

Baptism of Holv Spirit

- The Baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at conversion and involves the placement of a new covert into the body of Christ and the receiving of the indwelling presence of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). The Bible nowhere urges Christians to seek a second baptism of, in, by, or with the Holy Spirit after their conversion.

Role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification

- The Spirit fills believers and empowers Christians for service (Eph. 5:18; Acts 4:8; Acts 7:55) and is responsible for transforming them into conformity with Christ (Rom. 8:4,11).
- The filling of the Holy Spirit is a temporary experience that Christians must repeatedly seek. Through this filling, the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to serve God more effectively (Acts 4:8,31; 6:3,5; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24).
- The filling of the Holy Spirit is similar if not identical to Paul's notion of walking according to the Spirit in Rom. 8:1-11.
- The Spirit also helps Christians understand the meaning of scripture (1 Cor. 2:12; I John 2:27), assures believers they are God's children (Rom. 8:16) and distributes gifts to help Christians serve more effectively (1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10).

A final word about crises experiences

In this paper, I have been critical of of two crisis experiences: the Keswick notion of surrender and the Pentecostal description of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If someone is urged to pursue one of these experiences or is told these experiences are normative for Christians, I believe damage can result. He or she may become unnecessarily disappointed that the experience never came, or they may be tempted to fake receiving the experience in order to be viewed as spiritual.

This is not to say that life-changing post conversion experiences never happen to Christians. The Keswick experience of surrender no doubt occurs in the lives of some Christians (although it does not result in freedom from deliberate sin). Other life-defining post conversion experiences occur as well. But we are never told in the New Testament that Christians should seek out these experiences or that they are normative for all believers.

Despite the excesses and potential for problems, Christians should not avoid spiritual or crisis experiences altogether. Francis Schaeffer points out, "Christianity is not only intellectual...Christianity is the reality of communion with God in the present life; it is the understanding that there is the indwelling Spirit; it is the understanding that there is the moment by moment empowering of the Holy Spirit... It is the understanding that the fruit of the Spirit is something real to all Christians. It is the understanding that prayer is real and not just a devotional exercise. Indeed we must not overreact to... super-spirituality, but we must stress that Christ... means us to affirm life and not negate life. Such is the ideal. May god show us the living balance and help us to live, by his grace, in that balance."

Throwing out crises experiences would strip our Christian lives of some of the most profound and rewarding events that occur in our lives. The result would be a dead and lifeless orthodoxy that is just as destructive as overemphasizing experience. We should be grateful, as Paul was, when through adversity or the overflow of the Spirit we are granted accelerated growth or deeper insight into God's character. But we can't expect that these events will *always* occur in the life of *every* Christian.

While affirming healthy spiritual experiences, we should teach people to view sanctification mainly as a process. During this process Christians enjoy the power and presence of the Holy Spirit as He helps them to live in dependence on Him, have victory over sin, and serve effectively.

NOTES:

[1] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987). *Return to Text*

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[2] Ibid., p. 15. Return to <u>Text</u>
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[3] Ibid., p. 12. Return to Text

[4] Ibid., p. 21. Return to Text

[5] Ibid., p. 25. Return to Text

[6] See, for example, Matt 5:48,6:13; Rom. 8:3-4, 2 Cor. 7:1. In Matthew 5:48 Jesus admonishes his listeners to be perfect as their heavenly father is perfect. Paul says that Christians can fulfill the righteous requirement of the law because Jesus condemned sin in the flesh. Paul challenges the Corinthians to cleanse themselves from "all defilement of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." *Return to Text*

- [7] Luke 1:69-75, Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 4:17 Return to Text
- [8] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 13. *Return to* <u>Text</u>
- [9] Ibid., p. 17. Return to Text

[Return to Text

- 11 Ibid., p. 19. Return to Text
- [12] Rom. 6:12. All scripture references are to the *New American Standard Bible* Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by the Lockman Foundation. *Return to Text*
- [13] Rom. 6:22 Return to Text
- [14] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 26. *Return to Text*
- [15] Dieter in Five Views on Sanctification, p. 27. Return to Text
- [16] Ibid., p. 29. Return to Text
- [17] Ibid., p. 35. Return to Text
- [18] Ibid., p. 35, italics mine. Return to Text
- [19] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 226. *Return to* <u>Text</u>
- [20] Hoekema makes a strong case that this is essentially how Dieter defines entire sanctification. For more on this see Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 48. *Return to* <u>Text</u>
- ^[21] The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology points out that "teleios occurs five times meaning mature, fully grown: 1 Cor. 2:6; 14:20; Phil. 3:15, ... and Col. 1:28." Colin Brown, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1976), p. 62. *Return to Text*
- ^[22] The late Oswald Sanders was the consulting director for Overseas Missionary Fellowship, a well known speaker, and a prolific author. *Return to Text*
- [23] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 27. *Return to* <u>Text</u>
- [24] Ibid., p. 14, 23. Return to <u>Text</u>
- [25] Ibid., p 23. Return to Text
- [26] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 61. *Return to*

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[27] Ibid., p. 64. Return to <u>Text</u>
[28] Ibid., p. 69-70. Return to <u>Text</u>
[29] Ibid., p. 71-72. Return to <u>Text</u>
[30] Ibid., p. 74. Return to <u>Text</u>
[31] Ibid., p. 77. Return to <u>Text</u>
[32] Ibid., p. 81. Return to <u>Text</u>
[33] Ibid., p. 79. Return to <u>Text</u>
[34] Ibid., p. 81. Return to <u>Text</u>
[35] Ibid., p. 85 Return to <u>Text</u>
[35] Ibid., p. 85 Return to <u>Text</u>
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- [38] A permanent empowering of the Holy Spirit often evidenced by speaking in tongues that Christians typically receive sometime after conversion. *Return to <u>Text</u>*
- [39] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 118. *Return to Text*

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[40] Ibid., p. 118. Return to <u>Text</u>
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[36] Ibid., p. 85. Return to <u>Text</u>

[37] Ibid., p. 87. Return to Text

[41] Ibid., p. 127. Return to <u>Text</u>

[42] Ibid., p. 130. Return to Text

[43] Ibid., p. 131. Return to Text

[44] Ibid., p. 133. Return to Text

- [45] Many Pentecostals believe that the baptism of the holy Spirit typically follows conversion but can at times coincide with it. *Return to* <u>Text</u>
- [46] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 131. *Return to* <u>Text</u>
- [47] I believe that John 7:39 ("the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified") and John 17:1 ("Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you") imply that the disciples were not indwelled by the Holy Spirit prior to Jesus' glorification. Most theologians believe Jesus was glorified in his crucifixion, resurrection and exaltation (John 13:31-32). So the disciples could not have been Indwelled by the Spirit prior to Jesus' resurrection. In John 20:22, during a post resurrection appearance, Jesus breathes on the disciples and says, "receive the Holy Spirit." Does this mean they were Indwelled by the Spirit? That is a possible interpretation. If true, at Pentecost the disciples were given a special filling to

be effective witnesses while everyone else was being Indwelled for the first time. Another possible interpretation of John 20:22 recognizes that Jesus breathed the spirit on them in connection with his sending them out to witness (20:21) and that this act anticipated the future indwelling of the Holy Spirit to empower them to witness (Acts 1:7). Admittedly there are some difficulties with either view. *Return to Text*

- [48] Baptism of the Holy Spirit, as I have defined it, occurs at conversion. Luke records several conversions (Acts 8, 16) where no mention is made of tongues. *Return to Text*
- [49] Hoekema's claim that 1 Cor. 12:30 specifically refers to a "continuing ministry to the church of speaking in tongues in the assembly" is unconvincing. See Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 131. *Return to Text*
- [50] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 155. *Return to* <u>Text</u>
- ^[51] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 153-154. *Return to Text*
- [52] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987),p. 178. *Return to* <u>Text</u>
- [53] Ibid., p. 180. Return to Text
- [54] Ibid., p. 153-154. Return to <u>Text</u>
- [55] Ibid., p. 159, 178-179. Return to <u>Text</u>
- [56] Ibid., p. 171. Return to Text
- [57] Ibid., p. 171. Return to Text
- [58] Ibid., p. 166. Return to Text
- [59] Ibid., p. 169. Return to Text
- [60] Ibid., p. 170. Return to <u>Text</u>
- [61] Ibid., p. 177. Return to <u>Text</u>
- [62] Ibid., p. 176-177. Return to Text
- [63] Ibid., p. 176. Return to Text
- [64] Ibid., p. 173. Return to <u>Text</u>
- [65] Ibid., p. 180. Return to Text
- [66] Ibid., p. 195. Return to Text
- [67] Ibid., p. 187. Return to Text

- ^[68] Used by some, for example, to describe Jesus' human and divine nature. See Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1899), 2:387, 389. *Return to Text*
- Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 206. *Return to* <u>Text</u>
- [70] Ibid., p. 208. Return to <u>Text</u>
- [71] Ibid., p. 210. Return to Text
- [72] Ibid., p. 215. Return to <u>Text</u>
- [73] Ibid., p. 215. Return to Text
- [74] Ibid., p. 222. Return to Text
- [75] I think Walvoord is on very shaky ground here. Some organizations who follow Calvinist theology are aggressive in their outreach. *Return to Text*
- [76] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthony A. Hoekema, Stanley M. Horton, J. Robertson McQuilkin, John F. Walvoord, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 225. *Return to* Text
- [77] Note these imperatives: "Be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 5:18), "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16). *Return to Text*
- [78] Francis A. Schaeffer, *The New Superspirituality, The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1982), Vol. 3, pp. 399-401. *Return to Text*