



General Topics :: Nee vs. Tozer

Nee vs. Tozer - posted by coops (), on: 2005/10/11 8:33

Ok the title was a joke, but it got you looking right?

Well, not totally a joke, I has a question about them:

In *The Normal Christian Life*, Watchman Nee talk of being filled with the Holy Spirit. He says tarry meetings aren't the way to go, and cites examples such as himself, R A Torrey and Dr Martin Loyd Jones. He agrees that the experiences are very often different, but that to tarry is missing the point.

He also says that "we have already been cricified with Christ" (Think: seed of adam / seed of Christ) and are already dead and raised again in Christ.

Moving on to Tozer, he says "They give you books these days on how to be filled with the spirit in 10 easy steps. Thats not how I was filled... ... After hours and hours of dying, until I thought I was pretty close to dying, a verse of scripture was quoted in my ear, I believed it and down came the Holy Ghost and lept into the depths of my being... after God killed me, then He could fill me"

How do these two go together? They seem to conflict.

Re: Nee vs. Tozer - posted by LetUsPray (), on: 2005/10/11 9:07

Dear Coops,

You are soooo right. They do conflict and one of them isn't correct. I have posted a thread If You Think This is Useful, Will You? Even though I haven't read Tozer with respect to his prayer life, the post I wrote touched on exactly that. I will address this again in It Is NOT Normal for a Christian to Sin, But....?

I just finished reading another sermon by Ernest O'Neill which supports the Nee teaching. Again, if we are all filled with the same Holy Spirit, how do we get sooo divided?

God bless you,

Re: Nee vs. Tozer - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/11 9:12

Just an observation about God. It would seem that as soon as you conclude that God does something this way, He turns around and does it that way. Then we try to do it that way and He choses a different way. To interpret an experience based on ours or others experiences is usually a formula for failure. Let God be God. These great men were still men. While I understand what they'er saying , there is an element where all experiences of God are more on the lines of testimony rather than "doctrine" or teaching. Now while one can teach from experiences it a very rare thing indeed that the experience will square 100% with doctrinal teaching. That's why we are commanded to live by the every "Word" that proceeds from the Mouth of God, instead of just serving Him with only our intelect. In the first temptation of Jesus , He was tempted toward experience but opted for the Word that proceeded from the mouth of God. Just a thought.

Quote:
-----He also says that "we have already been cricified with Christ" (Think: seed of adam / seed of Christ) and are already dead and raised again in Christ.

The seed comment I will not comment on but the general context I will. Much of what we are is through identification with Christ and His finished work. To the degree in which we allow our faith to develop in this identification, we will succeed as christians. We are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, etc...Identification with reationship will lead us into experi

ence(s).

That should help get this thread going

:-) God Bless Bro. Daryl

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/11 9:14

Could it be that we serve a very Diverse God???? ;-)

Re: Nee vs. Tozer - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/11 9:53

Quote:

-----How do these two go together? They seem to conflict.

You're not wrong. They do conflict. I am with Tozer. ;-)

One of the interesting, and priceless, aspects of this site is that we have the opportunity of listening to people who see some vital issues very differently.

Re: Nee vs. Tozer - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/11 10:01

Dear Coops,

There is no conflict. They are both right.

Sometimes people are looking at the same thing from two different perspectives. We know in our hearts what we have experienced. It is our personal experience, our testimony of Christ. And thus, while we know this in our heart and experience it in truth, is it truly possible to tell what happens adequately in words?

And so, I don't think Nee and Tozer disagree. They are just explaining it in different ways. They are each providing a different piece of a large puzzle.

By what Nee is saying, when humanity sinned we became dead to God. You could look at it like this for we were rebuked by God. We were cast from His presence. We were sinners. And so, we were dead. Christ gave us new life and thus we were resurrected.

In that process of resurrection, we had to die to the law. We had to die to the old way of things. We were already dead to God. However, we were alive to sin. Thus, in Tozer's perspective, we had to die to sin. Once Tozer died to sin, he was resurrected to new life.

They are both trying to describe a transformation.

It does kind of bother me that Tozer said, "God killed me." When we die, we die with Christ on the cross. Who killed Christ? Did God kill Christ? Or did we kill Christ?

Something to ponder.

Hope this helps. This is my take on it anyway. Someone else may have a different perspective.

In Christ,
Blake

Re: Nee vs. Tozer - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/10/11 10:05

Quote:
-----Thats not how I was filled

Quote:
-----He agrees that the experiences are very often different

Think that very well sums it up and agree with Dohzman, these are not necessarily contradictory. Like most often when we are gleaning from each other and from past saints, if we are willing they could be seen as complimentary.

The problem here is in doing this comparison. What was referenced seems to be out of context of some sorts, there is some information missing.

Quote:
-----He agrees that the experiences are very often different, but that to tarry is missing the point.

In what context was this taken?

Quote:
-----They give you books these days on how to be filled with the spirit in 10 easy steps

Wouldn't think that Tozer would be referring to any of these man, from what I recall they would all be in complete agreement on this point. This seems to be an unfair comparison, if anything the likelihood would be that they were approaching it from different angles, hard to tell from just a couple of excerpts.

Re: simultaneously - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/10/11 10:22

Didn't see some of these until after the fact;

Quote:
-----You're not wrong. They do conflict. I am with Tozer. One of the interesting, and priceless, aspects of this site is that we have the opportunity of listening to people who see some vital issues very differently.

One of these days I will find it again but recall listening to a message from Keith Daniel where he mentioned hearing that some found it impossible to tell whether he was Calvinistic or Armenian and in that wonderful chuckle he has I believe he intimated that he had done well.

And all I could do was smile

:D

Re: Nee vs. Tozer - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2005/10/11 10:43

Tozer was likely operating from a Wesleyan view point of sanctification/baptism of the Holy Spirit, whereas Nee was not. In the Wesleyan informed view of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit/sanctification is where one truly dies to self, and what was once a heavenly reality from a position standpoint was not actualized in practical application and experience until they were baptized in the Spirit/sanctified.

I'm not overly familiar with either man's theology, though a little bit with each. They are probably in conflict. Remember, Nee was much more dispensational in theology, whereas Tozer was more Wesleyan-Arminian/Pentecostal.

Re: Nee vs. Tozer - posted by rookie (), on: 2005/10/11 12:19

Brother coops wrote:

Quote:
-----He also says that "we have already been crucified with Christ" (Think: seed of adam / seed of Christ) and are already dead and raised again in Christ.

This is true according to God's foreknowledge. But when does it become true for those who become heirs with Christ?

Where does obedience to the commands of Christ fit into these theological thoughts?

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/11 13:12

Quote:
-----This is true according to God's foreknowledge. But when does it become true for those who become heirs with Christ?

Where does obedience to the commands of Christ fit into these theological thoughts?

Much of what we are is through identification with Christ and His finished work. To the degree in which we allow our faith to develop in this identification, we will succeed as Christians

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2005/10/11 13:39

Brother Dozman wrote:

Quote:
-----Much of what we are is through identification with Christ

By what means does one realize this "identification?"

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/11 13:40

Faith

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/11 14:11

Quote:
-----By what means does one realize this "identification?"

the answer to this is the essence of the disagreement between Tozer and Nee.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2005/10/11 14:14

If all else fails, remember that Tozer was probably right :)

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2005/10/11 14:44

Brother dohzman wrote:

Quote:

-----Faith

Does faith find its roots in man or God?

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/11 15:01

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Everything God does and gives is through faith or in the agency of "faith".

Gal 3:5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Faith is a pretty exhaustive subject, I sure you know the passages too. Faith can be closely associated with conscience but isn't necessarily dependent upon the condition of the conscience as much as the response .

Re: Tozer vs. Nee - On: The Holy Spirit - posted by coops (), on: 2005/10/11 18:45

Yeah that is they key though, both Nee and Tozer are firm that faith is foundational. Nee calls it "reckoning" (looking back at the FACTS) and Tozer calls it "aprehending God".

So we have well established that faith is the key and that these theological interpretations could well differ, but may not.

I once read/heard somewhere that alot of theological differences are a result of not grasping the vastness of God. In our small minds they seem to conflict, but in God's master plan they go together somehow. I don't know if that was just somebody's cop-out to become a christian "pluralist" in theology, or something we could all think about. *shrugs* :-)

I'll come back to the dead/dying thing a little later, I just wanted to ask about the filling of the spirit.

Some quotes from Nee ((<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/nee/normal.html>) The Normal Christian Life - Chapter 8) are below, how do they fit in with Tozer's views? Or are they opposite?

Talking on (<http://bible.gospelcom.net/passage/?searchActs%202:33&version9;>) Acts 2:33, he says

Quote:

"The question of what *we* are does not come into consideration at all here, but only what *He* is. He is glorified; therefore the Spirit is poured out... The exaltation of the Lord Jesus is the basis on which the Spirit has been given... Now the principle on which we receive the Spirit of enduement of the Holy Spirit is the very same as that on which we receive forgiveness of sins... Then is it possible that the Son of God has been glorified and you have not

ecieved the Spirit? Never!...

Now heres the strongest part:

Quote:
-----As for forgiveness, so equally for the coming upon us of the Holy Spirit, the whole question is one of faith. As soon as we see the Lord Jesus on the Cross, we know our sins are forgiven; and as soon as we see the Lord Jesus on the Throne, we know the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon us. The basis upon which we receive the enduement of the Holy Spirit is not our praying and fasting and waiting, but the exaltation of Christ. Those who emphasize tarrying and hold 'tarrying meetings' only mislead us, for the gift is not for the 'favoured few' but for all, because it is not given on the ground of what we are at all, but of what Christ is. The Spirit has been poured out to prove His goodness and greatness, not ours. Christ has been crucified, therefore we have been forgiven: Christ has been glorified, therefore we have been endued with power from on high. It is all because of Him.

Thanks for all your responses, I'd love to hear you how can reconcile this :-)

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/11 19:35

I guess I don't see much conflict in thier theology, they both believe ,as I also believe, that the Holy Spirit is evidence of the resurrected, ascended and enthroned Christ. Thier methods seem to differ though.

Personally I think to some faith comes easier in acceptance of what Christ has done, where others , it would seem , need to work through or have things in them worked through inorder to recieve the Holy Spirit.

Eph 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

I believe that literally is be being filled.....etc... I think Ron Bailey made mention of that in another post but I can't find the reference.

Watchman Nee had some mystical doctrine too though, Have you ever read "The Latient(sp?) Power of Man"? From his perspective he attributed an awful lot of ,looking for words here.....almost god like abilities or attributes to man before the fall, and believed that they were still present but somehow hidden after the fall but still present. So I see in most of his writings a more man based approach to the Holy Spirit (by man based, more of a almost assuming the recieving of). Boy I don't know if I did that justice :-?

I know what I would like to say but just don't know how to go about it without along long explanation.I'll stop here.

Re: Tozer vs. Nee - posted by LetUsPray (), on: 2005/10/11 19:45

For what it is worth, I have that book and a number more. I loved to read and study Nee's work, but as of the last few years, a number of questions such as you touch on dohzman, have made me very uneasy about some of the things he wrote.

I am much more inclined to stick with God's word and ask for God's wisdom and insight.

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/11 19:52

I don't take lightly Nee's writing though, because where there's great suffering, there's also deep insight. I guess I approach alot of these great saints works like Mary the mother of Jesus who stored all these things in her heart and pondered them. :-)

Re: Nee vs Tozer - posted by coops (), on: 2005/10/11 20:01

Quote:
-----by man based, more of a almost assuming the recieving of

Nee says that we have already recieved the Holy Spirit. We just have to realise it to be filled. I can see the Chinese influence (in regard to their religion) in his peaceful way of putting it. Tozer charges on asking for it and gets it - but that contradicts Nee's interpretation. Then again, Jesus is supposed to be the Prince of Peace, so travailing in prayer over reciev

ing the Spirit... is that right?!

I know at some stage one of you is going to ask "what is your interpretation?" and this is what I'm trying to figure out, because I want to be able to answer this question. :-)

The hint I'm getting from the past few posts is this: Someone is probably wrong and its probably Nee.

It baffles me how two 'men of God' who were both 'mighty in prayer' and had really gotten a hold of 'dying to self' can hear two contradicting things from God?

P.S to the most recent post: yeah Nee has had some real eye openers for me (I hope he was right in those) and is great, I would definately not discount him, but test everyones words :-)

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/11 20:08

I think it's approach, Tozer believed in taking hold of the horns of the altar and taking by force, as it were, the things of heaven. I really believe it's a matter of ones faith, or inward conviction.

Regardless one thing is certain, If one seeks God with all thier heart THEY WILL FIND HIM ! In that the Lord has always been consistant. So I don't know if the approach is as important as the intent of the heart in its bent to love, glorify, and embrace Jesus Christ.

Re: Nee vs. Tozer - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2005/10/11 20:54

Interesting subject. This is my two cents.

I don't know if their theology contradicted concerning being filled with the Holy Ghost, but it seems from these excerpts that they are both in agreement that being filled with the Spirit is not guaranteed after a particular program (be it 10 steps or through a meeting). Just like salvation is not guaranteed to one who goes through a certain motion (whether it be going to an altar or reading off the sinner's prayer).

Dying to self is something that I believe is a daily walk. It is a new subject to me, but I think that while someone cannot lose a genuine salvation, they can get to a point after being filled where God is no longer working through them in a mighty way. For example: they fall into drunkenness, etc (many Old Testament verses speak of the Spirit moving upon men and then leaving them). However I think one can be filled again, just as Duncan Campbell testified (keep your lamps trimmed, etc).

It would seem to me at salvation, the old man in us is given a death sentence. However, the world has not been crucified to us at this point. I think those who remain at this point are thorny ground hearers. No showing fruit, but rather being choked out by the cares of this world. I believe we should seek to be crucified with Christ at this point, but in truth we are crucifying our worldly ways. Much like we should still seek Christ even though we have met Him. So we should also seek to be filled even though we already are.

So once the world is crucified to us, those rooms that are vacated by the old man are then filled with the Spirit. We speak of receiving fire from heaven, or having the Spirit poured on us, and while this is true, we must already have the Spirit in us to receive the outpouring.

So I would not want to say that Nee is wrong, since I don't know that context he was writing in, but all Christians are not Spirit-filled, but must have a death sentence put on the old man of the flesh (fruits of repentance) to truly be converted. I would have to agree that all true Christians have crucified the flesh (Rom 6:6, Gal 5:24), and have met with Spirit of Christ, but should still seek their flesh to be crucified, and to meet with Christ again, though he lives inside the converted person.

I like the way Corrie Ten Boom put it, that though Jesus is the way to salvation, He is also the way to the fulness. Just as repentance is a necessity to salvation and the fulness. Just as dying to self is the way to salvation and the fulness. It does seem that each step with the Lord is just a more intimate committal to the same doctrines we first learned to be converted, namely, turn from your ways, and look to Christ.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/12 6:12

Quote:
-----In the late 1950s, A. W. Tozer wrote about what he called "the error of textualism," which has its counter-part in today's "wordism." This is what he said: "The error of textualism is not doctrinal. It is far more subtle than that and much more difficult to discover, but its effects are just as deadly. Not its theological beliefs are at fault, but its assumptions.

"It assumes, for instance, that if we have the word for a thing we have the thing itself. If it is in the Bible, it is in us. If we have the doctrine, we have the experience. If something was true of Paul it is of necessity true of us because we accept Paul's epistles as divinely inspired.

"The Bible tells us how to be saved, but textualism goes on to make it tell us that we are saved, something which in the very nature of things it cannot do. Assurance of individual salvation is thus no more than a logical conclusion drawn from doctrinal premises, and the resultant experience wholly mental." (Man: The Dwelling Place of God, A. W. Tozer, page 18, copyright 1966 Christian Publications, Inc., Harrisburg, PA.)The emphasis of Watchman Nee in 'The Normal Christian Life' is that of Brethren writers generally; it distinguishes between standing and state. Our official 'standing' is where we are technically, in Christ. But our experience or 'state' needs to catch up with our 'standing'. Our 'reckoning' is a reckoning based upon our 'standing'. His famous trio walking along the wall illustrates this. As I remember it the three wall-walkers were Fact, Faith and Feeling. They were walking along the top of the wall but everytime that Faith looked backwards to 'Feeling' the whole trio fell off the wall. However, when Faith looked forward to Fact, then Feeling came along quite safely. The key difference here, as I see it, would be as to what 'Fact' Faith actually has its eyes upon. For Watchman Nee the 'Fact' would be the Biblical truth as recorded in the scripture. But this becomes very close to what Tozer would call 'textualism' where because we have the 'word' we think we have the 'thing'.

The Watchman Nee position seems to say that what is needed for the vast majority is the 'realisation' that these things are already true and this realisation is achieved by 'reckoning' it to be true. In some ways Tozer's position is much more pragmatic. He is asking the question 'is it true for you?' ie in Watchman Nee's Brethren terminology, Tozer is saying your 'state' is the reality rather than a 'logical conclusion drawn from doctrinal premises'.

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/12 10:48

Looking at the early church----Jewish believers in Christ verses Gentile believers in Christ---- Would it be right to say that the Jewish believers approach to messiah and the covenant promises was almost like an assuming the what ever? as compared to the gentile believers who really needed taught in order to take hold of ...whatever?

I agree with your statement above and have always sided with Tozer, but I'm going to play devils advocate here for a minute...Is there a place in christianity where certain truths or provisions should be assumed as true in regards to the normal christian life?

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2005/10/12 11:03

Brother dohzman wrote:

Quote:
-----Faith can be closely associated with conscience but isn't necessarily dependent upon the condition of the conscience as much as the response .

Does this mean that faith is of man according to your comments here?

Also, what does "agency of faith" mean?

In Galatians 3:5 Paul points to the source of where faith begins and then grows. There is nothing in carnal man that can know God. Paul writes that "by the hearing of faith?" this becomes the substance of what is hoped for. God speaks throughout the Holy Scriptures. This is the means by which man is known by God. There is no other way.

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2005/10/12 11:11

Brother Coops quoted Nee

Quote:

-----Nee calls it "reckoning" (looking back at the FACTS)

This is where Nee talks with stammering lips. His understanding relies on facts. The facts truly come from the Holy Scripture but to realize how the facts become true to oneself one must be led forward by the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote,

Phil. 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

A walk with Christ is always forward, one who understands this precept never has to rely on the reckoning the past.

In Christ
Jeff

Re: Nee vs Tozer - Reckoning vs Pragmatism - posted by coops (), on: 2005/10/12 18:13

Thankyou all for your discussion so far, this is great. There is an overwhelming support for Tozer's viewpoints here, but may I also play the devil's advocate?

philologos....

Quote:
-----The Watchman Nee position seems to say that what is needed for the vast majority is the 'realisation' that these things are already true and this realisation is achieved by 'reckoning' it to be true. In some ways Tozer's position is much more pragmatic. He is asking the question 'is it true for you?' ie in Watchman Nee's Brethren terminology, Tozer is saying your 'state' is the reality rather than a 'logical conclusion drawn from doctrinal premises'.

Would it be fair to say that Nee is still correct in this: that we HAVE died in Christ when He died, and the seed of Adam (the sinful flesh) was buried then and there, and that we, as Christians, have our part in Jesus' blood, so that we are now born by the spirit children of God and pardoned by that blood for our sinful nature, our new lives to be lived out in the spirit? I guess that is the foundation of knowing who you are in Christ, that you are forgiven, and the manner in which to live.

Its interesting, Riedhead preached against pragmatism (10 Shekels), and said in essence the same as Nee: when Christ died, we died with Him, and now we must live not according to the old dead nature, but according to the Spirit.

Is it ok to say that Tozer questions "Is it true for you?" whereas the real question is "Do you know it is true?" Because when you know it is true you will live it.

rookie

Quote:

-----A walk with Christ is always forward, one who understands this precept never has to rely on the reckoning the past.

How then do you interpret this: "Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin" (Romans 6:11)
I thought that we would look (with faith) back at the facts as a foundation for our future? I thought even Tozer would agree with this one?

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/12 18:36

Quote:
-----Would it be fair to say that Nee is still correct in this: that we HAVE died in Christ when He died, and the seed of Adam (the sinful flesh) was buried then and there, and that we, as Christians, have our part in Jesus' blood, so that we are now born by the spirit children of God and pardoned by that blood for our sinful nature, our new live to be lived out in the spirit? I guess that is the foundation of knowing who you are in Christ, that you are forgiven, and the manner in which to live.

Rom. 6:6 (KJVS) Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Paul is writing to people who 'know' something, This word for 'know' means perceiving; they have 'seen' it in their understanding. They do not need to be persuaded; they know. To such, Paul can say 'reckon yourselves...':

We may know the doctrine of justification by faith without being justified by faith ourselves, and we can 'reckon' ourselves to be dead...! but unless we are dead, it is a mental exercise only.

Quote:
-----Its interesting, Reidhead preached against pragmatism (10 Shekels), and said in essence the same as Nee: when Christ died, we died with Him, and now we must live not according to the old dead nature, but according to the Spirit.

Reidhead is talking about a different kind of pragmatism which is designed to make life easier.

Re: reckoning & death - head knowledge? - posted by coops (), on: 2005/10/12 19:15

philologos thanks for such a fast reply, i think Reidhead is talking of the same pragmatism, but applied wrongly. I guess the question is: where do we draw the line between pragmatism and faith?

Can we say: "I (in the flesh) died in Christ"? or do we have to say "I must die in Christ"? The latter gives rise to such stenches as legalism and pragmatism wrongly applied. It requires less faith and puts the responsibility on us to act. It almost seems works based (when extreme). Please note: Im not talking about works based justification, but works based holiness.

The latter requires more faith and releases us from the nature to sin. If we have become a Christian, we died in Christ when He died. And we can 'reckon' (look back at the black and white facts, just like accounting) and say that sin has lost its power on us and we no longer have to be bound to it. Its not "I must die" but "I dont have to fight this, I'm dead to it already when I walk by the Spirit".

So here we have Romans 6 where we must reckon ourselves to be dead to sin, it is no longer an issue to us. Then we have Romans 7 when it is revealed that we aren't even bound to the law anymore! We have no obligation to the law. Holiness is not obeying the letter of the law. For the law leads to death. Then finally Romans 8 where we are taught to live by the Spirit! But we can't do that until we stop trying to fulfill the law, and we stop trying to stop sinning. When we realise these things, we stop fighting in the flesh and allow the Spirit to do His work in us. No wonder He is called the Prince of Peace.

But we cannot have the experience of Romans 8 (life by the Spirit) until we have the revelation of Romans 7 (no longer bound to the law), which comes after the 'reckoning' that we died with Christ (Romans 6).

This isn't me saying "Hey you! This is black and white facts!" but voicing more what I got from Nee's writings and wondering what you all think of it. :-)

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/12 21:28

Hummmmm. how do I answer your questions here?
I do believe every man is given a measure of faith but its origin is God. I believe our ability to exercise faith can and is often closely related to the condition of our conscience. Faith worketh by love...Gal5:6f but because of sin the Love of man will wax cold....I John chapter 3 talks about our heart condemning us but God is greater.

This is how I understand this, our conscience can hinder us from experiencing the Fullness of the Spirit and that because of sin or other unresolved issues. The sin affects our love which effects our ability to exercise faith. By agency of faith I mean the practical out working of our walk. Faith, kinda like a stream of water that moves things. A deep inter confidence

ce toward God that transcends even the mind will and emotion. But has the ability to capture the mind will and emotions in acts of righteousness done in obedience to God's Word that proceeds from His mouth. Does that make sense to you? Did I answer you to your satisfaction? If not let me know I'll try to refine it for you.

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/12 21:39

This is from my perspective. It seems that as soon as we say the bible teaches this certain thing 1...2...3... in that order or that we observe the Holy Spirit operate in a manner 1...2...3... in that order, then all of a sudden God seems to throw us a curve ball and changes things up on us, He messes up the order to our way of thinking. I guess its so we stay dependent on Him and not institute programs where we can remove Him and keep going on as if nothing has changed. :-)

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/12 22:51

After I wrote the above I was reading Matt 6:25 to 30 and really felt as if it was at least a partial answer to my own question. That doesn't happen to me often, kinda cool 8-)

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/13 5:30

Perhaps if I can tease out the underlying nature of Watchman Nee's theology it will explain why I am saying that Tozer and Nee disagree. Let me first acknowledge my indebtedness to Watchman Nee's writings over many years. I am not anti-Nee. The basic position of most Brethren teachers was that we received the Spirit at conversion, usually without any specific consciousness of the fact. This would be, in their understanding, synonymous with regeneration, receiving Christ, being saved, being justified by faith etc. As such the Brethren did not look for a conscious experience of 'receiving the Spirit' but believed that all who were 'saved' HAD already received the Spirit. There was no 'second blessing' experience; everything was present in the 'first blessing'. All that was necessary to enjoy the blessings of the Spirit was to 'realise' that He had come, and then to base one's life on the fact. It is significant that Nee's main book on the work of the Spirit is entitled 'The Release of the Spirit'. There is a conscious point being made in this title; this is not 'receiving the Spirit' as a new experience but the 'breaking of the outward man' so that the Spirit, who is already within, can be released.

The 'second blessing' movements of Holiness or Pentecostalism both believed in a 'second blessing' which was 'distinct from and subsequent to, new birth'. This was not a 'realisation' but a fresh encounter with God; it was a conscious 'experience' of the Spirit. It is difficult to get a firm grip on Tozer's view of things from his own pen, or at least I have found it so. However, Tozer was the successor to, and a strong advocate of the teaching of, A B Simpson; and A B Simpson was 'second blessing holiness'. When ABS said 'baptism in the Spirit' he meant what Wesley meant by the experience (not the progress) of sanctification.

The consequence of these different foundations of understanding in the two men have their impact on their teaching. Watchman Nee wants us to understand what has already happened to us; A W Tozer want to make sure that it really happens to us. Tozer does not want us to put our confidence in 'logical deductions drawn from texts'; Nee does not want us to put our confidence in a point of experience.

Tozer is saying if you have got 'it' (not the Spirit but the personal experience) you will know it. Nee is saying you do have 'it', now count on it as you live. My point is that you can only 'count on it' if you really have it and if you really have it you will know it.

Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/10/13 8:33

Dear philologos,

I had not realized that about Nee, and did not get that impression from his book, "The Normal Christian Life." However, if that is indeed what Nee is saying and the basis for his theology, I would have to say I disagree.

I still appreciate Nee's readings have grown much from his teachings.

I have also yet to find a teacher apart from Christ who has a perfect doctrine, one that I agree with 100%. Have you?

Thank you,

Blake

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/13 9:11

Quote:

-----I have also yet to find a teacher apart from Christ who has a perfect doctrine, one that I agree with 100%. Have you?

I don't agree with myself all of the time! :-)
As our beloved brother Paul expressed it... we know in part.

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/13 9:54

As Ron has been contrasting the two it occurred to me that the "Word- Faith" teachings are a variation of the Brethren in that once you ask for The Holy Spirit you then accept it as fact and embrace that fact until the actual experience happens. The word/faith movement it would seem has taken much of its foundational principles from that ideology and of course today its grossly perverted and into a man centered believism.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2005/10/13 12:45

Brother Coops wrote:

Quote:

-----Can we say: "I (in the flesh) died in Christ"? or do we have to say "I must die in Christ"? The latter gives rise to such stench as legalism and pragmatism wrongly applied. It requires less faith and puts the responsibility on us to act. It almost seems works based (when extreme). Please note: I'm not talking about works based justification, but works based holiness.

If you obey His voice the things He commands you to do daily will cause you to die daily to your flesh. This is the spiritual outcome of those who abide in Christ. We can only reckon according to what the Spirit has taught us. The work of the Spirit in one's life is very clear to those who do what the Spirit tells them. This 'Life' by the Spirit is the only means by which legalism has no hold on those who hear. Living by the Spirit releases the bonds that hold us captive because of one's carnal mind.

To be known by God, is to receive the understanding of the truth that sets you free from the depravity of the first man Adam. The Second Man Christ actually gives you the means to begin to see this world for what it is. The Second Man Christ actually gives you understanding that begins to change the substance for which you strive for in this life. That which we use to strive for diminishes as Christ reveals Himself in you more each day. The world knows nothing of this substance but look at this death as foolishness. The cross is foolishness to those who are blind, yet it really is something that continues to grow as a treasure in our life. This is what faith is made up of.

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/13 14:15

Quote:

-----As Ron has been contrasting the two it occurred to me that the "Word- Faith" teachings are a variation of the Brethren in that once you ask for The Holy Spirit you then accept it as fact and embrace that fact until the actual experience happens.

dohzman

I can see your thinking but this is far from the case. The modern word/faith movement is really a kind of magic. If you say the right word, it works. That is very different to what the Brethren were about. There were some Brethren who believed that the 'Baptism in the Spirit' was a secondary experience (G H Lang) but saw it not in 'second blessing' terminology as pertaining to power or purity; they saw it as the moment when a person was distinctly joined to the body of Christ. They were usually very strongly opposed to the early days of the Pentecostal movement.

The word/faith folk are selling a methodology, which is why I call it magic. The Brethren were not wrong in saying that we must believe in what God has done. It is just that unless God has really 'done' something the process of 'reckoning by faith' is a house built upon the sand.

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2005/10/13 17:03

Hi all,

The most helpful post I have read is **philologos's** starting with "Perhaps if I can tease out..." His description of the Brethren's distinction between one's *position* and *experience* is quite correct.

However, that is not to say that Watchman Nee did not seek to *experience* the baptism of the Holy Spirit. With the help of some missionaries, he also experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit; he testified so in his own public testimony.

The terminologies by which he interpret his experience might be different from other teachers, but I do think they are really pointing at the same authentic experience. He would not have called his experience as "*receiving* the Holy Spirit," but he would say he was "*empowered* by the Holy Spirit". He believed that the Spirit is received at conversion (the "**indwelling** of the Spirit"), but he also acknowledged that the Spirit's empowerment can be experienced and manifested in a more outward manner subsequent to conversion (the "**outpouring** of the Spirit").

As such, I do not think Nee would find Tozer's description to be in conflict with his own view. He would have seen Tozer's words as the description of the "outpouring" (or filling) of the Spirit.

In understanding Watchman Nee, one must be careful not to rigidly fit him into the box of one particular theological system. He was also the one who introduced Christians from diverse traditions such as A. B. Simpson, Tozer, Madam Guyon, Brother Lawrence, Andrew Murray, T. Austin-Sparks etc. to the Chinese church.

Also, I would like to point out that the "reckoning" that Watchman Nee talks about is not just affirming a "logical conclusion drawn from doctrinal premises"; that would be a major misunderstanding of Nee's theology. A spiritual or mystical insight (he calls it "revelation"; others will probably use the term "illumination") is necessary, not just mental assent.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/13 17:50

Sam
glad to have 'teased' you out with these comments. Very helpful. Thank you. I can see the logic of Watchman Nee's line on the 'outpouring' or 'release' of the Spirit but although it may be a legitimate way of expressing a personal testimony I can't see a real biblical basis for this. Outpourings come from heaven, Biblically, rather than from the saint.

Re: - posted by coops (), on: 2005/10/13 18:10

Yeah **philologos** that was a really good post that made it very clear to me. I think both of them are trying to pull away from the two vices of their culture. Tozer is pulling away from dead intellectualism, and Nee is pulling away from legalism...

Quote:
-----I can see the logic of Watchman Nee's line on the 'outpouring' or 'release' of the Spirit but although it may be a legitimate way of expressing a personal testimony I can't see a real biblical basis for this. Outpourings come from heaven, Biblically, rather than from the saint

...Nee said something along the lines of not seeing a biblical basis for tarrying and waiting on God for such an experience. He said that do something on our own strength would be to take glory away from God, so He has already done everything that we have to just now receive. (Sorry, still playing the 'devils' advocate)

This is such a good thread, so full of wisdom!

Note: I go to a church that believes in a second blessing experience, that is sought after in meetings at the altar and people pray for those that want to be filled and many speak in tongues, I have also seen 'the lame walk and the blind see' literally.

There is no need to talk about the doctrine of my church because I'm well aware of all the issues surrounding it, but did find this: I have sought this second blessing years ago and had to check on the 'experience' because it didn't revolutionize

empower me to do God's work. I have also spent hours traveling in prayer, and a year trying to 'die to self'.

Once I hit on this reckoning thing it has come so easily and I have lived in just newness of life, one friend even said it was like I was suddenly 'glowing'. So that is why I'm trying to understand why my experience doesn't line up with what I've been taught. :-)

Re: magic - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/10/13 19:26

I believe you're right there, Word of Faith movement does utilize a lot of formulas to work God into a box. I always felt what they really were doing was creating workarounds to circumvent God's Sovereignty.

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2005/10/14 12:21

philologos:

Quote:
-----glad to have 'teased' you out with these comments. Very helpful. Thank you. I can see the logic of Watchman Nee's line on the 'outpouring' or 'release' of the Spirit but although it may be a legitimate way of expressing a personal testimony I can't see a real biblical basis for this. Outpourings come **from heaven**, Biblically, rather than **from the saint**.

I think it would be a misunderstanding to say that Nee suggested that "outpourings" come from within the believer, not from heaven. If it were so, he would not have used the distinctions of "indwelling" and "outpouring."

For Nee, the *outpouring* of the Spirit is **not** the same as the *release* of the Spirit. The latter is the process by which the dying to self leads to the expression of Christ's life in us. The former is the outward and external manifestations brought about by the Spirit from on high in the manner of Acts 2. The Spirit dispenses gifts from heaven and empowers us for service - that's the outpouring of the Spirit.

One of Nee's co-workers gave the account of Nee and others ministering in the rural area of China, they came across some Pentecostals. The co-workers were very concerned about the emotional outbursts and manifestations expressed in the meetings, to which Watchman Nee calmly said, "The Spirit works in many different forms."

As in other doctrines, Nee did not strictly follow the lines of the Brethren even though he was greatly influenced by them. That's why he was rejected by the Taylorites.

I hope this is clear. Sometimes I thought I was clear, and then realized from other's response that because we have different preconceived theological assumptions, miscommunication occurs.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/10/14 13:54

Quote:
-----The former is the outward and external manifestations brought about by the Spirit from on high in the manner of Acts 2. The Spirit dispenses gifts from heaven and empowers us for service - that's the outpouring of the Spirit.

Sam
Thank you for this clarification. Does this mean that Nee envisaged an experience 'distinct from and subsequent to, new birth' as expressed by the Pentecostals?

Quote:
-----As in other doctrines, Nee did not strictly follow the lines of the Brethren even though he was greatly influenced by them. That's why he was rejected by the Taylorites.

I had thought that this was due to his refusal to be 'exclusive' in maintaining fellowship with the likes of T Austin Sparks?

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2005/10/14 15:29

Quote:
-----Thank you for this clarification. Does this mean that Nee envisaged an experience 'distinct from and subsequent to, new birth' as expressed by the Pentecostals?

Nee accepts the possibility, though not necessity, of experience(s) "distinct from and subsequent to, new birth." I think he sees it not as an evidence of new birth, but an empowerment for service.

He teaches that all genuine Christians receive the Spirit at conversion, which may or may not include dramatic manifestations. But he also teaches that the Spirit may act subsequent to new birth, especially in relation to endowing gifts to believers for ministering the church.

In practice, churches following his teachings do not hold meetings to pray for the Spirit's outpouring. Like I said, the emphasis has always been on the Spirit's indwelling; also, I think they do not want to be identified with the Pentecostals. But "outpouring" sometimes, though rarely, happens spontaneously.

Quote:
-----I had thought that this was due to his refusal to be 'exclusive' in maintaining fellowship with the likes of T Austin Sparks?

Yes, that is the last straw that pushed the Brethren to act. In ecclesiology, Watchman Nee would be in-between the Exclusive and Open Brethren (in my opinion, anyways).

But before that, Nee mentioned how the Brethren debated with him on "Partial Rapture" and other issues regarding eschatology. He was more of a "moderate" dispensationalist. For example, he could not accept the notion that passages such as the Sermon on the Mount are for a future dispensation rather than the present -- his very last series of sermons and bible studies were on the Gospel of Matthew.